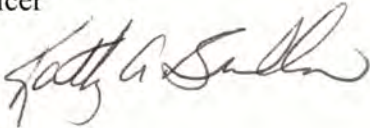




OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Since 1961.

To: Aaron Williams, Director
Carlos Torres, Regional Director, IAP
Daljit Bains, Chief Compliance Officer

From: Kathy A. Buller, Inspector General 

Date: February 28, 2011

Subject: Final Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Jamaica
(IG-11-03-E)

Transmitted for your information is our final report on the program evaluation of Peace Corps/Jamaica.

Management concurred with all 16 recommendations. Based on the documentation provided, we closed five recommendations: number(s) 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities. However, when we feel it is warranted, we may conduct a follow-up review to confirm that action has been taken and to evaluate the impact.

Eleven recommendations, number(s) 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, remain open. OIG will review and consider closing recommendations 1, 2, 4, 8, and 16 when the documentation reflected in the agency's response to the preliminary report is received. For recommendations 3, 7, 12, 13, 14, and 15, additional documentation is requested. Our comments, which are in the report as Appendix C, address these matters. Please respond with documentation to close the remaining open recommendations within 60 days of receipt of this memorandum. You may address questions regarding follow-up or documentation to Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Jim O'Keefe, or to Senior Evaluator Heather Robinson.

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

Attachments

cc: Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Deputy Director
Stacy Rhodes, Chief of Staff/Chief of Operations
Elisa Montoya, White House Liaison/Senior Advisor to the Director
Bill Rubin, General Counsel
Roger Conrad, Chief of Operations, IAP
Carla Ellis, Country Director PC/Jamaica

Rosie Mauk, Associate Director (VRS)
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Sarah Morgenthau, Director, Peace Corps Response
Jennifer Chavez Rubio, Director, Office of Private Sector Initiatives
Amy Johnson, Chief of Programming and Training, IAP
Dawn Hodge, Country Desk Officer, Jamaica



Peace Corps Office of Inspector General



Coastline in Portland, Jamaica



Final Program Evaluation Report: Peace Corps/Jamaica IG-11-03-E

February 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over 3,500 Peace Corps Volunteers have served the people of Jamaica since the program was launched in 1962. The program underwent programming changes in 2010, and there are currently two project sectors in Jamaica: (1) green initiative and (2) youth as promise. There are also two youth-related projects for Peace Corps Response Volunteers (PCRVs): (1) sexual and reproductive health and (2) youth and sports. At the onset of this evaluation, 79 Volunteers were serving in Jamaica, including 13 PCRVs.

Since 2009, PC/Jamaica (hereafter referred to as “the post”) experienced leadership and programming changes that significantly impacted the stability of the country program. In the past two years, the post had at least four permanent or temporary staff members serving in the country director position. The previous country director served in the position from February 2009 until her sudden, unplanned departure in May 2010. Staff morale declined under her leadership as she initiated and implemented organizational and programming changes that were not carried out in a participatory manner or supported by staff or Volunteers. Under her direction, the post closed its health project. This decision was made without the input of project partners, staff, and Volunteers, and there is no data to support the project closure. These programming modifications resulted in changes to the post’s organizational structure, and the resulting staff departures were not handled in a respectful, professional manner.

Increases in the post’s PEPFAR program were not well-planned or well-implemented. The previous country director advocated for a significant increase in the amount of funding received from the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which increased from \$50,000 to \$500,000. However, the post was unable to develop a feasible budget to support the \$500,000 funding level. The post did not secure the resources necessary to implement PEPFAR, and the safety and security coordinator (SSC) assumed programming responsibilities in addition to safety and security-related duties. This diverted important resources away from Volunteer safety and security in Jamaica, where there is a high crime rate. In addition, the post did not integrate HIV/AIDS into its programming, and most Volunteers interviewed as part of the evaluation were not involved in HIV/AIDS related activities.

The Peace Corps Response (PCR) program was not well planned or implemented. The post developed two new youth-related PCR programs under the direction of the previous country director. However, most programming staff members were excluded from assisting with the PCR program. Many PCRVs were unhappy with their sites because they did not have specific job assignments that could achieve measureable outcomes in a short timeframe, which is a basic element of PCR programming. In addition, some of the PCR work assignments did not match the expectations set during recruitment and orientation.

We found that, not only did the programming changes related to the health project, PEPFAR, and PCR negatively impact staff morale, they also impacted the Volunteers' satisfaction with their service in Jamaica. The health project was closed after Volunteers had been recruited and trained so Volunteers received inaccurate descriptions of their assignments and were unfamiliar with their project plan goals. The staff did not have time to incorporate the project changes into pre-service training (PST), which also left some Volunteers inadequately prepared to carry out the technical aspects of their assignments.

In addition to the challenges created by numerous programming changes, we found that many Volunteers struggled to integrate culturally and find meaningful, sustainable work. Volunteers stated that they were doing jobs that should be done by Jamaicans, were not able to transfer skills to host country nationals, or were concerned that their roles as grant writers made partner organizations too dependent on Peace Corps funding. Some Volunteers were frustrated with programming staff support, particularly the staff's lack of discretion and professionalism; ineffective site visits; and infrequent, unhelpful Volunteer Reporting Form (VRF) feedback. These concerns have resulted in a high number of site changes and Volunteer resignations.

One area where the post excels is providing safety and security support to Volunteers. The post has a high-performing SSC who is trusted by Volunteers. Volunteers and staff are well-prepared for emergencies, and the post is prepared to respond if a crime occurs against a Volunteer. According to documentation from the Office of Safety and Security, the post has "implemented effective security protocols that have resulted in a 50 percent reduction in crimes against Volunteers in the past 5 years, in spite of a steady increase in the national crime rate during that time." We commend the post and Volunteers for their strong focus on this critical aspect of post operations.

Our report contains 16 recommendations, which, if implemented, should strengthen programming operations and correct the deficiencies detailed in the accompanying report.

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HOST COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Jamaica is a small island nation in the Caribbean Sea that is home to approximately 2.8 million people, the majority of whom are of African origin. It is the third largest Caribbean island and is located approximately 90 miles south of Cuba. It is 146 miles long and 45 miles wide at its widest, with 635 miles of coastline.

The island was first inhabited by the Taino Indians prior to the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1494. The island was then colonized by the Spanish until the British displaced them in 1655 and established a plantation economy based on sugar, cocoa, and coffee. Jamaica gained its independence from Britain in 1962 and remains a member of the Commonwealth of British affiliates and former colonies. Jamaica's official head of state is the queen of England and a freely elected prime minister serves as the local government head. Jamaica is an English-speaking country; however, most Jamaicans speak Patois, a dialect derived from several languages, including English.

Jamaica faces large-scale unemployment and underemployment. The economy is heavily dependent on services, which account for more than 60 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The country derives most of its foreign exchange from remittances, bauxite/alumina, and tourism. Tourism revenues account for 20 percent of GDP. Jamaica is also used as a transshipment point for cocaine from South America to North America and Europe, and there is illicit cultivation and consumption of cannabis. Corruption is a major concern, and there is substantial money-laundering activity.

Jamaica is listed as "high human development" in the 2010 United Nations Human Development Report.¹ In 2003, the literacy rate was reported to be 87.9 percent. The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate was reported to be 1.6 percent in 2007. The country's environmental issues include heavy rates of deforestation; coastal waters polluted by industrial waste, sewage, and oil spills; damage to coral reefs; and air pollution in Kingston, the capital city, due to vehicle emissions.

PEACE CORPS PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The first Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Jamaica on June 12, 1962. More than 3,500 Volunteers have served in the country since that time. The program has undergone several significant changes since it began in 1962. Initially, Volunteers worked in cities, towns, and the countryside as teachers, agricultural extensionists, health educators, and rural development workers. In the mid-1970s, Volunteers were assigned to schools,

¹ The Human Development Report publishes an annual Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI provides a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and income. Countries receive a ranking that ranges from "very high human development" to "low human development" based on related data.

hospitals, health clinics, and other government ministry offices as teachers, nurses, and loan officers. Over time, Volunteers began working to conserve natural resources, promote hygiene and healthy living, help fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic, promote information technology and small business, and help youth gain the skills and education they need for their future.

The post is currently undergoing programming changes that began in 2009 under the direction of the previous country director who left the post in May 2010. Before these changes were implemented, Volunteers were assigned to one of three sectors: youth as promise, community environmental health (hereafter referred to as the health project), and environmental awareness. In 2010, the post closed the health project and consolidated programming into two projects, the green initiative and youth as promise. On May 21, 2010, 38 trainees assigned to the green initiative and youth as promise projects swore in and became training group 81 (Group 81). More detailed explanations of the two project areas are discussed below:

- **Green Initiative**

Volunteers serving in the green initiative project are placed in assignments that aim to increase the level of environmental knowledge in schools and communities, address food security issues through improved environmentally friendly agricultural practices, initiate eco-friendly income generation activities, and build the capacity of local organizations to effectively manage themselves.

- **Youth As Promise**

The post partners with the Ministry of Education's Guidance and Counseling Unit and Education Transformation Project. Youth as promise Volunteers support schools by working in partnership with regional literacy specialists to strengthen literacy programs; provide training and technical support to teachers to help them integrate information and education technology into the school curriculum and management; and strengthen school peer education, HIV/AIDS prevention, life skills education and parent outreach programs. A smaller number of Volunteers work with non-government and community based agencies involved in alternative education programs and community multimedia centers, primarily in rural, remote communities and small towns.

In addition to the Volunteers who serve a standard 27-month term, 13 PCRVs began serving in August 2010. These Volunteers were recruited to serve in two areas, sexual and reproductive health, and youth and sports. These projects are described below:

- **Sexual and Reproductive Health**

This project educates youth, promotes behavioral change, and supports organizations in reinforcing methods that reduce the high incidence of teenage sexual activity and increase the incidence of safe sex.

- **Youth and Sports**

This project utilizes sports as a vehicle to empower at-risk boys through life skills lessons embedded in sports programs.

Many of these programming changes were initiated by the previous country director who relinquished her position in May 2010. Her departure was unplanned. A replacement country director arrived in August 2010.

In total, there were 79 Volunteers serving in Jamaica at the onset of this evaluation. Volunteers were placed in a mix of rural communities, small towns, peri-urban centers, and in and around tourist cities.

EVALUATION RESULTS

PROGRAMMING

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

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

In reviewing the post's grant programs, the evaluation found evidence that the Small Project Assistance (SPA) and Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) programs had not been well-managed, but the post was already taking steps to address the related issues. Post staff was working with headquarters staff to improve oversight of these grant programs. The post's SPA committee membership had changed to include more staff members, and staff was increasing its oversight responsibilities of both SPA and PCPP grants.

Project changes were not supported by staff or properly communicated to Volunteers.

The previous country director initiated significant programming changes upon her arrival in February 2009. Under her direction, the post closed its health sector and moved Volunteers into the remaining projects; health education Volunteers working in schools were assigned to the youth sector, and Volunteers with construction and engineering skills were assigned to a health infrastructure track within the green initiative project. The post also launched two Peace Corps Response pilot programs – sexual and reproductive health and youth and sports – in an attempt to grow the youth as promise sector.

Two of Peace Corps' Programming and Training Guidance booklets – "Introduction and Overview" and "Project Design and Evaluation" – provide guidance for reviewing and revising project plans. These guides encourage the post to use a participatory process when revising its project plans. According to the "Project Design and Evaluation" booklet, "The [associate Peace Corps director] (APCD)/PM manages the review and analysis process, with input from the PTO, CD, the project advisory committee, and the training manager." In addition, the host country government, existing and potential partners, communities, staff, and Volunteers should be involved in the analysis process.

However, the post's project revision process diverged from this guidance. Headquarters and post staff stated that PC/Jamaica's project plan changes were initiated and led by the previous country director, not the APCDs, and were not supported by staff. There was no evidence that the post worked with ministry officials, Volunteers, and community members when revising the project plans and deciding to close the health sector. According Inter-America and Pacific Region (IAP) headquarters staff, they raised concerns about the proposed project plan changes, but the previous country director implemented them before receiving final approval.

Peace Corps' Programming and Training guides briefly mention project closures. The "Project Design and Evaluation" guide states:

A project may be closed out for a variety of reasons, including successful adoption of project activities by the country, completion of project major objectives, evolving host country priorities, or suspension or closing of a Peace Corps program in a country. When projects are closed out, APCD/PMs should create a detailed close-out report and electronic files.

There was no evidence that any of the factors that would warrant a project closure were present in Jamaica. In fact, the decision to close the health project contradicted the results of a 2009 impact study conducted by the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP). There were some indications that the project needed improvements, and the study found that there was "a lack of motivation among community members and political leaders to continue Volunteers' work." However, the study also found that, as a result of project activities, changes in sanitation practices occurred, service quality improved, capacity building was sustained, Volunteers were satisfied with their Peace Corps work, and community members developed more positive opinions of Americans.

Specialists in the Office of Programming and Training Support (OPATS) who were familiar with the health project were also surprised by the post's decision to close the health project because the information submitted in previous project status reviews reflected a well-functioning project. Staff stated that even though there were indications that the project needed to be revised, there was no evidence that the project needed to be closed. Because a thorough, participatory process was not used, post staff was confused about the rationale for the changes made to the health and youth as promise projects and

questioned the motives behind the modifications. As a result, some staff at post did not support the new programming direction.

Because programming changes occurred after Volunteers had been recruited under the old project frameworks, Volunteers received inaccurate assignment descriptions and were unfamiliar with their project plan goals. Overall, 35 percent (7 of 20) of the interviewed Volunteers were not familiar with the goals of their project plan. But Volunteers who were previously assigned to the health sector, and the Volunteers from Group 80, who were already serving when the project plan changes were made, were less familiar with their project plan goals.

Table 1: Volunteer Familiarity with Project Plan Goals

	Percent of Volunteers Unfamiliar with Project Plan Goals²	Average Rating
All interviewed Volunteers	35%	3.3
Group 80	50%	3.3
Group 81	13%	3.5
Health ³	57%	2.9

Source: OIG Volunteer Interviews, 2010

Furthermore, 58 percent (11 of 19) of the interviewed Volunteers stated that the project description they received before arriving did not accurately describe their assignment.⁴ Some Volunteers’ assignments changed after they had been recruited and trained, leaving them inadequately prepared to carry out the technical elements of their assignment (see the Training section of this report for more information). The instability that resulted from the project changes also likely impacted the success of the PCR pilot projects, which is discussed in more detail later in the “Programming” section.

Although some OPATS guidance mentions project closures, we determined that the agency does not have a formal process posts should follow when they assess whether they should close a project and communicate the decision to key stakeholders. Under current guidance, posts are not required to obtain regional approval, consult OPATS specialists, or present a data-driven case for the decision using key data indicators such as Volunteer survey responses, early terminations and Volunteer resignations, and project impacts.

Headquarters and post staff stated that the post will focus on clarifying its projects and obtaining staff and stakeholder buy-in on the changes before receiving the next Volunteer input. We concur that project clarification is necessary, especially before increasing the number of Volunteers serving in Jamaica.

² Represents the percent of Volunteers who rated their familiarity with their project plan goals and objectives as “not at all familiar” and “not very familiar.”

³ Represents ratings from Volunteers who were previously assigned to the health project.

⁴ One Volunteer in the sample did not provide a rating.

We recommend:

- 1. That the post work with the region, the Office of Programming and Training Support, and other specialists as needed, to review and finalize its project plans.**
- 2. That the Office of Global Operations, in consultation with appropriate offices, develop and communicate the guidelines to posts for discontinuing a project or sector, including the process and criteria used to make such decisions, and the process and timeline to communicate decisions to staff, project partners, and Volunteers.**

Volunteers raised concerns about the sustainability of their work.

Project sustainability over time is an important component of every Volunteer's assignment. The Volunteers included in our interviews stated that they have difficulty achieving this goal. This confirms data from the 2010 Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) in which 72 percent of PC/Jamaica Volunteers were satisfied with their ability to transfer knowledge and skills to counterparts and community members, lower than the global average of 85 percent.

Peace Corps' Programming and Training Guidance "Introduction and Overview" lists 10 Peace Corps project criteria that all projects are designed to meet. Three of them are as follows (see Appendix A for the complete list):

- Seeks sustainable results that complement other development efforts.
- Has local participants as partners in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the project.
- Does not displace qualified and available workers with Volunteers.

The project plans for both the green initiative and youth as promise projects reflect strategies for sustainability. However, 70 percent of the interviewed Volunteers (14 of 20) stated that they struggle to participate in sustainable work. Some Volunteers' stated that their counterparts and community members do not want to work with them, and they do not always feel their work is appreciated. Other Volunteers stated that they are doing work that could be done by Jamaicans. Some Volunteers also stated that they do not work alongside host country nationals. This is particularly true for Volunteers who are working in schools and do not partner with other teachers, which limits their ability to transfer skills to host country nationals. Volunteer comments reflect these challenges:

“A challenge [is the] brick wall of indifference from counterparts and organizations. It's common to hear counterparts express that they haven't asked for a Volunteer or if they did they asked for a specific purpose like a secretary or office role.”

“I ... am doing the work of another teacher. They could hire someone to take my place. I'm doing the job a Jamaican could be doing.”

“It's not sustainable. We pull out kids from their classroom where the teachers are ... We're either seen as someone who can do paperwork or we take students out and work with a child alone. I feel like I'm doing the job of a Jamaican.”

“We're doing the job Jamaicans are doing we're not creating anything sustainable... This is a violent, dangerous country and there's not a lot of respect for what we're doing by host country nationals.”

Volunteers were also concerned about the sustainability of their roles as grant-writers. Volunteers stated that they struggled with the perception by their counterparts and communities that they are a source of money, and they worry that the dependence on Volunteers to secure funding conflicts with the agency's sustainability goals. Volunteer comments included the following:

“[My organization] wanted me to write projects and grants and get them money. They didn't have anything for me to do except get them money.”

“Jamaica is a semi-developed country so it's difficult for us. We're not trained as doctors. We end up being a grant writer or having an office role. And there's also a culture of expectancy... They view Volunteers as grant writers.”

“Because Jamaica is so grant-dependent it's really frustrating for us to be expected to pound out grants.”

“I'm constantly in the office writing grants. It's not sustainable. Who's going to do all of this when I leave?”

This expectation that Peace Corps can provide money to Jamaican ministries and partner organizations was reflected in our discussions with ministry officials. In conversations with OIG, officials from two of the ministries stated that they need Volunteers to help address their funding challenges, and one asked if Peace Corps could provide money for the ministry.

We recommend:

- 3. That the post work with ministry and project partners to clarify and establish appropriate expectations regarding Volunteer roles as grant writers and other sources of income, and that it address this clearly during site development.**

The post has challenges placing Volunteers in sites where they can thrive programmatically, physically, and emotionally.

Selecting the proper site is critical to Volunteer effectiveness. “Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post” states, “There are probably no greater ingredients for a Volunteer’s success than the viability of the assignment and the safety and security of the Volunteer’s living and working conditions.” The guidance encourages the post to involve multiple units, including programming, training, health, safety and security, and administration, to place Volunteers in sites where they can be effective.

The post made improvements to its site development process and began implementing some of the changes in May 2010 with Group 81 Volunteers. Under the new site development process, staff and Volunteers evaluated potential sites and ranked them according to such factors as the safety and security of the area, the availability of good housing, and strength of the partner organization. Staff from the programming, medical, and safety and security units provided input when matching Volunteers with potential sites. However, there were other elements of the new site development process such as community meetings and additional site checks that staff was unable to completely implement due to the numerous programming and staff changes being implemented.

Despite implementing some changes intended to improve site development, Volunteers reported dissatisfaction with their initial site placements. This confirms data from the 2010 AVS survey in which 56 percent of Volunteers in Jamaica were satisfied with staff support for site selection/preparation, lower than the global average of 73 percent. In interviews, some Volunteers stated that the post did not set the right expectations with communities and partner organizations, and they were not placed in sites where there was enough work to do. Only 45 percent (9 of 20) of the interviewed Volunteers stated that they had enough work to do “most of the time” or “always.” Volunteers also experienced problems with the housing or host family that should have been noted and fixed by staff during the site development process. For example, Volunteers were placed in homes that had too many occupants or in houses where crimes had occurred.

In addition, Volunteers reported that they struggled to integrate culturally. Many Volunteers were placed in urban sites in and around tourist cities where they were often mistaken for tourists. Although counterparts were expected to help Volunteers integrate, Volunteers were not always housed in the same community as their workplace counterpart. This limited their ability to help the Volunteer integrate. Both post and headquarters stated that Jamaica’s culture is often difficult for Volunteers because of its aggressiveness and mistrust of foreigners. This makes it very important that Volunteer sites are well-developed and proper expectations are set with Volunteers, counterparts, and community members.

Even though the post has a well-developed site development and site matching process, site placements at the post are complicated by several factors. First, even though the post only has two project plans, Volunteers are actually working in a wide variety of project

sectors, including environment, agriculture, youth development, health, literacy, and numeracy. Staff needs to match Volunteers' skills and backgrounds with community needs, and the large variety of Volunteer assignments makes this challenging. The post also takes into consideration Volunteer preferences, which can be strong. Some Volunteers arrive in Jamaica expecting to be placed in rural communities and are dissatisfied if they are placed in an urban environment. Finally, the post receives Volunteers who are medically accommodated; 45 percent of the Volunteers serving in Jamaica at the time of this evaluation were medically accommodated.⁵ Some of these medical accommodations impact site development because post staff must place Volunteers in sites where their physical and emotional needs can be met.⁶

The post has experienced numerous housing and site changes as a result of the cultural and work-related frustrations Volunteers face in their sites; 30 percent of the interviewed Volunteers had changed sites, and even more Volunteers had to change housing. Not only does this create additional work for the staff, but it can also jeopardize Peace Corps' relationship with communities and partner organizations who may come to believe that the Peace Corps is not committed to assisting their community.

Volunteers' dissatisfaction with their sites has also resulted in Volunteer resignations. Data from 2005-2010 shows that Volunteer resignation rates at the post have been higher than global and regional averages. Some of these resignations can be attributed to Volunteers' dissatisfaction with their site placements. One Volunteer commented, "Once you decide that you're not doing anything and you can't integrate, that's when people ET [early terminate]. If I'm not being sustainable or making friends, what's the impact?"

Because there are many factors that create site development challenges in Jamaica, including unfocused programming, poorly managed programming changes, and difficult cultural integration, numerous changes need to be made to improve site development and reduce the number of site changes and Volunteer resignations. The following recommendation is intended to work in conjunction with the other recommendations included in this report to improve the quality of site development.

We recommend:

- 4. That the post review current site development processes and staff roles and implement an improved site development process.**

⁵ The term "medically accommodated" refers to Volunteers with special medical or site placement needs.

⁶ Not all medical accommodations impact a Volunteer's site placement. The Office of Volunteer Support was unable to provide data on the percent of currently-serving Volunteers in Jamaica who had a site-specific medical accommodation.

The Peace Corps Response program was not well implemented in PC/Jamaica.

PCR provides opportunities for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers to undertake short-term assignments that average six months in duration. At the time of the evaluation, 13 Peace Corps Response Volunteers were serving in Jamaica in two projects – 1) sexual and reproductive health and 2) youth and sports. These assignments were designed as pilot projects to help the post expand its youth as promise project. In addition to completing their own project work, the post envisioned that the Response Volunteers would conduct research and help staff identify sites that could be served by 27-month Volunteers.

The PCRVs we interviewed raised concerns about the PCR program. One of the PCR project criterion is that projects have identified and measurable deliverables and outcomes. However, PCRVs in Jamaica stated that they did not have specific job assignments that could achieve measurable outcomes in the short timeframe they were serving. Instead, they were assigned to sites that they considered more appropriate for Volunteers serving full 27 month assignments. Consequently, the PCRVs struggled to define their assignments, which should have been done before their arrival, and implement project activities in a short timeframe. One PCRV stated:

“I really think that Peace Corps in Jamaica needs to know the difference between a Volunteer and a Peace Corps Response Volunteer...The only thing they can say is different right now is the six month timeframe...We come to do a specific job but that's not the case here.”

The PCR assignments created frustration for both the PCRVs and the 27-month Volunteers, particularly those in the health sector who could not understand why their project was closed while the post continued to place Response Volunteers in HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health assignments that were suitable for 27-month Volunteers. One 27-month Volunteer stated:

“When Peace Corps Response came to the island they were given sites and jobs that would have been good for current Volunteers...When I hear of Response Volunteers working on HIV/AIDS I get upset. That's what I was supposed to be doing.”

Furthermore, the PCR work assignments did not match the expectations created during recruitment and orientation. Both of the PCR projects used generalized group project descriptions that described all the possible activities a Response Volunteer invited to Jamaica might undertake. Individual job descriptions were not developed for Response Volunteers based on their specific assignment during the recruitment process. Although some Peace Corps posts requesting PCRVs use a more generic group job description, PCR headquarters staff stated that it is rare for such job descriptions to apply to 12 or more Volunteers, and most are designed to cover just one or two Volunteers.

Despite the general nature of the job descriptions, some PCRVs stated that they were given specific information about their job assignment during recruitment, such as teaching high school soccer or conducting field-based research, but they were subsequently placed in a different assignment. Even though each of these project

descriptions stated that the PCRVs were expected to “communicate closely with one another, forming a highly interactive team,” the Response Volunteers reported that they were not collaborating with other Volunteers. They also had not worked with staff to identify potential sites for 27-month Volunteers as envisioned with the pilot program.

PCR headquarters staff reported that they had concerns regarding both the Volunteer position descriptions and the lack of detailed information the post had provided, but felt pressured by the previous country director to move forward. Post staff also acknowledged the difficulties establishing the PCR program. They reported that the former country director played a significant role launching the PCR pilot programs and excluded programming staff from planning and site development. When the country director left the post unexpectedly in May 2010, three months before the Response Volunteers arrived, the Response Volunteers sites were not yet developed. Programming staff, who were already heavily engaged in completing a PST for the last Volunteer input and realigning the green initiative and youth as promise projects, had to rush to complete site development for the PCRVs. The post was unable to develop sites for 24 PCRVs as originally planned and subsequently reduced the target number to 14.⁷ Site development and housing selection suffered, and this created dissatisfaction among the PCRVs in Jamaica.

Post staff stated that they are planning to make improvements for future RPCVs. They would like to use more traditional PCR job descriptions that are more specific and apply to a smaller number of Volunteers. They might also decrease the number of PCRVs they invite at one time in an effort to make the site development process more manageable.

We recommend:

- 5. That the post work with the Peace Corps Response office and the region to develop and implement a manageable Peace Corps Response strategy, improve position descriptions for Response Volunteers, and assign Response Volunteers to meaningful short-term assignments.**

The post does not engage in regular meetings with ministry partners.

“Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post” encourages posts to have regular communications with host country government and partner agencies. It states:

...There is much value to setting up a regular communications network with the counterpart agency (ministry, NGO, or community organization), so that consultation, exchange, and understanding take place on a steady basis, outside of the realm of special problems and crises. This means...some type of regularly scheduled meetings...that will

⁷ Only 13 Response Volunteers were serving at the time of the evaluation. The fourteenth person identified to serve was unable to do so.

serve to monitor activities and bring participants together to analyze project accomplishments and relations.

Overall, ministry officials stated that they are satisfied with Peace Corps Volunteers, and several representatives expressed an interest in increasing the number of Volunteers. But they also want to strengthen the relationship with Peace Corps and receive formal feedback on Volunteer activities and impact. A U.S. Embassy representative concurred and stated that the post could do a better job coordinating with the Jamaican government. Comments from ministry officials include the following:

“We need to tighten the relationship with the office a little. I would like to have periodic reports on Volunteer operations and their impact. I would like to have quarterly reports and meetings with Peace Corps.”

“I was part of the orientation program so I know the Volunteers and where they’re located. I don’t know how well they’re doing though.”

“We’d like to get feedback on how [the Volunteers are] contributing.”

Some ministry officials stated that they would like Volunteers with more specialized skills. In Jamaica, Volunteers are often placed in professional settings and work alongside counterparts and supervisors who are well-educated and have significant professional experience. Ministry officials noted that Volunteers are often younger, generalist Volunteers with limited professional experience. In an effort to receive more skilled Volunteers, some ministry officials were interested in exploring the opportunities available through PCR. Sample comments include the following:

“We need Volunteers with more skills than they have now.”

“Some work requires specialists. We’re getting generalists. We’re discussing the idea of having more specialized people. We’re going on the web to look at Peace Corps Response to see the kinds of jobs out there.”

Although Peace Corps staff stated that they communicate with Ministry officials regularly, the post was not providing regular status reports to them or operating formal project advisory committees (PACs). Peace Corps’ Programming and Training Guidance “Project Design and Evaluation” describes the PAC as a team of key project stakeholders that helps “develop credible, realistic and responsive project plans and training programs.” One function of an active PAC is to review and evaluate project results each year. The programming and training guidance recommends that the PAC include programming and training staff, Volunteers, community members, and government and partner agency representatives.

Operating PACs at the post could be an ideal way to formalize communications with ministry officials and project stakeholders and provide a forum to discuss Volunteer impacts and needed skills. The information generated by such a forum could be valuable given the current state of project sectors and PCR Volunteer assignments. Post staff members stated that they are planning to hold PAC meetings in the future.

We recommend:

- 6. That the post develop and implement a plan to engage in regular, formal meetings with host country government and partner agencies.**

PRESIDENT'S EMERGENCY PLAN FOR AIDS RELIEF

Another objective of this post evaluation is to answer the question “is the post able to adequately administer the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program, support Volunteers, and meet its PEPFAR objectives?” To answer this question, we evaluate:

- Whether the post is implementing its PEPFAR objectives as laid out in the annual implementation plan.
- Relationships between the post and coordinating partners.
- Whether Volunteers are fulfilling HIV/AIDS-related assignments and handling related challenges.

Increases in the post’s PEPFAR program were not well-planned or well-implemented.

PEPFAR provides funding to Peace Corps posts to help expand and enhance their response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In 2008, the post received \$50,000 in PEPFAR funding. In 2010, the post requested and received approval for \$500,000 in PEPFAR funding, a 1000 percent increase over its 2008 budget amount.⁸

To obtain PEPFAR funding, Peace Corps’ Office of AIDS Relief (OAR) requires posts to submit an implementation plan that “details the proposed activities that posts will implement with PEPFAR funds.” While developing the implementation plan, OAR encourages posts to use the strategic planning process outlined in Peace Corps guidance “Developing and Implementing Peace Corps Implementation Plans” and integrate HIV/AIDS activities into their project plans. This process helps guide the post in carefully considering its budget request and developing a viable implementation strategy. This careful planning process did not take place in Jamaica. The post struggled to develop a feasible budget and implementation plan, secure the resources needed to implement its PEPFAR-related activities, and integrate HIV/AIDS activities into programming.

Budget and Implementation Planning

Due to changes made by the Department of State’s Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC), the fiscal year (FY) 2010 the budget and implementation planning process worked differently than that of previous years. Posts received approval for their proposed budget number before OAR required them to submit an implementation plan

⁸ PC/Jamaica’s FY 2010 appropriated budget was \$1,810,400. PEPFAR funding is provided in addition to appropriated money.

(IP). The post initially requested \$500,000 in PEPFAR funding, which was approved by the in-country team and OGAC. To begin receiving the funds, OAR required the post to submit an IP, which was due on June 28, 2010. To date, the post has been unable to obtain approval for their IP. OAR required the post to submit an IP and budget that matched the original request for \$500,000; however, post staff could only develop a feasible budget totaling \$420,000. According to post staff, there was no record of a plan or budget that supported the \$500,000 request made by the previous country director.

Resources

In addition to the poor budget planning, the post did not secure sufficient staff resources before implementing PEPFAR-funded activities. The post planned to hire a Peace Corps Response coordinator to manage PEPFAR-funded PCRVs. However, the funding for this position was delayed. To manage the workload associated with PEPFAR and PCRVs, the SSC assumed programming responsibilities for both of these programs in addition to safety and security-related duties. This diverted important resources away from Volunteer safety and security in Jamaica, a high crime country that requires full attention from the SSC. While the shift did not result in negative impacts to Volunteer safety and security, it created tension between programming and safety and security staff. Nonetheless, shifting the SSC's attention from safety and security was risky and could have led to negative consequences.

At the time of our fieldwork the post had posted a vacancy announcement for a PEPFAR coordinator who would “manag[e] and provid[e] oversight and support to all Peace Corps Response Volunteers working in HIV/AIDS prevention capacities.” The post also hired a Peace Corps Response coordinator in July 2010, and the SSC has resumed her original position.

Programming Integration

Finally, PEPFAR does not appear to have been well-integrated into programming and Volunteer activities. Fifty-five percent (11 of 20) of the Volunteers we interviewed were not involved in any HIV/AIDS activities, and only 15 percent (3 of 20) of interviewed Volunteers had been involved in HIV/AIDS activities as part of their primary or secondary activities. Volunteers who were previously assigned to the health sector were more likely to be involved in HIV/AIDS activities; 71 percent (5 of 7) of the Volunteers who used to be assigned to the health sector had been involved in some level of HIV/AIDS activities. However, that project has since been closed. HIV/AIDS is not mentioned in the green initiative project plan, and only 17 percent (1 of 6) of the interviewed Volunteers who were originally assigned to that project had been involved in HIV/AIDS activities. The youth as promise project plan includes the objective “by 2015, 90 Volunteers and their Project Partners will train 25,000 youth in healthy lifestyles practices and HIV/AIDS prevention.” Despite this, only 33 percent (2 of 6) of the interviewed Volunteers who were originally assigned to the youth sector have been involved in HIV/AIDS activities.⁹

⁹ The calculations for the green initiative and youth as promise projects excluded Volunteers who were originally assigned to the health sector.

The post has struggled to implement its PEPFAR activities and use the increased funds because agency managers, including OAR and the IAP region, did not ensure that the post underwent a thorough planning process that clearly linked PEPFAR to its programming goals. To ensure the PEPFAR money is not being wasted or used inappropriately, the post needs to develop a clear, viable strategy before requesting additional PEPFAR funding.

We recommend:

- 7. That the post work with the Office of AIDS Relief and the region to develop and implement a manageable President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief strategy.**
- 8. That the post, in conjunction with the Office of Programming and Training Support, if needed, integrate HIV/AIDS activities into related project plans.**

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

Another key objective of our country program evaluation is to assess the extent to which the post’s resources and agency support are effectively aligned with the post’s mission and agency priorities. To address these questions, we assess a number of factors, including staffing; staff development; office work environment; collecting and reporting performance data; and the post’s strategic planning and budgeting.

In reviewing the post’s relationship with the U.S. Embassy in Jamaica and with Peace Corps headquarters offices, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would warrant action by the post. Post staff members participate in embassy meetings and communicate on a regular basis while still maintaining the necessary independence of Peace Corps. Post staff members reported that headquarters staff have been supportive in their implementation of a new organizational structure, and have helped them address challenges related to leadership turnover.

Instability in the country director position impacted staff cohesion and office morale.

The CD is a key position at the post and provides program direction and leadership. It is the CD’s responsibility to develop the post’s vision; oversee staff and Volunteers; foster open communication with staff, Volunteers, and representatives from the host government and project partners; and help the post’s multiple units work together and function as a team in providing Volunteer support. “Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post” states:

If the country director can be said to have any responsibility that overrides all others, it is to communicate, get along, and work well with staff, and to do everything possible to see

to it that staff members function in the same way toward each other. This can be done by the country director's own example and through a number of strategies that support and facilitate communication, cooperation, and trust between others.

Although the five-year rule makes turnover common at the Peace Corps, the post has had especially high turnover in the CD position. From 2001-2006 the post had a long-standing CD. After his departure, CD tenures shortened. In the past two years, the post had at least four permanent or temporary duty staff members serving in the CD position, and their tenures were far less than a two and one half year tour.

Changes in leadership often result in changes in a post's strategy and direction. Under the previous CD who served from February 2009 to May 2010, the post experienced significant changes in many areas. Some of these changes positively benefitted the staff, such as such as advocating for pay increases and making improvements to the physical office structure. But other changes, particularly to the post's programming, were not carried out in a participatory manner and were not supported by all staff members.

Furthermore, some of the programming modifications resulted in changes to the post's organizational structure and the staff impacts were not managed well. With the closure of a program sector, long-standing staff members' positions became redundant. Headquarters and post staff stated that the staff departures that resulted from the organizational changes were not handled in a respectful, professional manner. It was reported that some of the staff members who lost their jobs were informed by colleagues, not post leadership. The rationale for the changes was not properly communicated, which raised job security concerns throughout the office. Some staff viewed the organizational changes and subsequent staff departures as an attempt to relieve some people of their duties. As a result, staff reported that they became afraid of suggesting new ideas or disagreeing with the CD. A few staff members reported that they were reprimanded by the previous CD for sharing information with headquarters staff. Others thought that negative information provided to headquarters would result in an immediate phone call to the CD who would seek retribution.

The previous CD also obscured the distinction between units, particularly programming and safety and security. Staff reported that the CD excluded programming staff from participating in typical programming activities, such as site development. In addition, the SSC assumed responsibility for PEPFAR-related programming even though the programming unit already employed staff members with relevant skills and experience.

Staff reported that office morale was low and there was tension between units. This can be primarily attributed to the leadership and decision making style of the previous CD. A new CD arrived in August 2010, and staff was optimistic that the office environment would improve. But because of the frequent leadership turnover the post has experienced, staff was also wary and needed time to re-establish trust and healthy working relationships with one another. One staff member commented, "The [remaining staff] haven't been dealt with. There's no re-establishment of trust. To get the team back on track you have to re-establish the team. There's still a fear of uncertainty."

We recommend:

- 9. That the post and region develop and implement a plan to address the office's morale and staff communication problems.**

The Peace Corps Volunteer Leader was not participating in a substantive Volunteer activity with an assigned counterpart.

According to the *Peace Corps Manual* section (MS) 202.3.2, “a Volunteer Leader is first and foremost a Volunteer... Accordingly, Volunteer Leaders must, in addition to their special Volunteer Leader services, be involved in at least one substantive Volunteer program or activity with an assigned counterpart.”

The post has one Peace Corps Volunteer Leader (PCVL) who works in the Peace Corps office in Kingston, Jamaica. He started working in this capacity on October 13, 2010. According to the PCVL approval request submitted by the post, the PCVL was responsible for supporting Volunteers in the green initiative project by assisting with community entry, peer support, site development, planning and implementing training, and monitoring and evaluating SPA projects. The approval request also stated that 20 percent of the PCVL's time would be spent continuing to support his previous Volunteer assignment by working remotely from Kingston and traveling to the original site when needed.

The PCVL had only recently started working in the position at the time of the evaluation fieldwork. Although staff anticipated that the PCVL would continue working with previous project contacts, that was not yet occurring and there was no plan in place to ensure the PCVL was undertaking a primary Volunteer assignment with an assigned counterpart. To comply with the agency's policy concerning PCVLs, the post needs to ensure that the PCVL is continuing his Volunteer assignment as documented in the PCVL approval request.

We recommend:

- 10. That the post develop a position description and responsibilities that assign the Peace Corps Volunteer leader to a Volunteer activity with a counterpart.**

Staff performance appraisals were not conducted regularly for all staff.

The *Peace Corps Manual* provides guidance for employee performance appraisals. For personal services contractors (PSCs), MS 743.19 states: “It is U.S. Government policy

that a PSC's performance be evaluated during and at the completion of each contract . . . A copy of the evaluation should be maintained by the Country Director.”

At the time of the evaluation, performance appraisals for the 2010 appraisal cycle had not been completed for all staff members, and a review of personnel files revealed that appraisals have not been done for most staff on a regular basis. Of the nine personnel files sampled, seven (78 percent) did not contain performance appraisals for 2009 and none of the files contained appraisals for 2010. Although most files contained at least one performance appraisal, there were often gaps in which performance appraisals had not been conducted for several years.

We recommend:

- 11. That the post conduct annual and mid-year performance reviews for all staff members in accordance with Peace Corps policy.**

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Our country program evaluation attempts to answer the question, “Has post provided adequate support and oversight to Volunteers?” To determine this, we assessed numerous factors, including staff-Volunteer communications; project and status report feedback; medical support; safety and security support including staff visits to Volunteer work sites, the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), and the handling of crime incidents; and the adequacy of the Volunteer living allowance.

Overall, Volunteers reported that they were well-supported by the post. Ninety percent (18 of 20) of the Volunteers interviewed rated the staff as “effective” or better at helping them to adjust to life as a Volunteer, with an average rating of 3.7. For overall support, the average ratings for staff are as follows:

Table 2: Responses on Perception of Volunteer Support¹⁰

Area	Average Rating for Support	Percent of Volunteers rating “average support” or better
Leadership	N/A ¹¹	N/A
Programming	3.8	88%
Training	4.1	85%
Safety and Security	4.9	100%
Medical	4.3	100%
Administrative	N/A ¹¹	N/A

Source: OIG Volunteer Interviews, 2010

In reviewing the effectiveness of the Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC), the support available to Volunteers from diverse backgrounds, the availability of communication methods between post staff and Volunteers, and the adequacy and timeliness of Volunteers’ living and settling-in allowances, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would warrant action by the post.

The post has a functioning and active VAC. Some Volunteers stated that the effectiveness of the VAC was diminished by the previous CD who was unreceptive to VAC input and limited the extent to which meeting information could be communicated to Volunteers. However, Volunteers were hopeful that the VAC would have a better relationship with the current CD, and 91 percent (10 of 11) of interviewed Volunteers rated it favorably.¹²

Headquarters staff expressed concern that Volunteers from diverse backgrounds, especially women and homosexual Volunteers, might face challenges and hostilities in Jamaica. Although the post does not facilitate structured diversity support groups, Volunteers did not raise significant concerns with support in this area.

Volunteers reported that they are able to reach staff easily via phone and email. The post uses a closed circuit cell phone network that facilitates communication among staff and Volunteers, and Internet access is available on a regular basis for many Volunteers. However, some Volunteers in rural sites would like the post to decrease its reliance on email when communicating important, time-sensitive information due to their limited access to email.

¹⁰ The Leadership score was derived from the score for the country director; the Programming score was derived by averaging the scores for the PTO, APCDs, Peace Corps Response Coordinator, and Programming and Training Assistants; the Training score was derived from the score for the training manager; the Safety and Security score was derived from the score for the safety and security coordinator; the Medical score was derived from the collective Peace Corps Medical Officer scores; the Administrative score was derived from the score for the administrative officer.

¹¹ Fewer than five Volunteers provided a rating.

¹² Nine Volunteers in the sample did not provide a rating.

In general, most Volunteers were satisfied with the adequacy and timeliness of their settling-in and living allowance. However, Volunteers in urban settings stated that the living allowance is not adequate, particularly because the post requires them to take taxis to and from work. Volunteers also stated that they would like deposits to their accounts to be itemized so they can track the receipt of reimbursements.

Some Volunteers do not feel comfortable raising issues with programming staff.

Maintaining good communication between staff and Volunteers is essential in providing Volunteer support. According to “Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post”:

Volunteers need to be motivated to come talk to staff; it usually doesn’t just happen naturally (especially coming to the CD). Volunteers will be more likely to do so if they feel

- Staff are interested, already know something about the Volunteer, want to hear about his or her life and concerns, and listen.
- What they say won’t backfire, i.e., truths won’t be turned against the Volunteer, jokes made, and confidences repeated.
- That when they ask for an opinion or propose a new idea, your way of responding is helpful or constructive.

Although overall programming staff support ratings were high when the scores for the PTO, APCDs (including the Peace Corps Response coordinator), and programming and training assistants were combined, ratings for individual APCDs and the Peace Corps Response coordinator were lower. In particular, several Volunteers raised concerns with the way APCDs interact with them and the lack of discretion used by APCDs. Some Volunteers stated that their APCDs treat them like a burden when they raise concerns, and they are ineffective in facilitating problem resolution with supervisors and counterparts. Some typical Volunteer comments included the following:

“I don’t feel supported by [my APCD]. When [my APCD] comes to the community it creates problems. [My APCD] shares too much information.”

“I don’t call [my APCD] for support. I feel like I’m being a bother to [my APCD]. [My APCD] told me I was making more work for [my APCD].”

“[The APCDs are] more of a hindrance than a help. It feels like they show up at site to reprimand you.”

Some Volunteers also reported that APCDs have spoken to them negatively about other staff and Volunteers. As a result, some Volunteers are not comfortable raising issues with the APCDs because they do not trust that their confidentiality will be maintained. Volunteers also stated that they avoid interacting with staff in an effort to minimize negative outcomes. Comments from Volunteers demonstrate the effect these actions have on Volunteer-staff relationships and communications:

“Many times [my APCD] talked to us about other Volunteers and [staff]. That makes me not want to talk to [my APCD]. I won’t tell [my APCD] a thing.”

“[My APCD] is really difficult to communicate with...[My APCD] is not my go-to person. I can't communicate with [my APCD].”

“I'm of the opinion that the less interaction I have with staff, the better.”

A couple Volunteers noted that communications with the green initiative APCD have improved. But staff needs to continue making improvements in an effort to maintain professional, confidential communications with Volunteers.

We recommend:

12. That the post establish, document, and communicate to staff and Volunteers the expectations for staff-Volunteer communications and requirements for discretion and confidentiality.

Programming site visits lack structure and are often ineffective.

According to post site visit guidelines, each site visit should be several hours in length and include the following activities, among others:

- Meet with Volunteer to discuss scope of work and key issues
- Meet with Supervisor/Counterpart to discuss Volunteer performance and adjustment
- Meet with Volunteer and Supervisor together to discuss progress of assignment, achievements, upcoming plans, challenges and issues

Ninety-five percent (19 of 20) of the Volunteers interviewed for this evaluation were satisfied with the number of site visits they received, but 45 percent (9 of 20) raised issues with the effectiveness of the visits conducted by programming staff. Volunteers reported that programming staff do not always notify them of their visits prior to arrival, and Volunteers are not provided the opportunity to discuss problems and agree on a strategy with staff one-on-one before meeting with counterparts and supervisors. Volunteers also stated that programming staff will make commitments to counterparts and supervisors that the Volunteer is not comfortable implementing. Some typical Volunteer comments included the following:

“What's a site visit? I consider it when someone comes in to talk to me face-to-face. Not when they stop by for five minutes.... I want 10 minutes of us just one-on-one. Not five minutes on a busy street.”

“[My APCD] will just show up without talking to me. [My APCD] will talk to my supervisor and start making promises about what I will do. [My APCD] will say things I have asked [my APCD] not to say.”

“[My APCD] will make promises about things I can do for my school but I don't think I have the skills to do. [My APCD] hasn't talked with me about it first. It's hard not being on the same page.”

As a result, some Volunteers stated that they prefer not to have many programming site visits because they can make problems worse for Volunteers. Some typical Volunteer comments included the following:

“I wouldn't want more [site visits] because I don't think they'd be effective.”

“Because of [my APCD's] interactions with counterparts and supervisors, I've been ok with the number [of site visits received]. If I felt [my APCD] was more effective I'd want more. It would be nice to have more but I don't want [my APCD] here. It makes things more difficult.”

Although the post provided OIG with written site visit guidelines, it does not appear that these are being followed by programming staff. It is unclear if staff has received a copy of the guidelines or refer to them when conducting Volunteer site visits. They are not included in the staff or Volunteer handbooks, and staff did not demonstrate knowledge of the guidelines.

Programming staff can improve the effectiveness of site visits by notifying Volunteers in advance, establishing expectations for the site visit, and conferring with Volunteers before making commitments to counterparts and supervisors.

We recommend:

13. That the post align Volunteer and staff expectations regarding site visits by clarifying and documenting the guidelines and communicating them to staff and Volunteers.

14. That programming staff notify Volunteers, counterparts, and project partners in advance of site visits.

Volunteers are not receiving timely, useful report feedback on their Volunteer Report Forms.

Volunteers at the post are required to submit Volunteer Report Forms (VRFs) three times per year that detail their work activities. Peace Corps' Programming and Training Guidance “Management and Implementation” encourages programming staff to read and provide timely feedback to each of these periodic reports.

Only one of eight interviewed Volunteers who had been in-country longer than six months reported that they received VRF feedback “most of the time” or “always.”¹³ A review of Volunteers’ files and communication records confirmed that APCDs did not consistently provide VRF feedback. Staff acknowledged that providing timely feedback had been a challenge and was an area for improvement.

When Volunteers who had received feedback were asked to rate the quality of the feedback, 50 percent (10 of 20) rated it favorably, with an average rating of 2.2.¹⁴ Our review of the written feedback provided to Volunteers revealed variation in the quality of the feedback. Some APCDs provided substantive comments and suggestions while others merely sent an email confirming that the report had been received.

As a result of the lack of timely, quality feedback, some Volunteers admitted that they no longer take the VRF seriously. Instead of using the reports to provide important information about their project activities, they include outrageous, irrelevant information in an attempt to elicit a response from staff.

The post has not established clear, documented guidelines concerning the quality, timeliness, and method of providing VRF feedback, and staff had different perspectives on the required response time, ranging from two weeks to thirty days. It was reported that previous post leadership had even instructed APCDs to provide verbal, not written, feedback in an effort to save time. Clarifying the guidelines and expectations concerning VRF feedback and providing constructive written feedback in a timely manner would help set expectations for both staff and Volunteers and reiterate the importance of the information contained in the reports.

We recommend:

15. That the post establish, document, and communicate guidelines concerning staff feedback for Volunteer Report Forms.

The impact of medically accommodated Volunteers is inconclusive.

Medical clearance is required for all Peace Corps and Peace Corps Response applicants. At times, the agency may determine that an applicant has a medical condition that restricts their placement. These medical accommodations might dictate the country where the Volunteer can serve, and post staff might be required to place them in a site that is in close proximity to certain medical facilities.

¹³ At the time of the evaluation fieldwork, staff was still receiving and providing feedback on first-year Volunteers’ first VRF reports. In May 2010 these Volunteers swore in, and their first VRF reports were due on September 15, 2010.

¹⁴ This is based on ratings from six Volunteers. The other interviewed Volunteers had not received feedback and therefore could not comment on its quality.

In 2009, regional staff and previous post leadership raised concerns to management in the Office of Volunteer Support (VS) about the impact that the high number of medical accommodations had on the post. Of particular concern was the perception that the post received a high number of Volunteers with a mental health accommodation. The previous CD requested that the agency reduce the number of Volunteers with a mental health accommodation sent to Jamaica. Not only was there a concern that these Volunteers required more time and effort from the PCMOs and other staff, but staff were also concerned that serving in an culturally aggressive, high-crime country like Jamaica would negatively impact the Volunteer's mental health and overall productivity.

In response to these concerns, the VS analyzed the impact that a Volunteer's accommodation status had on average length of service at the post. Using data for Volunteers in training groups 76, 77, and 78, management concluded that less than 15 percent of the Volunteers had a mental health accommodation.¹⁵ However, the analysis also revealed that gender and mental health accommodation status impacted length of service. Specific findings were as follows:

- Volunteers in Jamaica with any mental health accommodation served approximately 60 fewer days, on average.
- Female Volunteers in Jamaica, regardless of their accommodation status, served 113 fewer days, on average.
- Female Volunteers with any mental health accommodation served approximately 215 fewer days, on average.

At the time of the evaluation, 45 percent of the Volunteers serving in Jamaica were medically accommodated, up almost 15 percent from when the analysis was conducted for groups 76, 77, and 78.¹⁶ Although staff reported that some Volunteers seek support from PCMOs and other staff more frequently than other Volunteers, it was unclear what impact, if any, their accommodation status had on post resources or the Volunteer's ability to serve. Medical information, including accommodation status, is confidential and available only on a "need to know" basis. With the exception of the PCMOs, most staff members did not know which Volunteers were accommodated and therefore could not determine whether their status impacted their well-being and ability to serve productively. Medical staff reported that they had adequate resources to support Volunteers. Staff also stated that it was important to make sure the post had adequate resources to help Volunteers with their mental health needs, regardless of accommodation status, due to the challenges of serving in Jamaica. Without additional data, it is difficult to determine whether the agency needs to adjust the number of medically accommodated Volunteers placed in Jamaica or provide additional resources to the post.

¹⁵ Groups 76, 77, and 78 were selected for analysis because they had already completed their 27 months of service.

¹⁶ 31.4 percent of the Volunteers in groups 76, 77, and 78 were medically accommodated compared to 45 percent of the Volunteers who were serving at the time of the evaluation. The Office of Volunteer support did not have global data so it was not possible to compare number of medically accommodated Volunteers in PC/Jamaica to other posts.

PC/Jamaica operates an effective Volunteer safety and security support system.

The Peace Corps asserts that safety and security of Volunteers is the agency's highest priority. Each post has a SSC to help the post implement the agency's primary safety and security policy, MS 270. Despite being a high crime environment in terms of crime affecting the larger Jamaican population, the number of Volunteer crime incidences in Jamaica is low. This can be attributed to the fact that the post has a high performing SSC; staff and Volunteers are prepared to keep themselves safe and take action in the event of an emergency; and the post responds well to Volunteer crimes.

The post's Volunteer safety and security support is a notably positive aspect of its operations. The post has a high-performing SSC, and the office of Safety and Security presented her with an award for outstanding service in August 2010. The SSC makes regular visits to Volunteer sites, and several Volunteers stated that she checked the adequacy of their emergency supplies when visiting them. Volunteers are comfortable approaching the SSC, and they have confidence that their confidentiality will be maintained.

Volunteers and staff are also well-prepared for emergencies. Volunteers stated that the SSC effectively communicated the country's security risks to prepare them for the dangers they might face. The SSC required Volunteers to complete a personal security plan so that they understood how they should respond if there was an emergency at their site. The EAP was tested in accordance with MS 270, and staff members received annual training on their EAP response roles. The SSC provided Volunteers with an EAP brochure that contained all of the important information and was small enough for Volunteers to carry with them. The Volunteers we interviewed had copies of the EAP, and all of them correctly identified their consolidation point.

If a crime does occur, the post is prepared to respond. All of the interviewed Volunteers who had experienced a crime reported that it was handled well. The post has an effective Duty Officer system to ensure that a staff member is always available to respond to incidences. OIG made two test calls to the duty officer phone number outside of business hours. Both calls were answered immediately by the duty officer.

Crime notification to the Embassy's Regional Security Officer (RSO) was one area for improvement. The RSO was not receiving notifications from the Crime Incident Reporting System (CIRS) due to difficulties with the State Department email system. The SSC was forwarding CIRS reports to the RSO until the situation was resolved.

As a result of the post's strong safety and security support, the number of Volunteer incidences is relatively low. According to documentation from the Office of Safety and Security, the post has "implemented effective security protocols that have resulted in a 50 percent reduction in crimes against Volunteers in the past 5 years, in spite of a steady increase in the national crime rate during that time." OIG commends the post and Volunteers for their strong focus on this critical aspect of post operations.

TRAINING

An important objective of the post evaluation is to answer the question, “Does training prepare Volunteers for Peace Corps service?” To answer this question we considered such factors as:

- training adequacy;
- planning and development of the training life cycle;
- staffing and related budget.

In reviewing the post’s process for planning and developing training, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would warrant action by the post. The post uses an inclusive process to plan its Volunteer training programs. Post staff at all levels who represent multiple units participates in planning and delivering Volunteer training.

Post staff also reported that it has adequate staffing resources to deliver Volunteer training. The post is able to find qualified part-time staff to assist with language and culture training during PST, and Volunteers stated that the high quality of the post’s language and cross-culture trainers enhanced PST. The post is also changing its organizational structure, which will enable programming staff to have a more structured role in the development and delivery of Volunteer training.

Technical training does not adequately prepare Volunteers for their jobs.

Volunteers at the post participate in several training programs throughout their service, including PST, early service conference (ESC), and in-service training (IST). We asked Volunteers to rate the effectiveness of these trainings and found that training is generally effective, but improvements need to be made in PST technical training. This confirms data from the 2010 AVS in which Volunteers rated PST technical training lower than the global average. Only 52 percent of Volunteers in Jamaica were satisfied with technical training compared to 74 percent globally.

Table 3: Volunteer Perceptions of Training Effectiveness

Area	Ineffective (1) / Below average (2)	Moderate (3) / Above average (4) / Very effective (5)	Average Rating
PST:			
Language ^a	12%	88%	4.3
Culture ^a	6%	94%	4.2
Safety/Security ^a	0%	100%	4.8
Medical/Health ^b	7%	93%	4.0
Technical ^b	53%	47%	2.3
ESC ^b	27%	73%	3.1
IST ^c	33%	67%	3.0

Source: OIG Volunteer Interviews.

^aN = 16, ^bN = 15, ^cN = 6

MS 201 “Eligibility and Standards for Peace Corps Volunteer Service” states that a trainee must demonstrate technical competence, which is defined as “proficiency in the technical skills needed to carry out the assignment,” by the end of training. According to the post’s IPBS for FY 2011-2013, the post changed its PST model for Group 81 to emphasize technical training. This change included a move from site-based training, where trainees received site-specific training from their partner agencies, to sector-based hub training, where trainees gathered in sector-specific groups to receive specialized technical training. The post also recruited technical experts to oversee PST technical curricula and included practicum segments so trainees could get hands-on experience during PST.

These changes appear to have resulted in improvements. Volunteers in the most recent input group rated their technical training higher than Volunteers in the previous groups.

Table 4: Volunteer Perceptions of Technical Training Effectiveness (by Input Group)

Volunteer Group	Percent of Volunteers Rating “Average Effectiveness” or Better	Average Rating
Group 79 & 80 ^a	14%	1.6
Group 81 ^b	75%	2.9

Source: OIG Volunteer Interviews.

^aN = 7, ^bN = 8

The improved feedback from Group 81 Volunteers reflects the positive impact of the PST technical training changes. However, Volunteer feedback reveals that technical training is still inadequate in preparing them for their jobs. Some Volunteers stated that the technical training they received did not pertain to their primary assignment once they arrived at site. In addition, Volunteers requested more hands-on practice, and Volunteers working in schools stated that they needed more skills related to literacy, phonics, and teaching both students and teachers.

There is a lot of variety in Volunteer work assignments at the post because of the breadth of the post’s project plans. This variety makes it difficult for the post to provide technical training that is specialized to each Volunteer’s assignment. Furthermore, the post did not review the training design and evaluation (TDE) process after making significant programming changes that included the elimination of the health sector and a greater focus on literacy and numeracy in the youth as promise project. Peace Corps’ Programming and Training Guidance “Training Design and Evaluation” states:

TDE ensures that trainees and Volunteers have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are essential for success in their development work and for integration into their communities...By using the TDE process, posts can identify and train the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of Volunteers to do their jobs effectively.

Reviewing the TDE process and providing adequate time to implement the changes before the next PST should help improve technical training.

We recommend:

- 16. That the post work with the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support to review the training design and evaluation process and make necessary changes to technical training before the next pre-service training.**

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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

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

OIG Evaluation Unit announced its intent to conduct an evaluation of the post on July 27, 2010. For post evaluations, we use the following researchable questions to guide our work:

- To what extent has post developed and implemented programs to increase host country communities' capacity?
- Does training prepare Volunteers for Peace Corps service?
- Has the post provided adequate support and oversight to Volunteers?
- Are post resources and agency support effectively aligned with the post's mission and agency priorities?
- Is the post able to adequately administer the PEPFAR program, support Volunteers, and meet its PEPFAR objectives?

The evaluator conducted the preliminary research portion of the evaluation July 28-September 24, 2010. This research included review of agency documents provided by headquarters and post staff; interviews with management and staff representing the IAP region, OPATS, OAR, PCR, VS; and inquiries to the offices of Safety and Security, OSIRP, the Office of Private Sector Initiatives, and the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection. The evaluator also reviewed submissions related to the post that were made to the OIG Hotline in April 2010.

In-country fieldwork occurred from September 27-October 15, 2010, and included interviews with post senior staff in charge of programming, training, and support; the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires; the embassy regional security officer; representatives from USAID, and host country government ministry officials. In addition, we interviewed a stratified judgmental sample of 20 Volunteers (25 percent of Volunteers serving at the time of our visit) based on their length of service, site location, project focus, gender, age, ethnicity, and marital status. One additional Volunteer requested a meeting with OIG, which was granted. The evaluator also interviewed the PCVL.

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

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

As part of this post evaluation, interviews were conducted with 20 Volunteers, 12 staff members in-country, and 35 representatives from Peace Corps headquarters in Washington D.C., the U.S. Embassy in Jamaica, and key project partners and ministry officials. Volunteer interviews were conducted using a standardized interview questionnaire, and Volunteers were asked to rate many items on a five-point scale (1 = not effective, 3 = average effectiveness, 5 = very effective). The analysis of these ratings provided a quantitative supplement to Volunteers’ comments, which were also analyzed. For the purposes of the data analysis, Volunteer ratings of “3” and above are considered favorable. In addition, all 20 Volunteer interviews occurred at the Volunteers’ homes, and we inspected these homes using post-defined site selection criteria. The period of review for a post evaluation is one full Volunteer cycle (typically 27 months).

The following table provides demographic information that represents the entire Volunteer population in Jamaica at the time fieldwork was conducted; the Volunteer sample was selected to reflect these demographics.

Table 5: Volunteer Demographic Data

Project¹⁷	Percentage of Volunteers
Youth As Promise	44%
Green Initiative	39%
Peace Corps Response:	
Sexual and Reproductive Health	6%
Youth and Sports	10%
Gender	Percentage of Volunteers
Female	50%
Male	50%
Age	Percentage of Volunteers
25 or younger	41%
26-29	23%
30-49	18%
50 and over	19%

Source: August 2010 PC/Jamaica Volunteer roster.

Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

At the time of our field visit, the post had 23 staff positions.¹⁸ The post also employs temporary staff/contractors to assist with PST. Given the time of our visit, these temporary positions were not staffed. We interviewed 12 staff members.

¹⁷ Because the health sector was closed in 2010, all health Volunteers were re-assigned to youth as promise or green initiative.

¹⁸ The post was implementing some organizational changes that would impact staffing. Several vacancy announcements were posted during fieldwork.

Table 6: Interviews Conducted with PC/Jamaica Staff Members

Position	Status	Interviewed
Country Director	USDH	X
Administrative Officer	FSN	X
Programming and Training Officer	USDH	X
APCD/Environment	PSC	X
APCD/Youth As Promise	PSC	X
Programming and Training Assistant (2)	PSC	X
Peace Corps Response Coordinator	PSC	X
Training Director	PSC	X
Safety and Security Coordinator	PSC	X
PCMO (2)	PSC	X
Medical Administrative Assistant	PSC	
Executive Secretary	PSC	
Receptionist	PSC	
Administrative Assistant (2)	1 PSC / 1 FSN	
Administrative Assistant/Property Manager	PSC	
Cashier	FSN	
Information Technology Specialist	PSC	
General Services Manager	PSC	
Driver/Messenger	PSC	
Landscaper/Office Attendant	PSC	

Data as of October 15, 2010.

Additional interviews with 35 people were conducted during the preliminary research phase of the evaluation, in-country fieldwork, and follow-up work upon return to Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Table 7: Interviews Conducted with PC/Headquarters Staff, Embassy Officials and Key Ministry Officials

Position	Organization
Regional Director	PC/Headquarters/IAP Region
Chief of Operations	PC/Headquarters/IAP Region
Chief Administrative Officer	PC/Headquarters/IAP Region
Acting Chief of Programming and Training	PC/Headquarters/IAP Region
Country Desk Officer	PC/Headquarters/IAP Region
Country Desk Assistant	PC/Headquarters/IAP Region
Safety and Security Desk Officer	PC/Headquarters/IAP Region
Chief, Field Assistance Division	PC/Headquarters/OPATS
Language and Cross Cultural Specialist	PC/Headquarters/OPATS
Program and Training Specialist (Env/Ag)	PC/Headquarters/OPATS
Programming & Training Specialist (Youth Development)	PC/Headquarters/OPATS
Programming & Training Specialist (Health)	PC/Headquarters/OPATS
Programming and Training Advisor	PC/Headquarters/OAR

Position	Organization
Administrative Specialist	PC/Headquarters/OAR
Program Specialist	PC/Headquarters/OAR
Chief of Operations	PC/Headquarters/PCR
Program and Operations Specialist	PC/Headquarters/PCR
Recruitment and Placement Specialist	PC/Headquarters/PCR
Associate Director	PC/Headquarters/VS
Director, Office of Medical Services	PC/Headquarters/VS
Special Services Officer	PC/Headquarters/VS
SPA Program Specialist	PC/Headquarters/OPATS
PCPP Program Specialist (IAP/EMA)	PC/Headquarters/OPSI
Chargé d'Affaires	U.S. Embassy in Jamaica
Regional Security Officer	U.S. Embassy in Jamaica
HIV/AIDS Technical Advisor	U.S. Agency for International Development
Supervisory Program Officer	U.S. Agency for International Development
Chief Education Officer	Ministry of Education
Education Assistant	Ministry of Education
Senior Director – Community Development, Youth and Sports	Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Culture
Consultant in charge of marketing	Ministry of Agriculture
Deputy Executive Director (Interim)	Rural Agricultural Development Authority
Board Secretary	Rural Agricultural Development Authority
Director of Projects	Rural Agricultural Development Authority
Parish Agricultural Manager, St. Catherine	Rural Agricultural Development Authority

Data as of October 2010.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

WE RECOMMEND:

1. That the post work with the region, the Office of Programming and Training Support, and other specialists as needed, to review and finalize its project plans.
2. That the Office of Global Operations, in consultation with appropriate offices, develop and communicate the guidelines to posts for discontinuing a project or sector, including the process and criteria used to make such decisions, and the process and timeline to communicate decisions to staff, project partners, and Volunteers.
3. That the post work with ministry and project partners to clarify and establish appropriate expectations regarding Volunteer roles as grant writers and other sources of income, and that it address this clearly during site development.
4. That the post review current site development processes and staff roles and implement an improved site development process.
5. That the post work with the Peace Corps Response office and the region to develop and implement a manageable Peace Corps Response strategy, improve position descriptions for Response Volunteers, and assign Response Volunteers to meaningful short-term assignments.
6. That the post develop and implement a plan to engage in regular, formal meetings with host country government and partner agencies.
7. That the post work with the Office of AIDS Relief and the region to develop and implement a manageable President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief strategy.
8. That the post, in conjunction with the Office of Programming and Training Support, if needed, integrate HIV/AIDS activities into related project plans.
9. That the post and region develop and implement a plan to address the office's morale and staff communication problems.

10. That the post develop a position description and responsibilities that assign the Peace Corps Volunteer leader to a Volunteer activity with a counterpart.
11. That the post conduct annual and mid-year performance reviews for all staff members in accordance with Peace Corps policy.
12. That the post establish, document, and communicate to staff and Volunteers the expectations for staff-Volunteer communications and requirements for discretion and confidentiality.
13. That the post align Volunteer and staff expectations regarding site visits by clarifying and documenting the guidelines and communicating them to staff and Volunteers.
14. That programming staff notify Volunteers, counterparts, and project partners in advance of site visits.
15. That the post establish, document, and communicate guidelines concerning staff feedback for Volunteer Report Forms.
16. That the post work with the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support to review the training design and evaluation process and make necessary changes to technical training before the next pre-service training.

THE TEN PEACE CORPS PROJECT CRITERIA

According to Peace Corps Programming and Training Guidance “Introduction and Overview,” all Peace Corps projects are designed to meet the following criteria:

Peace Corps Project Criteria

A Strong Project ...

1. Increases local capacity in a demonstrable way
2. Strives to address expressed priorities of those who have limited access to resources and opportunities.
3. Seeks sustainable results that complement other development efforts.
4. Has local participants as partners in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the project.
5. Addresses Peace Corps initiatives and cross-cutting themes as appropriate, including analyzing gender relationships and promoting women’s participation to increase their status and opportunities.
6. Places Volunteers where they engage with those they serve and their skills match locally identified needs.
7. Does not displace qualified and available workers with Volunteers.
8. Uses the types and numbers of Volunteers that are consistent with available applicants.
9. Has local Peace Corps staff and resources to train and support Volunteers to complete their assignments successfully.
10. Has host government agencies, civil society organizations, and communities as partners who can support the project and the Volunteers.
11. Is continuously evolving.

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE PRELIMINARY REPORT



Since 1961

MEMORANDUM

To: Kathy Buller, Inspector General

Through: Daljit Bains, Chief Compliance Officer *Daljit Bains*

From: Carlos J. Torres, IAP Regional Director *Una Favor for*

Date: February 14, 2011

CC: Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Deputy Director
Stacy Rhodes, Chief of Staff
Joaquin Ferrao, Deputy Inspector General
Jim O'Keefe, Assistant IG, Evaluations
Esther Benjamin, Associate Director, Global Operations
Roger Conrad, Chief of Operations, IAP
Steve Miller, Director, Overseas Programming and Training Support
Sarah Morgenthau, Director, Peace Corps Response
Amy Johnson, Chief of Programming & Training, IAP
Dawn Hodge, Country Desk Officer

Subject: Response to the Preliminary Report of Peace Corps/Jamaica, December 2010

Enclosed please find the IAP's Region's response to the recommendations made by the Inspector General for Peace Corps/Jamaica, as outlined in the Preliminary Report of the Program Evaluation Report of the IG Audit sent to the Agency on December 20, 2010.

The Inter America Pacific (IPA) Region concurs with all **16** recommendations provided by the OIG in its Preliminary Program Evaluation Report: Peace Corps/Jamaica. Post has addressed and provided supporting documentation for 3 of the 16 recommendations and will work to address the remaining recommendations by the set target dates.

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

1. That the post work with the region, the Office of Programming and Training Support, and other specialists as needed, to review and finalize its project plans.

Concur: The Youth as Promise and Green Initiative projects underwent project reviews in collaboration with Office of Programming and Training Support (OPATS) specialists.

The Youth as Promise project review was led by OPATS specialist, Katie Green, in collaboration with Peace Corps Jamaica's Youth as Promise Program Manager and Director of Programming and Training. This project review led to dividing the existing Youth as Promise project into two projects/sectors: Literacy & Numeracy project (Education Sector) and Youth as Promise II (Youth Development Sector). The project review consisted of a PAC meeting, focus groups with youth, stakeholder consultations, staff interviews, PCV site visits, group meetings with PCVs, meeting the Peace Corps Response Volunteers, document review, PCV survey, and a task analysis. The PAC consisted of GOJ representatives, the NGO community, stakeholders and PCVs. The PAC was broken into two groups: Literacy & Numeracy and Life-Skills to review a Literacy & Numeracy project framework, and a Youth Development project framework. This PAC also identified PCV activities, existing resources, training needs, and potential partners. In addition sector specific priority areas were identified through mapping PCV activities as well as stakeholder activities. The Project Status Report (PSR) was also utilized to assist in reviewing the project.

Peace Corps Jamaica implemented the Green Initiative project review with OPATS consultation on PAC meeting agendas and content, extensive review and feedback on surveys, and additional meetings. The Green Initiative conducted two Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings; one PAC was held in Kingston on December 8, 2010 with Government of Jamaica (GOJ) officials, NGO stakeholders, farmers and Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs). The second PAC was held in rural Jamaica with NGO stakeholders and PCVs on December 14, 2010. These PACs reviewed existing frameworks, PCV activities.

Two surveys were administered to assist in reviewing the project plan; the first survey was conducted with PCVs, the second survey was conducted with stakeholders in the environment and agricultural sector. In addition, the Program Manager and Program and Training Assistant conducted a document review including the Annual Volunteer Survey and PSR to inform the project plan.

The Green Initiative, Literacy & Numeracy and Youth as Promise II project plans will be finalized on April 1, 2011.

Documents Submitted:

- Green Initiative (GI)

- Project Advisory Committee Meeting Report (PAC)
- GI PAC Agenda
- GI Survey Results (PCV)
- GI Survey Results (Partners)
- OPATS Youth as Promise Review Report (Katie Green)

Documents to be Submitted:

- Education Project Framework
- Youth as Promise II Project Framework and Green Initiative Project Framework

Status and Timeline for Completion: April 1, 2011

2. That the Office of Global Operations, in consultation with appropriate offices, develop and communicate the guidelines to posts for discontinuing a project or sector, including the process and criteria used to make such decisions, and the process and timeline to communicate decisions to staff, project partners, and Volunteers.

Concur: OPATS has written new guidance for closing/terminating a project. This guidance will be coordinated within HQ and once approved by the Office of Global Operations, will be sent out to the field.

Documents Submitted:

- Proposed Project Closure Guidance from OPATS Programming and Training Guidance, PDE section G-2. This guidance will be coordinated within HQ PC before it is finalized and sent to Posts.

Status and Timeline for Completion: June 1, 2011

3. That the post work with ministry and project partners to clarify and establish appropriate expectations regarding Volunteer roles as grant writers and other sources of income and that it address this clearly during site development.

Concur: Post agrees that clearer expectations can be set regarding the role of PCVs in development and grant writing with project partners. Post's clarification of the role of the PCV will be documented in the Site Development process; site screening form and the Site Development Talking Points. It is also documented in the Supervisors' Manual, Volunteer Handbook, and MOU/Agreement to clarify roles

Documents Submitted:

- (Draft) Grant writing clarification for inclusion in the 2011 Volunteer Handbook;
- Site Development Talking Points
- Site Evaluation Form
- Site Screening Form

Documents to be Submitted/Date:

- Finalized PCV Handbook/May 31, 2011

Status and Timeline for Completion: May 31, 2011

4. That the post review current site development processes and staff roles and implement an improved site development process.

Concur: Post is finalizing its Site Development Handbook that documents the site development process: preparation, screening, evaluation and confirmation; site selection criteria, supporting documents, timelines and responsibilities of staff in this process.

Documents Submitted:

- Draft Site Development Handbook
- Calendar of Training Events covering Site Evaluation and Confirmation

Documents to be Submitted/Date:

- Finalized Site Development Handbook / March 18, 2011

Timeline and Timeline for Completion: March 18, 2011.

5. That the post work with the Peace Corps Response office and the region to develop and implement a manageable Peace Corps Response strategy, improve position descriptions for Response Volunteers, and assign Response Volunteers to meaningful short-term assignments.

Concur: Post has met with Peace Corps Response Office and verified a strategy for implementing Response Volunteers in Jamaica. Post will bring PCRVs in groups of 2 to 4 Volunteers 4 times a year. The PCRV assignments will be very specific jobs that complement the existing Education, Youth as Promise and Green Initiative Sectors. Current PCRVs who are extending have very specific job descriptions.

Response Volunteers serving in Jamaica in the August 2010 input were part of a pilot. The purpose of the pilot was to assign Response Volunteers to projects in 1) sexual and reproductive health and 2) youth and sports. In the past, PCR has run pilot projects in other countries when post would like to consider opening a program in a new project area. The request from Jamaica was for 24 total Response Volunteers (12 in each program) which was much larger than any previous pilot. PCR only had experience with large inputs such as this with new country entries and the PCR leadership knew that in order to find candidates for 24 positions (to arrive on the same day) recruitment needed to begin immediately.

Going forward, PCR now requires that for larger groups, 5 or more Volunteers, posts must have their position descriptions ready at least 5 months in advance, as opposed to the usual 2 to 3 months lead time that we require for groups of 1 or 2 Volunteers. This extra time ensures that sites will be properly developed and thought out by post and the implementing partners, and that there will be enough lead time to make any necessary changes before the Volunteers arrive in country.

Furthermore, Heather Schwenk, Chief of Operations/ PC Response, will travel to Jamaica in early March to work with post and the two new Peace Corps Response Coordinators to provide training in the following areas:

- the recruitment process
- developing job descriptions
- 5/day orientation that is competency based
- the COS process
- HQ/Post communication
- document review of Post PCRV documents

Documents Submitted:

- Email from PC Response to Post
- Sample position descriptions
- Email from PCR Response providing guidance

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed

6. That the post develop and implement a plan to engage in regular, formal meetings with host country government and partner agencies.

Concur: Annual PAC meetings have been implemented for the Green Initiative, Youth as Promise and Education projects to include Government of Jamaica partner agencies, and PCVs who will review annual progress reports and other programmatic issues. PAC's will become annual events for the GI, YAP and Education Project.

Documents submitted:

- Calendar of Programming and Training Events (COPTTE)
- Site Development Handbook (Draft)
- List of PAC participants and agendas
- USAID and PC meeting agenda

Status and Timeline for Completion: March 18, 2011

7. That the posts work with the Office of AIDS Relief and the region to develop and implement a manageable President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief strategy.

Concur: Post's FY10 PEPFAR Plan was developed with assistance from the OAR; this plan has been approved. Post is working with the OAR on the FY11 Plan.

Documents submitted:

- OAR Approval Memo for FY 10

Documents to be submitted:

- OAR Approval memo for FY11 IP & Budget.

Status and Timeline for Completion: March 31, 2011

8. That the post, in conjunction with the Office of Programming and Training Support, if needed, integrate HIV/AIDS activities into related project plans.

Concur: Post is holding a PEPFAR funded Behavior Change Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop with programming and training staff in March to incorporate HIV/AIDS prevention activities into related project plans and training continuum. A mid-service training will be held with Group 81 Volunteers in HIV/AIDS and Behavior Change.

Documents to be submitted:

- Behavior Change Workshop agenda
- Draft Youth Life Skills Project Framework

Date: May 31, 2011

9. That the post and region develop and implement a plan to address the office's morale and staff communication problems.

Concur: With the support of the Region, Framework Consultants, an outside consulting and training company, facilitated a half-day workshop with staff addressing office morale and staff communications. In addition to the workshop, Post has been engaged in a variety of activities to address both morale and communications. We have established a meeting matrix, meeting norms and our definition of team is posted throughout the office. In addition, we have updated and distributed the PSC handbook and conducted a Professional Development Survey. Post has implemented acknowledgement of staff in All-Staff Meetings. Team building activities such as holiday activities, birthday celebrations, and an office notice board have also been planned.

Documents Submitted:

- Staff Training 'Framework Consultants Workshop' PowerPoint presentation
- Definition of Team
- PC Jamaica Meeting Matrix
- PC Jamaica Meeting Norms
- PSC Handbook
- Professional Development Survey Results

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed

10. That the post develop a position description and responsibilities that assign the Peace Corps Volunteer leader to a Volunteer activity with a counterpart.

Concur: Post has established a position description for the current PCVL inclusive of responsibilities. The request memo has been amended to include details on 20% of the work being conducted with counterparts for assignments. In addition, Post has developed a generic PCVL Position Description for potential PCVLS to be included in the Volunteer handbook.

Documents Submitted:

- PCVL Position Description
- Current PCVL Work Plan

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed

11. That the post conduct annual and mid-year performance reviews for all staff members in accordance with Peace Corps policy.

Concur: Post has conducted all but one 2010 EOY performance review (scheduled to be completed Feb. 16, 2011), and 2011 mid-year performance reviews are scheduled for May/June 2011.

Documents Submitted:

- Memo from CD verifying that all, but one, 2010 EOY performance reviews have been completed and mid-year reviews scheduled
- Excel sheet showing dates that staff received their reviews

Status and Timeline for Completion: February 28, 2011

12. That the posts establish, document, and communicate to staff and Volunteers the expectations for staff-Volunteer communications and requirements for discretion and confidentiality.

Concur: CD has issued a statement to staff and volunteers concerning discretion and confidentiality. This statement will be included in the 2011 PCV Handbook under Volunteer Support.

Additionally, the Country Director will deliver the Global Ops mandated PCV confidentiality training to all staff on February 28, 2011.

Documents Submitted:

- Staff and PCV Communications regarding confidentiality
- Email from Global Ops to Posts to conduct Confidentiality Training

Documents to be Submitted/Date:

- Finalized PCV Handbook/May 31, 2011

Status and Timeline for Completion: May 31, 2011

13. That the posts align Volunteer and staff expectations regarding site visits by clarifying and documenting the guidelines and communicating them to staff and Volunteers.

Concur: Post has added a section in the Volunteer handbook outlining expectations for Volunteer Support including a site visit matrix to be included in the Volunteer Handbook outlining expectations of site visits by all staff. The PCV Handbook is currently in draft status and will be finalized May 31, 2011.

Documents Submitted:

- Site Visit Matrix - draft

Documents to be Submitted/Date:

- Finalized PCV Handbook no later than May 31, 2011

Status and Timeline for Completion: May 31, 2011

14. That programming staff notify Volunteers, counterparts, and project partners in advance of site visits.

Concur: Post has incorporated notification guidelines in the Volunteer Support section and Site Visit Matrix of the Volunteer Handbook to notify PCVs and Project Partners at least one week in advance of scheduled site visits. The PCV Handbook is currently in draft status and will be finalized May 31, 2011.

Documents Submitted:

- Site Visit Matrix - draft

Documents to be Submitted/Date:

- Finalized PCV Handbook/ May 31, 2011

Status and Timeline for Completion: May 31, 2011

15. That the post establish, document, and communicate guidelines concerning staff feedback for Volunteer Report Forms.

Concur: Post has established criteria for Volunteer Reporting Form feedback in the Volunteer Support section of the PCV Handbook.

Documents Submitted:

- Trimester Report Section in PCV Handbook

Documents to be Submitted/Date:

- Finalized PCV Handbook NLT May 31, 2011

Status and Timeline for Completion: May 31, 2011

16. That the post work with the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support to review the training design and evaluation process and make necessary changes to technical training before the next pre-service training.

Concur: Post and OPATS representatives are in discussion regarding potential opportunities and best practices to improve the Training Design and Evaluation (TDE) process. Post will continue discussion with OPATS to develop a plan to make changes to the TDE process to improve technical training for the upcoming PST. Additionally, IAPs Chief of Programming and Training is tentatively scheduled to go TDY to PC-Jamaica to assist with the TDE re-write.

Documents to be Submitted:

- TDE Technical Training plan

Status and Timeline for Completion: April 18, 2011

OIG COMMENTS

Management concurred with all 16 recommendations. Based on the documentation provided, we closed five recommendations: number(s) 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities. However, when we feel it is warranted, we may conduct a follow-up review to confirm that action has been taken and to evaluate the impact.

Eleven recommendations, number(s) 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, remain open. OIG will review and consider closing recommendations 1, 2, 4, 8, and 16 when the documentation reflected in the agency's response to the preliminary report is received. For recommendations 3, 7, 12, 13, 14, and 15, additional documentation is requested. These recommendations remain open pending confirmation from the chief compliance officer that the documentation reflected in OIG Analysis below is received.

3. That the post work with ministry and project partners to clarify and establish appropriate expectations regarding Volunteer roles as grant writers and other sources of income and that it address this clearly during site development.

Concur: Post agrees that clearer expectations can be set regarding the role of PCVs in development and grant writing with project partners. Post's clarification of the role of the PCV will be documented in the Site Development process; site screening form and the Site Development Talking Points. It is also documented in the Supervisors' Manual, Volunteer Handbook, and MOU/Agreement to clarify roles

Documents Submitted:

- (Draft) Grant writing clarification for inclusion in the 2011 Volunteer Handbook;
- Site Development Talking Points
- Site Evaluation Form
- Site Screening Form

Documents to be Submitted/Date:

- Finalized PCV Handbook/May 31, 2011

Status and Timeline for Completion: May 31, 2011

OIG Analysis: We acknowledge the agency's efforts to address this recommendation and await the finalized Volunteer handbook. Please also submit

APPENDIX C

the Supervisors' Manual and sample MOUs/Agreements that reflect the Volunteer's role in grant writing activities.

7. That the posts work with the Office of AIDS Relief and the region to develop and implement a manageable President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief strategy.

Concur: Post's FY10 PEPFAR Plan was developed with assistance from the OAR; this plan has been approved. Post is working with the OAR on the FY11 Plan.

Documents submitted:

OAR Approval Memo for FY 10

Documents to be submitted:

OAR Approval memo for FY11 IP & Budget.

Status and Timeline for Completion: March 31, 2011

OIG Analysis: We acknowledge the agency's efforts to address this recommendation and await the OAR approval memo for FY11 implementation plan and budget. The FY10 document received reflected OGAC's approval of Caribbean FY10 Regional Operational Plan. Please also submit the OAR approval memo for the FY10 implementation plan and budget.

12. That the posts establish, document, and communicate to staff and Volunteers the expectations for staff-Volunteer communications and requirements for discretion and confidentiality.

Concur: CD has issued a statement to staff and volunteers concerning discretion and confidentiality. This statement will be included in the 2011 PCV Handbook under Volunteer Support. Additionally, the Country Director will deliver the Global Ops mandated PCV confidentiality training to all staff on February 28, 2011.

Documents Submitted:

- Staff and PCV Communications regarding confidentiality
- Email from Global Ops to Posts to conduct Confidentiality Training

Documents to be Submitted/Date:

- Finalized PCV Handbook/ May 31, 2011

OIG Analysis: We acknowledge the agency's efforts to address this recommendation and await the finalized Volunteer handbook. Please also submit

documentation that demonstrates how this information was communicated to staff and documented for staff's ongoing use.

13. That the posts align Volunteer and staff expectations regarding site visits by clarifying and documenting the guidelines and communicating them to staff and Volunteers.

Concur: Post has added a section in the Volunteer handbook outlining expectations for Volunteer Support including a site visit matrix to be included in the Volunteer Handbook outlining expectations of site visits by all staff. The PCV Handbook is currently in draft status and will be finalized May 31, 2011.

Documents Submitted:

- Site Visit Matrix - draft

Documents to be Submitted/Date:

- Finalized PCV Handbook no later than May 31, 2011

OIG Analysis: We acknowledge the agency's efforts to address this recommendation and await the finalized Volunteer handbook. Please also submit documentation that demonstrates how the site visit guidelines were communicated to staff and documented for staff's ongoing use.

14. That programming staff notify Volunteers, counterparts, and project partners in advance of site visits.

Concur: Post has incorporated notification guidelines in the Volunteer Support section and Site Visit Matrix of the Volunteer Handbook to notify PCVs and Project Partners at least one week in advance of scheduled site visits. The PCV Handbook is currently in draft status and will be finalized May 31, 2011.

Documents Submitted:

- Site Visit Matrix - draft

Documents to be Submitted/Date:

- Finalized PCV Handbook/ May 31, 2011

OIG Analysis: We acknowledge the agency's efforts to address this recommendation and await the finalized Volunteer handbook. Please also submit documentation that demonstrates how the site visit notification deadlines have been communicated to staff and documented for staff's ongoing use.

15. That the post establish, document, and communicate guidelines concerning staff feedback for Volunteer Report Forms.

Concur: Post has established criteria for Volunteer Reporting Form feedback in the Volunteer Support section of the PCV Handbook.

Documents Submitted:

Trimester Report Section in PCV Handbook

Documents to be Submitted/Date:

Finalized PCV Handbook NLT May 31, 2011

OIG Analysis: We acknowledge the agency's efforts to address this recommendation and await the finalized Volunteer handbook. Please also submit documentation that demonstrates how the Volunteer Report Form feedback guidelines have been communicated to staff and documented for staff's ongoing use.

PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION AND OIG CONTACT

OIG CONTACT

Following issuance of the final report, a stakeholder satisfaction survey will be distributed. If you wish to comment on the quality or usefulness of this report to help us improve our products, please e-mail Jim O'Keefe, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations, at jokeefe@peacecorps.gov, or call (202) 692-2904.



Jim O'Keefe
Assistant Inspector General/Evaluations

STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This program evaluation was conducted under the direction of Jim O'Keefe, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations, and by Senior Evaluator Heather Robinson. Additional contributions were made by Reuben Marshall and Lisa Chesnel.

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE, AND MISMANAGEMENT

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