



# **FINAL PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT**

**Peace Corps/Guinea**

**IG-07-14-E**



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# Peace Corps Office of Inspector General

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*PC/Guinea's Office in Conakry, Guinea*



*Flag of Guinea*

## **Final Program Evaluation Report Peace Corps/Guinea**

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## Acronyms

APCD.....	Associate Peace Corps Director
CAO.....	Chief Administrative Officer
CD.....	Country Director
CDU.....	Country Desk Unit
CFO.....	Chief Financial Officer
CY.....	Calendar Year
EAC.....	Emergency Action Committee
EAP.....	Emergency Action Plan
IST.....	In-Service Training
LCP.....	Local Compensation Plan
MS.....	Manual Section
OCIO.....	Office of the Chief Information Officer
OIG.....	Office of Inspector General
OMS.....	Office of Medical Services
OPSI.....	Office of Private Sector Initiatives
PC.....	Peace Corps
PCM.....	Peace Corps Manual
PCMO.....	Peace Corps Medical Officer
PCPP.....	Peace Corps Partnership Program
PCSSO.....	Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer
PSC.....	Personal Services Contractor
PST.....	Pre-Service Training
SED.....	Small Enterprise Development
SPA.....	Small Project Assistance
SSC.....	Safety and Security Coordinator
TG.....	Technical Guideline
USAID.....	United States Agency for International Development

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## WHY WE DID THIS EVALUATION

*The Office of Inspector General conducts regular reviews of Peace Corps operations.*

*The last program evaluation of PC/Guinea was in 2001.*

PC/Guinea's policies and procedures for handling medical and security emergencies have proven to be highly effective in the challenging circumstances under which the post has operated. The staff and Volunteers cope on a daily basis with the ongoing political instability, deplorable conditions of the roads, and unreliable or nonexistent communication infrastructure. The country director and staff have worked hard to create systems that address these challenges and to ensure the safety of the Volunteers. For example, the post successfully evacuated three critically ill Volunteers and kept the Volunteers safe through three nationwide strikes and the evacuation to Mali in January 2007.

While the post has functioned well under emergency conditions, we found opportunities to improve the effectiveness of their day-to-day operations in the areas of safety and security, medical and program support, training, and the oversight of Peace Corps Partnership Project (PCPP) funds. Specifically:

### Safety And Security

- Ten out of 39 Volunteers reported to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) that the radios at or near their sites were not in working order.
- The condition and quantity of PC/Guinea's vehicle fleet were not sufficient to ensure its ability to evacuate Volunteers under emergency conditions.

### Medical Support

- Malaria policies were not communicated accurately and effectively to the Volunteers.
- Some Volunteers were dissatisfied with medical support.
- PC/Guinea did not have an effective system for monitoring and storing medical inventories at the regional houses and in the Peace Corps vehicles, and for tracking radio requests from Volunteers.

### **Allocation Of Resources**

- PC/Guinea underutilized its regional coordinators.
- Hyperinflation was eroding Volunteer allowances and staff salaries.

### **Training**

- Pre-Service technical training for small enterprise development (SED) Volunteers and agroforestry Volunteers did not provide the hands-on training they needed to undertake their work assignments.
- Volunteers in the agroforestry and health projects did not have the local language skills that they needed to perform their work assignments.

### **Programming**

- PC/Guinea was not providing agroforestry Volunteers with effective counterpart or project support.
- The post did not have adequate internal controls in place to ensure that Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) grants were being used in accordance with Peace Corps policy.
- The PCPP proposal process was not functioning effectively for the post staff, Volunteers, or the Office of Private Sector Initiatives (OPSI).

Our report contains 44 recommendations, which, if implemented, should improve internal controls and correct the weaknesses outlined above.

# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

Peace Corps Volunteers have been in Guinea from 1962 - 1966, 1969 - 1971, and from 1985 until the evacuation to Mali in January 2007. At the time of the OIG evaluation, PC/Guinea had 114 Volunteers working in four projects: education, agroforestry/environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and small enterprise development.

<i>Sector of Assignment</i>	<i>Number and Percent of Volunteers</i>
<b>Education</b>	48 (42%)
<b>Environment</b>	19 (17%)
<b>Health/HIV AIDS</b>	25 (22%)
<b>Crisis Corps</b>	1 (1%)
<b>Small Enterprise Development</b>	21 (18%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>114 (100%)</b>

*Education:* Volunteers have been working in Guinean secondary schools since 1986, teaching English, physics, chemistry, and math to nearly 8,000 students at 33 schools and the University of Kankan.

*Environment/Agroforestry:* Volunteers work with rural communities to raise awareness of environmental issues and promote sound agroforestry practices. Through community participation, Volunteers help people to boost their agricultural yields, achieve food security, generate an income, and protect the environment.

*Health and HIV/AIDS:* Volunteers work as public health extension agents in small rural communities. Their overall task is defined broadly as health promotion that directly supports the priorities of the Ministry of Health, including reproductive health, diarrheal control, malaria prevention, nutrition, and HIV/AIDS.

*Small Enterprise Development:* Volunteers work as small enterprise development advisors in medium to large communities. Their work is aimed at empowering youth and small-scale entrepreneurs (especially women) by strengthening business management skills. Volunteers provide training in business management, help to create and strengthen market linkages, and establish basic accounting systems. The Volunteers are also trained in life skills and conduct HIV/AIDS workshops or other activities.

## **Conditions in Guinea**

The deteriorating economic conditions and the declining health of President Lansana Conté overshadow both the lives of Guineans and PC/Guinea operations. Inflation has hit Guineans hard, especially in the price of rice, a staple food, and fuel. The frustration of the Guinean populace became increasingly evident in 2006 with two nation-wide strikes and a third in January 2007.

The political and economic conditions have a direct impact on Peace Corps' operations in Guinea. Roads are poorly maintained throughout the country, making transportation one of the greatest risks to Volunteer and staff safety. Volunteers worry about staying healthy and getting medical care when they fall ill because they sometimes lack the means to communicate directly with the staff.



## RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION

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### **ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES FOR COLLECTING AND CONSOLIDATING VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION CAN BE IMPROVED.**

PC/Guinea has developed effective policies and procedures to ensure the safety and security of the Volunteers, as demonstrated by the successful and safe evacuation of the Volunteers in January 2007 and their ability to contact Volunteers during the last two enactments of the Emergency Action Plan (EAP). For example:

- The safety and security coordinator (SSC) created a chart with the location of bush taxis that staff and Volunteers use for sending bush notes to Volunteers. This is a safety and security best practice for Peace Corps countries that are dependent on high frequency radios to communicate with Volunteers.
- The post's 2005-2006 Action Plan and 2007-2009 Integrated Planning and Budget Strategy (IPBS) submission included integrating Volunteer Information Database Application (VIDA) into post business processes as part of their performance goals.
- The SSC used VIDA effectively during the strikes to contact Volunteers, track communications with Volunteers, and monitor their whereabouts.
- The SSC received VIDA training in Ghana and subsequently trained PC/Guinea senior staff on using VIDA to collect and manage site locator forms, leave slips, and other emergency contact information.
- The country director, the SSC, and senior staff have fostered a positive environment in which Volunteers are comfortable reporting crimes to the staff.

Our review identified four minor vulnerabilities that, if addressed, will strengthen the post's ability to respond to emergencies in a timely manner. In the past, the unions have given advance notice of the strikes, thereby allowing Peace Corps sufficient time to prepare. PC/Guinea may not always have the time to locate and contact the Volunteers in the event of a security emergency. It would be difficult to implement the post's EAP in a timely manner and ensure the safety of the Volunteers if Volunteer contact information is not collected and updated, leave slips are not submitted according to policy, and means of communication are not secured and tested.

## **Volunteer Emergency Contact Information**

During our Volunteer site visits, we observed that site locator forms or emergency contact sheets for 8 out of 16 Volunteers in the Haute region were missing or had out-of-date information. When the OIG pointed out to the SSC that the site locator forms and emergency contact sheets were inaccurate or missing, the SSC explained that the post used the VIDA computer program to store and manage Volunteer emergency contact information.

However, the OIG was not able to identify a system for merging emergency contact information captured on the paper forms with VIDA.

In addition, we found that the post allowed new Volunteers to submit their emergency contact forms at their first in-service training (IST), usually three or four months after they are posted to their sites, to give them time to identify reliable contact persons. This contradicts the *PC/Guinea Volunteer Handbook* which states that Volunteers are required to submit emergency contact information within one month of arriving at site.

## **Out-of-Site Policy**

Volunteers and staff told the OIG that the post was not consistent in the enforcement of out-of-site policies and the submission of leave slips (*les fiches d'absence*). Volunteers had also raised their concerns over the inconsistencies in the enforcement of this policy in their 2006 COS survey feedback. Volunteers stated that they would arrive in Conakry before staff had received their leave slip that they had submitted via the monthly mail run.

## **Testing of Warden System**

The post had not tested its warden system that was put in place in July 2006. The Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer (PCSSO) and the SSC conducted training for the new wardens in June 2006. At that time, the PCSSO recommended that the warden training and the warden system emergency communication network be tested as soon as a new group of Volunteers arrived at their sites. Volunteers told the OIG that a new group of Volunteers had arrived at their sites, but that the warden system had not been tested.

## **Radio Checks**

Ten out of 39 Volunteers reported to the OIG that the radios at or near their sites were not in working order. The post's EAP requires Volunteers to identify working radios that they can use in the event of an emergency. However, the post and/or regional coordinators no longer conduct regular radio checks with the Volunteers to ensure that radios are in working condition. Regular radio checks were stopped when two of the three regional coordinators were replaced. In the absence of functioning radios, the regional coordinators and wardens use bush taxis to deliver messages or contact nearby Volunteers who can travel by bike or foot. In a standfast, regional vehicles are dispatched to pick up Volunteers without reliable radio contacts.

The country director indicated that he intends to resume this practice and will integrate it into the training of the regional coordinators and include biweekly radio checks into the next version of the EAP.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**We recommend:**

- 1. That the post require Volunteers to submit emergency contact forms within one month of arriving at site as required by the PC/Guinea Volunteer handbook.**
- 2. That the post clarify the process and staff responsible for collecting contact information and merging paper and electronic forms.**
- 3. That the post consistently enforce its policy for submission of leave slips.**
- 4. That the post update and test the warden system with every new group of Volunteers.**
- 5. That the post reinstitute biweekly periodic radio checks with Volunteers.**
- 6. That the post submit an evacuation report to the region to document best practices and lessons learned.**

**VOLUNTEERS OFTEN ARRIVE LATE AT NIGHT AND HAVE A 30-MINUTE WALK TO THE KANKAN REGIONAL HOUSE.**

In general, Volunteers reported that they live and work in safe places and are integrated into their communities. Volunteers assigned to the Kankan Volunteer house, however, reported they did not feel safe making the 30-minute walk from the bus station to the Kankan Volunteer house during the evening. Traveling on foot after dark puts them at risk of becoming the victim of a crime. Some Volunteers stated that post will reimburse taxi costs in an effort to encourage Volunteers to take taxis to maintain their safety, but other Volunteers were not aware of this reimbursement policy.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**We recommend:**

- 7. That the post establish and publicize a policy to reimburse Volunteers for evening taxi rides from the Kankan bus station to the Volunteer transit house.**

**THE CONDITION AND QUANTITY OF PC/GUINEA'S VEHICLE FLEET ARE NOT SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE THE ABILITY OF PC/GUINEA TO EVACUATE VOLUNTEERS UNDER EMERGENCY CONDITIONS.**

PC/Guinea is heavily dependent on its vehicles to implement its EAP, ensure the safety of the Volunteers, and provide medical, program, and administrative support to the Volunteers. While PC/Guinea's fleet allocation of 11 vehicles staff conformed to the fleet formula established in the 2007 Vehicle Fleet Management Guide, the political and physical conditions in Guinea and the post's strategies for dealing with those conditions push the vehicles to their limit. For example:

- Three vehicles are permanently positioned at the regional houses in Boké, Labé, and Kankan as part of the post's safety and security strategy. During security emergencies, such as standfests, the country director sends three additional vehicles and staff members to the regional houses.
- Conakry is situated on a peninsula, making it easy for the government, military, or other groups to cut off movement in or out of the city.
- To ensure that the Volunteers stay off the roads and minimize their use of public transportation, the post instituted a monthly mail run. Once every month, the regional coordinators pick up mail and supplies in Conakry and run a circuit to every Volunteer's site. The mail run can take up to two weeks to complete. While the mail run consumes valuable time and resources, it accomplishes three things for the post:

- Reduces the need for Volunteers to travel out of their sites for mail, medicine, Peace Corps news, and other necessities.
- Ensures that a staff member sees every Volunteer at least once per month.
- Reduces the Volunteers' risk of road accidents because the post encourages them to coordinate their travel with the mail run.

The vehicles at the regional houses often substitute for the lack of communication infrastructure in Guinea.

- The Volunteers use the radios in the vehicles during the mail run to contact staff in Conakry.
- When a standfast is imminent, the regional coordinators send the drivers out to fetch Volunteers from sites without reliable communication and bring them back to the regional house until the situation is calm.
- At the time of the January 2007 evacuation, there was no public transportation available due to fuel shortages.

PC/Guinea has appropriately placed the safety and security of the Volunteers as its first priority and developed strategies that best meet the challenging conditions in Guinea.

Notwithstanding these strategies, the following realities exist:

- Six of the nine Land Cruisers have over 80,000 kilometers; three of these vehicles have over 150,000 kms (see chart below). The Peace Corps standard for determining vehicles eligible for replacement is five years or 80,000 kms.<sup>1</sup>
- Guinea is a large country with 245,860 square kilometers. We estimated from the Volunteer site map that the furthest Volunteer from Conakry is 600 kilometers away. The driving time between Conakry and Kankan is at least 12 hours.

Because of the heavy usage of the vehicles and the deplorable road conditions, three Land Cruisers are in poor shape and deemed by the motor pool coordinator and country director to be unsafe for travel upcountry.

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<sup>1</sup> The preliminary report stated that vehicles could be replaced at 100,000 kms. The final report has been changed to reflect Peace Corps Fleet Management guidelines stating that vehicles may be replaced at 80,000 kms.



### **Land Cruisers at PC/Guinea, August 2006**

<u>Vehicle #</u>	<u>Purchase Year</u>	<u>Kilometers</u>
9-PAT-101	2001	186,001
9-PAT-10	2001	137,407
9-PAT-14	2002	180,576
9-PAT-112	2003	106,186
9-PAT-111	2003	164,702
9-PAT-17	2004	112,129
9-PAT-36	2005	58,004
9-PAT-81	2006	30,800
9-PAT-82	2006	30,429

Source: PC/Guinea Vehicle Report, August 2006

According to the staff, there is almost always one vehicle in the repair shop. There are few qualified mechanics in Guinea and the post suspected that mechanics at the service garages switched out the authentic Toyota parts and replaced them with generic and less reliable parts. To reduce this risk, the post hired a mechanic to work on vehicles in an area behind the office.

The placement of vehicles at the regional houses is vital to the post's EAP and its goal of bringing support closer to the Volunteers. However, it created scheduling challenges for the staff in Conakry that could affect the quality of support to the Volunteers and the ability of the program staff to conduct effective site development work. The post created a motor pool coordinator position to maximize the efficient use of the vehicles, but the staff stated that scheduling site visits and site development trips can be difficult.

With three vehicles at the regional houses, the Conakry office has six Land Cruisers. One vehicle must remain available at all times for the medical staff to respond to emergencies. That leaves five land cruisers for nine staff members: the country director, administrative officer, four Associate Peace Corps Directors (APCDs), the education program assistant (who functions as an APCD), the safety and security coordinator, and the training manager. During the eight months of pre-service training (PST) and in-service training (IST), one vehicle is dedicated to the training manager, which further reduces the number of vehicles available to staff.

The post has limited transportation alternatives under normal conditions and even fewer options in the course of a nationwide strike, civil strife, or a military coup. There is no

rail service and, in strike conditions, taxi and bus service diminishes or disappears altogether if fuel shortages materialize. According to the country director, evacuating to both Mali and Senegal would necessitate at least one additional vehicle or possibly two additional vehicles, depending on the situation. To carry out the January 2007 evacuation to Mali, the post rented one additional vehicle.

PC/Guinea needs to have the resources to evacuate across multiple borders and have the flexibility to respond to changing conditions. We believe that PC/Guinea's current allocation of 11 vehicles is insufficient to ensure the ability of the post to evacuate Volunteers in a safe and timely fashion, especially if the post has to evacuate across two or more borders and do so in chaotic conditions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**We recommend:**

- 8. That the region, the post, and the Office of Management's Overseas Building Operations conduct a vehicle needs assessment to determine whether PC/Guinea has an adequate number and appropriate mix of vehicles to meet all contingency plans in the EAP.**
- 9. That the post and region replace vehicles at 80,000 kms to ensure that the post has a sufficient number of reliable vehicles.**

## **SOME VOLUNTEERS WERE DISSATISFIED WITH MEDICAL SUPPORT.**

Keeping Volunteers in Guinea healthy is a significant challenge. The country of Guinea has a high prevalence of infectious diseases and an underdeveloped medical, communication, and transportation infrastructure. Volunteer interviews confirmed the difficult health conditions in Guinea. According to the APCMO, Guinea is the most challenging post among the nine countries he supervises.

The PCMOs have handled severe medical cases; in 2005 and 2006, they provided care to Volunteers with cases of cerebral malaria and acute skin infections. The PCMOs orchestrated the medical evacuation of at least one Volunteer during a country-wide strike that closed roads and reduced access to medical resources. The country director, the APCMO, and the Office of Medical Services stated that the PCMOs went

above and beyond their duty to transport these Volunteers to safety and provide expert clinical care. Notwithstanding these efforts, some Volunteers reported that they were not satisfied with the PC/Guinea medical support and indicated a loss of confidence in the medical support system. Peace Corps has an obligation under Technical Guideline (TG) 120, Attachment B, to provide quality medical care to all Volunteers.

Volunteers who lose confidence in the ability of Peace Corps to provide them quality medical care may self-treat and self-medicate. Guinea has no system for regulating the quality of drugs that are imported and sold without prescriptions in shops and pharmacies. Volunteers who self-medicate with locally purchased medicines risk ingesting an ineffective or harmful drug.

Several factors driving the Volunteers' discontent with medical support are:

- Some Volunteers stated that the PCMOs do not always return their calls.
- Some Volunteers believed that the PCMOs fail to understand the anxiety that ill Volunteers experience regarding their lack of proximity to health care, unreliable phone and/or radio communication, and possible misdiagnosed conditions.
- One Volunteer reported that the PCMOs do not share information with each other and that Volunteers who call and reach one PCMO have to explain their case again if they call a second time and find the other PCMO.
- Medications that Volunteers request through the mail run do not always arrive. The country director acknowledged the problem of missing packages during the mail run and indicated that the staff are trying to fix the problem, which is not limited to medical supplies.
- The PCMOs frequently make preliminary diagnoses over the radio or an intermittent cell phone connection to decide whether a Volunteer is ill enough to warrant being brought to Conakry and exposing them to the transportation risks. Two Volunteers stated that they have to be seriously ill before the PCMOs will grant permission for Volunteers to travel to Conakry.
- Cultural differences in medical care delivery systems in the United States and other countries can affect

Volunteers' interpretations of the quality of their medical care. The APCMO stated that a lack of confidence in the PCMOs was common among Volunteers in West Africa due to their health care expectations.

- Volunteers expressed a concern that they were not being adequately protected by the SPF 15 sunscreen lotion that PC/Guinea distributes. After a Volunteer was recently diagnosed with basal cell carcinoma, Volunteers became more cognizant of the risks of skin cancer.<sup>2</sup>
- Volunteers reported that the mosquito nets in the Volunteer house in Conakry are torn.

It is significant to note that, notwithstanding the above complaints about medical support, several Volunteers opined that Volunteer complaints may have been more due to the conditions in Guinea rather than the lack of support from the PCMOs. In addition, due to confidentiality issues and lack of complete information, Volunteers may not always understand or know the full background behind PCMO decisions.

The country director, the APCMO, and the Office of Medical Services expressed to the OIG that they have a high level of confidence in the PCMOs' ability to provide medical care to the Volunteers. At the request of the OIG, the Office of Medical Services (OMS) reviewed the medical files of two Volunteers who had been critically ill to determine the quality of care they had received from the PCMOs. In written correspondence, OMS stated: "On reviewing these notes, I find no evidence that the PCMOs attentiveness and medical care of these Volunteers was anything but exceptional and exemplary."

In response to the post's experiences and the potential for simultaneous medical and security emergencies, the post has recently put in place a backup system to support the PCMOs when one will be away from Conakry. According to the country director, the post has identified two doctors in Conakry who will act as backup. PC/Guinea also recently implemented a memorandum of understanding with the U.S. Embassy. Embassy backup would only be utilized in the event that the two PCMOs were not available.

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<sup>2</sup> Our preliminary report stated that the Volunteer had been diagnosed with melanoma; however, OMS informed us that the diagnosis was basal cell carcinoma. We have corrected the above text.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend:

10. That the PCMOs devise a system to log incoming and outgoing messages to Volunteers and document the Volunteers' health status and recovery.
11. That the post provide cross-cultural training to both the Volunteers and the PCMOs to help them set realistic expectations and understand the differences between American and local medical systems.
12. That the post assign a staff member to inspect and mend or replace mosquito netting in the Volunteer houses.
13. That the post provide SPF 50 sunscreen for the Volunteers.

## PEACE CORPS AND THE POST'S MALARIA POLICIES WERE NOT BEING COMMUNICATED ACCURATELY AND EFFECTIVELY TO THE VOLUNTEERS.

Volunteers expressed confusion regarding the contraction of malaria and Peace Corps policies on malaria prophylaxis. Examples are as follows:

- Two Volunteers we interviewed reported that some Volunteers fear that they can be administratively or medically separated if they contract malaria, even if they are taking their prophylaxis.
- Some Volunteers reported that they believe that Peace Corps headquarters has a policy to administratively or medically separate Volunteers who contract malaria twice (the "two strikes and you're out" policy).
- Some Volunteers told the OIG that the PCMOs had told them that taking the prophylaxis will prevent malaria.
- Contrary to information from OMS, a previous PCMO told Volunteers that mefloquine was becoming resistant to the strain of malaria present in Guinea.
- Several volunteers stated that they take mefloquine regularly but complained about the negative side effects. Volunteers expressed concern that Peace Corps was not discussing providing an alternative drug with less negative side effects.



According to the country director, Volunteers were told that malaria prophylaxis was not 100% effective, but that the drugs would reduce the severity of the disease. He stated that Volunteers were told that “if they don’t take it, they risk very serious, long-term consequences, and even death.” Staff also reported that PC/Guinea requires Volunteers to sign an agreement at pre-service training stating that if they fail to take their malaria prophylaxis that they will be administratively separated. The only mention of malaria in the PC/Guinea Handbook appears in the context of Volunteers not taking their prophylaxis in the section entitled, “Some Grounds for Administrative Separation.”

According to OMS’s 2005 *The Health of the Volunteer*, 22% of all cases of malaria among Peace Corps Volunteers worldwide occurred in Guinea. Guinea had the highest number of cases of falciparum (19 cases) and presumptive malaria (32 cases) of any Peace Corps country in 2005. The Volunteers in Guinea are aware of the high incidence rate and this drives their fear of being separated from service because of malaria.

The lack of trust between Volunteers and PCMOs was evident to the OIG evaluation team. The Volunteers indicated to the OIG that they do not feel as comfortable consulting the PCMOs as they do the rest of the senior staff. In addition, PC/Guinea had not been transparent regarding the ability of the post to determine through blood tests whether Volunteers were taking their prophylaxis.

The PCMOs told the OIG team that the high incidence of malaria in PC/Guinea may be due to the Volunteers not taking their malaria medicine on a regular basis. The PCMOs may be justified in this belief because, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention statistics, most cases of malaria occur not because the drugs are ineffective, but because people fail to take them.

Based on interviews with staff at the post and headquarters, interviews with Volunteers, and a desk review of Peace Corps and the post’s policy, we conclude that miscommunication of policies, a lack of transparency, and the delivery of conflicting information contributed to the confusion among Volunteers. We also found that Volunteers were not able to distinguish between administrative separation due to non-compliance and medical separation because of an individual’s inability to

metabolize the malaria drugs properly. Volunteers were unaware that agency policy gives country directors discretion as to whether a Volunteer will be sent home.

In addition, we found that PC/Guinea is not communicating information on the effectiveness of mefloquine as effectively as possible.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**We recommend:**

- 14. That OMS work with the PCMOs to draft guidance and training materials to effectively and accurately convey the agency's and the post's malaria policies and procedures. These revisions should include, but are not limited to:**
  - **Clarification that Volunteers not in compliance with malaria policy will be administratively separated at the discretion of the country director.**
  - **Clarification that Volunteers who are not able to comply due to intolerance to the drugs will be medically separated and that the post may consult with OMS regarding the option of transferring the Volunteer to a country outside of the malaria zone.**
  - **Clarification that Volunteers who take their prophylaxis regularly can still contract malaria.**
  - **Establish informed consent testing for the level of prophylaxis in the blood stream.**
  - **Advise Volunteers of the evidence that mefloquine remains the most effective drug for the prevention of malaria in West Africa.**
  - **Provide information on the steps currently being taken by Peace Corps to routinely monitor malaria drug resistance in Guinea.**
- 15. That the post establish effective monitoring and follow-up of all malaria prevention measures.**

**PC/GUINEA DOES NOT HAVE AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM FOR MONITORING AND STORING MEDICAL INVENTORIES AT THE REGIONAL HOUSES AND IN THE PEACE CORPS VEHICLES.**

**Medical Inventories**

The PCMOs still relied on a paper ledger to maintain the medical inventory in Conakry; we found that the paper ledger system was organized but probably not the most efficient method for tracking medical stocks. The room in which the medical supplies are kept in Conakry was also organized and clean. The PCMOs stated they would like to switch to an electronic medical inventory database. The OCIO and OMS are currently working to select a database as the official Peace Corps medical inventory tool. Once selected, the database will be provided to all Overseas Health Units.

**Medical Supplies at the Regional Houses and in Peace Corps Vehicles**

The medical supplies at the regional houses and in the Peace Corps vehicles were not organized or systematically inventoried. Also, it was not clear to the regional coordinators which items were over-the-counter supplies and which needed to remain under the control of the regional coordinators. TG 200 states: “PCMOs should establish organizational systems in the health unit...that may be either computer or paper based...for distributing over-the-counter supplies.”

The lack of an organizational system for maintaining an inventory and restocking medical supplies may result in medical supplies not being available from the regional house or the Peace Corps vehicle when they are needed. Volunteers suggested that additional items be added to the Peace Corps vehicle medical kit, including Dramamine, larger supplies of stool sample kits, and aquatabs for water purification. PC/Guinea’s inventory system broke down for several reasons – turnover in regional coordinator staff, the medical assistant was on leave, and lack of guidelines for the regional coordinators.

PC/Guinea retained three controlled substances and kept them in a small lock box in a bar-locked filing cabinet. The cabinet is located in a locked room in the medical unit, which is in a secured section of the Peace Corps office. The PC/Guinea Medical Unit told the OIG that its safe for storing controlled medical substances was not in compliance with TG 200.

PCM sections 734.2.1.7 and TG 200.7.1 regarding the requirements for the storing of controlled substances are similar but not identical. The discrepancy between the two

policies may create confusion among non-native English speakers and could result in confusion or lack of compliance. *(Note: Upon further reflection and communication with the agency, we have modified this section from the preliminary report.)*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**We recommend:**

- 16. That the post identify the medications that are to be stocked in the regional houses and the Peace Corps vehicles.**
- 17. That the post determine which medications will be available to the Volunteers. This list needs to specify what is in possession of the regional coordinators.**
- 18. That the post create a medical log which Volunteers sign to indicate what medications they have taken from the medical supplies at the regional houses.**
- 19. That the post add to the regional coordinators' position description that they review the medical log and order supplies of depleted medicines on a monthly basis.**
- 20. That the health unit in Conakry restock a vehicle's medical kit each time the vehicle returns from the field.**
- 21. That the PCMOs track Volunteers' radio requests for medical supplies.**
- 22. That the PCMOs contact the OMS's Chief of Quality Improvement to verify that their safe is in compliance with Peace Corps policy.**
- 23. That the post comply with the revised policy on storing controlled substances.**

**PC/GUINEA  
UNDERUTILIZES ITS  
REGIONAL  
COORDINATORS**

The post has three regional coordinators who are located at the regional houses/workstations in Boké, Labé, and Kankan. They provide vital support to the Volunteers and program staff, and can respond quickly to Volunteers' requests or emergency situations. However, the post could utilize the regional coordinators more fully in site development. The proximity of the regional coordinators to Volunteer sites permits them to spend longer periods of time visiting potential sites and make more site visits before the APCDs make a final determination.

In identifying prospective Volunteer sites, regional coordinators have several advantages:

- By living in the area, they get to know potential host organizations for Volunteers.
- They can scout for potential counterparts.
- They can monitor economic and social trends in the region.
- They allow the post to provide Volunteer field support in a more timely manner.
- The demand on vehicles at the main office is lessened.

In 2006, the country director undertook a post-wide review of position responsibilities relative to program needs. The regional coordinator responsibilities are evolving out of this review. According to the country director, regional coordinators will be able to fulfill functions similar to a program assistant with additional training.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**We recommend:**

- 24. That the region work with PC/Guinea to train and upgrade the regional coordinator positions to allow them to take on greater responsibilities, including those related to site selection and development and Volunteer support.**

**HYPERINFLATION IS  
ERODING  
VOLUNTEER  
ALLOWANCES AND  
STAFF SALARIES.**

Guinea is categorized by the Department of State as a hyper-inflation post. Volunteers and staff reported that hyperinflation was eroding the living allowances of the Volunteers and the salaries of the host country national staff. The Volunteer allowance was increased during the summer of 2006. The country director informed the OIG that the post was planning to request another increase to the Volunteer



living allowance from the region in January 2007. Despite these increases, Volunteers reported that the living allowance was still not keeping up with inflation and remained too low.

Staff stated that trying to adjust the living allowance using Volunteer surveys every three months was too slow and not feasible given the physical difficulties of distributing and collecting surveys. PCM section 221.5.5.5 provides alternative policy by which the country director can make an emergency adjustment to the Volunteer living allowance in a timely manner. PC/Guinea appears to have met the criteria that would qualify a post for an emergency increase in the Volunteer allowance.

However, the post was told by the region's chief administrative officer that the post must receive a 75% response rate on the Volunteer living allowance survey before the region would grant an increase over 10%. We find that this advice from regional management did not appear to be in keeping with the intent of the emergency Volunteer living allowance clause in PCM section 221.5.5.5. The advice also appears contrary to the Peace Corps Act, U.S. Code Title 22 § 2504 b. which states:

Volunteers shall be provided with such living, travel, and leave allowances, and such housing, transportation, supplies, equipment, subsistence, and clothing as the President may determine to be necessary for their maintenance and to insure their health and their capacity to serve effectively.

As a result of not receiving adequate living allowances, Volunteers were demoralized and their health and safety were substantially at risk.

In addition to the Volunteer living allowances, staff reported that the PSC salaries were being eroded by hyperinflation. PC/Guinea has three FSNs and 31 PSCs.

In a letter to the regional director, the country director requested authorization by the region to increase the PSC's remuneration during a contract period (CY 2005) and expressed concern "that a serious morale issue will develop" since only three of his staff would be getting Local Compensation Plan (LCP) raises in July 2005 and 31 remaining staff would not see raises until January 2006." The country director requested that the region "make an effort to

provide an equitable adjustment for all our personnel. . . . I also feel that we are morally obligated to do so given the current extreme economic condition in Guinea.”

The post’s request to increase the PSCs’ remuneration was denied by regional management. However, PCM section 743 states:

The Contractor may be granted annual increases and adjustments to the rate of compensation on the same basis as those granted to Peace Corps foreign-service national direct hire employees - if policy at post has been to maintain comparability between the two pay structures.

Additionally, the administrative officer informed the OIG team that when he was at headquarters for the Administrative Officer Training that he spoke with the region’s chief administrative officer about the need to renegotiate contracts when new local compensation plans are approved. He explained to her that renegotiation of PSC contracts mid-stream is allowed according to the Overseas Financial Management Handbook section 27.2.5.

However, staff reported that the region’s chief administrative officer responded to the post’s inquiry that it is the region’s policy not to renegotiate the contracts.

Currently, Volunteers respect the post staff and feel supported; staff support may wane, however, if staff salaries continue to decrease as a result of hyperinflation. Poor staff support would have a direct impact on the Volunteers health, safety and productivity in their community.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**We recommend:**

- 25. That the region increase the Volunteer allowances in the case of an emergency situation as stated in PCM section 221.5.5.**
- 26. That the region renegotiate the personal services contracts as allowed by OFMH section 27.2.5.**

**PRE-SERVICE  
TECHNICAL  
TRAINING FOR SED  
AND  
AGROFORESTRY IS  
NOT PROVIDING THE  
HANDS-ON TRAINING  
THAT SOME  
VOLUNTEERS NEED  
TO UNDERTAKE  
THEIR WORK  
ASSIGNMENTS.**

Pre-service technical training for SED Volunteers and agroforestry Volunteers did not provide the Volunteers with the hands-on training they needed to undertake their work assignments.

Of the 61 Volunteers responding to “How well did your technical training prepare you for your work assignment?” in the OIG Questionnaire, 15 Volunteers (25%) stated that technical training did not prepare them or only somewhat prepared them. Of these 15, 10 were in the SED program, four in agroforestry, and one in health.

- Among the six agroforestry Volunteers whom we interviewed, three thought that training was too theoretical and classroom-based.
- Seven of the eight SED Volunteers in our interview sample reported that PST did not teach them how to apply their skills to real life situations in Guinea. Several Volunteers cited the need for an equivalent training to the education project’s Practice School. One said that he would have liked to learn how to teach business concepts to Guineans with only a primary school education.

The staff identified three challenges to developing effective training for the Volunteers for the post’s relatively new SED project:

- The business community in Guinea does not understand the function of SED Volunteers because they see them as providing grants or loans rather than providing expertise.
- The post relocated its training site and had not yet built up a reliable set of local businesses and cooperatives to deploy for field visits or on-site internships.
- The teaching styles of the SED technical trainers has been to stick close to the teaching materials and not draw on their own experiences in the business world to give the Trainees a sense of how concepts translate into concrete tasks. In contrast, Volunteers told the OIG that IST was more useful to them because it was organized around Volunteers’ field experiences. The APCD/SED shared with the OIG team ideas for improving training including “internships.”

The effects of weak technical training on the Volunteers are a lack of confidence in their work and frustration. Volunteers

without the appropriate skills lack the credibility they need to perform their work assignments and meet project goals. The lack of applied, hands-on training impairs the credibility of the Volunteers with their target population and, therefore, their effectiveness in transferring skills.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**We recommend:**

- 27. That the region work with the post and the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research (the Center) to identify financial resources to conduct a training workshop for the program and training staff in Guinea. The purpose of this training would be twofold:**
  - **Facilitate greater integration of program and training functions; and**
  - **Assist program and training staff to design training units to provide the Volunteers with opportunities to practice the technical skills they require to perform their work assignments and illustrate the ways that Volunteers can apply those skills in the Guinean context.**
- 28. That the programming and training staff, along with a representative sample of experienced Volunteers, conduct a comprehensive performance analysis of Volunteer work assignments to determine the sector competencies required by Volunteers to achieve the tasks in the project plans. This should include revising the task analysis and project plan, as needed, as well as soliciting input from Volunteers and counterparts on what Volunteers actually do in their projects.**
- 29. That the APCD/SED and APCD/Agroforestry work with the training staff to develop hands-on training exercises for their Volunteers.**
- 30. That the training manager conduct site visits to observe the Volunteers at their work.**

**VOLUNTEERS IN THE AGROFORESTRY AND HEALTH PROJECTS DID NOT HAVE THE LOCAL LANGUAGE SKILLS THAT THEY NEEDED TO PERFORM THEIR ASSIGNMENTS.**

Agroforestry and health Volunteers are placed in rural areas and work with people who do not speak French or do not speak it well. At the health posts, health Volunteers must be able to speak to the mothers in the local language. The agroforestry Volunteers also work on a daily basis with women who do not speak French. Of the 12 health and agroforestry Volunteers in our interview sample:

- Eight said they depended heavily on local languages and could have used more training at PST with trained language teachers.
- Only one Volunteer, an agroforestry Volunteer, said that she could function in her site with French.

According to the Peace Corps Act, U.S. Code Title 22 § 2521 and PCM section 305.4(d), Volunteers must “demonstrate competence” in their ability to communicate in the language of the country of service with the fluency required to meet the needs of the overseas assignment.

The post provides additional language training at IST, including in local languages. Three Volunteers said that they sought out a local language tutor at their site, but found it difficult to learn because the local tutor could not explain the structure of the language and was not trained to teach a language in the manner to which Americans are accustomed.

There are four principal reasons why Volunteers have not been acquiring sufficient local language during pre-service training.

- Roughly half of the health and agroforestry Trainees do not arrive with the required French proficiency level of intermediate-mid (see Table 1).
- The training staff stated that Volunteers need French language skills to interact with their counterparts and for travel through other regions of Guinea.
- The program staff have not finished site selection by the time PST begins. The APCDs are now making an effort to finalize site selection by the third week of PST. This will permit those Trainees with intermediate-mid French language skills to shift to local language training earlier in PST. According to language scores provided by the post, 60% of the Trainees met the French requirement by the middle of PST (see Table 1).



- The training staff have not explored alternative ways of providing Volunteers with the necessary language skills.

**Table 1. PST Language Scores for agroforestry and health Trainees, January – March 2006**

	<b>January 16</b>	<b>February 28</b>	<b>March 28</b>
Adv High	0	2	2
Adv Middle	0	5	6
Adv low	8	2	4
Inter High	3	3	5
<b>Inter Mid</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
Inter Low	2	7	1
Novice High	1	2	0
Novice Mid	3	0	0
Novice Low	6	0	0

Source: PC/Guinea

The study of high performing posts, conducted by the Office of Inspector General in 2006, identified several practices in other Francophone countries that address the language issues described here:

- In Niger, the country director established expectations for language competencies and enforced the rule that Volunteers would not be sworn in until they reached them. Volunteers and staff worked hard to develop new approaches to language learning and met the country director's expectations.
- In Mauritania, the post provided the Volunteers with a list of trained and vetted language tutors at or near their sites. These tutors were often trainers at PST or qualified local teachers. The Volunteers received language tutoring throughout their two years of service with intensive language training during their first three months at site.

PC/Guinea has a precedent for additional language training at site for Volunteers who finish PST without passing the language proficiency tests. The post provided French language tutors to at least two Volunteers in our interview sample. Both Volunteers stated that having the additional tutoring, especially at their sites, was beneficial.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend:

31. That the programming and training staff conduct a comprehensive task analysis to determine the language skills needed by the Volunteers to carry out their work assignments.
32. That the post offer Volunteers additional local language ISTs for Volunteers who depend on local languages for their work. These could occur at the regional houses under the supervision of the regional coordinators.
33. That the post request manuals and other materials for supporting language tutors from the Center's training unit.
34. That the region work with the Center's training unit to support a sub-regional workshop in West Africa on language learning. This could encompass PST and IST language learning, training and working with tutors, and materials development.
35. That the post identify and train a pool of local language tutors.

## PC/GUINEA IS NOT PROVIDING AGROFORESTRY VOLUNTEERS WITH EFFECTIVE COUNTERPARTS OR PROGRAM SUPPORT.

Agroforestry Volunteers do not have the support structure they need to implement their work assignments.

According to the responses to the OIG questionnaire, agroforestry Volunteers have a moderately clear understanding of what they are supposed to accomplish. Among the 11 agroforestry Volunteers who completed the OIG survey, only one said that their work assignment was not clear. In interviews, however, four of the six agroforestry Volunteers indicated that they were struggling or had struggled in their first year to develop a work assignment for themselves and to initiate projects.

There are several reasons why the agroforestry Volunteers do not have the support structure needed to initiate work assignments:

- Agroforestry Volunteers do not have effective counterparts or host organizations to provide them guidance, help to organize a work plan, and mobilize

the community around projects. One of the components of a successful Volunteer assignment is the pairing of a Volunteer with “counterparts or host organizations that are committed to be involved with the work of the Volunteers.”<sup>3</sup> Forestry agents from the Ministry of Water and Forestry (*Direction Nationale des Eaux et Forêts*) serve as official counterparts for agroforestry Volunteers. According to two officials with the ministry, the agents are poorly paid and ill-equipped to perform their responsibilities; the ministry’s failure to pay staff decent wages has led to a demoralized workforce; and, forestry agents do not have bicycles to transport themselves to Volunteers’ work sites.

With one exception, the six Volunteers in our interview sample were no longer working with their ministry counterparts. Three of the Volunteers told the OIG that they had adopted their host fathers or neighbors as their counterparts. A fourth was developing projects with the doctor at the health clinic and a teacher at the school because her official counterpart from the ministry was rarely available.

Unfortunately, Guinea offers few options for placing agroforestry Volunteers with organizations. One of the few agroforestry Volunteers with a well-designed job was placed in a community that was affiliated with Tostan, an international organization that was founded by a Peace Corps Volunteer in Senegal. It specializes in organizing poor, rural communities in the areas of health, environment, and human rights issues. The Volunteer works with two counterparts, the chair of the local environment committee and a staff member of Tostan. With Tostan, she has had opportunities to conduct workshops and take seven farmers to a workshop to learn grafting techniques for avocados, citrus, and mangoes. Small Project Assistance provided funding for this workshop.

The International Center for Research on Agro-Forestry (ICRAF) is interested in working with Peace Corps. Staff at ICRAF, however, were unsure if they would have future funding to remain in Guinea. ICRAF and Peace Corps are a potentially good fit. ICRAF

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<sup>3</sup> A Blueprint for Success, OIG, January 23, 2007, p.1.

specializes in applied agroforestry research and frequently works with local communities to plant trees that are environmentally appropriate and generate an income for the communities.

- Peace Corps is prohibited from using appropriated funds to train counterparts. PC/Guinea has made a considerable effort to raise funds to train counterparts and Volunteers together. The Education Volunteers and their counterparts attended a workshop. USAID provided funding to conduct a Life Skills workshop for Volunteers and their counterparts on HIV/AIDS prevention (an agency requirement). Both workshops won high praise from Volunteers and counterparts.
- PC/Guinea shifts the burden of site development to the Volunteers, expecting them to develop a work plan through community needs assessments. An effective community needs assessment can help Volunteers learn essential aspects of their communities, practice their language skills, and develop a relationship with their counterpart. Community assessments, however, cannot fully substitute for the development of structured work assignments by professional staff and identification of good counterparts through site development. Volunteers without much work experience or experience working in other cultures need a more structured work environment and staff support.
- Most agroforestry Volunteers are not receiving the program support they need from the APCD to initiate and sustain projects. Seven of the 11 agroforestry Volunteers responding to the OIG Questionnaire said that they were “not at all” or “somewhat” satisfied with the support they received from staff.

Volunteers told the OIG that they raised their concerns over the length and quality of site visits by APCDs at the December 2006 COS conference. According to one Volunteer, site visits by the APCD/Agroforestry were as short as 45 minutes. Of the six agroforestry Volunteers whom we interviewed, only one told the OIG team that they had a constructive working relationship with the APCD/Agroforestry. The other five agroforestry Volunteers stated that support from program staff was inconsistent. They cited the times

that the APCD/Agroforestry had gone out of his way to help his Volunteers, but also cited the lack of follow up on other things that the Volunteers needed. Volunteers were unsure whether the APCD was interested in or knowledgeable about their work based on the lack of feedback they received on their quarterly reports.

- The agroforestry Volunteers may not be arriving at their sites at the most appropriate time. Three agroforestry Volunteers suggested to the OIG that the timing of their arrival at sites hindered their ability to initiate projects. The country director and the APCD/Agroforestry told the OIG that they had already been considering this change. The OIG, in the 2001 program evaluation, made a similar recommendation to change the PST schedule.

The lack of structure and support in the agroforestry program has resulted in Volunteers not having substantial work assignments. Unoccupied or partially occupied Volunteers are at greater risk of being out-of-site and, possibly, traveling on Guinea's dangerous roads and in public transportation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**We recommend:**

- 36. That the country director work with the APCD/Agroforestry to improve site development, including:**
  - **Identification of viable counterparts and host organizations for the Volunteers.**
  - **Development of work activities for the Volunteers' first three to six months.**
- 37. That the country director work with the APCD/Agroforestry to improve the quality of staff support to the agroforestry Volunteers, including:**
  - **Determining an appropriate amount of time for site visits to first-year Volunteers and setting goals for the visits that will best support the Volunteers' work, and**
  - **The APCD/Agroforestry provide feedback to Volunteers on their quarterly reports.**

**THE POST DOES NOT HAVE ADEQUATE INTERNAL CONTROLS IN PLACE TO ENSURE THAT PCPP GRANTS ARE BEING USED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PEACE CORPS POLICY.**

**38. That the country director and the four APCDs institute supervised quarterly or bi-annual meetings at the regional houses for Volunteers to exchange project ideas, strategies, and experiences.**

**39. That the post and the region develop a workshop for agroforestry Volunteers and counterparts to:**

- **Help counterparts and Volunteers work more effectively together.**
- **Teach or reinforce their project design and management skills.**

The Office of Private Sector Initiatives (OPSI) is dependent on the posts to ensure that Peace corps Partnership Program (PCPP) projects are viable, have accurate budgets, and that Volunteers spend project funds appropriately.

OPSI has expressed concerns that:

- Funds are not being spent as specified in the project proposal.
- Volunteers do not document expenditures with receipts.
- Budgets are frequently inaccurate.

PC/Guinea has a process for reviewing Volunteers' proposals and project implementation. Volunteers submit their draft proposals to their APCD for program review and to the administrative officer for budgetary review. After they have signed off, the country director reviews and comments on the proposals. Once all changes have been made, the country director signs the cover sheet and forwards the proposal to OPSI. APCDs are responsible for monitoring the implementation of projects and inspecting projects during site visits.

The post's process for reviewing project proposals was not consistent with ensuring that only well-written and complete project proposals were sent to OPSI. Of the 22 projects that the post submitted to OPSI between July 2005 and December 2006, only five were accepted immediately. According to OPSI, the most frequently missing items were signatures, implementation plans, and accurate budgets (see Appendix C).



OPSI has not been able to establish controls that ensure that PCPP funding is being spent in accordance with Peace Corps policy. OPSI is based at headquarters and has not been able to perform spot checks and has had limited capacity to:

- Implement the policy and procedural changes necessary to ensure Peace Corps staff and Volunteers are using donated funds in accordance with U.S. laws and Peace Corps policies.
- Hold country directors and Volunteers accountable to existing Peace Corps policies.
- Strengthen compliance by ceasing funding to posts that fail to comply with PCM sections 720 and 721.

In the absence of reliable methods for enforcing compliance with Peace Corps policy, Peace Corps is at risk that Volunteers, community members, or Peace Corps staff will misuse PCPP funds.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**We recommend:**

**40. That OPSI revise PCM section 720 to include the following elements:**

- **Posts receiving OPSI funding must establish a grants review committee comprised of Peace Corps staff and Volunteers to ensure that each proposal meets OPSI's criteria and that applications are complete before forwarding them to the country director for his/her signature.**
- **The country director and/or the Volunteer's APCD conduct a mandatory site visit to confirm that OPSI funds were spent as specified in the project proposal.**
- **Administrative officers review and approve proposal budgets before submission to OPSI.**
- **Volunteers submit physical evidence of a project's completion, such as photographs.**
- **Volunteers submit copies of all available receipts with the project completion report to OPSI.**
- **Volunteers are required to sign an agreement not to accept funds outside of official Peace Corps mechanisms. Country directors who become aware that Volunteers are violating PCM section 721 subject them to administrative separation.**

**PCPP PROPOSAL  
PROCESS IS NOT  
FUNCTIONING  
EFFECTIVELY FOR  
THE POST STAFF,  
VOLUNTEERS, OR  
OPSI.**

**41. That the agency provide travel funds to OPSI to be used to conduct inspection visits and provide training to posts as needed.**

The Office of Private Sector Initiatives' criteria for approving Peace Corps Partnership Program proposals are not sufficiently clear to the Volunteers and staff of PC/Guinea. The current procedures for applying for a PCPP grant are not functioning effectively for PC/Guinea. OPSI expressed to the OIG their frustration that PC/Guinea submits incomplete proposals and does not consistently follow required policies and procedures. PC/Guinea has acknowledged that project proposals have been sent to OPSI that were either incomplete or inaccurate. From July 2005 - December 2006, OPSI requested revisions or corrected or missing information on 12 of the 22 projects (see Appendix C).

Staff and Volunteers have stated that they find it difficult to comply with Peace Corps policy and guidance issued by OPSI. Four Volunteers told the OIG that they were unsure what kind of information OPSI expected them to provide to meet the criteria of sustainability and indicators of success.

A review of projects by the OIG, including original and revised proposals and emails between post and OPSI suggest that: (a) OPSI is asking for additional details not clearly specified in project application materials, such as week-by-week implementation schedules, (b) the post is not submitting all required elements, such as signed cover sheets, detailed and accurate budgets, or well-defined implementation plans.

We draw on documentation from two projects provided to the OIG by OPSI and PC/Guinea to illustrate the current inefficiencies in the application and approval processes and to identify areas where the processes could be made more effective and efficient for both PC/Guinea and OPSI. The two projects are: a water pump project for \$787 (#675-119) and a library project for \$1644 (#675-120).

The OIG observed that Volunteers are not submitting all required elements as specified in PCM section 720. The library project, for example, was missing the following:

- A statement acknowledging that there will be no additional funding beyond the amount stated in the proposal.

- The community's contribution in the budget.
- A well-developed plan for implementing the project.
- A cover sheet with country director signature and the correct dollar amount requested.

Reviewing the two projects, the OIG observed that OPSI sustainability criteria is not clear to the Volunteers. In the original project proposal for the water pump, sent to OPSI on June 30, 2006, the Volunteer cited the following factors as evidence of sustainability:

- The pump would be installed during the dry season when the water level is at its lowest point to ensure that the pump would draw water year-round.
- The high level of community involvement in the project, including setting community goals, writing the project proposal, and expanding the pump project to include an education component indicates that the community understands the value of clean water and will invest the effort to maintain the pump.
- One of the members of the community had already been trained on how to maintain and repair pumps.
- The community will undergo sanitation training to reinforce the "health benefits of clean drinking water and other ways to avoid letting microbes into the system. After training a few teachers and community agents, there will be some health education sessions on both the community and school level."

In an email dated July 11, 2006, OPSI asked the Volunteer to expand on how the project would be sustained, specifically, "what members of the community will keep up this project and how will they do so?" In her response to OPSI on July 25, 2006, at the time of submission of a second version, the APCD stated that she suggested to the Volunteer that he discuss with his community how they would pay for repairs. The additional information was included in the revised proposal and accepted by OPSI as fulfilling their requirement.

The OIG's review of the two cases showed that indicators and measures of success were not clear to the Volunteers.

The review of the two cases showed that Volunteers are not providing sufficiently detailed implementation plans and timelines. PCM section 720.4.0: Criteria for Approval of PCPP Projects requires that "a project contains a well-

developed timeline for project implementation.” It does not currently specify a requirement that Volunteers provide a week-by-week schedule, yet in two cases, the OPSI staff requested this information after the original proposals were submitted. In the library project, OPSI requested that the Volunteer submit a timeline “detailing the progress of the library by week.”

Review of the PCPP cases showed that OPSI is also requesting budgetary details that are not specified in the Criteria for Approval of PCPP Projects:

On August 28, 2006, almost two months after the submission of the original project proposal, OPSI notified the country desk unit that the Volunteer’s project would be posted to the website. On September 8, OPSI alerted PC/Guinea that the water pump project was fully funded.

Overall, there are three major reasons why communications between OPSI and the post in the review process have broken down.

1. OPSI is not providing adequate guidance to the posts.

The type of information that OPSI expects to see in a proposal is not clearly specified in documents provided to the country director or available to Volunteers through the web. Staff and Volunteers in Guinea have relied on the proposal cover sheet to craft proposals. The cover sheet lists required elements but does not define key concepts or establish the level of detail expected by OPSI. From July 2005 to December 2006, project proposals have been held up most frequently because OPSI has asked for additional or different information on budgets (8 proposals), implementation plans (6 proposals), sustainability (3 proposals), and indicators of success (5 proposals).

OPSI provided the OIG with three additional documents. The first, the Peace Corps Partnership Program Criteria Information Series provided more details on key concepts than the proposal cover sheet. According to email correspondence between post and OPSI, PC/Guinea started distributing this document to the Volunteers as of July 2006. This document adds additional details to the cover sheet, but still lacks sufficient information when compared to the reasons why projects are delayed in

receiving approval. Second, the OIG obtained a draft handbook that OPSI states has been distributed to all posts. Third, the CD-ROM that OPSI provided to the country directors at Overseas Training in February 2007 contained a well-written sample health project proposal. The OIG cannot determine if OPSI sent these documents to all posts and, if so, when that was done.

2. PC/Guinea may have been using an outdated Project Proposal Cover Sheet. Of the twelve criteria listed in PCM section 720.4.0, the cover sheet submitted by PC/Guinea was missing five elements. OPSI revised the cover sheet in October 2006; this version more accurately reflects the elements in the Peace Corps Manual.
3. OPSI staff have been unable to conduct field visits to Guinea or elsewhere to 1) train Volunteers and staff and 2) obtain a better understanding of the country conditions where the projects are being implemented.

OPSI staff, PC/Guinea staff, and Volunteers are frustrated with the process for submitting and approving project proposals. The level of frustration at the post raises several risks for the program and the Volunteers:

- Volunteers may use alternative and unofficial means for funding their projects. In addition to violating PCM section 721, carrying large amounts of cash from the United States to Guinea puts the Volunteers at risk of physical danger.
- The submission of incomplete proposals by the post and multiple requests for additional information by OPSI is an inefficient use of Peace Corps staff and Volunteer time. The country director and program staff have demanding jobs that consume far more than 40 hours per week.
- OPSI has a potential public relations problem in that Volunteers express their frustrations with the PCPP process to their friends, family, and former Volunteers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**We recommend:**

- 42. That OPSI simplify and tighten the PCPP application process, using the Small Project Assistance procedures as a model.**

- 43. That OPSI draft a handbook with clear guidance for staff and Volunteers, including:**
- **Instructions on how to write an effective proposal.**
  - **A sample project proposal.**
  - **Clear explanations of criteria, especially sustainability and indicators and measures of success.**
  - **A budget template.**
  - **A checklist with sufficient detail to ensure that Volunteers meet OPSI's expectations.**
  - **Online availability of the handbook to Volunteers.**
- 44. That OPSI work with the Center's Overseas Training Unit to revise their training module for country directors, APCDs, and Volunteers.**



## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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### WE RECOMMEND:

1. That the post require Volunteers to submit emergency contact forms within one month of arriving at site as required by the PC/Guinea Volunteer handbook.
2. That the post clarify the process and staff responsible for collecting contact information and merging paper and electronic forms.
3. That the post consistently enforce its policy for submission of leave slips.
4. That the post update and test the warden system with every new group of Volunteers.
5. That the post reinstitute biweekly periodic radio checks with Volunteers.
6. That the post submit an evacuation report to the region to document best practices and lessons learned.
7. That the post establish and publicize a policy to reimburse Volunteers for evening taxi rides from the Kankan bus station to the Volunteer transit house.
8. That the region, the post, and the Office of Management's Overseas Building Operations conduct a vehicle needs assessment to determine whether PC/Guinea has an adequate number and appropriate mix of vehicles to meet all contingency plans in the EAP.
9. That the post and region replace vehicles at 80,000 kms to ensure that the post has a sufficient number of reliable vehicles.
10. That the PCMOs devise a system to log incoming and outgoing messages to Volunteers and document the Volunteers' health status and recovery.
11. That the post provide cross-cultural training to both the Volunteers and the PCMOs to help them set realistic expectations and understand the differences between American and local medical systems.
12. That the post assign a staff member to inspect and mend or replace mosquito netting in the Volunteer houses.
13. That the post provide SPF 50 sunscreen for the Volunteers.

14. That OMS work with the PCMOs to draft guidance and training materials to effectively and accurately convey the agency's and the post's malaria policies and procedures. These revisions should include, but are not limited to:
  - Clarification that Volunteers not in compliance with malaria policy will be administratively separated at the discretion of the country director.
  - Clarification that Volunteers who are not able to comply due to intolerance to the drugs will be medically separated and that the post may consult with OMS regarding the option of transferring the Volunteer to a country outside of the malaria zone.
  - Clarification that Volunteers who take their prophylaxis regularly can still contract malaria.
  - Establish informed consent testing for the level of prophylaxis in the blood stream.
  - Advise Volunteers of the evidence that mefloquine remains the most effective drug for the prevention of malaria in West Africa.
  - Provide information on the steps currently being taken by Peace Corps to routinely monitor malaria drug resistance in Guinea.
15. That the post establish effective monitoring and follow up of all malaria prevention measures.
16. That the post identify the medications that are to be stocked in the regional houses and the Peace Corps vehicles.
17. That the post determine which medications will be available to the Volunteers. This list needs to specify what is in possession of the regional coordinators.
18. That the post create a medical log which Volunteers sign to indicate what medications they have taken from the medical supplies at the regional houses.
19. That the post add to the regional coordinators' position description that they review the medical log and order supplies of depleted medicines on a monthly basis.
20. That the health unit in Conakry restock a vehicle's medical kit each time the vehicle returns from the field.
21. That the PCMOs track Volunteers' radio requests for medical supplies.
22. That the PCMOs contact the OMS's Chief of Quality Improvement to verify that their safe is in compliance with Peace Corps policy.
23. That the post comply with the revised policy on storing controlled substances.
24. That the region work with PC/Guinea to train and upgrade the regional coordinator positions to allow them to take on greater responsibilities, including those related to site selection and development and Volunteer support.

25. That the region increase the Volunteers' allowances in the case of an emergency as stated in PCM section 221.5.5.5.
26. That the region renegotiate the personal services contracts as allowed by OFMH section 27.2.5.
27. That the region work with the post and the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research (the Center) to identify financial resources to conduct a training workshop for the program and training staff in Guinea. The purpose of this training would be twofold:
  - Facilitate greater integration of program and training functions; and
  - Assist program and training staff to design training units to provide the Volunteers with opportunities to practice the technical skills they require to perform their work assignments and illustrate the ways that Volunteers can apply those skills in the Guinean context.
28. That the programming and training staff, along with a representative sample of experienced Volunteers, conduct a comprehensive performance analysis of Volunteer work assignments to determine the sector competencies required by Volunteers to achieve the tasks in the project plans. This should include revising the task analysis and project plan, as needed, as well as soliciting input from Volunteers and counterparts on what Volunteers actually do in their projects.
29. That the APCD/SED and APCD/Agroforestry work with the training staff to develop hands-on training exercises for their Volunteers.
30. That the training manager conduct site visits to observe the Volunteers at their work.
31. That the programming and training staff conduct a comprehensive task analysis to determine the language skills needed by the Volunteers to carry out their work assignments.
32. That the post offer Volunteers additional local language ISTs for Volunteers who depend on local languages for their work. These could occur at the regional houses under the supervision of the regional coordinators.
33. That the post request manuals and other materials for supporting language tutors from the Center's training unit.
34. That the region work with the Center's training unit to support a sub-regional workshop in West Africa on language learning. This could encompass PST and IST language learning, training and working with tutors, and materials development.
35. That the post identify and train a pool of local language tutors.

36. That the country director work with the APCD/Agroforestry to improve site development, including:
  - Identification of viable counterparts and host organizations for the Volunteers.
  - Development of work activities for the Volunteers' first three to six months.
37. That the country director work with the APCD/Agroforestry to improve the quality of staff support to the agroforestry Volunteers, including:
  - Determining an appropriate amount of time for site visits to first-year Volunteers and setting goals for the visits that will best support the Volunteers' work.
  - The APCD/Agroforestry provide feedback to Volunteers on their quarterly reports.
38. The country director and the four APCDs institute supervised quarterly or bi-annual meetings at the regional houses for Volunteers to exchange project ideas, strategies, and experiences.
39. That the post and the region develop a workshop for agroforestry Volunteers and counterparts to :
  - Help counterparts and Volunteers work more effectively together.
  - Teach or reinforce their project design and management skills.
40. That OPSI revise PCM section 720 to include the following elements:
  - Posts receiving OPSI funding must establish a grants review committee comprised of Peace Corps staff and Volunteers to ensure that each proposal meets OPSI's criteria and that applications are complete before forwarding them to the country director for his/her signature.
  - The country director and/or the Volunteer's APCD conduct a mandatory site visit to confirm that OPSI funds were spent as specified in the project proposal.
  - Administrative officers review and approve proposal budgets before submission to OPSI.
  - Volunteers submit physical evidence of a project's completion, such as photographs.
  - Volunteers submit copies of all receipts with the project completion report to OPSI.
  - Volunteers are required to sign an agreement not to accept funds outside of official Peace Corps mechanisms. Country directors who become aware that Volunteers are violating PCM section 721 subject them to administrative separation.
41. That the agency provide travel funds to OPSI to be used to conduct inspection visits and provide training to posts as needed.
42. That OPSI simplify and tighten the PCPP application process, using the Small Project Assistance procedures as a model.
43. That OPSI draft a handbook with clear guidance for staff and Volunteers, including:
  - Instructions on how to write an effective proposal.
  - A sample project proposal.
  - Clear explanations of criteria, especially sustainability and indicators and measures of success.

- A budget template.
  - A checklist with sufficient detail to ensure that Volunteers meet OPSI's expectations.
  - Online availability of the handbook to Volunteers.
44. That OPSI work with the Center's Overseas Training Unit to revise their training module for country directors, APCDs, and Volunteers.

## APPENDIX A

### OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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The objective of our evaluation was to determine whether PC/Guinea has provided adequate support and oversight to ensure its Volunteers meet the needs of the people of Guinea. This objective is encapsulated by the first goal of Peace Corps' mission. Specifically, we considered whether:

- Pre-Service Training and In-Service Training provided Volunteers with the technical and language skills necessary to carry out their primary assignment.
- PC/Guinea has promoted a safe living and working environment for Volunteers.
- Volunteer work sites and assignments were prepared to meet the basic needs of people of Guinea.
- Volunteers were provided with adequate on-going support to enable them to carry out their assignments.

Because interviews with Volunteers comprised a major part of our evaluation methodology, our scope encompassed the time period during which current Volunteers have served in Guinea, from January 2004 to the conclusion of our fieldwork in December 2006.

To accomplish our objective, we:

- Reviewed relevant criteria, including the Peace Corps Act (22 USC 34), various Peace Corps Manual sections, agency-wide guidance on the EAP and evacuation preparation, the SPA Project Handbook, and post-specific policies and procedures.
- Reviewed documentation related to post operations, including its Integrated Planning and Budget System submission, the EAP, the project plan, project status reports, Volunteer assignment descriptions, staff position descriptions, results of the 2004 and 2006 Annual Survey of the Peace Corps Volunteer, the 2005 Health and Safety of the Volunteer reports, Small Project Assistance grant proposals, PCPP grant proposals, site and housing development reports, and site visit reports.
- Inspected pharmaceuticals provided to Volunteers at their sites, in Volunteer-accessible cabinets in the regional houses, in the Peace Corps vehicles, and in the PCMOs' offices to determine if they were properly stored.
- Inspected emergency provisions maintained at the three regional houses.
- Inspected Volunteers' homes for safety and security.
- Conducted a desk review of two Peace Corps Partnership projects.



## APPENDIX A

- Selected a stratified judgmental sample of Volunteers based on their length of service, area of service, project focus, gender, age, and ethnicity and interviewed 39 Volunteers or 34 percent of the 114 Volunteers in the country at the time of the program review. These interviews occurred at the Volunteers' home, at work sites where the Volunteers serve, or at the Peace Corps office in Conakry.
- Interviewed 18 Volunteer counterparts.
- Interviewed Ministry officials at each of the four sponsoring ministries.
- Interviewed Peace Corps staff from the Africa Region, Safety and Security Office, Office of Partnership and Special Initiatives, Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research, Office of Medical Services, and PC/Guinea post with responsibility for all aspects of Volunteer support.
- Interviewed a senior analyst at the U.S. Department of State who tracks political and economic events in West Africa.
- The Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research provided information on the use of SPA grant funds by PC/Guinea. The Office of Partnership and Special Initiatives (OPSI) provided data and extensive consultations on PCPP grant funds. We did not evaluate general controls over the accounting systems for either SPA or OPSI because that work was outside the scope of our evaluation. During our interviews and review of supporting documentation for SPA and OPSI grants, nothing came to our attention suggesting that the information we were provided was inaccurate. However, we did identify a need for OPSI to provide more specific guidance to PC/Guinea staff and Volunteers and for the post to strengthen its internal controls over PCPP funds.
- We performed our evaluation from October to December 2006, including work at PC/Guinea from November 24-December 17, 2006. Accordingly, we included such tests of records and other evaluation procedures that we considered necessary under the circumstances. We identified internal control weaknesses in the areas of programming, Volunteer medical support, safety and security, and OPSI grant approval and oversight. The internal control weaknesses identified are discussed in the Results of Evaluation section of this report. If implemented, our recommendations should strengthen the operations and programs of PC/Guinea.

## APPENDIX B

### PRIOR REPORTS

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Since the report issued in 1991, the Office of Inspector General has issued one report related to PC/Guinea.

**Office of Inspector General Report, “Audit/Program Evaluation/Safety and Security Assessment of Peace Corps Guinea,” report number IG 01-02-AES, issued August 2001.**

This report contained 48 recommendations related to auditing (11), program evaluation (18), and safety and security (19). In particular, the report noted the following conditions in 2001 that continued to be issues in 2006: 1) Limited telephone and road access make it imperative that the post test its alternative communication methods to contact Volunteers under emergency conditions, 2) PC/Guinea lacks a system for the inventory, review and replenishment of drugs and other medical supplies at the regional houses, 3) The Region needs to reevaluate whether PC/Guinea’s vehicle ceiling should be increased in order to ensure the post has adequate vehicles to support its program and medical needs, 4) Transportation and communication woes remain the pervasive safety and security issues among Volunteers, and 5) There is a need for the post to make site assignments earlier in PST in order to facilitate local language learning and give Trainees a better context for technical and cross-cultural learning.

## APPENDIX C

### COMPLIANCE WITH OPSI PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

OPSI Project No.	Budget	USD budget	Community percentage	Sustain-ability	Indicators of Success	Implemen-tation Plan	Time-line	Cover Sheet	Statement	Co-sponsor ship	Misc
113	x										
115			x							x	
117		x		x		x					
118					x	x					
119	x	x			x	x					x
120	x					x		x	x		
122	x			x							
124				x			x		x		
125					x						
127					x	x		x			
128	x										
129	x		x		x	x	x				

Source: Office of Private Sector Initiatives, January 22, 2007. The above table is a sample of project proposals submitted by PC/Guinea to OPSI.

Note: An "X" indicates that the required element was completed.

## APPENDIX D

**REGION'S RESPONSES TO THE PRELIMINARY  
REPORT INCLUDING THE OFFICE OF  
MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE TO NO. 8,  
THE OFFICE OF MEDICAL SERVICES RESPONSE TO  
NOS. 14 AND 22, AND THE OFFICE OF PRIVATE  
SECTOR INITIATIVES RESPONSE TO NOS. 40 - 44**

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**45<sup>th</sup>**  
**Peace Corps**  
*Anniversary*

*1961-2006: a legacy of service at home and abroad*

**Memorandum**

**DATE:** July 27, 2007

**TO:** H. David Kotz, Inspector General

**FROM:** Henry McKoy, Director, Africa Region *Henry McKoy*

**CC:** David Liner, Chief of Staff  
Courtney Santonicola, Deputy Chief of Staff  
Stephen Peterson, Country Director, Peace Corps/Guinea  
John Dimos, Chief Compliance Officer  
Lynn Foden, Chief of Operations, Africa Region  
Jennifer Brown, Country Desk Officer, Africa Region  
Nicole Lewis, Country Desk Assistant, Africa Region

**SUBJECT:** Africa Region's Response to the OIG Preliminary Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Guinea

The Africa Region thanks the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) for the Preliminary Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Guinea. Post is appreciative of the feedback presented in this evaluation.

Post's responses have been reviewed and integrated into this response. Region will continue to work with post to ensure full implementation of the OIG recommendations. The Region, as well as post, Office of Medical Services, Office Private Sector Initiatives, the Center and Management/ Overseas Building Operations, concurs with 38 recommendations and partially concurs with the remaining 6 of the 44 recommendations. In the cases where Region partially concurs, we concur with the intent of the recommendation but propose a slightly different method or process for closing the recommendation.

As you are aware, Peace Corps/Guinea recently welcomed Volunteers back to Guinea. An initial group of reinstates arrived in Guinea on July 27, 2007, and others will follow as their schedules permit. The first group of 36 trainees will arrive and begin eleven weeks of Pre-Service Training on December 8, 2007. Due to the fact Volunteers have just returned to Guinea it may take some additional time to respond to some of the recommendations that require working with Volunteers in the field. We ask for your understanding as we reopen this post and normalize operations.

Attached please find our responses to the Preliminary Report on Peace Corps/Guinea. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments. Region will greatly appreciate your guidance and support as we respond to the recommendations.

**Response to Preliminary Report  
Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Guinea  
November 2006**

**Recommendation 1** That the post require Volunteers to submit emergency contact forms within one month of arriving at site as required by the PC/Guinea Volunteer handbook.

Partially Concur<sup>1</sup>

The most recent version of the Peace Corps Guinea Volunteer Handbook, updated September 2006, states that Volunteers have two months to send in their forms after arriving at their sites. Post believes two months are required in order to receive accurate and reliable information. Post emphasizes the importance of emergency contact information with trainees and Volunteers. Trainees research their contact options while on site visit during Pre Service Training (PST). In addition, initial contact information is gathered by staff during the site development process.

We agree that the system for ensuring forms are collected can be improved. Please see the memorandum from the Country Director (CD) to staff appointing the Safety and Security Coordinator (SSC) as the responsible staff member and as the post point of contact. The handbook has also been updated to refer to the SSC as point person in the office rather than the Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMOs). This requirement will be reiterated by the SSC in safety and security sessions and by the CD during the final administrative session at PST.

The memorandum from the CD has been shared with staff and the directive will be implemented as regular practice when Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) return to Guinea, on July 27, 2007.

**Recommendation 2** That the post clarify the process and staff responsible for collecting contact information and merging paper and electronic forms.

Concur<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Attachment 1A. *Peace Corps Guinea Volunteer Handbook* (Sept 2006) – see page 15  
Attachment 1B. Updated *Peace Corps Guinea Volunteer Handbook* (Sept 2006) – see page 15  
Attachment 1C . Memorandum from Country Director to Guinea staff regarding PCV Emergency Contact Forms and VIDA  
Attachment 1D.Safety and Security Officer Scope of Work

<sup>2</sup> Attachments 1A-1D



The procedures for this process are included in the memorandum that addresses Recommendation 1. The SSC will be the point of contact for receiving all Emergency Contact forms, will enter the information from each Emergency Contact form into VIDA, supply a copy to the Medical office, and file the original in the SSC office.

The memorandum from the Country Director to staff was completed May 2007 and has been shared with staff.

**Recommendation 3** That the post consistently enforce its policy for submission of leave slips.

Concur<sup>3</sup>

The CD wrote a memorandum to the Associate Peace Corps Directors (APCDs) and Program Assistant outlining a consistent policy for handling leave slips. This policy will be implemented upon the return of PCVs to Guinea, July 27, 2007.

**Recommendation 4** That the post update and test the warden system with every new group of Volunteers.

Concur<sup>4</sup>

The CD, in a memorandum to the SSC, has required the SSC to conduct a warden test no later than two months after each new group is sworn-in. The tests will use VIDA as appropriate and the results will be presented to the CD for review and changes as needed. This will be implemented upon the swearing-in of the new December 2007 input, and the first test will be conducted by April 1, 2008.

**Recommendation 5** That the post reinstitute biweekly periodic radio checks with Volunteers.

Concur<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Attachment 3 Memorandum from Country Director to Staff concerned regarding PCV leave and out of site requests

<sup>4</sup> Attachment 4 Memorandum from Country Director to Staff concerned regarding Testing Warden System.

<sup>5</sup> Attachment 5A Memorandum from Country Director to Staff concerned regarding Reinstitution of biweekly HF radio checks with PCVs.  
Attachment 5B Radio Check Log for PCVs.



Biweekly radio checks will be implemented upon the return of PCVs to Guinea, on July 27, 2007, per the CD's memorandum to the regional coordinators and the SSC.

**Recommendation 6** That the post submit an evacuation report to the region to document best practices and lessons learned.

Concur

Post will submit the Final Evacuation Report by August 31, 2007.

**Recommendation 7** That the post establish and publicize a policy to reimburse Volunteers for evening taxi rides from the Kankan bus station to the Volunteer transit house.

Concur<sup>6</sup>

The Kankan regional house was moved one month prior to the Inspector General's (IGs) visit. PCVs had not voiced this concern before the time of the IG's visit; however, it is clearly stated in post's transportation policy that night travel should be avoided when possible and this policy applies in Kankan as well. Additionally, transportation allowance is included in PCVs' allowance surveys, and PCVs would have indicated this need in the next survey. Post will include funds in the transportation allowance for use from taxi stations to the regional houses/hotels for each region.

The CD wrote a memorandum to all Haute region Volunteers that will be distributed when PCVs return to Guinea on July 27, 2007.

**Recommendation 8** That the region, the post, and the Office of Management's Overseas Building Operations conduct a vehicle needs assessment to determine whether PC/Guinea has an adequate number and appropriate mix of vehicles to meet all contingency plans in the EAP.

Concur<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Attachment 7 Memorandum from Country Director to Volunteers and concerned Staff regarding Taxi rides from taxi station to regional PCV house.

<sup>7</sup> Attachment 8A Memorandum from Administrative Officer to Motorpool Supervisor Regarding Vehicle Replacement

The Office of Management's Overseas Building Operations (M/OBO) agrees that Post's vehicle needs should be assessed. The PC vehicle ceiling calculation, currently used by all posts worldwide, recommends 11 vehicles for Peace Corps/Guinea, which is the number post currently has. The PC Vehicle Fleet Management Guide clearly states that post has can request additional vehicles above and beyond the vehicle ceiling.

M/OBO believes that this assessment should not be conducted by M/OBO due to its unfamiliarity with the PC Guinea program goals and locale (exception: unless a site visit is deemed necessary). Therefore, it is M/OBO's recommendation that this assessment be conducted by post and Region since they are familiar with the current situation(s) as well as the needs of the program(s). As this assessment should be carried out by post and the Region, M/OBO is reluctant to name a date by which the proposed action will be completed.

Please recognize that the *PC Vehicle Fleet Management Guide* clearly states that Post has the opportunity to request additional vehicles which will be reviewed by both M/OBO and Regional CAO. Regional approval and commitment for funding will be needed if additional vehicles are approved since Office of Management only funds "replacements" and not new additions (new additions to fleet are funded either by Region or PEPFAR depending on use).

The APCD/AO wrote a memorandum to the Motor Pool Supervisor requiring him to provide a list of vehicles with current mileage and anticipated mileage and to analyze the vehicle fleet for replacement needs. This analysis will be complete by March 31, 2008.

**Recommendation 9** That the post and region replace vehicles at 100,000 kms to ensure that the post has a sufficient number of reliable vehicles.

Partially Concur<sup>8</sup>

Current guidance provides for requesting vehicle replacements at 80,000 kilometers. Per a May 2007 memorandum from the APCD/AO to the Motor Pool Supervisor, post will request vehicle

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Attachment 8C Vehicle Fleet Plan

<sup>8</sup> Attachment 9A Memorandum from Administrative Officer to Motorpool Supervisor Regarding Vehicle Replacement  
Attachment 9C Vehicle Fleet Plan

replacements based on this guidance. Region will purchase new vehicles based on available resources.

**Recommendation 10** That the PCMOs devise a system to log incoming and outgoing messages to Volunteers and document the Volunteer's health status and recovery.<sup>9</sup>

Concur<sup>10</sup>

The PCMOs have a log system in place. However, in addition to better using these logs, the PCMOs will schedule time each morning to meet for a minimum of 30 minutes to discuss on-going cases and to plan and assign follow-up action.

This will be implemented upon the return of PCVs to Guinea on July 27, 2007.

**Recommendation 11** That the post provide cross-cultural training to both the Volunteers and the PCMOs to help them set realistic expectations and understand the differences between American and local medical systems.

Concur<sup>11</sup>

Post requested cross cultural training materials from OMS and no such training materials exist at this time.

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<sup>9</sup> Comment from OMS: On page 11 of the IG report, it states that "a Volunteer was recently diagnosed with melanoma..." This appears to be incorrect. Dr. Saxman has reviewed the medical record of the Volunteer in question (as identified by the OIG). The Volunteer had a small lesion on the nose that the PCMO was aware of which was present prior to the time she entered Peace Corps. According to the medical record the lesion changed in size, at which time a decision was made to perform a biopsy. Because of the lack of resources in Guinea as well as the fact that the Volunteer was going home on vacation, the decision was made to give her authorization to see a dermatologist at her home of record. The biopsy revealed a basal cell carcinoma which was treated with a limited local excision termed Mohs micrographic surgery. She recovered uneventfully. Because of the inference in the report that this was a "misdiagnosed condition," and the implication of an allegation of misdiagnosing a malignant melanoma—a highly aggressive form of skin cancer which can cause death, OMS would recommend removing or correcting this in the report.

<sup>10</sup> Attachment 10A Memorandum from Country Director to PCMOs regarding maintaining logs and exchanging case information.  
Attachment 10B Medical Log

<sup>11</sup> Attachment 11. Memorandum from Country Director to PCMOs and TM regarding Cross-cultural training for PCT at PST.

The CD has requested in a memorandum that the PCMOs meet with the Embassy nurse, APCMO and reinstated Volunteers to discuss Volunteer expectations no later than August 2007. A session to address cross-culture issues specific to medical care will be added to the PST curriculum.

PCMOs will meet with the APCMO by August 31, 2007, and the new session added to PST curriculum will be implemented upon the next intake of trainees in Q1 08/December 8, 2007.

Additionally, when PCVs transfer back and are reinstated to Guinea beginning on July 27, 2007, the PCMOs will hold a meeting with them to discuss how better to address cross-cultural issues (i.e. American expectations of health care providers) specific to medical care.

**Recommendation 12** That the post assign a staff member to inspect and mend or replace mosquito netting in the Volunteer houses.

Concur<sup>12</sup>

This has been added to the job description of the house manager responsible for the PCV house in Conakry. See the memorandum to the Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC) regarding the maintenance of mosquito nets at the regional PCV houses and hotel.

The attached memorandum to the VAC will be given to the VAC committee upon the return of PCVs to Guinea on July 27, 2007.

**Recommendation 13** That the post provide SPF 50 sunscreen for the Volunteers.

Partially Concur<sup>13</sup>

OMS finds that there is only a very small difference in the UV penetration rate between sunscreens with SPF 30 and SPF 50, and often people find SPF 50 sunscreen more difficult to use because it is generally more greasy and pasty and difficult to apply. OMS generally recommends that Posts routinely provide sunscreen with SPF 30 or greater and educate Volunteers on the proper method to apply sunscreen as well as instructing Volunteers to wear

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<sup>12</sup> Attachment 12A. Job Description of Janitor of PCV Houses

Attachment 12B. Memorandum from Country Director to VAC Committees regarding Mosquito nets in regional PCV houses and hotel

<sup>13</sup> Attachment 13A Memorandum from the Director of OMS to David Kotz, OIG

protective clothing and wide brimmed hats in conjunction with sunscreen. Post will submit documentation of their SPF 30 supplies by January 1, 2008.

**Recommendation 14** That OMS work with the PCMOs to draft guidance and training materials to effectively and accurately convey the agency's and the post's malaria policies and procedures. These revisions should include, but are not limited to:

- Clarification that Volunteers not in compliance with malaria policy will be administratively separated at the discretion of the country director.
- Clarification that Volunteers who are not able to comply due to intolerance to the drugs will be medically separated and that the post may consult with OMS regarding the option of transferring the Volunteer to a country outside of the malaria zone.
- Clarification that Volunteers who take their prophylaxis regularly can still contract malaria.
- *Establish informed consent testing for the level of prophylaxis in the blood stream.*
- Advise Volunteers of the evidence that mefloquine remains the most effective drug for the prevention of malaria in West Africa.
- Provide information on the steps currently being taken by Peace Corps to routinely monitor malaria drug resistance in Guinea.

Partially Concur<sup>14</sup> (OMS Concur with all the bullets except bullet 4: *Establish informed consent testing for the level of prophylaxis in the blood stream*).

The Office of Medical Services (OMS) has developed a slide set and handout that will be provided to the PCMOs in Guinea clarifying and/or describing the above points. OMS representatives will meet with the PCMOs at the upcoming CME and work with them to consider how these materials can be best incorporated into the training for new Volunteers and how this information can be reinforced during the Volunteers' service. OMS has also obtained copies of the slide set used by the Guinea PCMOs during PST and will work with them to make these more user friendly for the Trainees and to insure that the information is provided at a level which is more understandable for the Trainee and the Volunteer.

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<sup>14</sup> Attachment 14A Memorandum from the Director of OMS to David Kotz, OIG

In regard to bullet number four, OMS no longer mandates that drug levels be drawn on Volunteers who develop malaria, but are obtained only if medically indicated. Peace Corps does not require formal written informed consent for blood tests obtained in the context of the medical care of a Volunteer.

**Recommendation 15** That the post establish effective monitoring and follow up of all malaria prevention measures.

Concur<sup>15</sup>

Information concerning the prevention of malaria is presented to PCVs in several documents (pg 44 of the Welcome Book, pgs 15, 31 and 49-53 in the PCV Medical Handbook, and pgs 17-18 in the PCV Handbook) and during sessions at PST. Additionally, inspection of screening on PCV houses has been included in post's site visit checklist for staff (PCMOs, APCDs, RCs and SSC). Funds to procure screening for PCVs houses is provided in the PCVs' settling-in allowance. The CD has distributed a memorandum to the AO, APCDs, RCs, SSC, and PCMOs reminding them of their malaria prevention duties, and asking APCDs to add screening inspection to their site visit checklist as well. In addition, the CD has outlined in this memorandum methods and processes for confirming, reporting and enforcing screening requirements.

Documentation is complete, and this will be implemented upon the return of PCVs to Guinea, on July 27, 2007.

**Recommendation 16** That the post identify the medications that are to be stocked in the regional houses and the Peace Corps vehicles.

Concur<sup>16</sup>

Post has identified the medications that will be stocked in the regional house and this was completed in June 2007. Please see the attached regional stock level inventory sheet.

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<sup>15</sup> Attachment 15A Guinea Welcome Book

Attachment 15B Guinea PCV Health Handbook

Attachment 15C Memorandum from Country Director to PC Guinea staff regarding Malaria prevention and PCV housing

Attachment 15D PCV Site Visit Form/Guinea

Attachment 15E Staff Site Visit Checklist

<sup>16</sup> Attachment 16A Medical Inventory Sheet

Attachment 16B Flowchart of distribution and refill of medical supplies to regional houses

**Recommendation 17** That the post determine which medications will be available to the Volunteers. This list needs to specify what is in possession of the regional coordinators.

Concur<sup>17</sup>

Post completed a list and a regional medication inventory in June 2007. Post has also submitted a flow chart outlining the distribution and refill of medical supplies to the regional houses. Please see attachments for Recommendation 17.

**Recommendation 18** That the post create a medical log which Volunteers sign to indicate what medications they have taken from the medical supplies at the regional houses.

Concur<sup>18</sup>

In June 2007, Post created a medical log that Volunteers will sign to indicate what medications they have taken from medical supplies at the regional houses.

**Recommendation 19** That the post add to the regional coordinators' position description that they review the medical log and order supplies of depleted medicines on a monthly basis.

Concur<sup>19</sup>

The regional coordinator's position description was updated to require reviewing the medical log and ordering supplies monthly in June 2007.

**Recommendation 20** That the health unit in Conakry restock a vehicle's medical kit each time the vehicle returns from the field.

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<sup>17</sup> Attachment 16A Medical Inventory Sheet

Attachment 16B Flowchart of distribution and refill of medical supplies to regional houses

<sup>18</sup> Attachment 18A Medical Inventory Sheet

Attachment 18B Flowchart of distribution and refill of medical supplies to regional houses

Attachment 18 C Log

<sup>19</sup> Attachment 19A Medical Inventory Sheet

Attachment 19B Flowchart of distribution and refill of medical supplies to regional houses

Attachment 19 Peace Corps Regional Workstation Coordinators Job Description

Concur<sup>20</sup>

Post has issued a procedure memorandum and modified travel advance form to address this recommendation. Drivers will check out medical kits in advance of travel, and return medical kits to the Medical Unit upon their return. The Medical Unit will then inventory the supplies and restock any necessary medications at this time.

These procedures were outlined in a memorandum to all drivers and medical staff in June 2007 and will be implemented upon the return of Volunteers beginning on July 27, 2007.

**Recommendation 21** That the PCMOs track Volunteers' radio requests for medical supplies.

Concur<sup>21</sup>

The log was completed in June 2007. Implementation will start when the Volunteers return, beginning on July 27, 2007.

**Recommendation 22** That the Office of Medical Services eliminate the discrepancy between PCM section 723 and TG 200.

OMS concurs with the new agreed upon recommendation.<sup>22</sup>

Dr. Scott Saxman, Director of OMS, discussed with Ms. Shelley Elbert from the OIG and both agree that there is no discrepancy between PCM section 723 and TG 200.

Ms. Elbert has changed the recommendation to read:

“That the PCMOs contact Kenneth Kim, Chief of Quality improvement in the Office of Medical Services division, to verify that their safe is in compliance with Peace Corps policy.”

OMS concurs with the new recommendation.

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<sup>20</sup> Attachment 20A Memorandum from Administrative Officer to Motorpool supervisor, driver, and medical unit staff regarding Travel, Advances and Medical Kits

<sup>21</sup> Attachment 21 A Log

<sup>22</sup> Attachment 22A Memorandum from the Director of OMS to David Kotz, OIG



Post has contacted Kenneth Kim, Chief of Quality Improvement in the Office of Medical Services division, to verify that their safe is in compliance with Peace Corps policy.

**Recommendation 23** That the post comply with the revised policy on storing controlled substances.

Concur

Post will provide for storing controlled substances according to the revised guidance from OMS when it is issued.

**Recommendation 24** That the region work with PC/Guinea to train and upgrade the regional coordinator positions to allow them to take on greater responsibilities, including those related to site selection and development and Volunteer support.

Concur<sup>23</sup>

Post already has in place a program for continual training of Regional Coordinators (RCs) to increase their skills and knowledge so they may better support Volunteers. For the past year, senior staff have provided training to RCs when they come to Conakry for the monthly mail run and administrative business. Additionally, one RC was in Ghana in May and June, where he was taking an intensive English course and this was supported by Region. All RCs have been given three-ring binders in which they keep all documents referencing rules, procedures and guidelines. Post feels confident that as the RCs' responsibilities increase funding for appropriate remuneration will be available and included in future Operating Plans.

The CD wrote a memorandum to staff (RCs, APCDs, PCMOs, SSC) in May 2007 formalizing the requirement of at least two hours of training each month when the RCs are in Conakry for the mail run. The P&T team will prioritize needs with input from all

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<sup>23</sup> Attachment 24A Memorandum from Country Director to senior staff regarding training program for RCs  
Attachment 24B Regional Coordinator Training Material – EAP Contact Log  
Attachment 24C Regional Coordinator Training Material – EAP True/False Quiz with Answers  
Attachment 24D Regional Coordinator Training Material – EAP True/False Quiz  
Attachment 24E Regional Coordinator Training Material – Peer Counseling Helpful Hints  
Attachment 24F Regional Coordinator Training Material – RC Training Medical Tips  
Attachment 24G Regional Coordinator Training Material – RC Roles and Responsibilities in EAP  
Attachment 24H Regional Coordinator Training Material – RC Roles and Responsibilities  
Attachment 24I Regional Coordinator Training Material - Statement of Work for Security Guards

sections and create and communicate a schedule to RCs at least one week prior to the arrival of the RCs in Conakry each month. The AO and CD will request funding for remuneration as needed.

**Recommendation 25** That the region increase Volunteers' living allowance, per PCM section 221.5.5.5.

Concur<sup>24</sup>

Volunteers (transfers and reinstated) are scheduled to return to post on July 27 and the next training input is scheduled to arrive in December. Prior to their arrival, we will conduct an independent survey to ensure the living allowance is adequate to meet their needs as defined by PC MS 221. The living allowance will be set with authority under PC MS 221.5.5.5. Per the manual a living allowance survey will be conducted to justify or modify the living allowance. A review of the living allowance survey will be made and the results will be forwarded to your office for approval within 90 days.

As you are aware Guinea has been suffering from hyperinflation and extreme currency devaluation (111% in FY 06 and 156% in FY 07) over the past several years. Post conducted three living allowance surveys during 2006 with an 80% return (please see attached memo). The latest was performed in December and resulted in an increase of 114%. Our independent market survey reflected increase in many consumable items greater than 100%. This survey was not submitted for implementation due to the evacuation of the Volunteers. Living Allowance surveys were also conducted in March and May of 2006. The May survey resulted in an increase that was implemented in July.

Peace Corps Guinea will continue to utilize PC MS 221.5.5.5 to ensure that Volunteer living allowance remains adequate to meet their needs.

**Recommendation 26** That the region renegotiate the personal services contracts as allowed by OFMH section 27.2.5 (*Note that the OFMH section that addresses this issue is now 28.3*).

Partially concur<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Attachment 25A Memorandum from AO to CAO regarding volunteer living allowance

<sup>25</sup> Attachment 26 MS 743, section 10.3 Basic Compensation

According to Peace Corps Manual Section 743, section 10.3 Basic Compensation, “Increases to basic compensation shall only be made in extraordinary circumstances or with contemplated increases in the Statement of Work and shall only be made by contract modification after a period of performance (base or option period) is complete. Changes to the State Department Local Compensation Plan (LCP) do not result in changes to the contract basic compensation. The basic compensation in the contract itself is what determines basic compensation to be paid.” Furthermore, upon checking with General Counsel, post should not modify contracts until the end of performance period.

Region agreed to seek approval to modify Peace Corps/Guinea’s personal services contracts from the Chief of Staff, the Office of Acquisitions and Contracts, and Chief Financial Officer once the revised LCP was released, in June 2007. The Region is still in discussion with OACM, CFO, and General Counsel regarding this situation and hopes to have a decision by September 1, 2007.

**Recommendation 27** That the region work with the post and the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research (the Center) to identify financial resources to conduct a training workshop for the program and training staff in Guinea. The purpose of this training would be twofold:

- Facilitate greater integration of program and training functions; and
- Assist program and training staff to design training units to provide the Volunteers with opportunities to practice the technical skills they require to perform their work assignments and illustrate the ways that Volunteers can apply those skills in the Guinean context.

Concur

The TM is eager to develop and implement TDEs, better integrate programming and training, and facilitate new opportunities for trainees to practice their skills in a Guinean context. Post has invited SRPTC Andrea Wojnar-Diagne to Guinea this late summer or early fall (before the next PST) to facilitate a workshop with programming and training staff that will address these issues. In addition, the workshop will include the new Training Design and Evaluation (TDE) concept and an implementation plan.

Examples of how the training staff and APCDs are working toward achieving these goals include:

- In March 2007, the Regional SRPTC in Senegal invited the Guinea/TM to attend a TDE workshop facilitated by Center staff. Following the Senegal workshop, the PC/Guinea TM stayed in Senegal to work with the TM/Senegal and the SRPTC. As a result, the TM/Guinea became more versed in the TDE process and how it can help build better collaboration between P&T units. Once all of the P&T staff returns to Guinea, the TM will transfer that knowledge.
- May 29 - June 22, 2007, the PC/Guinea TM attended OST at headquarters and was advised by Center staff on the importance of his responsibility to insist upon interaction between training staff and APCDs (i.e. integrate programming and training).
- SED APCD Josh Romalis has created business support TDAs for his SED Volunteers. Trainees take the entire length of the PST to complete the TDAs. Josh Romalis implemented this concept during the Uganda PST earlier this year and will further refine and implement these methods in the next PC/Guinea PST.
- Region and the Center are planning a Language Cross Culture CWACA sub-regional workshop to be held in Benin the first week of October 2007. The agenda will include curriculum design, adult learning principles filtered into language and cross cultural curricula, lesson planning in alignment with TDE to include learning objectives, structural segments of lessons, teaching methodologies, evaluation tools, ongoing learning systems, cross cultural facilitation, homestay debriefings for cross-cultural learning, mini-diversity session (foundation of American diversity training), and designing community contact assignments. It is anticipated that Guinea staff will attend.

To be completed and implemented with arrival of new training class on December 8, 2007.

**Recommendation 28** That the programming and training staff, along with a representative sample of experienced Volunteers, conduct a comprehensive performance analysis of Volunteer work assignments to determine the sector competencies required by Volunteers to achieve the tasks in the project plans. This should include revising the task analysis and project plan, as needed, as well as soliciting input from Volunteers and counterparts on what Volunteers actually do in their projects.

Concur

Post would like the programming and training staff, along with SRPTC Wojnar-Diagne and the Center, to conduct a comprehensive performance analysis of Volunteer work assignments to determine sector competencies. Post will also request Center assistance to conduct project reviews in FY09 (all projects will receive some level of review, except Small Enterprise Development which was reviewed in September 2006 and given a green status by Peace Corps Center SED Specialist Fran Kambour in January 2007). The Center is also prepared to assist with questionnaires, methods, interview planning, focus group planning, and writing results into frameworks. Post will work with Volunteers upon their return to Guinea beginning on July 27, 2007.

**Recommendation 29** That the APCD/SED and APCD/Agroforestry work with the training staff to develop hands-on training exercises for their Volunteers.

Concur<sup>26</sup>

Post is in the process of creating a satellite training site for Agroforestry PCTs for this purpose. This new site is conveniently located near to the main training site in Forecariah, and provides available land for PCTs to use for hands-on activities such as tree grafting, gardening and demonstration plots. APCD/SED will also work with the training manager to identify possible hand-on activities related to work done by SED PCVs. The Center is available to assist with developing this hands-on training as well. The CD has issued a memorandum to the Agroforestry and SED APCDs asking them to collaborate on developing hands-on training sessions for the next PST, scheduled for FY08 December.

To be implemented with the next training group scheduled to arrive 8 December 2007.

**Recommendation 30** That the training manager conduct site visits to observe the Volunteers at their work.

Concur<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Attachment 29 Memorandum from Country Director to TM and APCDs regarding hands-on training program. PST session format will be completed and sent in November 08

<sup>27</sup> Attachment 30 Memorandum from Country Director to TM regarding site visits

The CD issued a memorandum June 2007 directing the TM to visit Volunteers at their sites upon their return to Guinea beginning on July 27, 2007.

**Recommendation 31** That the programming and training staff conduct a comprehensive task analysis to determine the language skills needed by the Volunteers to carry out their work assignments.

Concur<sup>28</sup>

According to a June 2007 memorandum from the AO to the TM and all APCDs, the APCDs and TM will work with counterparts and collaborating organizations to determine language skills needed for PCVs to carry out their assignments. In addition, The TM, during OST June 2007, worked with the Center Language Specialist to enhance the skills and abilities required to conduct such an analysis.

These tasks will be completed in August and September 2007 and any necessary changes will be implemented in future PSTs.

**Recommendation 32** That the post offer Volunteers additional local language ISTs for Volunteers who depend on local languages for their work. These could occur at the regional houses under the supervision of the regional coordinators.

Concur<sup>29</sup>

As per post's PCV handbook, and included in post's annual budget, procedures are described and funding is provided for PCVs to obtain additional language tutoring at their sites. Post has issued a memorandum to PCVs, dated May 2007 (to be distributed upon the Volunteers' return) describing how they can organize more formal session in groups by pooling the language tutoring funding they are provided. Also, post already provides 3 days of language training to PCVs at early service IST. Memorandum to RCs and PCVs written, to be issued upon the return of PCVs, beginning on July 27, 2007.

In addition, post will incorporate a request to fund this recommendation in their FY08 Operational Plan and Region will

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<sup>28</sup> Attachment 31 Memorandum from CD to TM and all APCDs regarding assessing language skill needs

<sup>29</sup> Attachment 32 Memorandum from Administrative Officer to RCs and PCVs regarding language tutoring.

fund it based on available resources. Staff will further develop the training capacity of language tutors contracted by PCVs to improve language learning by conducting a training/orientation and providing them with materials.

**Recommendation 33** That the post request manuals and other materials for supporting language tutors from the Center's training unit.

Concur

To be completed by September 2007.

**Recommendation 34** That the region work with the Center's training unit to support a sub-regional workshop in West Africa on language learning. This could encompass PST and IST language learning, training and working with tutors, and materials development.

Concur

Region and the Center are planning a Language Cross Culture CWACA sub-regional workshop to be held in Benin the first week of October 2007. In addition to language learning, training/working with tutors, and materials development, the workshop will include curriculum design, adult learning principles filtered into language and cross cultural curricula, lesson planning in alignment with TDE to include learning objectives, structural segments of lessons, teaching methodologies, evaluation tools, ongoing learning systems, cross cultural facilitation, homestay debriefings for cross-cultural learning, mini-diversity session (foundation of American diversity training), and designing community contact assignments. It is anticipated that Guinea staff will attend. Workshop is scheduled to take place the first week of October 2007.

**Recommendation 35** That the post identify and train a pool of local language tutors.

Concur

Volunteers can be reimbursed up to 75,000 GNF per month for language tutoring. Volunteers are encouraged to hire language tutors once they arrive in their communities and to also coordinate language training retreats in their regional capital. PC/Guinea staff has offered to, and will continue to, assist Volunteers in finding qualified language tutors.

In addition, Post will submit a request to hire a permanent language coordinator to identify and train local language tutors in the FY08 Operations Plan. The Region will fund this request as resources become available. The Ops Plan submission is due to Peace Corps headquarters by August 3, 2007 and decisions will be made by October 5, 2007.

- Recommendation 36** That the country director work with the APCD/Agroforestry to improve site development, including:
- Identification of viable counterparts and host organizations for the Volunteers.
  - Development of work activities for the Volunteers' first three to six months.

Concur<sup>30</sup>

APCD/Agroforestry will work with Department of Water and Forests contacts to outline criteria for counterparts and identify locations where PCVs are most needed and PCV partners exist. APCD/Agroforestry will develop a plan for deployment of Agroforestry Volunteers that will complement planning for other sectors to ensure PCV support and cross-sector collaboration, and efficient use of PC/Guinea resources. David Miller, Natural Resource Management Specialist from the Center, has agreed to work with, and supply resources to, the APCD as well.

Documents to be completed by October 2007.

- Recommendation 37** That the country director work with the APCD/Agroforestry to improve the quality of staff support to the agroforestry Volunteers, including:

- Determining an appropriate amount of time for site visits to first-year Volunteers and
- setting goals for the visits that will best support the Volunteers' work.
- The APCD/Agroforestry provide feedback to Volunteers on their quarterly reports.

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<sup>30</sup> Attachment 36A Performance Discussion Summary for APCD/Agroforestry  
Attachment 36B Work and Development Plan for APCD/Agroforestry  
Attachment 36C Memorandum from Country Director to APCD/Agroforestry regarding improvement of PCV support



Concur<sup>31</sup>

These issues have been raised in the APCD/Agroforestry's annual performance review and he is aware that these changes need to be made. APCD/Agroforestry will use the site visit checklist and additional topics of discussion based on needs determined from PCV quarterly reports when conducting visits. Additionally, the APCD/Agroforestry will submit a site visit schedule at least 2-3 months in advance at Senior Staff Meetings. The APCD will spend at least two hours minimum at each PCV site. These points were also reiterated in a memorandum from the CD to the APCD in May 2007.

This will be implemented upon the return of PCVs to Guinea, beginning on July 27, 2007.

**Recommendation 38** The country director and the four APCDs institute supervised quarterly or bi-annual meetings at the regional houses for Volunteers to exchange project ideas, strategies, and experiences.

Concur<sup>32</sup>

In an on-going effort to minimize use of public transport and keep PCVs at their sites and focused on their work, post suggests combining these meetings with VAC committee meetings, which are held bi-monthly and alternate between the three regional offices and Conakry. At least one senior staff member attends every meeting, and the composition of the VAC committee is representative of all PCVs (including sectors, time in service and region). The CD issued a memorandum to senior staff, RCs, VAC and PCVs requesting the VAC committee to exchange project ideas.

The first series (one in each region) of such meetings to start at least six months after the new December 07 input of PCVs are at site (by July 2008).

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<sup>31</sup> Attachment 36A Performance Discussion Summary for APCD/Agroforestry  
Attachment 36B Work and Development Plan for APCD/Agroforestry  
Attachment 36C Memorandum from Country Director to APCD/Agroforestry regarding improvement of PCV support

<sup>32</sup> Attachment 38 Memorandum from CD to Senior Staff, RCs, VAC and PCVs regarding exchange meetings

**Recommendation 39** That the post and the region develop a workshop for agroforestry Volunteers and counterparts to:

- Help counterparts and Volunteers work more effectively together.
- Teach or reinforce their project design and management skills.

Concur

Post will submit a request to fund such an effort in its Operations Plan for FY08. The Region and the Center will fund this request as resources become available. The Ops Plan submission is due to Peace Corps headquarters by August 3, 2007 and decisions will be made by October 5, 2007. Additionally, long-term efforts will be made to include counterparts in ISTs and PSTS wherever possible.

**Recommendation 40** That OPSI revise PCM section 720 to include the following elements:

- Posts receiving OPSI funding must establish a grants review committee comprised of PC staff and Volunteers to ensure that each proposal meets OPSI's criteria and that applications are complete before forwarding them to the country director for his/her signature.
- The country director and/or the Volunteer's APCD conduct a mandatory site visit to confirm that OPSI funds were spent as specified in the project proposal.
- Administrative officers review and approve proposal budgets before submission to OPSI.
- Volunteers submit physical evidence of a project's completion, such as photographs.
- Volunteers submit copies of all receipts with the project completion report to OPSI.
- Volunteers are required to sign an agreement not to accept funds outside of official Peace Corps mechanisms.
- Country directors who become aware that Volunteers are violating PCM section 721 be subject to administrative separation.

Partially concur<sup>33</sup>

OPSI has taken the above points into consideration and is studying the best venue and manner to address the underlying issues. OPSI concurs that better training of field staff and greater involvement of

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<sup>33</sup> Attachment 40-44 Response from OPSI to OIG

post in Partnership projects will improve their quality. OPSI is currently in the process of revising MS 720, and has already revised the PCPP Volunteer Handbook and created a training module that address many of these issues.

Specifically, MS 720 will require post to establish an appropriate approval procedure for proposals and a review committee, comprised of staff members and if possible Volunteers. It will continue to require PCVs to submit receipts with the project completion report. Other materials, such as the revised handbook and the training module, encourage post to visit PCPP projects, where feasible, and encourage PCVs to submit photos of their projects. This will be an on going effort.

**Recommendation 41** That the agency provide travel funds to OPSI to be used to conduct inspection visits and provide training to posts as needed.

Concur

OPSI has already planned outreach visits to the field to train staff, e.g. to the Africa Region CD conference in Maputo in May, and to the IAP PTO conference in Washington in June. In addition, OPSI has created a training module that was represented at the EMA CD conference in Hong Kong in April and the EMA Program Managers' conference in Kyrgyz Republic in April, and will be represented at the IAP APCD conference in Guatemala in May. OPSI will also provide training to field staff during the next OST in June. Every effort will be made to continue to train field staff at trainings and to visit posts where possible.

**Recommendation 42** That OPSI simplify the PCPP application process, using the Small Project Assistance procedures as a model.

Concur

OPSI is revising the on-line application form so that it is simple and easy to use. The already revised handbook also simplifies and clarifies the application process. This was completed June 15, 2007.

**Recommendation 43** That OPSI draft a handbook with clear guidance for staff and Volunteers, including:

- Instructions on how to write an effective proposal.
- A sample project proposal.
- Clear explanations of criteria, especially sustainability and indicators and measures of success.

- A budget template.
- A checklist with sufficient detail to ensure that Volunteers meet OPSI's expectations.
- Online availability of the handbook to Volunteers.

Concur

In early April, OPSI issued a revised PCPP Volunteer Handbook and Best Practices CD that address all points. These are also available on line. In addition, Peace Corps/Togo will share its guidance to volunteers on the same subject. These efforts are completed.

**Recommendation 44** That OPSI work with the Center's Overseas Training Unit to revise their training module for country directors, APCDs, and Volunteers.

Concur

In April, OPSI completed a training module for staff and PCVs, including a revised handbook, a PowerPoint describing procedures, and a range of Best Practices materials. This recommendation has been completed.

## MEMORANDUM

TO: David Kotz, Office of the Inspector General

THRU: Verle Lanier, Associate Director/Volunteer Support

FROM: Scott Saxman, M.D., F.A.C.P. Director, Office of Medical Services

DATE: May 15, 2007

SUBJECT: Response to Preliminary Guinea Audit Report from the Office of Inspector General dated March, 2007

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**14. That OMS work with the PCMOs to draft guidance and training materials to effectively and accurately convey the agency's and the post's malaria policies and procedures. These revisions should include, but are not limited to:**

- **Clarification that Volunteers not in compliance with malaria policy will be administratively separated at the discretion of the country director.**
- **Clarification that Volunteers who are not able to comply due to intolerance to the drugs will be medically separated and that the post may consult with OMS regarding the option of transferring the Volunteer to a country outside of the malaria zone.**
- **Clarification that Volunteers who take their prophylaxis regularly can still contract malaria.**
- **Establish informed consent testing for the level of prophylaxis in the blood stream.**
- **Advise Volunteers of the evidence that mefloquine remains the most effective drug for the prevention of malaria in West Africa.**
- **Provide information on the steps currently being taken by Peace Corps to routinely monitor malaria drug resistance in Guinea.**

Concur with all except bullet number four.

The Office of Medical Services has developed a slide set and handout that will be provided to the PCMO's in Guinea clarifying and/or describing the above points. OMS representatives will meet with the PCMO at the upcoming CME and work with them to consider how these materials can be best incorporated into the training for new volunteers and how this information can be reinforced during the Volunteer's service. OMS has also obtained copies of the slide set used by the Guinea PCMO's during PST and will work with them to make these more user friendly for the Trainees and to insure that the information is provided at a level which is more understandable for the Trainee and the Volunteer.

In regard to bullet number four, OMS no longer mandates that drug levels be drawn on Volunteers who develop malaria, but are obtained only if medically indicated. Peace Corps does not require formal written informed consent for blood tests obtained in the context of the medical care of a Volunteer.

**22. That the Office of Medical Services eliminate the discrepancy between PCM section 723 and TG 200.**

Do not concur.

Dr. Scott Saxman has discussed with Ms. Shelley Elbert and both agree that there is no discrepancy between PCM section 723 and TG 200. Ms. Elbert has changed the recommendation to read: "That the PCMOs contact Kenneth Kim, Chief of Quality improvement in the Medical Services division, to verify that their safe is in compliance with Peace Corps policy." We concur with that recommendation. For accuracy, please change "Medical Services division" to "Office of Medical Services."

**Other responses from the Office of Medical Services:**

On page 11 of the report, it states that "a Volunteer was recently diagnosed with melanoma..." This appears to be incorrect. Dr. Saxman has reviewed the medical record of the Volunteer in question (as identified by the OIG). The Volunteer had a small lesion on the nose that the PCMO was aware of which was present prior to the time she entered Peace Corps. According to the medical record the lesion changed in size, at which time a decision was made to perform a biopsy. Because of the lack of resources in Guinea as well as the fact that the Volunteer was going home on vacation, the decision was made to give her authorization to see a dermatologist at her home of record. The biopsy revealed a basal cell carcinoma which was treated with a limited local excision termed Mohs micrographic surgery. She recovered uneventfully. Because of the inference in the report that this was a "misdiagnosed condition," and the implication of an allegation of misdiagnosing a malignant melanoma—a highly aggressive form of skin cancer which can cause death, OMS would recommend removing or correcting this in the report.

In addition, while not directed to OMS, recommendation 13 states that Post should "provide SPF 50 sunscreen for the volunteers." It is not clear whether this is intended to mean "only sunscreen with SPF 50 protection." In fact, there is only a very small difference in the UV penetration rate between sunscreens with SPF 30 and SPF 50, and often people find SPF 50 sunscreen more difficult to use because it is generally more greasy and pasty and difficult to apply. OMS generally recommends that Posts routinely provide sunscreen with SPF 30 or greater and educate Volunteers on the proper method to apply sunscreen as well as instructing Volunteers to wear protective clothing and wide brimmed hats in conjunction with sunscreen.



**To:** David Kotz, Inspector General

**From:** Pamela Martin, Acting Director, Office of Private Sector Initiatives

**Date:** May 7, 2007

**Subject:** Response to Preliminary Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Guinea

We appreciate the feedback that the Inspector General's Office has provided the Office of Private Sector Initiatives regarding its work with Peace Corps/Guinea. Enclosed is our response to the Preliminary Program Evaluation Report for Peace Corps/Guinea. Please let us know if you have any questions or comments.

Attachments

Cc: Henry McKoy, Regional Director, Africa  
Scott Saxman, Director, Office of Medical Services  
Wil Bryant, Associate Director, Office of Management  
David Liner, Chief of Staff/Operations  
A. Courtney Santonicola, Deputy Chief of Staff/Operations  
Stephen Peterson, Country Director  
Amy Horton, Director, Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research



**Recommendation #40 That OPSI revise PCM section 720 to include the following elements:**

- **Posts receiving OPSI funding must establish a grants review committee comprised of Peace Corps staff and Volunteers to ensure that each proposal meets OPSI's criteria and that applications are complete before forwarding them to the country director for his/her signature.**
- **The country director and/or the Volunteer's APCD conduct a mandatory site visit to confirm that OPSI funds were spent as specified in the project proposal.**
- **Administrative officers review and approve proposal budgets before submission to OPSI.**
- **Volunteers submit physical evidence of a project's completion, such as photographs.**
- **Volunteers submit copies of all available receipts with the project completion report to OPSI.**
- **Volunteers are required to sign an agreement not to accept funds outside of official Peace Corps mechanisms. Country directors who become aware that Volunteers are violating PCM section 721 subject them to administrative separation.**

**Partially concur.**

OPSI has taken the above points into consideration and is studying the best venue and manner to address the underlying issues. OPSI concurs that better training of field staff and greater involvement of post in Partnership projects will improve their quality. OPSI is currently in the process of revising MS 720, and has already revised the PCPP Volunteer Handbook and created a training module that address many of these issues.

Specifically, MS 720 will require post to establish an appropriate approval procedure for proposals and a review committee, comprised of staff members and if possible Volunteers. It will continue to require PCVs to submit receipts with the project completion report. Other materials, such as the revised handbook and the training module, encourage post to visit PCPP projects, where feasible, and encourage PCVs to submit photos of their projects.

**Recommendation #41 That the agency provide travel funds to OPSI to be used to conduct inspection visits and provide training to posts as needed.**

**Concur.**

OPSI has already planned outreach visits to the field to train staff, e.g. to the Africa Region CD conference in Maputo in May, and to the IAP PTO conference in Washington in June. In addition, OPSI has created a training module that was represented at the EMA CD conference in Hong Kong in April and the EMA Program Managers' conference in Kyrgyz Republic in April, and will be represented at the IAP APCD conference in Guatemala in May. OPSI will

also provide training to field staff during the next OST in June. Every effort will be made to continue to train field staff at trainings and to visit posts where possible.

*Date:* Ongoing.

**Recommendation #42 That OPSI simplify and tighten the PCPP application process, using the Small Project Assistance procedures as a model.**

**Concur.** OPSI is revising the on-line application form so that it is simple and easy to use. The already revised handbook also simplifies and clarifies the application process.

*Date:* June 15, 2007

**Recommendation #43 That OPSI draft a handbook with clear guidance for staff and Volunteers, including:**

- **Instructions on how to write an effective proposal.**
- **A sample project proposal.**
- **Clear explanations of criteria, especially sustainability and indicators and measures of success.**
- **A budget template.**
- **A checklist with sufficient detail to ensure that Volunteers meet OPSI's expectations.**
- **Online availability of the handbook to Volunteers.**

**Concur.**

In early April, OPSI issued a revised PCPP Volunteer Handbook and Best Practices CD that address all points. These are also available on line.

*Date:* Completed

**Recommendation #44 That OPSI work with the Center's Overseas Training Unit to revise their training module for country directors, APCDs, and Volunteers.**

**Concur.**

In April, OPSI completed a training module for staff and PCVs, including a revised handbook, a powerpoint describing procedures, and a range of Best Practices materials.

*Date:* Completed.



### OIG COMMENTS

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The region concurred with 38 recommendations and partially concurred with 6 of the 44 recommendations. We closed recommendation nos. 1 – 3, 7, 9 – 12, 15 – 22, 24, 33, 37, and 42 – 44. Recommendation nos. 4 – 6, 8, 13, 14, 23, 25 – 32, 34 – 36, and 38 – 41 remain open pending confirmation from the chief compliance officer that the following has been received:

- For recommendation no. 4, documentation that the revised SSC's position description includes the responsibilities of updating and testing the warden system, as stated in the May 23, 2007 memorandum from the country director.
- For recommendation no. 5, documentation that the post has reinstituted biweekly radio checks with Volunteers.
- For recommendation no. 6, a copy of the evacuation report including lessons learned and best practices.
- For recommendation no. 8, copy of the vehicle assessment report scheduled to be completed in March 2008.
- For recommendation no. 13, documentation that the post is receiving and distributing sunscreen to Volunteers on a timely basis and a copy of the justification for providing sunscreen with a lower SPF than the level identified in our recommendation.
- For recommendation no. 14, documentation from OMS that training support has been provided to PC/Guinea and a copy of Peace Corps policy that provides that Peace Corps Medical Officers may medically test Volunteers without obtaining their consent.
- For recommendation no. 23, documentation that the revised OMS guidance has been implemented.
- For recommendation no. 25, documentation that Volunteer living allowance surveys have been conducted and analyzed and documentation that the living allowance meets the needs of the Volunteers.
- For recommendation no. 26, documentation that the region has renegotiated the personal services contracts, as allowed by OFMH section 27.2.5.<sup>1</sup>
- For recommendation no. 27, documentation that PC/Guinea staff have participated in the Coastal West and Central Africa workshop.

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<sup>1</sup> OFMH version issued January 9, 2007.

## APPENDIX E

- For recommendation no. 28, a copy of the comprehensive performance analysis.
- For recommendation no. 29, a copy of the training status report.
- For recommendation no. 30, a copy of the training manager's site visit schedule.
- For recommendation no. 31, a copy of the Center's Language Specialist's report that includes the support provided to the post.
- For recommendation no. 32, documentation that additional local language training has been established for Volunteers.
- For recommendation no. 34, documentation that a regional workshop on language learning has been conducted.
- For recommendation no. 35, a copy of the list of trained local language tutors.
- For recommendation no. 36, a copy of the APCD/Agroforestry's plan to improve site selection.
- For recommendation no. 38, a copy of the agenda for regional meetings held in 2008.
- For recommendation no. 39, a copy of the workshop agenda and a list of participants.
- For recommendation no. 40, a copy of revised Peace Corps Manual section 720.
- For recommendation no. 41, documentation that travel funds has been provided to OPSI.

Though we have closed recommendation no. 22, we would like to note that the guidance found in PCM section 734.2.1.7 and TG 200.7.1 regarding the requirements for the storing of controlled substances is similar but not identical. The discrepancy between the two policies is minor; however, the difference may create confusion among non-native English speakers and could result in confusion or lack of compliance. We suggest that management review and revise these two policies to bring them into alignment with each other.

In their response, the region described actions they are taking or intend 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 they have taken these actions nor 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 audit the impact.

## APPENDIX F

### OIG CONTACTS AND STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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#### **OIG CONTACTS**

If you wish to comment on the quality or usefulness of this report to help us improve our products, please e-mail Alice Bunker, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations and Inspections, at [abunker@peacecorps.gov](mailto:abunker@peacecorps.gov), or call (202) 692-2913.

#### **STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Alice Bunker, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations and Inspections and Senior Evaluators Shelley Elbert and Lynn Khadiagala managed all aspects of this assignment, and Lori Carruthers contributed to the writing of this report.

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