Office of Inspector General

Office
202.692.2900
peacecorps.gov/OIG
OIG Reports

Hotline
202.692.2915   800.233.5874
Online Reporting Tool
OIG@peacecorps.gov

To: Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Director
             Daljit Bains, Chief Compliance Officer

From: Kathy A. Buller, Inspector General

Date: August 19, 2014

Subject: Final Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Armenia
             (IG-14-05-E)

Transmitted for your information is our final report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Armenia.

Management concurred with all five recommendations. We closed two recommendations based on a review of corrective actions and supporting documentation. Three recommendations, numbers three through five, remain open. OIG will review and consider closing these recommendations when the documentation reflected in the OIG's comments and the agency's response to the preliminary report is received. For recommendation three, additional documentation is required.

In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities.

Our comments, which are in the report as Appendix E, address these matters. Please respond with documentation to close the remaining open recommendation within 90 days of receipt of this memorandum.

You may address questions regarding follow-up or documentation to Assistant Inspector General for Evaluation Jim O'Keefe at 202.692.2904 or to Senior Evaluator Susan Gasper at 202.692.2908.

Please accept our thanks for your cooperation and assistance in our review.

cc: Laura Chambers, Chief of Staff
       Jacklyn Dao, White House Liaison
       Bill Rubin, General Counsel
       Keri Lowry, Regional Director, Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Operations
       Kristin Besch, Chief of Operations, Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Operations
       Betsy Vegso, Chief of Program and Training, Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Operations
       Daryl Sink, Chief, Overseas Operations, Office of Safety and Security

Ken Puvak, Acting Country Director, Peace Corps/Armenia
James Bach, Director of Programming and Training, Peace Corps/Armenia
Terri L Gureno, Director of Management and Operations, Peace Corps/Armenia
Patricia Barkle, Deputy Chief Compliance Officer
Armenia Country Desk

Peace Corps
Office of Inspector General

PC/Armenia Teaching English as a Foreign Language Volunteer
Danny Schlingman (right) with host family

Flag of Armenia

Final Program Evaluation Report:
Peace Corps/Armenia
IG-14-05-E

August 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

More than 800 Peace Corps Volunteers have served the people of Armenia since the program was first launched in 1992. There are currently two project areas in Armenia: teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) and community and youth development (CYD). At the onset of this evaluation, 76 Volunteers were serving in Armenia. Peace Corps/Armenia (hereafter referred to as "the post") has one training input per year.

WHAT WE FOUND

We found the post generally to be high functioning. Following the agency's 2012 annual country portfolio review,[1] the post was asked to identify strategies to revitalize programs. Post leadership was asked to submit a plan to regional management to address issues, and the Europe, Mediterranean and Asia (EMA) region committed to providing resources. At the time of our evaluation, the post had implemented most items on its improvement plan. The improvement plan seems to have positively affected post operations.

Both the CYD and TEFL projects have had recent project reviews by the agency, and project frameworks for both projects have been endorsed. The post is on its way to meeting EMA's minimum standards for site development and monitoring. While the post has positive working relationships with its host ministries, it does not have current Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with either of them. We also identified that Volunteer performance reporting needs improvement.

Overall, the post's training is well-regarded by Volunteers. Volunteers rated most topics in pre-service training (PST) highly, especially language and safety and security. Technical training could use improvement, but all Volunteers in the recent training group rated it either neutrally or favorably. We also identified that the mid-service training (MST) conference needs improvement; however, the post has adopted a new planning process, using lessons learned, to improve future conferences.

In general, we determined that the post has developed a solid Volunteer support structure and that Volunteers are satisfied with the support they receive. There is frequent, open communication between Volunteers and staff, and Volunteers receive numerous site visits from staff. The post's safety and security systems are strong. Volunteers believe the safety and security coordinator (SSC) takes his job very seriously and are confident in his ability to do the job.

We found the post to be well-managed and that staff turnover has not been a significant issue for the post. However, staff leadership positions are due to turnover soon and could be a challenge for the post. We did identify some problems with staff communication. The rationale and background for decisions by post or headquarters were not clearly understood by staff.

---

[1] The Country Portfolio Review process aims to provide the agency with an evidence-based approach for guiding strategic decisions and targeting resources. Posts are ranked according to their performance in a number of indicators and are placed into one of several categories.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF

Our report contains five recommendations, which, if implemented, should strengthen post operations and correct the deficiencies detailed in the accompanying report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOST COUNTRY BACKGROUND

The Republic of Armenia is a mountainous country located at the crossroads of Western Asia and Eastern Europe. It is bordered by Turkey to the west, Georgia to the north, Azerbaijan to the east, and Iran and the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan to the south. It is slightly smaller than Maryland with a population of approximately three million people.

Figure 1. Map of Armenia

Armenia has a long and complex history marked by many struggles for independence and the domination of foreign powers. Armenian civilization traces back to the sixth century B.C. and it became the first state in the world to adopt Christianity as its religion. By the 19th century, it was divided between the Ottoman and Russian empires. During World War I, at least one million Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire were killed. While briefly independent, Armenia was incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1922. The modern Republic of Armenia became independent in 1991. Shortly after, Armenia broke into war with neighboring Azerbaijan over the predominately ethnically Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh in southwestern Azerbaijan. Numerous efforts at peace talks have failed to settle the status of the enclave; Nagorno-Karabakh remains a "frozen conflict" zone.

The recent economic recession severely hurt the Armenian economy, which relies heavily on workers' remittances, particularly from Russia. As the majority of Armenia's critical infrastructure (most significantly, its energy distribution system) is owned and/or managed by Russia, Armenia is heavily dependent on Russian commercial and governmental support. In

1988, a massive earthquake destroyed several cities in the North, killing 25,000 people and leaving tens of thousands of people homeless.

Because of its geographic isolation, limited export base, and monopolies in key business sectors, Armenia is especially vulnerable to deterioration in the global economy and economic downturn in Russia. Armenia has just two open trade borders with Iran and Georgia. Its borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey closed in 1991 and 1993, respectively, due to ongoing conflict with Azerbaijan over the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh region.

According to the 2013 United Nations' Human Development report Armenia ranks among countries in the "high human development" category (87 out of 187 countries),[2] which is slightly below the average for countries in this category and for countries in Europe and Central Asia. Two countries close to Armenia in 2012 HDI rank and population size, Georgia and Azerbaijan, have HDIs ranked 72 and 82 respectively.

PEACE CORPS PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The post has been in existence for over 20 years; since that time more than 800 Volunteers have served in Armenia. The bilateral country agreement was signed between the United States and Armenia on September 24, 1992. Current Volunteers work in one of two sectors: TEFL or community and youth development CYD. In 2010, the community health education and environmental education projects were phased out.

The post receives one trainee input per year. The most recent group of 31 trainees arrived in May 2013; the next training input will start in August 2014, and their training is scheduled to last for 11 weeks. While some Volunteers are placed in large cities (up to 200,000), most are placed in smaller towns (less than 50,000 people) or villages (less than 5,000).Volunteers in both the TEFL and CYD projects integrate cross-sector programming priorities (CSPP) such as technology for development, host country volunteerism and youth as resources into their work. The post also has two stand-alone CSPP committees: Gender Equality and HIV/AIDS. The projects Volunteers are engaged in are:

- **Teaching English as a Foreign Language**
  Volunteers teach in secondary schools, colleges, universities, training centers, and other institutions of higher learning. Volunteers work to improve the quality of English education through both formal instruction and non-formal activities such as after-school clubs.

- **Community and Youth Development**
  This project was formerly known as community business development. In 2012, the project underwent a formal review and it was determined that the project should shift away from business development, which was often difficult due to the country's regulatory environment, and towards community and youth development, a priority of the government that better fit

---

[2] "The Human Development Report" publishes an annual Human Development Index. The Index provides a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education, and income. Countries are ranked from "very high human development" to "low human development" based on related data.

the capacity of Peace Corps Volunteers. CYD Volunteers work with local non-governmental organizations, youth centers, and educational institutions to implement programs that result in positive youth development and build organizational capacity and professionalism. They engage in a variety of projects, from advising organizations in human resource management practices to organizing entrepreneurship camps for youth.

Following the agency's 2012 annual country portfolio review, the post was one of four in the EMA region, identified by regional management as needing additional attention. The EMA regional director held a three day country portfolio review meeting with senior leadership from each of these posts to identify strategies to revitalize programs and improve indicator scores. The post's challenge areas centered on programming and Volunteers feeling engaged in their work. Post leadership was asked to submit an improvement plan to address issues, and the region committed to providing resources. The post's major plans included: continuing to "focus in"[3] the TEFL and CYD project sectors, conducting a project review of the TEFL project, conducting a PST review, shifting trainee input to better align with partner and training needs, considering full-time homestays for Volunteers, conducting more thorough identification and better vetting of sites, and reviewing and revising programming and training staff statements of work and performance evaluations and expectations.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) last conducted a country program evaluation of the post in 2004. An OIG audit was conducted in 2013. The post's fiscal year (FY) 2013 budget was approximately $1.5 million.[4] At the time of the evaluation, the post had 27 permanent staff positions. The post does not currently have a Peace Corps Volunteer Leader or Peace Corps Response program.

EVALUATION RESULTS

PROGRAMMING

The evaluation assessed the extent to which the post has developed and implemented programs intended to increase the capacity of host country communities to meet their own technical needs. To determine this, we analyzed the following:

- the coordination between the Peace Corps and the host country in determining development priorities and Peace Corps program areas;
- whether post is meeting its project objectives;
- counterpart selection and quality of counterpart relationships with Volunteers;
- site development policies and practices.

---

[3] The Focus In/Train Up strategy is designed to maximize the skills of Volunteers with limited expertise and/or work experience.

[4] This amount does not include the salaries, benefits, and related cost of U.S. direct hires assigned to post and other costs the agency has determined should be centrally-budgeted.

In our assessment of post programming, we interviewed relevant headquarters offices, post staff, program partners and Volunteers and analyze project documentation. We determined that the post has a strong programming foundation. For the last three years, the post has been working on improvements in many aspects of programming. The 2012 country portfolio review focused attention and committed resources to these ongoing initiatives. The post has continued to "focus in" its projects, improve its site development process, and identify potential solutions and process changes to improve its Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) scores. The post's AVS scores related to primary job assignment is one of the indicators in the country portfolio review process. Both project areas have recently been reviewed and their project frameworks have been finalized. In reviewing the project objectives, site development and monitoring, coordination with host country project partners, counterpart selection and grant funding, we found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post.

Project Objectives. Both the CYD and TEFL projects have had recent project reviews, and their project frameworks have been endorsed by headquarters. Ninety percent of interviewed Volunteers (18 of 20) rated favorably their understanding of their project goals and objectives, but only 35 percent (seven of 20) favorably rated their ability to achieve them. Fifty-five percent (11 of 20) rated neutrally.[5] Some challenges Volunteers in the CYD sector listed were their organizations not fully understanding the role of the Volunteer or having dedicated resources. TEFL Volunteers cited challenges such as the Armenian school system, classroom management, and not having level-appropriate learning materials for students. Volunteers in both sectors cited counterpart turnover as a challenge.

Site Development and Monitoring. Eighty percent (16 of 20) of interviewed Volunteers rated their satisfaction with site placement favorably; the remaining twenty percent were neutral. Many different staff is involved in the site development process and currently serving Volunteers play a role in evaluating and recommending potential sites. Counterparts also speak to prospective counterparts about what it was like to work with a Volunteer. Staff discussed the challenges with managing all of the data that feeds into site development and would welcome guidance and tools from headquarters.

At the time of our visit, the post had made progress meeting the EMA's minimum standards for site development and monitoring. The EMA region identified site development and monitoring as one of its top priorities for quality improvement. In September 2013, the EMA region released its "Minimum Standards for Site Development and Monitoring," which lists the essential activities of identifying, selecting, and approving sites and visiting Volunteers during the course of their service. The region's FY 2014 – 15 Integrated Planning and Budgeting System guidance asks posts ensure that systems and documentation are in place to fully meet these standards by September 2014.

Though the post's site development process is documented in a procedural manual, some forms that contain the majority of information needed to evaluate a site are not explicitly referenced. The manual is also specific to site identification and development. It does not cover the

---

[5] Volunteer interviews were conducted using a standardized interview questionnaire, and Volunteers were asked to rate many items on a five-point scale (1 = not effective, 3 = neutral, 5 = very effective). The percentage of Volunteers who gave a favorable rating includes those who gave ratings of "4" or "5".

monitoring process or tools needed after a Volunteer has been placed at site, such as the site visit process or site locator forms. The post collects this information but does not reference it in the manual.

Counterpart Selection. All Volunteers we interviewed had at least one counterpart; many had worked with or were currently working with multiple counterparts. Volunteer ratings of their counterparts' support in meeting project objectives were as follows:

- 45 percent rated favorably (nine of 20)
- 35 percent rated neutral (seven of 20)
- 20 percent rated poorly (four of 20)

Programming staff believed that the amount of training and orientation counterparts received was sufficient in the last year; Small Project Assistance (SPA) funding had helped fund these trainings.

Table 1. Volunteer Relationships with Counterparts
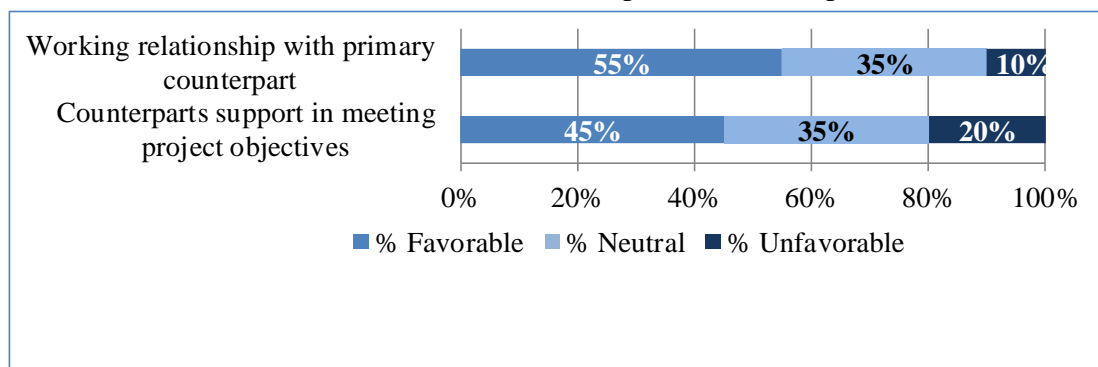
Grant Funding. Half of the Volunteers we interviewed had participated in a grant-funded project (seven Small Project Assistance (SPA) and three Peace Corps Partnership Program), but only two of those Volunteers felt able to give a rating as to how well the project was operating due to either their role in, or the timing of the process. Both ratings were favorable.

Though no major concerns were identified, the post was planning to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of SPA projects and use the results for continuous improvement. The evaluation will assess the level of community involvement, the community's perception of the project, and project outcomes and effects.

Coordination with Host Country Project Partners. The Peace Corps' country agreement with Armenia has been in effect since 1992. The post distributes an annual report to stakeholders but the post needs to make sure that the performance data reported by Volunteers is reliable and accurate. Also, an area of concern that surfaced in our review is the MOUs for both project areas have expired and are currently under review by its stakeholder ministries. Additional information on this topic follows in the section below.

While the post has many fundamental programming elements in place, the evaluation did uncover some areas that require management attention, particularly related to MOUs and project performance reporting. The remainder of this section provides more information about these topics.

The Post does not have current MOUs with host country ministries.

The post does not have current MOUs with its respective stakeholder ministries for either the CYD or TEFL projects. The post uses Project Advisory Committees (PACs) to coordinate with host country project partners. Both projects' PACs have ministry-level representation. The focus of recent PAC meetings has been to review the newly focused project frameworks.

Programming and Training Guidance: Project Design and Evaluation highly recommends that every project have a current national or ministry level MOU. "Memoranda of Understanding that establish a clear understanding of the goals, objectives, and working relationship between the Peace Corps and host ministries help to manage expectations and add credibility to the Peace Corps' work in the country." Additionally, *Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post* indicator 6.2 provides guidance that, "Peace Corps and host country partner agencies have memoranda of understanding, which describe and give guidelines for the cooperation between them. The MOU sets out the roles and responsibilities between the parties."

While both ministry representatives we met with during evaluation fieldwork spoke positively about their relationships with the Peace Corps, the lack of MOUs could be detrimental to the Peace Corps program. With no formal understanding of the goals and objectives of Peace Corps' work in Armenia, and without clear guidelines for cooperation, there could be a misalignment of expectations, roles, or responsibilities between the post and its project partners.

> **We recommend:**
>
> 1. **That the post develop a memorandum of understanding for the teaching English as a foreign language project with the appropriate Armenian ministry.**
>
> 2. **That the post develop a memorandum of understanding for the community and youth development project with the appropriate Armenian ministry.**

Volunteers' project performance data is not reliable.

As part of the annual project status reporting (PSR) process, Volunteers are required to submit periodic reports using the Volunteer Reporting Form (VRF). Since 2008, the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT), which comprises the VRF, has been the primary reporting mechanism Volunteers use to capture project activities and outcomes and other aspects of their service. This data is used in the agency-wide aggregation included in the agency's Performance and Accountability Report.

Volunteers were not accurately completing their VRFs. Only 12 of 20 Volunteers interviewed had completed VRF reports at this point in their service and almost half of the Volunteers in our sample had not been in service long enough to be required to submit a report. When asked "How reliable is the information in your trimester or quarterly reports?" Fifty-five percent (six of 11) reported favorably. Even though they rated themselves favorably, Volunteers comments raised concerns. Volunteers reported that they did not understand what was expected of them and that they used numbers "that made sense to them" when filling out the VRT. A Volunteer commented, "We don't have good universal assessment tools and what I put down as improvement, someone else in another place might say it's not improvement. It's very unreliable." Some Volunteers commented that they had not received training. Others stated that training included discussions about modified project goals and objectives but did not sufficiently address tools or how to enter data in the VRF. Volunteers also commented that VRF training was rushed or delayed because a new version of the application would soon be released.

A major redesign of the VRT was started in 2012 to accommodate programming and training changes introduced through Focus In/Train Up (FITU) and make technology upgrades. The post volunteered to be an early adopter of the new VRT but, at the time of our evaluation fieldwork, it had not been rolled out. Because the new VRF and accompanying process had not been completed, the post had delayed training Volunteers on it. Additionally, the EMA Monitoring and Evaluation workshop on data collection and tools was postponed due to the partial U.S. government shutdown in October 2013. However, agency performance reporting was still required.

Volunteer performance reports are necessary to meet agency reporting requirements and, if used effectively, can also play an important role for staff to provide technical guidance, support, and timely responsiveness to problems experienced by Volunteers. Inaccurate data sets have the potential to disrupt analysis and prevent the agency from understanding the impact it has on host countries.

> **We recommend:**
>
> 3. **That the director of programming and training ensure that Volunteers are fully informed on how to accurately complete the volunteer reporting form.**

TRAINING

Another objective of the post evaluation is to answer the question, "Does training prepare Volunteers for Peace Corps service?" To answer this question we considered such factors as training adequacy and planning and development of the training life cycle.

Overall, the post's training is generally well-regarded by Volunteers. The post uses a community-based training model. Volunteers and language and cross cultural facilitators (LCFs) live with host families in training villages during PST. The post has updated the standard FITU training packages to be specific to Armenia. To make sure trainings resonate with trainees and

Volunteers, the post uses training advisory groups, which are comprised of Volunteers, to develop trainings. In 2013, the post had a PST review performed by a director of programming and training (DPT) from another post, which focused on session content and sequencing. Staff found the review helpful. The post has also focused on language acquisition by offering a pre-departure online course for invitees.

In reviewing the post's assessment of trainees' achievement of learning objectives, training evaluation, and the adequacy of resources to support the post's training program, we found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post.

Assessment of Trainees' Achievement of Learning Objectives. The post uses different methods to assess trainee's achievement of learning objectives, such as observation and on-the-spot assessment of the trainer. The post distributes a handbook for each project that lists technical competencies and learning objectives that trainees are expected to achieve based on project frameworks. The post also employs a written safety and security test.
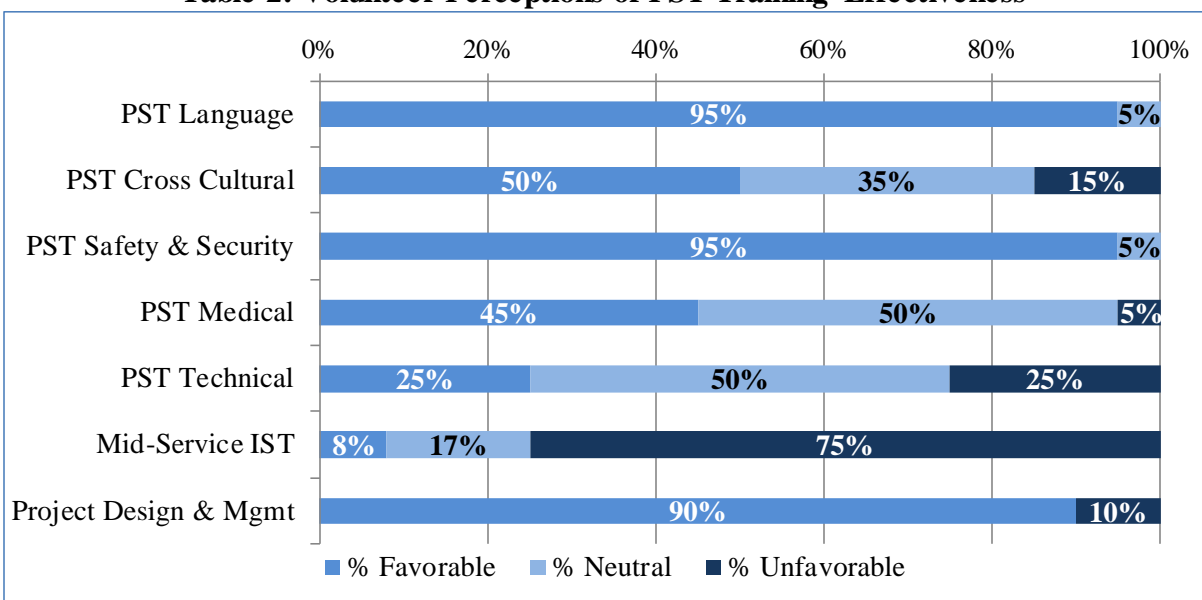
Even though the post is already performing well in this area, it will continue to make improvements as part of an agency-wide process to adopt global learning standards. According to a December 2013 decision memo, Peace Corps posts will adopt global learning standards as a means to guide high quality training. Having global learning standards ensures that all posts measure achievement of a standard set of learning objectives through a standard set of methods. The Trainee Assessment Portfolio will function as a formative assessment throughout PST and summative evaluation of a trainee's knowledge, skills and abilities at the end of PST.

Training Evaluation. The post used different methods to obtain Volunteer perspectives about the effectiveness of its training program and make improvements based on their feedback. Throughout PST, staff solicits feedback from trainees and makes improvements on an ongoing basis. The post also solicits PST effectiveness evaluations after Volunteers have been at their sites for at least three months. In-service training (IST) assessments are also gathered within a month of the event's completion.

Adequacy of Training Resources. There were no concerns about the adequacy of resources for training, although changing the timing of trainee inputs from the third to the fourth quarter, raised some concerns about the post's ability to identify and hire new LCFs.

Training Effectiveness. Volunteers we interviewed were generally satisfied with the quality of Peace Corps training as ratings show in the figure below. They found PST to be very effective in the areas of language and safety and security, and less effective in other areas. Volunteers were generally satisfied with trainings that occurred after PST but did not find MST to be effective as we will discuss further in the following section.

Table 2: Volunteer Perceptions of PST Training Effectiveness

Category	% Favorable	% Neutral	% Unfavorable
PST Language	95%		5%
PST Cross Cultural	50%	35%	15%
PST Safety & Security	95%		5%
PST Medical	45%	50%	5%
PST Technical	25%	50%	25%
Mid-Service IST	8%	17%	75%
Project Design & Mgmt	90%		10%

Source: OIG Interviews 2013
PST: N=20, MST: N=12, Project Design and Mgmt: N=10

Fifteen percent of Volunteers we interviewed (three of 20) rated cross-cultural training unfavorably in terms of effectiveness. Volunteers wanted more information on issues they expected to face during service, such as cultural norms around sex, struggles minorities would face, and how to find a balance with being oneself in a culturally appropriate way. One suggestion was to use panels of currently serving Volunteers to discuss the ways they had addressed issues.

While only 45 percent of Volunteers rated medical training favorably, 50 percent were neutral. Both our Volunteer interviews and the post's PST Evaluation Report identified the need for post to provide more information on identifying mental health issues and strategies for handling stress and loneliness.

Twenty-five percent of Volunteers (five of 20) rated technical training a "1" or "2" in terms of effectiveness; these Volunteers were from both project areas and had all been in country at least a year. TEFL Volunteers were concerned that technical training was too theoretical, and CYD Volunteers were concerned that sessions were too basic or were not applicable to their site assignments. However, all Volunteers in the most recent input rated technical training neutrally or favorably for TEFL and favorably for CYD. The timing of the next training input has been adjusted and will occur later in the year. This will enable the post to provide an authentic Armenian school experience for the TEFL Volunteers' PST practicum.

With the exception of MST, Volunteers were generally satisfied with trainings that occurred after PST. Ninety percent of interviewed Volunteers who had taken the project design and management training rated it favorably, and many said it was the best training Peace Corps offered. The interviewed Volunteers who participated in safety and security warden training

rated it favorably. The U.S. Embassy regional security officer (RSO) was impressed with the training's table top exercise on crisis management.

The one training area we determined that needs management attention is MST.

MST was not effective.

Mid-service training is generally held 12 months after PST. *Programming and Training Guidance: Training Design and Evaluation* states, "While the midservice point in service is important for reviewing the successes and challenges of Volunteers' service, sharing ideas, and providing additional skills and support as necessary, it is a challenging conference to do well."

Seventy-five percent of Volunteers (nine of 12) rated MST a "1" or "2" in terms of effectiveness. Volunteers said that it was poorly planned, topics were not relevant, and materials were not fully defined. Volunteers also stated that training content should come from the country program or experts rather than only soliciting Volunteer requests.

> "There was a very open agenda and I don't think we should be responsible for what needs to be done at training. Peace Corps has been in Armenia for 20 years and they know better what phases we are in and where we are in our service. Having choices is helpful, but I felt like it was thrown together at the last minute."
>
> "Peace Corps is constantly asking us what we want in the training and will we do the training for each other… On the one hand it's good to say - what do you need training on? We'll make sure we get a session on that, but it also seems to me that after more than 50 years Peace Corps… should know what trends are happening and what Volunteers need. At least 50 percent of the training should be determined and facilitated by the country office or an expert in the community. Our MST for [our group] was a disaster because the content was so worthless."

While the *Programming and Training Guidance* does not define what must be covered during MST or how effectiveness should be measured, many Volunteers we interviewed believed it was a waste of time and money. Post staff received Volunteer feedback about MST's ineffectiveness following the event. Staff recognized that the timing of the training was challenging because it overlapped with PST. Following this event, the post implemented a new planning process for trainings. The process requires having major tasks completed, such as a signed contract, 28 days before the training occurs. It has facilitated collaboration between the Programming and Training and Administrative Units.

> **We recommend:**
>
> 4. **That the director of programming and training monitor the effectiveness of in-service trainings and make improvements, if necessary.**

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Our country program evaluation attempts to answer the question, "Has post provided adequate support and oversight to Volunteers?" To determine this, we assessed numerous factors,

including staff-Volunteer communications; project and status report feedback; medical support; safety and security support, the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), and the handling of crime incidents; and the adequacy of the Volunteer living allowance.

We determined that the post has developed a solid Volunteer support structure and that Volunteers are generally satisfied with the support they receive. In reviewing staff-Volunteer communications, Volunteer performance report feedback, site visits, medical support, Volunteer allowances, emergency preparedness, crime incident response, and housing checks, we found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post.

Volunteers' ratings for support in specific areas were as follows:

Table 3: Responses on Perceptions of Volunteer Support[6]
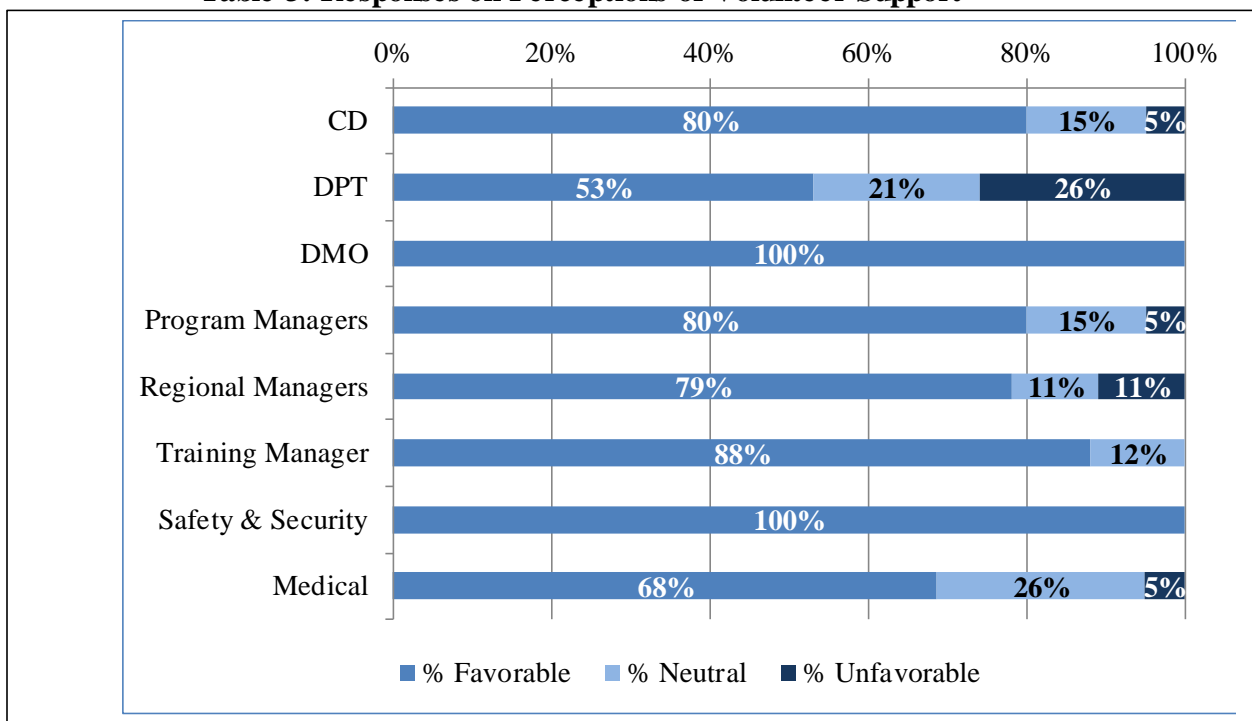
Source: OIG Interviews November 2013.

Staff-Volunteer Communications. The evaluation determined that there is frequent open communication between Volunteers and staff. Staff regularly seeks Volunteer feedback and is generally aware of Volunteer needs and concerns. Some of the feedback mechanisms used to gather Volunteer input include surveys, training evaluations, personal communications, and the Volunteer Advisory Committee. Staff regularly communicates with Volunteers through newsletters and personal interactions through text messages, phone calls, and email. Telecommunications infrastructure, both mobile phone and internet, seem reliable in all areas of the country in which Volunteers are placed.

---

[6] Denominator numbers (N) are based on the number of Volunteers who responded to our questions. For CD, Program Managers, and Safety and Security Coordinator N=20; for DPT, Regional Managers and Medical N=19; for Training Manager N=17; and for DMO N=13.

Volunteer Performance Report Feedback. Staff provide regular feedback to Volunteers' performance reports. All Volunteers in our sample who had submitted reports had received feedback. Volunteers commented that the feedback was broad, positive and timely; 92 percent (11 of 12) of the Volunteers who answered the question rated the quality of VRF feedback as three or better on the five-point Likert Scale (3.6 average).

Site Visits. Volunteers in Armenia receive numerous site visits. All but one Volunteer (19 of 20) in our sample believed that the number of site visits they received was adequate; the one Volunteer who said the number was not adequate stated that there were too many site visits. Seventy-nine percent (15 of 19) of Volunteers favorably rated the quality of their site visits.

Medical Support. Volunteers were mostly satisfied with the medical care they received during service. The Office of Health Services (OHS) conducted a site assessment visit in September 2013 which found no concerns with the quality of care provided by the unit or deficiencies in health unit operations. Only one of the 19 Volunteers interviewed during the evaluation rated medical support as unfavorable.[7] Despite the generally positive ratings, some female Volunteers raised concerns about feeling uncomfortable approaching Peace Corps medical officers (PCMOs) for support because of concerns about professionalism or bedside manner. OIG had follow-up conversations with headquarters staff in OHS and with post to discuss specific concerns and suggestions for how to address Volunteers' concerns.

Volunteer Allowances. In general, Volunteers were satisfied with the adequacy and timeliness of settling-in and living allowances and reimbursements. Ninety-five percent of Volunteers rated the adequacy of their settling in allowance as "sufficient" or "more than sufficient," and 80 percent of Volunteers rated the adequacy of their living allowance as "sufficient" or "more than sufficient." The director of management and operations (DMO) reported that the living allowance survey is completed every year, and a settling-in allowance survey is completed with each group. An emergency living allowance survey was conducted in November 2013 to address a dramatic increase in utility costs; an increase to the Volunteer living allowance was subsequently approved by regional management.

Emergency Preparedness. The post's safety and security systems seem strong. Volunteers believe the SSC takes his job very seriously and are confident in his ability to do the job. The SSC has been with Peace Corps since the position was created in 2002 and has a strong disaster response and emergency preparedness background.

Post uses a site locator form (SLF) control sheet to keep track of when SLFs are reviewed and whether additional detail is needed. Post also has a site summary sheet, which includes a listing of incidents and related notes or recommendations, for each site in its site history file.

Staff and Volunteers seem prepared to respond in case of an emergency. All Volunteers interviewed at their site had an up-to-date copy of their EAP. Ninety percent of interviewed Volunteers correctly identified their consolidation points. The post had a sound duty officer system. The duty officer handbook was clear and well-organized. A monthly duty officer

---

[7] One Volunteer in our sample chose not to give a rating; this person had never sought medical support.

meeting, where new information and potential scenarios are reviewed, is held for all staff that perform duty officer responsibilities.

Crime Incident Response. The post adequately responded to crimes against Volunteers. During interviews, many Volunteers remarked that Armenia is a very safe country. Two Volunteers in our sample reported that they had been victims of a crime; one was reported to Peace Corps. When asked, "If a crime were to occur to you in the future, would you report it," 85 percent of Volunteers said "yes" and 15 percent of Volunteers said they were "unsure" because of concerns about administrative reprisal or insensitivity in handling sexual assault cases. In addition, at the time of the evaluation, only some of the staff required to complete the online sexual assault response training, had done so.[8]

Housing Checks. Volunteers' houses were generally in compliance with items on the post's housing checklist. The post's housing criteria include elements related to the condition of the house and the surrounding neighborhood. A review of Volunteers' houses and the post's housing check records verified that housing checks were usually completed and documented accurately.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

Another key objective of our country program evaluation is to assess the extent to which the post's resources and management practices are adequate for effective post operations. To address this question, we assess a number of factors, including staffing; staff development; office work environment; collecting and reporting performance data; and the post's strategic planning and budgeting.

We found the post to be generally well-managed. Since 2010, the post changed its programming and training staffing by eliminating two program manager positions and implementing a regional manager model. The post has also designated a monitoring, reporting and evaluation (MRE) champion and two Sexual Assault Response Liaisons (SARLs) per other agency initiatives. While not specific to the post, multiple agency reform initiatives have required field staff to take on responsibilities in addition to their current duties. While some staff considered these opportunities for growth and development, some raised concerns that the added responsibilities were not consistent with their grade and that workloads were not realistic. Staff at post and at headquarters recognized that numerous agency initiatives required extra work of staff.

In reviewing staffing, staff development, and the post's relationship with the U.S. Embassy, we found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post.

Staffing. The post was anticipating leadership turnover. In 2014, the three U.S. direct hire (USDH) leadership positions: country director (CD), DPT and DMO will turn over. EMA regional leadership was working to replace the positions with little interruption to post operations. While staff turnover has not been a significant issue for the post in previous years, the upcoming turnover of leadership positions could be a challenging time for post.

---

[8] The training is required for: country directors, DPTs, DMOs, SSCs, associate Peace Corps project managers, programming and training specialists, training managers, Peace Corps medical officers, and any other staff who may function as a duty officer or first responder.

Staff Development. The post was attentive to staff development. In the sample of nine performance appraisals we reviewed, all were complete and feedback was generally thorough. Employee requests, such as a salary grade review or overtime pay, were documented and some training needs were identified. The post budgets staff development funds for all staff to address items identified in individual development plans. The post also participates in the U.S. embassy awards system.

Relationship with the Embassy. The post had an effective working relationship with the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan, and post leadership regularly participated in embassy meetings. Embassy representatives we met with had confidence in the Peace Corps program, believed that Peace Corps takes the safety and security of Volunteers very seriously, and welcomed opportunities to be more involved while also recognizing Peace Corps' independence from the Department of State.

Office Work Environment. We found staff morale to be generally good. Most staff said that morale had been low for staff and Volunteers after the two project area closed in 2010, but that currently it was "normal." Staff said that after Armenia was identified in the regional portfolio review as one of the four "low" EMA posts, staff morale fell because they had been working extensively to address Volunteer concerns and incorporate Volunteer suggestions. Staff reported that they were appreciative of the CD's openness, personal interest in them and their work, and attention to detail. Some staff raised concerns that staffing decisions, both at headquarters and at post, were not transparent, and personnel actions taken during evaluation fieldwork caused some staff to revisit this issue with OIG before we left country; additional information on this follows in the section below.

While post's resources and management practices were generally adequate for effective post operations, the evaluation uncovered some areas that require management attention. The remainder of this section provides more information about these topics.

The RSO did not know how the Kate Puzey Volunteer Protection Act of 2011 (Kate Puzey Act [9] would impact his ability to support Volunteer victims of sexual assault.

On May 11, 2012, the Peace Corps and the Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security Service (DOS/DS) signed a MOU on security support abroad. This MOU outlines the security functions that DOS/DS will perform for Peace Corps, including support for responding to crimes against Volunteers. The MOU stipulates that the CD will notify the RSO by email of all crimes against Peace Corps Volunteers through the Peace Corps Consolidated Incident Reporting System (CIRS).

Under Peace Corps Interim Policy Statement (IPS) 3-13 Responding to Sexual Assault, implemented September 1, 2013, if a Volunteer victim of a sexual assault chooses a restricted report, information may not be shared outside of designated staff: the PCMO, the SSC, and the SARL. With the implementation of IPS 3-13, separate CIRS systems were developed for restricted and non-restricted reports of crime incidents for statistical tracking purposes. The

---

[9] P.L. 112-57.

MOU has not been amended to clarify when and under what circumstances RSOs will be informed about crimes against Volunteers.

The RSO in Yerevan did not know whether or how the Kate Puzey Act would impact his ability to support Volunteer victims, particularly in the case of restricted reports. He said that his organization was ready to support the Peace Corps, but "needed to know where he was stepping."

We recommend:

5. **The country director, in coordination with the Office of Safety and Security, clarify when and under what circumstances the U.S. Embassy regional security officer will be informed about crimes against Volunteers and how U.S. Embassy regional security officer support will be requested.**

OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN

We noted the following additional areas that could be improved to enhance efficiency at the post.

Decisions affecting post staff were not clearly understood.

Some staff raised concerns that there is a lack of communication between American staff supervisors and local Armenian staff. Upon the DMO's arrival at the post, the DMO analyzed personal services contractor (PSC) compensation levels and discovered that PSC salaries were not aligned with the local compensation plan (LCP)[10]. On December 30, 2012, the DMO aligned all PSC compensation levels with the LCP, except those of seven PSCs whose compensation was over the LCP salary scale. In consultation with the CD, the DMO froze the seven PSC salaries indefinitely. During the OIG Audit in April 2013, the DMO was advised to consult with the Office of Acquisitions and Contract Management, the Office of General Counsel, and a local law firm for further guidance and was instructed by the agency to implement the salary reductions. During evaluation fieldwork in November, the post took action to align staff salaries with the local compensation plan.

During the DMO's tenure, the post had also changed its overtime policy. While both of these changes could have added efficiencies to post, some staff believed that "each administration is looking at it differently…We don't know what is right or wrong – only what is presented to us." Staff perceived that starting with the abrupt closing of the two project sectors, decisions came from above without explanation. In previous times, local staff was involved in decisions, and "there was a spirit of collectivism."

Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post 2.3 discusses that "there are recognized avenues for incorporating each individual's input into program management and decision-making. Administrative, programming, training, medical, safety/security, and support staff and Volunteers all have ways to express their opinions to decision-makers." Indicator 2.4 discusses the importance of honesty in communications and transactions.

Senior staff at the post is typically made up of three U.S. direct hires (USDH) staff who are time limited to five years.[11] Some post senior staff also raised the concern that there had been a

---

[10] Per the *Foreign Affairs Handbook*, all U.S. government agencies at a post should work together in developing uniform policies and procedures relative to FSN compensation. An LCP is a document that contains the local salary schedule of pay rates, statements authorizing separate benefit payments, hours of work, premium pay rates, eligibility and other pertinent facets of compensation applicable to FSN's inclusive of conditions of work.

[11] Section 7(a) of the Peace Corps Act limits USDH staff to tours of five years. The FYR became law in August of 1965 when an amendment to section 7(a) of the Peace Corps Act brought all USDH employees, foreign and domestic, under the same personnel system, limited their appointments to a maximum of five years, and gave the Director limited authority to personally approve extensions of up to eight and a half years. OIG published Impacts of the Five-Year Rule on Operations of the Peace Corps (IG-12-05-E) in June 2012 that details findings and recommendations about this topic.

practice of making the job description fit the person in place instead of making sure the position is what is needed for successful post operations. Some senior staff raised concerns that their jobs were centered on managing local staff with little agency guidance or training on the Peace Corps' approach to human resources management, including things like performance reviews, using coaching for staff development, and having standard templates for statements of work, or a standard organizational design. Concerns were also raised that it is unclear how, if in any way, the Office of Human Resources at headquarters can support posts.

These issues have contributed to the inconsistencies in how staff is managed from one USDH administration to the next. This inconsistency could result in a lack of trust between staff and contribute to discontent and low morale. While we are not issuing a recommendation, we wanted to highlight the issue for agency management.

Post staff raised concerns regarding workload and compensation.

Some staff raised concerns about having additional responsibilities added to their duties without additional compensation. For example, each post added two SARLs[12] to comply with the Kate Puzey Act. SARLs were selected from existing staff and responsibilities were added to existing duties. When SARLs went through the application process, they understood that there would be additional incentives for the additional duties. However, they currently understand that it is a voluntary position. SARLs were asked to keep a log of actual time used to respond to victims who request SARLs. However, this does not account for the time and responsibility of carrying the SARL duty phone and being available to respond at a moment's notice while on duty. The SSC also took on greater responsibilities with the Kate Puzey Act.

Other initiatives have also added to staffs' responsibilities. Each post has identified a MRE champion. Programming senior staff believes that MRE is a full-time position. "If the agency wants us to do it and do it well, they need to let us hire a full-time MRE person."

As noted in another recent OIG report,[13] many new headquarters-mandated initiatives have been disseminated to the field without coordination by offices involved. There was not an office or a process at headquarters that ensured that new guidance and expectations sent to overseas field staff were paced so as not to overwhelm the capacity of field staff to respond and comply with them. Recognizing this, in January 2014, the Office of Global Operations issued "Standard Operating Procedures for Headquarters Communication with Regions and Posts" to improve how headquarters offices coordinate and manage communication with field staff. While we are not issuing a recommendation, we wanted to highlight the issue for agency management to inform decision-makers at Peace Corps headquarters of the impacts felt by the post and the importance of finding ways to more carefully coordinate and manage the flow and pace of new initiatives and expectations for overseas staff.

---

[12] SARLs must be available to respond to a victim of sexual assault at the victim's request.
[13] IG-14-04-E, Mexico Final Evaluation Report (June 2014).

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

WE RECOMMEND:

1. That the post develop a memorandum of understanding for the teaching English as a foreign language project with the appropriate Armenian ministry.

2. That the post develop a memorandum of understanding for the community and youth development project with the appropriate Armenian ministry.

3. That the director of programming and training ensure that Volunteers are fully informed on how to accurately complete the volunteer reporting form.

4. That the director of programming and training monitor the effectiveness of in-service trainings and make improvements, if necessary.

5. The country director, in coordination with the Office of Safety and Security, clarify when and under what circumstances the U.S. Embassy regional security officer will be informed about crimes against Volunteers and how U.S. Embassy regional security officer support will be requested.

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

In 1989, OIG was established under the Inspector General Act of 1978 and is an independent entity within the Peace Corps. The purpose of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) is to prevent and detect fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement and to promote economy, effectiveness, and efficiency in government. The Inspector General is under the general supervision of the Peace Corps Director and reports both to the Director and Congress.

The Evaluation Unit within OIG provides senior management with independent evaluations of all management and operations of the Peace Corps, including overseas posts and domestic offices. OIG evaluators identify best practices and recommend program improvements to comply with Peace Corps policies.

The Evaluation Unit announced its intent to conduct an evaluation of the post on August 14, 2013. For post evaluations, we use the following researchable questions to guide our work:

- To what extent has post developed and implemented programs to increase host country communities' capacity?
- Does training prepare Volunteers for Peace Corps service?
- Has the post provided adequate support and oversight to Volunteers?
- Are post resources and management practices adequate for effective post operations?

The evaluator conducted the preliminary research portion of the evaluation August through October 2013. This research included review of agency documents provided by headquarters and post staff; interviews with management staff representing the EMA regions, Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of Victim Advocacy (OVA), OHS, Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS); and inquiries to Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Partnerships.

In-country fieldwork occurred from November 1– 25, 2013, and included interviews with post senior staff in charge of programming, training, and support; the U.S. ambassador, deputy chief of mission; the embassy RSO; and host country government ministry officials. In addition, we interviewed a stratified judgmental sample of 20 Volunteers (26 percent of Volunteers serving at the time of our visit) based on their length of service, site location, project focus, gender, age, and ethnicity. An additional request for an interview from a Volunteer not in the sample was accommodated; thereby increasing the total number of Volunteers interviewed to 21. Denominator numbers are based on the number of Volunteers who responded to our questions.

This evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections, issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. The evidence, findings, and recommendations provided in this report have been reviewed by agency stakeholders affected by this review.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

As part of this post evaluation, interviews were conducted with 21 Volunteers, 14 staff in-country, and 11 representatives from Peace Corps headquarters in Washington D.C., the U.S. Embassy in Armenia, and key ministry officials. [14] Volunteer interviews were conducted using a standardized interview questionnaire, and Volunteers were asked to rate many items on a five-point scale (1 = not effective, 3 = neutral 5 = very effective). The analysis of these ratings provided a quantitative supplement to Volunteers' comments, which were also analyzed. For the purposes of the data analysis, Volunteer ratings of "4" and above are considered favorable. In addition, 20 Volunteer interviews occurred at the Volunteers' homes, and we inspected 18 of these homes using post-defined site selection criteria. The period of review for a post evaluation is one full Volunteer cycle (typically 27 months).

The following table provides demographic information that represents the entire Volunteer population in Armenia; the Volunteer sample was selected to reflect these demographics.

Table 4: Volunteer Demographic Data

Project	Percentage of Volunteers
CYD	45%
TEFL	55%
Gender	**Percentage of Volunteers**
Female	63%
Male	37%
Age	**Percentage of Volunteers**
25 or younger	37%
26-29	21%
30-49	18%
50 and over	24%

Source: Source: Volunteer Information Database Application for Peace Corps/Armenia.
Note: Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

At the time of our field visit, PC/Armenia had 27 staff positions. The post also employs temporary staff to assist with PST. Given the time of our visit, these positions were not staffed. We interviewed 14 staff. The staffing configuration of posts often varies and staff often hold additional responsibilities relevant to the evaluation in addition to their official job title. We conduct interviews with SARLs, grants coordinators, MRE champions and Peace Corps Response coordinators as necessary and appropriate for the post.

---

[14] An additional request for an interview from a Volunteer not in the sample was accommodated; thereby increasing the total number of Volunteers interviewed to 21.

Table 5: Interviews Conducted with Post Staff

Position	Status	Interviewed
Country Director	USDH	X
Director of Programming and Training	USDH	X
Director of Management and Operations	USDH	X
Program Manager (2)	PSC	X
Language and Cross Cultural Coordinator	PSC	X
Regional Manager (3)	PSC	X
Training Manager	PSC	X
Safety and Security Coordinator	PSC	X
Medical Officer (2)	PSC	X
Driver/Mechanic (3)	PSC	
Administrative Assistant	PSC	
Executive Assistant/PR Coordinator/IRC Manager	PSC	X
Custodian (2)	PSC	
Regional IT Specialist	PSC	
Financial Assistant	PSC	
Volunteer Support Specialist	PSC	
General Services Manager	PSC	
IT Specialist	PSC	
Cashier	PSC	
Medical Assistant	PSC	

Data as of November 2013.

Four additional interviews were conducted during the preliminary research phase of the evaluation, in-country fieldwork, and follow-up work upon return to Peace Corps/headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Table 6: Interviews Conducted with Peace Corps Headquarters Staff, Embassy Officials and Key Ministry Officials

Position	Organization
Acting Regional Director	PC Headquarters/EMA Region
Chief of Operations	PC Headquarters/EMA Region
Chief of Programming and Training	PC Headquarters/EMA Region
Country Desk Officer	PC Headquarters/EMA Region
Chief Administrative Officer	PC Headquarters/EMA Region
Regional Security Advisor	PC Headquarters/EMA Region
Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	PC Headquarters/EMA Region
Director, Office of Victim Advocacy	PC Headquarters/OVA
Associate Director, Volunteer Recruitment and Selection	PC Headquarters/Volunteer Recruitment and Selection
Program & Training Education Specialist, Overseas Programming and Training Support	PC Headquarters/OPATS
Medical Officer, Office of Health Services	PC Headquarters/OHS
Head of Youth Policy Department	Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of the Republic of Armenia
Chief TEFL Specialist	National Institutes of Education,

	Ministry of Education of the Republic of Armenia
Ambassador	Department of State/Armenia
Deputy Chief of Mission	Department of State/Armenia
Regional Security Officer	Department of State/Armenia
Supervisory Program Officer	U.S. Agency for International Development/Armenia

Data as of November 2013.

APPENDIX C: LIST OF ACRONYMS

AVS	Annual Volunteer Survey
CIRS	Consolidated Incident Reporting System
CD	Country Director
CSPP	Cross Sector Programming Priorities
CYD	Community and Youth Development
DMO	Director of Management and Operations
DOS/DS	Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
EMA	Europe Mediterranean and Asia
FITU	Focus In/Train Up
FY	Fiscal Year
IPS	Interim Policy Statement
IST	In-service Training
LCF	Language and Cultural Facilitator
LCP	Local Compensation Plan
MRE	Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MST	Mid-Service Training
OHS	Office of Health Services
OPATS	Office of Programming and Training Support
OVA	Office of Victim Advocacy
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
PCMO	Peace Corps Medical Officer
PSR	Project Status Report
PSC	Personal Services Contractor
PST	Pre-service Training
RSO	Regional Security Officer
SLF	Site Locator Form
SPA	Small Project Assistance
SSC	Safety and Security Coordinator
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
VRF	Volunteer Reporting Form
VRT	Volunteer Reporting Tool

Since 1961.

MEMORANDUM

To: Kathy Buller, Inspector General

Through: Daljit K. Bains, Chief Compliance Officer

From: Keri Lowry, EMA Regional Director
              Ken Puvak, Acting Country Director

Date: July 23, 2014

CC: Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Director
              Laura Chambers, Chief of Staff
              Joaquin Ferrao, Deputy Inspector General
              Jim O'Keefe, AIG Evaluations
              Carolos Torres, Associate Director, Global Operations
              Hill Denham, EMA Chief of Operations
              Kristin Besch, EMA Chief of Operations
              Jim Bach, Director of Programming and Training
              Terri Gureno, Director of Management and Operations
              Bina Sheladia, Country Desk Officer
              Patricia Barkle, Deputy Chief Compliance Officer

Subject: Agency Response to the Preliminary Report of Peace Corps/Armenia May 2014

Enclosed please find the agency's response to the recommendations made by the Inspector General for Peace Corps/Armenia, as outlined in the Preliminary Report by the OIG sent to the Agency on May 20, 2014.

The Region concurs with all five recommendations provided by the OIG in its Preliminary Evaluation Report: Peace Corps/Armenia. Post has addressed and provided supporting documentation for the five recommendations.

1

The Region will continue to work with Post and the departments identified in the Preliminary Report to ensure closure of these recommendations by the dates included within for outstanding recommendations.

Recommendation 1

1. That the post develop a memorandum of understanding for the teaching English as a foreign language project with the appropriate Armenian ministry.

    Response: Concur

Former Country Director David Lillie signed a MoU (Action Plan) with the Ministry of Education and Science on December 10, 2013.

    Documents Submitted: Action Plan between the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia and Peace Corps of Armenia, signed December 10, 2013

    Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed

Recommendation 2

2. That the post develop a memorandum of understanding for the community and youth development project with the appropriate Armenian ministry.

    Response: Concur

Director of Programming and Training Jim Bach signed a MoU with the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs on June 10, 2014.

    Documents Submitted: Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs and U.S. Peace Corps, signed June 10, 2014

    Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed

Recommendation 3

3. That the director of programming and training ensure that Volunteers are fully informed on how to accurately complete the volunteer reporting form.

    Response: Concur

Director of Programming and Training (DPT), Jim Bach, will review current data collection tools with staff and ensure that appropriate training is provided during PST and in-service trainings (ISTs and MSTs). In addition the DPT will monitor Program Manager VRF feedback and provide technical support to staff and volunteers when appropriate.

> **Documents Submitted:**
> MST Calendar of Training Events
>
> **Documents to be Submitted:**
> PST Calendar of Training Events
>
> **Status and Timeline for Completion:** August 15th, 2014

Recommendation 4

4. That the director of programming and training monitor the effectiveness of in-service trainings and make improvements, if necessary.

> **Response:** Concur

Director of Programming and Training, Jim Bach, will work closely with Programming and Training staff to assess volunteer needs for in-service training and ensure that they are incorporated into trainings and that events are evaluated.

> **Documents Submitted:**
> MST Needs Assessment
> MST Calendar of Training Events
> **Documents to be Submitted:**
> A21 MST Calendar of Training Event, including post workshop summary and volunteer evaluations
> PST Calendar of Training Events
>
> **Status and Timeline for Completion:** August 15th, 2014

Recommendation 5

5. The country director, in coordination with the Office of Safety and Security, clarify when and under what circumstances the U.S. Embassy regional security officer (RSO) will be informed about crimes against Volunteers and how U.S. Embassy regional security officer support will be requested.

> **Response:** Concur

Shortly after the new RSO arrives in Yerevan in mid-July, the Acting Country Director (CD) will meet with him and provide a copy of our updated Legal Environment Survey (LES) and discuss potential support services as outlined in the PC/DS MOU.

Documents to be Submitted:

A memo to the file documenting that the Acting CD met with the new RSO, provided a copy of the LES, and discussed potential support services to include circumstances with which the U.S. Embassy regional security officer will be informed about crimes against Volunteers, how U.S. Embassy regional security officer support will be requested and any other support services discussed in brief.

Status and Timeline for Completion: August 31, 2014

Management concurred with all five recommendations. Based on the documentation provided, we closed two recommendations: numbers one and two. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities. However, when we feel it is warranted, we may conduct a follow-up review to confirm that action has been taken and to evaluate the impact.

Three recommendations, numbers three through five, remain open. OIG will review and consider closing these recommendations when the documentation reflected in the OIG's comments and the agency's response to the preliminary report is received. For recommendation three, additional documentation is required.

3. That the director of programming and training ensure that Volunteers are fully informed on how to accurately complete the volunteer reporting form.

> **Concur**
> Director of Programming and Training (DPT), Jim Bach, will review current data collection tools with staff and ensure that appropriate training is provided during PST and in-service trainings (ISTs and MSTs). In addition the DPT will monitor Program Manager VRF feedback and provide technical support to staff and volunteers when appropriate.
>
> **Documents Submitted:**
> MST Calendar of Training Events
>
> **Documents to be Submitted:**
> PST Calendar of Training Events
>
> **Status and Timeline for Completion: August 15th, 2014**
>
> **OIG Analysis:** In addition to providing the PST Calendar of Training Events, please provide the training session plan to indicate the content of the material covered.

APPENDIX F: PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION AND OIG CONTACT

PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION

This program evaluation was conducted under the direction of Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Jim O'Keefe by Senior Evaluator Susan Gasper. Additional contributions were made by Program Analyst Kaitlyn Large.

Jim O'Keefe
Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations

OIG CONTACT

Following issuance of the final report, a stakeholder satisfaction survey will be distributed to agency stakeholders. If you wish to comment on the quality or usefulness of this report to help us improve our products, please contact Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Jim O'Keefe and at jokeefe@peacecorps.gov, or 202.692.2904.

Help Promote the Integrity, Efficiency, and Effectiveness of the Peace Corps

Anyone knowing of wasteful practices, abuse, mismanagement, fraud, or unlawful activity involving Peace Corps programs or personnel should contact the Office of Inspector General. Reports or complaints can also be made anonymously.

Contact OIG

Reporting Hotline:

U.S./International:	202.692.2915
Toll-Free (U.S. only):	800.233.5874

Email:	OIG@peacecorps.gov
Online Reporting Tool:	PeaceCorps.gov/OIG/ContactOIG

Mail: Peace Corps Office of Inspector General
P.O. Box 57129
Washington, D.C. 20037-7129

For General Information:

Main Office:	202.692.2900
Website:	peacecorps.gov/OIG
Twitter:	twitter.com/PCOIG