



Office of Inspector General

Office
202.692.2900
[Website](#)
[OIG Reports](#)

Hotline
202.692.2915 | 800.233.5874
[Online Reporting Tool](#)
OIG@peacecorpsoidg.gov

To: Jody Olsen, Director
Gregory Huger, Regional Director, Inter-America and the Pacific Region
Dale Withington, Country Director, Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean
Angela Kissel, Chief Compliance Officer

From: Kathy A. Buller, Inspector General

Date: June 22, 2020

Subject: Final Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean (IG-20-03-E)

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

Management concurred with 14 recommendations. All 14 recommendations will remain open pending confirmation from the chief compliance officer that the documentation identified in management's response and OIG comments has been received. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. OIG will review and consider closing recommendations 1, 3-9, and 12-14 when the documentation reflected in the agency's response to the preliminary report is received. For recommendations 2, 10, and 11, additional documentation is required and is described in the OIG Comments section in Appendix E.

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.

Please respond with documentation to close the remaining open recommendations within 90 days of the receipt of this memorandum.

You may address questions regarding follow-up or documentation to Assistant Inspector General for Evaluation Jeremy Black at 202.692.2912.

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

cc: Michelle Brooks, Chief of Staff
Matthew McKinney, Deputy Chief of Staff/White House Liaison
Patrick Young, Associate Director, Office of Global Operations
Timothy Noelker, General Counsel
Traci DiMartini, Chief Human Capital Officer
Karen Becker, Associate Director, Office of Health Services
James Golden, Deputy Director, Office of Health Services
Jill Carty, Director, Counseling and Outreach Unit
Renee Ferranti, Director, Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response Program
Shawn Bardwell, Associate Director, Office of Safety and Security
Temby Caprio, Chief of Operations, Inter-America and the Pacific Region
Lindsey Suggs, Chief of Programming and Training, Inter-America and the Pacific Region

Gonzalo Molina Zegarra, Chief Administrative Officer, Inter-America and the Pacific Region
Geoffrey Benelisha, Director of Management and Operations, Inter-America and the Pacific Region
Joshua O'Donnell, Regional Security Advisor, Inter-America and the Pacific Region
Patrick Triano, Director of Programming and Training, Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean
Stephanie Rust, Director, Overseas Programming and Training Support
Kweku Boafo, Director, Peace Corps Response
Alex Garcia, Chief of Operations, Peace Corps Response
Eastern Caribbean Desk



PEACE CORPS
Office of
**INSPECTOR
GENERAL**



A Volunteer's student showing plants grown in a school gardening project.



Final Program Evaluation
Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean
IG-20-03-E
June 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted a program evaluation of Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean (hereafter referred to as “the post”) from December 2 through December 20, 2019. The post had a main office located on St. Lucia and regional offices on Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent. At the onset of this evaluation, the post had 70 Volunteers in its literacy project serving 2-year terms, 15 Peace Corps Response Volunteers, and 27 staff working across all 4 island nations. The post’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 operating plan was approximately \$2.7 million. The last OIG program evaluation of this post occurred in 2007.

WHAT WE FOUND

Several aspects of the post’s operations were functioning well. Two-year primary English literacy (PEL) Volunteers served in areas of need on each island. Volunteers were satisfied with their healthcare and their safety and security training, and Volunteer housing met health and safety standards. Staff responded sufficiently to security incidents, and we found that the post had improved emergency preparedness based on lessons learned from recent hurricane events. Two-year Volunteers were integrated at sites and satisfied with programmatic support and counterparts.

However, we identified several issues that required management attention. The post’s low morale had been a long-running challenge that hindered operational effectiveness. Staff reported that their training needs were not being met, and we discovered tasks that were not completed because either standard operating procedures were not followed or staff was not trained to complete them. The Response program needed significant improvement in most aspects we examined, including site preparation, identification of quality job assignments, training and support, and overall program oversight. Technical training did not sufficiently prepare literacy Volunteers for their assignments, and the post was not adequately assessing trainees’ readiness to serve before swearing them in as Volunteers. We also found that the literacy project goals were mis-aligned with Volunteer activities and that the post’s lack of formal relationships with official host-country stakeholders reduced the literacy project’s impact. Finally, the post needed improved data collection to determine the sufficiency of living and settling-in allowances for Volunteers on each island.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF

Our report contains 14 recommendations, which, if implemented, should strengthen post operations and correct the deficiencies detailed in the accompanying report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
HOST COUNTRY BACKGROUND	1
PEACE CORPS PROGRAM BACKGROUND	2
EVALUATION RESULTS	3
Programming	3
Training.....	7
Site Management	9
Volunteer Safety and Security Support.....	11
Volunteer Health Support.....	13
Volunteer Administrative Support.....	14
Communication and Collaboration.....	15
Staffing Resources	19
LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS	22
APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY	24
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED.....	26
APPENDIX C: LIST OF ACRONYMS	29
APPENDIX D: AGENCY RESPONSE TO THE PRELIMINARY REPORT	30
Appendix E: OIG Comments.....	39
APPENDIX F: PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION AND OIG CONTACT	42

HOST COUNTRY BACKGROUND

The Eastern Caribbean is a collection of over ten island nations that stretch along the eastern edge of the Caribbean Sea. Four of these nations – Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Lucia – host Peace Corps Volunteers under the management of Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean.

Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Lucia share the Eastern Caribbean dollar as their common currency and English as their official language. Their history includes both French and British colonization and influence, and each country gained independence from England in the 1970s. They remain part of the British Commonwealth, and are also members of inter-governmental organizations, such as Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), which coordinates and promotes economic, educational, environmental, and social development for member states across the region. Each of the four countries are served by the U.S. Embassy located on the Eastern Caribbean island of Barbados.

Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Lucia are among the smallest countries in the world, both in land mass and population. Because of their small size, they struggle achieving effective economies of scale, and face expensive infrastructure, transportation, and energy costs.

Table 1: Population, Growth, Migration, and Unemployment in Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean Countries

COUNTRY	POPULATION		POPULATION GROWTH		NET MIGRATION		UNEMPLOYMENT	
	Total	World Rank	Rate	World Rank	Rate	World Rank	Rate	World Rank
St. Lucia	165,510	187	0.31%	168	-2.2/1,000	166	20%	186
Grenada	112,207	190	0.42%	161	-2.8/1,000	174	24%	195
Dominica	74,027	202	0.17%	182	-5.4/1,000	196	23%	192
St. Vincent/ Grenadines	101,844	195	- 0.23%	209	-8/1,000	212	18.8%	182

Natural disasters are a significant risk for each country. For example, hurricanes Maria and Dorian struck the area in 2017 and 2019 respectively. Although the islands share other commonalities, they are independent nations with distinctions that include four autonomous governments and sets of laws, four separate holiday calendars, and four local languages and cultures.

PEACE CORPS PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Approximately 3,996 Volunteers have served at this post since St. Lucia opened as one of the agency's first three programs in 1961. Prior to the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak,¹ the post operated uninterrupted since its inception in numerous project sectors in Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Barbados, Montserrat, and St. Lucia. At the time of fieldwork, the post supported 70 Volunteers serving 2-year terms in the primary English literacy project and 15 Peace Corps Response Volunteers with an operating plan of approximately \$2.7 million. This is a unique Peace Corps post, because it covers four separate and independent nations under one program.

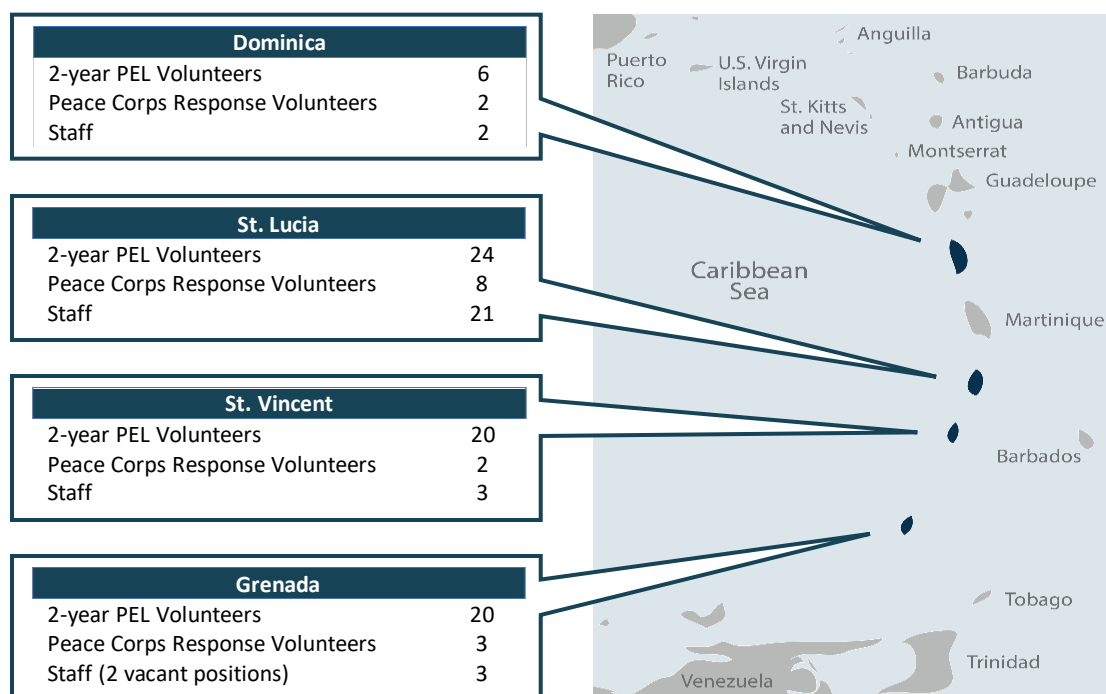


Figure 1: Map of the Eastern Caribbean.

The post's projects include:

- Primary English Literacy.** Two-year Volunteers support teachers, parents, community members, and students in primary-level English literacy. Volunteers work in primary schools, building capacity and enhancing literacy skills. They co-teach with counterparts to administer reading assessments, design and deliver lessons, work with readers in small groups, help create or enhance school libraries, and implement other literacy-related efforts such as readers' theater, book clubs, and community outreach.
- Peace Corps Response.** Response Volunteers work in the ministries of education on literacy curriculum development and in the Public Library System. They also work with special needs and autistic students, and support a legacy youth project across the post.

¹ On March 15, 2020, the Peace Corps Director announced the evacuation of all Volunteers and suspension of global operations due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

EVALUATION RESULTS

PROGRAMMING

In our evaluation, we assessed programming using the following researchable questions to guide our work:

- Is the program focused on the country's development priorities, in the poorest areas of the country?
- Are Volunteers achieving project objectives?

The following programmatic areas of no concern pertain to the post's 2-year PEL project. Results from the assessment of the Response program are detailed below in the programming areas that require management attention.

AREAS OF NO CONCERN

The post's Primary Education Literacy project addressed a development priority for the four countries of the Eastern Caribbean and Volunteers served in poor areas of each country. Eighty-six percent of the Volunteers we interviewed agreed that their work contributed to their literacy project goals. Both post and headquarters staff, as well as stakeholders with whom the Peace Corps collaborated, reported that literacy was a development need in the four countries of the post, and we found that the project aligned with the OECS Early Learner's Program. We also learned from survey data and fieldwork interviews that staff and most Volunteers agreed that Volunteers worked in poor areas, and that their work met a basic need. A couple staff members at post also mentioned that they work with under-resourced schools. Outside stakeholders, including Ministry of Education and U.S. Embassy officials, agreed that Volunteers were placed in underserved communities.

Most PEL Volunteers were satisfied with technical support from staff. Eighty-five percent of the PEL Volunteers who responded to the technical support interview question reported that staff met their technical program needs.

AREAS OF PROGRAMMING THAT REQUIRED MANAGEMENT ATTENTION

The evaluation uncovered some programming areas that required management attention, particularly regarding the extent to which Volunteers were achieving PEL project objectives and implementation and oversight of the Peace Corps Response program. The remainder of this section provides more information about these findings.

Primary Education Literacy project goals were poorly aligned with Volunteer activities and accomplishments.

Agency guidance states that quality programming, training, and evaluation maximizes what Volunteers do best and enhances Volunteer success by providing them "real work and opportunities that they are qualified to perform." We learned that Volunteers reported mixed results hitting project targets and goals. We heard from four staff who thought that the quantitative data (see Table 2) did not tell the full story.

Table 2: Summary of the Post's PEL Framework and Project Targets Achieved.

PEL GOALS	PEL OBJECTIVES	TARGETS ACHIEVED BY VOLUNTEERS
Goal 1: Increase Student Success	<i>Objective 1.1: Improve Literacy Achievement and Participation in English Classes</i>	0 out of 4
	<i>Objective 1.2: Improve Personal Development and Literacy Skills through Extracurricular Activities</i>	1 out of 3
	<i>Objective 1.3: Expand Use of Library and/or ICT Resources</i>	2 out of 3
Goal 2: Enhance Teaching Practices	<i>Objective 2.1: Enhance Teachers' Literacy Instructional Practice</i>	7 out of 7
	<i>Objective 2.2: Improve Resource Development and Utilization</i>	3 out of 4
Goal 3: Improve School, Family, and Community Partnerships	<i>Objective 3.1: Increase Community and Caretaker participation/support for Students' Literacy Development</i>	0 out of 3

Several instances of reporting data did not match what Volunteers told us about achieving project goals. For example, the data shows that Volunteers missed 70 percent of goal one indicators that target improved student literacy; however, nearly 82 percent of Volunteers we interviewed reported goal one successes. We saw a similar trend with goal three reporting of family and community support for literacy development, where we found that Volunteers missed all three of the targets, yet were optimistic about achieving goal three. This sentiment was particularly strong from EC91² Volunteers who thought goal three success would come after spending more time at site. Finally, numerous Volunteers leveled negative comments and criticisms at co-teaching, represented by objective 2.1 and for which targets were surpassed in all seven indicators. Volunteers hit co-teaching targets, but both staff and Volunteers criticized the sustainability of their skills transfer work with local teachers.

The mismatch between PEL targets and what Volunteers expressed to us was due to several factors. Some staff said that some PEL goals had too many indicators or activities to report on, while other PEL goals and related indicators did not capture the true range of Volunteer activities.

Staff and Volunteers also noted that the PEL framework's objectives, indicators, and targets did not accurately represent what Volunteers should or could do to improve primary-level literacy. Volunteers also reported that technical training was too focused on co-teaching, which they thought did not prepare them to effectively support students' literacy needs or deliver activities

² EC91 refers to the 91st Eastern Caribbean training cohort to arrive. It was the post's most recent training cohort, which arrived in 2020.

such as pull-outs.³ Some Volunteers reported that the ministries of education wanted Volunteers involved in pull-out groups rather than co-planning or co-teaching, though the co-teaching goal included 11 of the project's 24 indicators.

We learned of concerns that some Volunteers lacked skills and experience to achieve some targets, and Volunteers' expressed dissatisfaction with how well technical training prepared them to perform their jobs. Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC) meeting notes stated, "The training attempts to make teachers out of people who have never taught or have experiences with [teaching] rather than focusing [on] their skill sets."

The agency planned to review the PEL project in order to re-align programming, training, and evaluation according to agency guidance. At the time of fieldwork, the post was in the early stages of this project review and re-alignment process, which was scheduled to conclude in FY 2021.

We recommend:

- 1. That the director for programming and training, with guidance from the regional chief of programming and training, develop a primary English literacy framework with objectives and indicators that accurately reflect how Volunteers can best achieve literacy project success.**

The Response program needed improvement in key respects.

According to the Peace Corps' Handbook for Response programs, Peace Corps Response Volunteers are expected to accomplish concrete deliverables in a condensed period of time, and staff should develop work and assignments such that Response Volunteers "can hit the ground running."

We found that Response Volunteers struggled with their assignments. Three of six Response Volunteers as well as staff we interviewed reported that Response Volunteers did not have enough work to do at site. Response Volunteers surveyed by the Peace Corps at the end of their service indicated a similar problem: 5 of 13 survey respondents indicated they did not have enough work to do at their sites, 6 did not have meaningful work available to them when they arrived at their sites, and 6 did not think the host-country nationals with whom they were supposed to collaborate were prepared to work with them. In addition, we learned of other shortcomings with the Response program, including dissatisfaction with support from partner organizations, a lack of available counterparts, and Response assignment materials that were either incorrect or missing important information about the organization hosting the Response Volunteer.

We identified three main causes of the problems with the Response program, including ineffective site management and identification, insufficient training for Volunteers, and poor staff collaboration and oversight. First, Response Volunteers informed us that site identification and preparation by staff had been poor. One Response Volunteer we spoke with questioned why the organization had asked for a Response Volunteer because sometimes the organization would

³ Pull-outs are smaller groups of students who get pulled out from a classroom to work with the Volunteer.

not have anyone present for an entire week. One staff member stated that the organizations hosting Response Volunteers were reluctant to give them work immediately and that sometimes there were changes at organizations between the time of site identification and the Volunteers' arrival. Another staff member said the post had not been very successful with placing Response Volunteers in quality assignments. Staff expressed to us that Response Volunteer placements were not carefully considered and that some hosting organizations were not the right fit for, or capable of, hosting Response Volunteers. We also found that the post did not use site selection checklists for assessing Response Volunteer sites, which made it difficult to know if Response sites met the post's standards. A senior staff person we interviewed was unsure if the post had defined or used site selection criteria for Response sites.

The second cause for the problems with the Response program was insufficient training to support Volunteers' community integration. Response Volunteers reported that they had not received adequate language and cross-cultural training, and were not integrated at site. One Volunteer reported going into this foreign living environment "almost blind," and another stated that their motivation and positivity was negatively impacted by a near total lack of integration. We also heard from staff and Volunteers that Response Volunteers struggled to navigate work environments.

Finally, we determined that the Response program suffered from ineffective management and oversight. VAC meeting minutes revealed that Response Volunteers thought that the post did not understand their skill sets or how to make good use of them. Both staff and Volunteers expressed concerns about inconsistent programmatic support provided to Response Volunteers. Staff informed us that there was ineffective communication and collaboration between those responsible for managing the Response program and post leadership, which had negatively impacted the performance of the Response program. The budget to support the Response program was also a source of misunderstanding. The Response coordinator had not reviewed the FY 2020 budget for the Response program almost 4 months into the fiscal year and was not included in senior staff meetings, despite being responsible for eighteen percent of the overall Volunteer population. This added confusion and challenges to Response planning and Volunteer support, including travel for the Response coordinator.

As a result of these deficiencies, most of the Response Volunteers in the Eastern Caribbean reported that they were making "low" or "some" impact.

We recommend:

- 2. That the country director develop a plan to improve management of key aspects of the post's Response program, including: identification and vetting of Response Volunteer assignments, selection and preparation of work sites and partners, training of Response Volunteers on local language and culture, and staff communication and collaboration to support the program.**

TRAINING

In our evaluation, we assessed training using the following researchable question to guide our work:

- Do trainings prepare Volunteers for service?

The post tried balancing standard post-wide training with island-specific training for its most recent cohort by using a three-phased pre-service training (PST) model spread across the islands. The first training phase occurred on St. Lucia for the entire cohort and included core safety and security, medical, and policy sessions. The cohort was broken up for phase two, during which trainees lived in their communities on their island of service for more core sessions and island-specific orientation. Trainees were sworn-in as Volunteers at the conclusion of phase two and worked in their schools and communities where they were accompanied and observed by trainers during the 7 weeks of phase three technical training practicum. On each Friday of phase three, Volunteers/trainees were brought together for a “hub day” of debrief and reflection. This multi-phased training period ended following phase three.

AREAS OF NO CONCERN

Safety and security training were effective. Crimes of opportunity such as theft presented a moderate risk to Volunteers serving in the Eastern Caribbean; however, based on our review of agency data, we found that Volunteers thought safety and security training was effective. In addition, 94 percent of Volunteers who responded to the OIG survey said the safety and security training prepared them to live and work safely in their sites. In addition, fieldwork revealed no concerns from staff regarding safety and security training.

PEL Volunteers had the intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes they needed to integrate in their communities and be successful. For the last 2 years, Volunteers at the post reported on the Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) that they were integrated into their communities, had friends at site, and felt supported by their local community at about the same rates as the Inter-America and Pacific (IAP) region. Ninety-five percent of staff reported on the OIG survey that Volunteers were integrated into their communities, and 80 percent of the PEL Volunteers stated that Peace Corps training prepared them with the skills and cultural understanding they needed to form positive relationships in their communities.

Language training was effective for PEL Volunteers. While English was the official language for each of the post’s four countries, the post provided training for Volunteers in the local languages specific to their islands of service. Most PEL Volunteers we interviewed were satisfied with language training, and Volunteers’ satisfaction with language training was significantly higher for EC91 than EC90. Multiple individuals reported that training on one of the islands had improved recently, and two Volunteers spoke specifically about the overall improvement of language training since their own input. The test scores we reviewed showed that tested Volunteers achieved the oral and written language proficiency level required by the post’s trainee assessment portfolio (TAP). However, as described below, the post was not assessing all Volunteers’ attainment of all competencies, including language.

AREAS OF TRAINING THAT REQUIRED MANAGEMENT ATTENTION

The evaluation uncovered that trainee assessment and technical training required management attention. The remainder of this section provides more information about these topics.

The post did not sufficiently assess PEL trainees' readiness to serve prior to swearing-in trainees as Volunteers.

The post's TAP stated that trainees are "responsible for meeting the expectations outlined in the Trainee Assessment Portfolio for each of the components in each of the phases." In addition, the TAP lists significant consequences for trainees if they do not meet all requirements to qualify for service during the three phases of training.

Contrary to the process laid out by the TAP, trainees were sworn in as Volunteers before they had completed phase three of training. (See Figure 2)

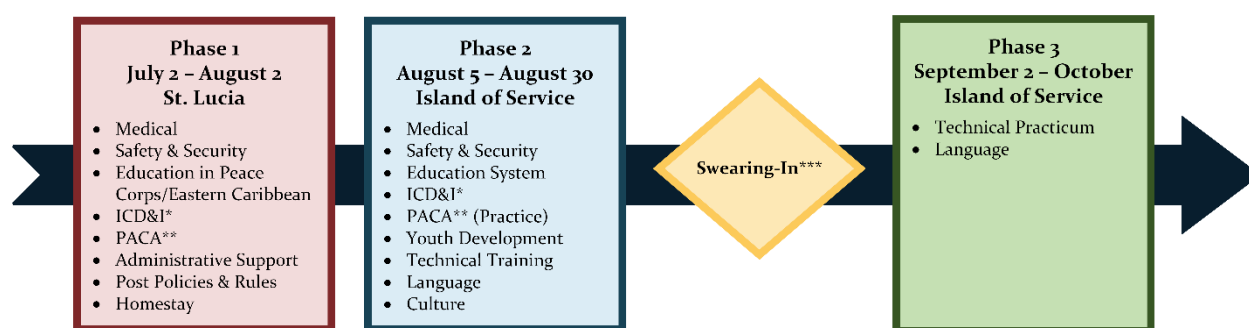


Figure 2. This graphic represents the post's three-phased PST for 2019. Volunteer swear-in for EC91 occurred at the end of Phase 2, though the induction dates were not uniform across all islands.

We learned that this training model was developed under previous leadership, though it was not clear to OIG why that decision had been made. We heard from several senior staff members, including the director of programming and training (DPT), that the programming and training team thought that this was an ineffective approach to training and assessing trainees prior to induction. According to some staff we interviewed, some Volunteers were not taking training seriously, particularly during phase three, because they were already Volunteers prior to their completion of training. We also found that some staff were not adequately assessing how well each trainee or Volunteer met training competencies. The post's most recent TAP was incomplete for Volunteers on some of the islands. We found examples of missing assessments for trainees in EC89 and EC90, and no assessments for EC90 trainees on St. Vincent.

As a result of this deficient trainee assessment process, the post may have sworn in trainees who lacked the desired technical competencies for Volunteers. Some trainees may not have sufficiently focused on acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors they needed to serve as Volunteers in the country.

We recommend:

- 3. That the country director swear-in Volunteers based on staff's completed assessment of trainees' readiness to serve and qualifications.**

- 4. That the director of programming and training provide more oversight of staff's completion of trainee assessments, per the post's trainee assessment portfolio guidelines.**

Technical training lacked sufficient opportunities for Volunteers to practice teaching prior to their placements in schools.

Manual section 201 states that by the end of training, Volunteers should have the technical skills needed to carry out their assignment. Many Volunteers reported to us that technical training was ineffective. During fieldwork, 7 of the 24 Volunteers we interviewed reported that technical training did not help them develop the skills needed for their job and 31 percent of the 50 PEL Volunteers responding to OIG's survey reported that technical training did not effectively prepare them for their PEL work. We heard from staff, Volunteers, and at least one stakeholder who stated that technical training needed a means by which Volunteers could practice teaching before they got to site and were expected to perform in front of classrooms.

In the past, the post had conducted a "model school," which was an activity that provided trainees an opportunity to practice teaching in front of students. This activity was logistically challenging and expensive and had been cancelled as part of PST. Removing the model school practicum created challenges for some of the generalist trainees who lacked teaching experience and had limited exposure to a classroom full of students.

We found negative trends in training- and project-related data that we determined were tied to ineffective training. Only 55 percent of Volunteers who responded to the AVS in 2019 thought training helped them perform technical aspects of their work, which was down from 81 percent for the 2018 survey. The survey also revealed significant decreases in how personally rewarding Volunteers thought their project was from 2018 to 2019. Finally, nearly 50% of Volunteers in 2019 thought that their primary project should be reduced or discontinued, which was up significantly from 2018 results and 2.5 times higher than IAP Region results. At least one member of senior staff thought the elimination of model school might have contributed to these negative trends, and staff we spoke to thought the preparation of Volunteers to teach suffered because the opportunity for trainees to practice teaching before going to their sites had been removed.

We recommend:

- 5. That the director of programming and training incorporate more opportunity for education project trainees to practice teaching before going to their permanent sites, and ensure staff observe, assess, and document trainees' acquisition of teaching skills prior to their swearing-in.**

SITE MANAGEMENT

In our evaluation, we assessed site management using the following researchable question to guide our work:

- Are sites, housing, and work assignments appropriate and meeting all established criteria?

AREAS OF NO CONCERN

PEL and Response Volunteer housing and most PEL Volunteer sites met established criteria. About 90 percent of the houses we inspected met the post's criteria for the location, security, and condition of all Volunteer homes. Additionally, 21 of the 25 PEL Volunteers we interviewed said they had sufficient work at their sites. We also found that sites for PEL Volunteers met the post's programmatic and safety and security criteria.

PEL Volunteers were satisfied with their counterparts. Approximately 97 percent of PEL Volunteers we interviewed said they had motivated and supportive counterparts. About half of the PEL Volunteers reported working with more than one counterpart. Two senior staff and a local stakeholder we spoke with expressed that Volunteers who worked with more than one counterpart tended to make a greater impact, and post leadership said they wanted more Volunteers to establish relationships with more than one counterpart.

AREAS OF SITE MANAGEMENT THAT REQUIRED MANAGEMENT ATTENTION

The evaluation uncovered concern with the completion and utilization of site history files. This finding is detailed below.

Site history documentation was incomplete and not used effectively during site development.

According to Safety and Security Instruction (SSI) 401 on site history files, the post's DPT is responsible for identifying staff roles and ensuring that the agency's guidance for site history files is followed.

The post provided us with their site history file standard operating procedure (SOP), which reflected SSI requirements and guidance on how to collect, store, and use site specific information. The SOP tasked the administrative assistants and program managers with uploading documentation into the Volunteer Information Database Application (VIDA) and the safety and security manager (SSM) and DPT with ensuring that site history files have been reviewed for security or programmatic issues. We reviewed a selection of site history files and found that, though the post had included key site history documentation in VIDA, seven files did not document security incidents as required, and six files did not include site selection criteria/approval forms. Moreover, individuals were not using site history information during the site assessment process.

We identified that staff lacked guidance about how to enter documentation into VIDA, staff did not follow the post's SOP, and the DPT was not actively overseeing the post's implementation of SSI 401.

During the most recent site identification and placement process for EC91 Volunteers on Grenada, Volunteers were tasked with Volunteer placement and site identification activities. These Volunteers were not provided adequate information about schools and sites, which may have included a history of crimes against Volunteers at the sites under consideration. In addition, the Volunteers had insufficient information about the qualifications of the trainees for whom they were trying to find sites. Without a good site history management system in place, staff or Volunteers involved in site identification and preparation may not have all information needed to match Volunteers with appropriate sites.

We recommend:

- 6. That the director of programming and training ensure that the post adheres to its standard operating procedure for the collection, documentation, recordation, and proper utilization of site history files.**

VOLUNTEER SAFETY AND SECURITY SUPPORT

In our evaluation, we assessed Volunteer safety and security support using the following researchable questions to guide our work:

- Is the post sufficiently prepared to respond to emergencies and security incidents?
- Are preventative safety and security measures adequate?

AREAS OF NO CONCERN

The post's emergency action plan was incorporated into the Embassy emergency action plan. The working relationship regarding emergency preparedness between the post and the U.S. Embassy in Barbados was strong. The U.S. Embassy incorporated the post's emergency action plan (EAP) into the Embassy EAP, and the regional security officer (RSO) stated that he had a positive working relationship with the country director (CD), the director of management and operations (DMO), and the SSM.

The post's emergency action plan had been updated and tested. The post's EAP was updated in May 2019 and tested on the islands of Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines on May 9, 2019.⁴ All 67 Volunteers responded within 6 hours, and staff at Peace Corps headquarters determined that the EAP test was successful.

The post made significant changes to the latest EAP in response to lessons learned during the consolidation of Volunteers during Hurricane Maria in 2017, which headquarters staff described as a "shaky" and "tenuous" experience. Some of the changes the post made to their EAP included consolidating Volunteers earlier, training Volunteers to be emergency coordinators for consolidations, and setting up food and water at consolidation points. The changes to the EAP were well received, and a senior staff member also stated that the post was prepared for hurricanes.

The post's emergency coordinator management system improved emergency preparedness. As noted above, in response to lessons learned from a recent hurricane, the post developed the emergency coordinator management system. Emergency coordinators were Volunteers who assisted with consolidations and were responsible for the distribution of supplies during such events. Emergency coordinators worked together on each country to coordinate Volunteer consolidations and were trained in crisis management to assume the responsibility as key points of contact at each consolidation point. Volunteers said the system of relying on emergency coordinators had streamlined communication and improved preparedness. Headquarters staff also agreed that the post was better prepared for hurricanes after implementing improved consolidation point planning.

⁴ Volunteers were not placed in Dominica for 2018 and did not enter on duty there until after May 2019 when the EAP tests were conducted.

Volunteers knew their consolidation points. All Volunteers we interviewed correctly identified their consolidation points and stated that they would be able to reach their consolidation point in an emergency. Furthermore, all six consolidation points in the Eastern Caribbean had been inspected by post staff.

Volunteers trusted the safety and security manager and reported crimes. Volunteers expressed a high level of trust in their SSM and in the post's ability to respond to crime incidents. Ninety percent of Volunteers we interviewed also said if they were a victim of a crime they would report the crime to the Peace Corps. Volunteers described the SSM as "competent," "caring," and "transparent." Volunteers who had been victims of crime said they felt the situation was "handled very well." Furthermore, senior staff at headquarters spoke highly of the SSM's abilities.

The post adequately addressed the Peace Corps safety and security officer's recommendations. In June 2019, the post had three open recommendations from a 2018 Peace Corps safety and security officer (PCSSO) trip report. The post addressed two of the PCSSO's recommendations related to developing a consolidation point training plan for staff and Volunteers and customizing post standard operating procedures during emergencies. As of January 2020, there was one outstanding recommendation related to identifying air ambulance services and secondary facilities available on other nearby island nations that could assist the post in an emergency situation. At the time of fieldwork, the post was addressing how to close this recommendation.

Volunteers followed the transportation policy. The rate of transportation related injuries among Volunteers at the post was lower than regional and global rates in 2017 and 2018. Many Volunteers said that the availability of buses allowed them to travel freely while abiding by the rules. Nevertheless, the post faced challenges with regards to Volunteer transportation risks. Narrow island roads increased accident risks, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. Travel by boat was also dangerous if the craft lacked proper safety equipment. For that reason, Volunteers were required to seek approval from the Peace Corps and submit information about the craft and operator before they could board a boat. All Volunteers interviewed said they were able to follow the post's travel and transportation rules.

AREAS OF VOLUNTEER SAFETY AND SECURITY SUPPORT THAT REQUIRED MANAGEMENT ATTENTION

The evaluation revealed that the collection and recordation of Volunteer contact information needed attention. The remainder of this section provides more information about this topic.

The post has not stored updated contact information for Volunteers in the Volunteer Information Database Application as required.

SSI 603 states that VIDA is the official repository for correct Volunteer contact information. OIG pulled contact information from VIDA for those Volunteers interviewed during fieldwork and found that 28 of the 30 Volunteers had their correct contact information stored in VIDA. However, contact information for some emergency or local contacts was not included. Eight Volunteers had provided contact information for their original host family or someone else who did not live at their current site.

The administrative assistants at the post were responsible for updating Volunteer contact information in VIDA, though Volunteers often did not share a new phone number with them. Moreover, one senior staff member said an administrative assistant was too busy to update Volunteer contact information in VIDA in a timely manner. Another staff member said training for the administrative assistants on how to work with VIDA would be useful. Inaccurate contact information in VIDA could impede the post's ability to efficiently contact all Volunteers in an emergency.

We recommend:

- 7. That the country director oversee improved staff training and processes for updating Volunteer contact information in the Volunteer Information Database Application.**

VOLUNTEER HEALTH SUPPORT

In our evaluation, we assessed Volunteer health support using the following researchable question to guide our work:

- Is the health care program meeting Volunteers' needs?

AREAS OF NO CONCERN

The post's medical action plan met requirements. We found that the post medical action plan (MAP) generally met the requirements in Technical Guidance (TG) 385. The post also had a regional MAP for each island which included most of the required components. One regional MAP did not have local bus, train, and ferry schedules. The last MAP tabletop exercise was conducted in April 2019 and included 27 staff members, including the acting CD, the DMO, both Peace Corps medical officers (PCMO), and the SSM. Headquarters determined that the post's MAP met guidelines.

Volunteers were generally satisfied with the healthcare they received from the Peace Corps. Eighty-eight percent of Volunteers who participated in the OIG survey reported that the healthcare they received met their physical health needs, and 76 percent said the healthcare they received met their mental health needs. These figures were largely consistent across all four islands.

Medical unit staffing and logistical support were adequate. A member of senior staff stated that the medical unit was adequately staffed, and we heard from the PCMOs that their workloads were manageable. Both PCMOs stated that they could tend to Volunteer needs, though they often worked over 8 hours per day to get their work done. PCMOs said that most days without medical emergencies were manageable, but that tending to urgent issues could slow down response time. Despite the significant workload, PCMOs supported Volunteers across four islands while maintaining a high quality of care.

The post's medical officer backup was sufficient. The post had two backup PCMOs on contract that had been trained, but utilized only one of those backups regularly. The backup PCMO worked with Peace Corps about three to four times per year for about a 1-week period each time. The post provided documentation that showed provider credentials and an Office of Health Services (OHS) recommendation for the use of the provider as back-up. OHS staff described the backup as knowledgeable, professional, and pleasant.

Most health facilities had been assessed. Post staff had assessed 94 percent of health facilities listed in their MAP, which included facilities on each island. Although some facilities and providers had not been assessed within the past 3 years as required by TG 385, PCMOs were working to assess the remaining facilities that were unassessed or out-of-date. The OHS site assessment in May 2019 noted that facilities in Grenada, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia were “impressive with clean, modern, and well equipped and staffed facilities.”

The post informed Volunteers about the quality nurse. According to the PCMOs, Volunteers were informed of the quality nurse line during PST through the Volunteer newsletter and when Volunteers received their medical kit. Volunteers used the quality nurse line to address concerns to OHS.

Volunteers were mostly satisfied with support navigating the challenges of service. The majority of Volunteers interviewed said the post provided sufficient support to navigate the challenges of service. Volunteers said the PCMOs were reliable and support was available if needed. Although most Volunteers expressed confidence in the resources provided by the post, some Volunteers reported hearing rumors of individuals getting medically separated while seeking mental health support, which dissuaded some from reaching out to the PCMOs. Senior staff at the post understood that there was a misconception among Volunteers that they would get sent home if they sought mental health support. The PCMOs communicated the process and policies with Volunteers to address this misconception. The PCMOs said they felt comfortable addressing mental health needs of Volunteers. One PCMO communicated that they were prepared, trained, and able to handle the number of cases they receive. OHS also expressed confidence in both PCMOs’ ability to handle the mental health needs of Volunteers.

The medical unit sufficiently protected Volunteer confidentiality. Eighty-seven percent of Volunteers felt that their interactions with PCMOs would remain confidential within the medical unit. This figure was consistent across all islands. A few Volunteers on outer islands expressed concern that there might be breaches in confidentiality, though, according to the CD and the PCMOs, staff on the outer islands were not provided with as much information as Volunteers thought they were. Two members of senior staff reported that the new configuration of the medical office physical space should help ensure the protection of confidential information, and several staff members expressed confidence that the medical unit was adequately protecting patient confidentiality.

Peace Corps medical officers supported Volunteers with accommodations. Both PCMOs said they were able to support Volunteers with accommodations. One PCMO described direct dialogue with the programming staff for placing volunteers with specific needs in sites.

VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

In our evaluation, we assessed Volunteer administrative support using the following researchable question to guide our work:

- Does the administrative unit provide sufficient support to Volunteers, including allowances and reimbursements?

AREAS OF VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT THAT REQUIRED MANAGEMENT ATTENTION

The evaluation uncovered some areas of Volunteer administrative support that required management attention, particularly with the data used for the determination of living and settling-in allowance sufficiency. The remainder of this section provides more information about this topic.

The post did not have enough data to determine the sufficiency of living and settling-in allowances on an island-by-island basis.

Peace Corps Manual Section (MS) 221 states that living allowances should be verified by market-basket survey data that is collected by staff in multiple locations across a post. In addition, the manual section sets a 75 percent response rate threshold for the living allowance survey before consideration of a living allowance adjustment greater than 10 percent.

We learned that the post had not conducted market-basket surveys for St. Vincent and Grenada as required, due in part to outer-island staff not having received guidance from leadership regarding market-basket surveys. In addition, the post did not initiate any change to the living allowance, because Volunteer participation in the living allowance survey fell far short of the 75 percent threshold established by MS 221.

As a result of not conducting market-basket surveys and not achieving the 75 percent participation standard, the post did not have sufficient data to make an informed decision. Staff expressed their assumption that the low survey response rates meant that the Volunteers were satisfied with the allowances. However, approximately one-third of the Volunteers interviewed on Grenada and St. Lucia reported that the living allowance was insufficient, and about the same number on Dominica and Grenada thought the settling-in allowance was insufficient.

We recommend:

- 8. That the director of management and operations train staff on how to conduct market-basket surveys and have staff conduct a market-basket survey for each island, as required by Manual Section 221.**
- 9. That the country director and director of management and operations work with Volunteers to increase living and settling-in allowance survey participation.**

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

In our evaluation, we assessed the effectiveness of communication and collaboration using the following researchable question to guide our work:

- Do staff effectively communicate and collaborate with each other, Volunteers, and stakeholders?

AREAS OF NO CONCERN

Communication between the post and headquarters, and between the post and the Embassy, was effective. In general, most post and headquarters staff said their communication was good. Embassy staff we spoke with said their communication and relationship with the post was effective. Although two headquarters staff brought up concerns about the physical distance from the Embassy, the CD did not have any concerns about the relationship with the Embassy, stating that the distance did not affect post operations.

The Volunteer advisory committee was effective. Ninety-four percent of Volunteers reported that the VAC was a useful mechanism for communication between staff and Volunteers. Senior staff members said the VAC meetings were good. Though staff thought the VAC was not as active as it could be and said meetings were infrequent, we found that VAC meeting minutes showed a recognition of several important issues including technical training, Peace Corps Response, and the Volunteers' issues with reporting project accomplishments. The VAC was functional and raised substantive issues with post leadership.

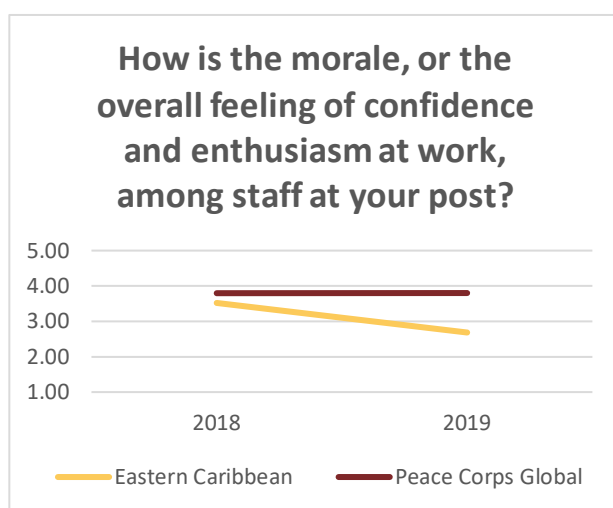
AREAS OF COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION THAT REQUIRED MANAGEMENT ATTENTION

The evaluation uncovered some areas of communication and collaboration that required management attention, particularly the impact that both low morale and the lack of formal relations with the host government had on operations. The remainder of this section provides more information about these topics.

Low morale and poor communication at the post negatively impacted operations.

According to *Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post*, staff and Volunteers should express loyalty and pride in working for the Peace Corps, and morale should be good. Moreover, the document specifies the inclusion of staff input into decision-making and effective communication between staff as additional best practices for effective post management.

We learned that staff morale was low at the post. Staff reported dissatisfaction in a number of topic areas, and ranked 60th out of 60 Peace Corps posts for 12 of the 35 questions on the most recent Host Country Staff Survey (HCSS). The post ranked in the bottom five posts for an additional nine of those questions. Not only was morale an area the post ranked 60th out of 60 Peace Corps posts, but one of several for which the scores dropped over recent years. This data was underscored by post staff who reported bad morale in the St. Lucia office that had negative impacts upon the office environment.



One staff member thought that when leadership did not ask for their opinions, it meant that staff were not valued or taken seriously. Two others reported that staff were afraid to speak out to

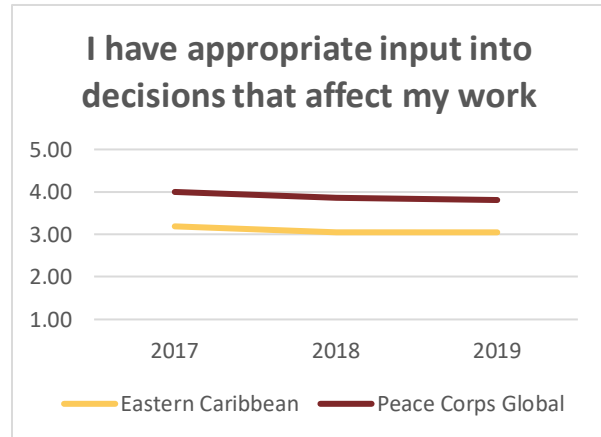
U.S. direct hire leadership, and used the words “fear” or “intimidation” to describe their feelings about expressing opinions or feedback. In the HCSS, the post ranked last among 60 posts in response to the prompts “I am treated fairly by senior post leadership” and “My supervisor/team leader treats me the way I want to be treated”.

We identified several reasons that staff reported low morale and dissatisfaction with leadership that included the staff’s perceived lack of input into management decisions and poor overall communication.

Lack of Staff Input into Decision-Making

Seven post staff members reported frustration with decisions that impacted their work without consulting them. Staff reported that there were fewer staff meetings for key activities such as site identification, training, events, and Volunteer support. Others expressed frustration that they were left out of meetings related to their work.

Staff also relayed concerns about specific decisions for which they claimed leadership did not solicit or consider their input. Some of these decisions made under previous leadership included the 2018 office move, management of the Hurricane Maria aftermath, the 2018 evacuation of St. Vincent, and the adoption of the three-phased training model. Staff were also concerned about decision-making under current leadership regarding the move to electronic funds transfer for vendors and host families, staff hiring decisions, and several other decisions specific to their jobs.



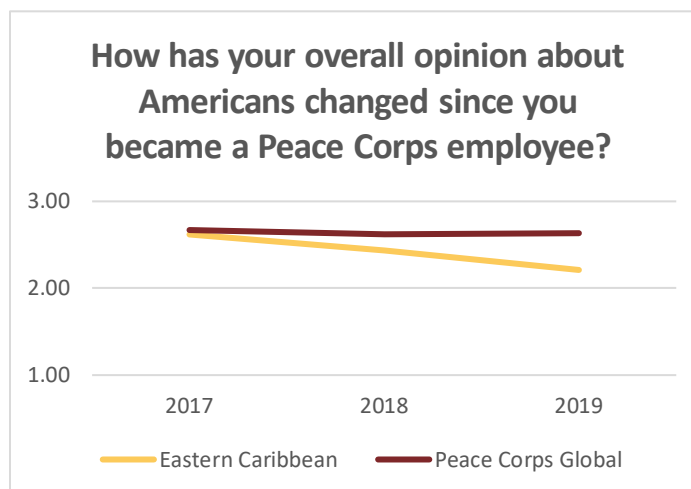
Poor Communication

Over one-third of respondents to the OIG staff survey identified that communication needed improvement. Multiple headquarters staff reported that communication across the islands was challenging, and we heard from Volunteers and post staff that ineffective inter-island communication prevented key messages from reaching the islands. Some attributed that poor communication to insufficient staff collaboration at the St. Lucia office. Others reported to us that poor communication between the programming and training unit and the administrative unit at the post led to administrative staff not being informed in a timely manner of what they needed to do for certain tasks. In addition, multiple individuals thought poor communication had impacted PST, and another thought communication between leadership about PST was occurring less frequently.

Finally, the departures of Grenada’s APCD in June 2019 and driver in December 2018 created a communication challenge for the post. Individuals we spoke with reported that staff and Volunteers on Grenada who performed additional duties to support operations during this staffing gap did not receive sufficient guidance or preparation. Leadership explained that they had supported the Grenada office with multiple temporary duty assignment personnel and Volunteers during this period. However, as noted above in the site history finding, we found that

there had been insufficient communication between management and island staff during site assessment and placements in Grenada.

Overall, staff reported less enthusiasm for their work instead of having an “all-hands-on-deck” attitude. Staff also reported that the general quality of some work was lower because some staff were not putting in the time they used to commit to their work. Several individuals expressed a feeling of increased tension in the St. Lucia office, and a Volunteer wondered if it caused staff to leave. Our final observation about this topic concerned the HCSS, which showed a decrease in staff opinion of Americans since 2017 that placed them 60th out of 60 posts for 2019.



We recommend:

- 10. That the country director work with relevant headquarters offices and post staff to improve and assess employee engagement in decision-making and foster an environment that supports better communication, collaboration, and information sharing among staff.**
- 11. That the country director establish processes and practices that improve communication lines between staff, including those across different islands.**

The post did not have formalized relationships with the host country government.

Programming and Training Guidance states that posts should have agreements with the host country governments that help them engage with these governments, lend credibility and clarity to the program, and support collaboration between the Peace Corps and the host countries. The guidance also underscores the importance of project advisory committees (PAC), describing them as:

[the] ‘voice of key project stakeholders’ that helps the Peace Corps ensure that it develops credible, realistic, and responsive project plans and training programs. A PAC should be established for each new project and should remain active throughout the life of a project. This committee shares responsibility for the design, evaluation, and revision of the project.

We learned that the post did not have memoranda of understanding (MOU) with partner ministries of education on any of the islands. In addition, there was no PAC on St. Vincent or Dominica, and, though Grenada hosted poorly-attended stakeholder meetings, we also found no evidence of a PAC on that island. There was a PAC on St. Lucia, and the post had been conducting stakeholder meetings there to help with the current PEL project review and make sure the project aligned with ministry needs.

We learned that neither staff nor the ministries prioritized MOUs and PACs. The post planned to start the MOU process once the new project re-alignment process started. We also learned from staff that an MOU had been underway for Dominica, but it was derailed by Hurricane Maria, and the PAC there was postponed because the post suspended Volunteer placements on that island from when the hurricane occurred until the second half of 2019. The Dominica project manager planned to start a PAC in 2020. Finally, we learned that turnover at the ministries was a significant impediment to establishing MOUs.

Although program managers and APCDs reportedly had good commitment and relationships with ministry officials without formalized agreements, staff had concerns that the lack of PACs meant that the post was not bringing together key people to inform the project. One member of senior staff learned in recent stakeholder meetings that there were needs not being considered because they had not been articulated in the past. Several staff remarked that issues had come up with school principals, a group they said were critical for Volunteer success at site. They commented that the issues could be resolved through formalized support from the ministry and help with accountability for schools, principals, and teachers in supporting and working with Volunteers. As stated earlier in this report, technical training and reporting goals were heavily weighted towards co-teaching activities, though several Volunteers reported that ministry officials preferred Volunteer engagement with pull-outs over co-teaching. Overall, we concluded that stakeholder input would be particularly valuable during the post's recently initiated formal project review.

We also learned that poor stakeholder participation on Grenada was indicative of how thin the coordination was between the post and the ministry. One individual there thought a better working relationship with the ministry would improve Volunteer impact. Without a country agreement in place or a program manager who had effective relationships with officials, Grenada's lack of MOU and PAC seemed more significant. We also learned that Grenada was the only one of the four countries that did not waive value added taxes or customs fees and did not pay a host country contribution of \$40 per Volunteer.

We recommend:

- 12. That the country director develop a memorandum of understanding or similar agreement for the literacy project with the appropriate ministry or national-level government partner for each country.**
- 13. That the country director establish a project advisory committee for each country.**

STAFFING RESOURCES

In our evaluation, we assessed the post's management of staffing resources using the following researchable question to guide our work:

- Has leadership effectively managed staffing and staff capacity?

AREAS OF NO CONCERN

Region staff conducted task analyses to ensure staffing was adequate. We heard from numerous staff at the post who thought there was a need for more staff, however, it appeared that management was assessing the post's staffing challenges. The Region sent staff members in October 2019 and January 2020 to conduct task analyses, first of programming and training unit staffing and then administrative unit staffing. Additionally, the post had recently hired a programming and training specialist, which a member of senior staff asserted would help the training team.

Most staff thought roles and responsibilities were clearly defined. We heard from multiple staff members who said that their roles & responsibilities were clearly defined, though two staff members on outer islands said some of their responsibilities fell outside of their statement of work. In the OIG survey, 94 percent of staff agreed that their duties and responsibilities were clear and well-defined.

Most staff at the post had completed the required Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response (SARRR) Training. All but two staff had received the all-staff SARRR training. All designated staff had received designated staff training. Following fieldwork, the post's management stated that it was in the process of training the remaining two staff members.

AREAS OF STAFFING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT THAT REQUIRED MANAGEMENT ATTENTION

The evaluation found that staff reported not receiving sufficient training. The remainder of this section provides more information about this topic.

Staff reported they did not receive sufficient training for their jobs.

Both MS 664 and "Characteristics of a High Performing Post" underscore the importance of enhancing performance of official duties through training and learning.

Almost half the staff who responded to our survey said they had not received training to meet their needs. In interviews, 7 of 13 local staff reported that their training needs had not been met, and 6 staff reported needing training on tools or processes related to more Peace Corps-specific job duties. For example, three staff needed more training on Peace Corps information technology systems such as VIDA or LearningSpace. In addition, staff reported needing other training in areas that were pertinent to their jobs, such as coaching or monitoring and evaluation.



Post leadership explained that budget constraints had limited the availability of training for staff. One senior staff member also suggested that staff were too busy to find time for training. However, we found that 40 percent of staff who replied to the OIG staff survey reported that they had not discussed training needs with their supervisor. This mirrored the HCSS results, which

not only found that the post ranked 60th out of 60 on a key training-needs topic, but also that the results showed a downturn over the last 3 years.

Post leadership said they wanted to find ways to train staff without budget impacts such as through self-directed training or training during staff meetings. During fieldwork, the CD asked staff to identify their top three training priorities so they could be considered during the post's strategic planning process, however, we determined that meeting staff training needs warranted additional management attention.

We found that staff reported struggles completing certain job-related tasks at a high level of quality. An example cited in this report was the Volunteer site contact information assessment, which found that accurate information was not updated accurately or in a timely manner. The post scored 58th out of 60 posts for the HCSS prompt: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I have enough resources to develop my job skills."

We recommend:

- 14. That the country director develop and implement a plan to address staff training needs.**

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

WE RECOMMEND:

1. That the director for programming and training, with guidance from the regional chief of programming and training, develop a primary English literacy framework with objectives and indicators that accurately reflect how Volunteers can best achieve literacy project success.
2. That the country director develop a plan to improve management of key aspects of the post's Response program, including: identification and vetting of Response Volunteer assignments, selection and preparation of work sites and partners, training of Response Volunteers on local language and culture, and staff communication and collaboration to support the program.
3. That the country director swear-in Volunteers based on staff's completed assessment of trainees' readiness to serve and qualifications.
4. That the director of programming and training provide more oversight of staff's completion of trainee assessments, per the post's trainee assessment portfolio guidelines.
5. That the director of programming and training incorporate more opportunity for education project trainees to practice teaching before going to their permanent sites, and ensure staff observe, assess, and document trainees' acquisition of teaching skills prior to their swearing-in.
6. That the director of programming and training ensure that the post adheres to its standard operating procedure for the collection, documentation, recordation, and proper utilization of site history files.
7. That the country director oversee improved staff training and processes for updating Volunteer contact information in the Volunteer Information Database Application.
8. That the director of management and operations train staff on how to conduct market-basket surveys and have staff conduct a market-basket survey for each island, as required by Manual Section 221.
9. That the country director and director of management and operations work with Volunteers to increase living and settling-in allowance survey participation.
10. That the country director work with relevant headquarters offices and post staff to improve and assess employee engagement in decision-making and foster an environment that supports better communication, collaboration, and information sharing among staff.

PEACE CORPS OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

11. That the country director establish processes and practices that improve communication lines between staff, including those across different islands.
12. That the country director develop a memorandum of understanding or similar agreement for the literacy project with the appropriate ministry or national-level government partner for each country.
13. That the country director establish a project advisory committee for each country.
14. That the country director develop and implement a plan to address staff training needs.

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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

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

The Evaluation Unit announced its intent to conduct an evaluation of the post on October 1, 2019. For this evaluation, we used the following researchable questions as announced to the agency to guide our work:

- **Programming and Training**
 - Is the program focused on the country's development priorities, in the poorest areas of the country? Are Volunteers achieving project objectives?
 - Do trainings prepare Volunteers for service?
 - Are sites appropriate and meeting all established criteria?
- **Volunteer Support**
 - Is post sufficiently prepared to respond to emergencies and security incidents? Are preventative safety and security measures adequate?
 - Is the health care program meeting Volunteers' needs?
 - Does the administrative unit provide sufficient support to Volunteers, including allowances and reimbursements?
- **Leadership and Management**
 - Does staff effectively communicate and collaborate with each other, Volunteers, and other stakeholders?
 - Has leadership effectively managed staffing and staff capacity?

The evaluation team conducted the preliminary research portion of the evaluation between October 1, 2019, and November 29, 2019. This research included a review of agency and post documents provided by headquarters and post staff; interviews with headquarters staff representing Inter-America and the Pacific Operations, the Office of Health Services, the Office of Safety and Security, Overseas Programming and Training Support, Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Peace Corps Response, and the Office of the Director; and an inquiry to the Office of Victim Advocacy. We also conducted online surveys that were completed by 68 Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean Volunteers and 17 Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean staff.

In-country fieldwork occurred from December 2, 2019, to December 20, 2019, and included interviews with post leadership and staff in programming, training, and support roles. We conducted phone interviews with the Ambassador and Regional Security Officer at the U.S.

Embassy in Barbados, and we met with the Principal Officer at the Embassy in Grenada. We interviewed four host country government ministry officials. In addition, we interviewed a stratified judgmental sample of 31 Volunteers (37 percent of Volunteers serving at the time of our visit) and inspected 31 Volunteer living spaces.⁵

The scope of the evaluation encompassed 3 years, from 2017 to 2020, to include the 27-month span in-country of most Volunteers (which includes 3 months of training) and additional time for Volunteers that extended their service beyond 2 years.

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

⁵ For three Volunteers located on Dominica, the evaluator was not able to visit the Volunteers' houses so the evaluator dictated the criteria over the phone for the Volunteer to do the inspection.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

As part of this post evaluation, interviews were conducted with 32 Volunteers,⁶ 17 staff in-country, and 26 key stakeholders, including Peace Corps headquarters staff, officials with the U.S. Embassy in Barbados and Grenada, and host-country ministry officials in Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent.

The following table provides demographic information for the entire Volunteer population in Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean. The Volunteer sample was selected to represent these demographics in addition to length of service, geographic location, and ethnicity.

Table 3: Volunteer Demographic Data

Project	Percentage of Volunteers
Primary English Literacy Volunteers	75%
Peace Corps Response Volunteers	18.75%
Peace Corps Volunteer Leaders	6.25%

Site Location (Island)	Percentage of Volunteers
Dominica	10%
Grenada	25%
St. Lucia	40%
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	25%

Gender	Percentage of Volunteers
Female	81.25%
Male	18.75%

Age	Percentage of Volunteers
25 or younger	48%
26-29	26%
30-49	18.75%
50 and over	6.25%

Source: VIDA. Note: Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

⁶ Thirty-one of the Volunteers interviewed were part of our stratified judgmental sample described in Appendix A, and one of the Volunteers interviewed was a Peace Corps Volunteer leader.

PEACE CORPS OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

At the time of our field visit, the post had 29 permanent staff positions with 2 vacancies. The post periodically employed temporary staff to assist with training, however these positions were not staffed at the time of our visit. We interviewed 17 staff.

Table 4: Interviews Conducted with Post Staff

Position	Status	Interviewed
Administrative Assistant (3)	FSN	X
Administrative Assistant	PSC	
Associate Peace Corps Director (2)	PSC	X
Cashier	FSN	
Country Director	USDH	X
Director of Management Operations	USDH	X
Director of Programming and Training	USDH	X
Driver	PSC	
Driver/Office Attendant	PSC	X
Executive Assistant & HR Coordinator	PSC	
Financial Assistant	PSC	
General Services Manager	PSC	
IT Specialist	PSC	
Medical Secretary	PSC	
Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation Coordinator	PSC	X
Office Attendant	PSC	
Peace Corps Medical Officer (2)	PSC	X
Peace Corps Response Coordinator	PSC	X
Program Manager	PSC	X
Programming and Training Specialist	PSC	X
Receptionist/Travel Assistant	PSC	
Safety and Security Manager	PSC	X
Training Manager	PSC	X

Data as of December 2019.

*PSC is personal services contractor; FSN is foreign service national.

PEACE CORPS OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

An additional 26 interviews were conducted with key stakeholders during the preliminary research phase of the evaluation and in-country fieldwork.

Table 5: Interviews Conducted with Key Stakeholders

Position	Organization
Ambassador	U.S. Embassy in Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean, and the OECS
Regional Security Officer	U.S. Embassy in Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean, and the OECS
Principal Officer	U.S. Embassy Grenada ⁷
Officer for Measurement & Evaluation, Curriculum Unit	Ministry of Education, Human Resource Planning, Vocational Training, and National Excellence (Dominica)
Curriculum Officer for Language Arts & National Focal Point for the Early Learners Program	Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations, and Sustainable Development (St. Lucia)
Early Learners Program Coordinator	Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development (Grenada)
Senior Education Officer	Ministry of Education, National Reconciliation, Ecclesiastical Affairs, and Information (St. Vincent and the Grenadines)
Director of Programming and Training, Former	U.S. Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean (2016-2018)
Chief Administrative Officer	Inter-America and the Pacific Operations, Peace Corps Headquarters
Chief Programming and Training Officer	Inter-America and the Pacific Operations, Peace Corps Headquarters
Chief of Operations (2)	Inter-America and the Pacific Operations, Peace Corps Headquarters
Country Desk Officer	Inter-America and the Pacific Operations, Peace Corps Headquarters
Regional Security Adviser	Inter-America and the Pacific Operations, Peace Corps Headquarters
Specialist	Inter-America and the Pacific Operations, Peace Corps Headquarters
Director, Counseling and Outreach Unit	Office of Health Services, Peace Corps Headquarters
Deputy Director, Office of Health Services	Office of Health Services, Peace Corps Headquarters
International Health Coordinator	Office of Health Services, Peace Corps Headquarters
Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer	Regional Placement (Mexico), Office of Safety and Security
Education Specialist	Overseas Programming and Training Support, Peace Corps Headquarters
Education Program Specialist	Overseas Programming and Training Support, Peace Corps Headquarters
Volunteer and Placement Specialist	Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Peace Corps Headquarters
Placement Supervisor	Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Peace Corps Headquarters
Chief of Operations	Peace Corps Response, Peace Corps Headquarters
Program Specialist	Peace Corps Response, Peace Corps Headquarters
Principal Service Officer for Innovation	Office of the Director, Peace Corps Headquarters

Data as of December 2019.

⁷ The U. S. Embassy Grenada is located in St. George's, Grenada and falls under the U.S. Embassy in Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean, and the OECS.

APPENDIX C: LIST OF ACRONYMS

APCD	Associate Peace Corps Director
AVS	Annual Volunteer Survey
CD	Country Director
DMO	Director of Management and Operations
DPT	Director of Programming and Training
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
FY	Fiscal Year
HCSS	Host Country Staff Survey
IAP	Inter-America and the Pacific
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MAP	Medical Action Plan
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Peace Corps Manual Section
OAS	Organization of American States
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OHS	Office of Health Services
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
PCMO	Peace Corps Medical Officer
PCSSO	Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer
PEL	Primary English Literacy
PST	Pre-Service Training
RSO	Regional Security Officer
SARRR	Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SSI	Safety and Security Instruction
SSM	Safety and Security Manager
TAP	Trainee Assessment Portfolio
TG	Technical Guidance
USDH	United States Direct Hire
VAC	Volunteer Advisory Committee
VIDA	Volunteer Information Database Application

APPENDIX D: AGENCY RESPONSE TO THE PRELIMINARY REPORT



MEMORANDUM

To: Kathy Buller, Inspector General

Through: Angela Kissel, Chief Compliance Officer *Angela Kissel*

From: Michelle K. Brooks, Chief of Staff *Michelle K Brooks*
Gregory Huger, Regional Director, Inter-America and the Pacific Region
Dale Withington, Country Director, Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean

Gregory Huger

Date: June 18, 2020

CC: Matthew McKinney, Deputy Chief of Staff/White House Liaison
Patrick Young, Associate Director, Office of Global Operations
Carl Sosebee, Senior Advisor to the Director
Timothy Noelker, General Counsel
Temby Caprio, Chief of Operations, Inter-America and the Pacific Region
Lindsey Suggs, Chief of Programming and Training, Inter-America and the Pacific Region
Gonzalo Molina Zegarra, Chief Administrative Officer, Inter-America and the Pacific Region
Kweku Boafo, Director, Peace Corps Response
Shawn Bardwell, Associate Director, Office of Safety and Security
Karen Becker, Associate Director, Office of Health Services
Joshua O'Donnell, Regional Security Advisor, Inter-America and the Pacific Region
Patrick Triano, Director of Programming and Training, Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean

Subject: Preliminary Report on the Evaluation of Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean (Project No. 20-EVAL-01)

Enclosed please find the agency's response to the recommendations made by the Inspector General for Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean as outlined in the Preliminary Report on the Evaluation of Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean (Project No. 20-EVAL-01) given to the agency on May 4, 2020.

Recommendation 1

That the director for programming and training, with guidance from the regional chief of programming and training, develop a primary English literacy framework with objectives and indicators that accurately reflect how Volunteers can best achieve literacy project success.

Concur

Response: Post is focused on developing a new literacy project that builds on the achievements and lessons learned of its predecessor. Activities include:

- A SWOT Analysis with Volunteers at their MST in October 2019
- Reviews of other Posts' Literacy Projects in October/November 2019 to determine if any of their approaches to similar challenges could be adapted to the Eastern Caribbean
- Stakeholder workshops in all four countries in November 2019 – January 2020, which involved Post Staff, Ministry of Education staff from the school level up through the HQs, PCVs, and Response Volunteers. A Post P&T Staff Retreat in December 2019 (during the Program Evaluation period).
- A PTE Alignment Workshop in March. Post P&T Staff, PCVs, OPATS Education Specialist, and the IAP Roving DPT drafted key elements of a new Project Plan.

Post P&T Staff worked in March, April and May 2020 to produce required documents for a new Project, including a Situation Analysis, Logical Project Framework, and an Implementation Plan. The M&E Plan and Bridge to Training are expected to be completed by July 2020

Documents to be Submitted:

- Approved Situation Analysis.
- Approved Logical Project Framework
- Approved Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- Approved Implementation Plan
- Approved Bridge to Training

Status and Timeline for Completion: October 2020

Recommendation 2

That the country director develop a plan to improve management of key aspects of the post's Response program, including: identification and vetting of Response Volunteer assignments, selection and preparation of work sites and partners, training of Response Volunteers on local language and culture, and staff communication and collaboration to support the program.

Concur

Response: Based on the 2018 and 2019 Response Volunteer surveys and conversations between senior staff and Response Volunteers, PC/ Eastern Caribbean identified that a review of the Response Program was needed. Plans to improve the Response program have already begun and include expanding the role of the response Volunteer at their sites, improving supervisor and counterpart training and an increase in language training hours.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Revamp Meeting (Agenda) – Counterparts Supervisor Workshop Agenda for meeting with Response Volunteers to review and revise session plans for RV Counterpart Workshop
- Counterpart – Supervisor Session Summaries
- Revised draft session plans for Response Volunteer Counterpart Workshop (Session – Workplan and Orientation Session; and; Sustainability Session Plan)
- Final Roll-up Plan for improving management of key aspects of the post's Response program

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2020

Recommendation 3

That the country director swear-in Volunteers based on staff's completed assessment of trainees' readiness to serve and qualifications.

Concur

Response: The CD, DTP and the Training Manager will ensure moving forward that the TAP process will be completed and documented for all trainees and Volunteers.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Calendar of Training Event (COTE - for next PST, May to August 20210)
- Revised Trainee Assessment Portfolio (TAP) for next PST

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2021

Recommendation 4

That the director of programming and training provide more oversight of staff's completion of trainee assessments, per the post's trainee assessment portfolio guidelines.

Concur

Response: PC Eastern Caribbean will return to a Two-Phase PST in 2020. The first phase will be in St. Lucia, will include a Practice School (a kind of Model School), and PCTs will be assessed twice. The second phase will be on the PCTs island-of-service, and PCTs will be assessed a third time and only inducted if they are capable of carrying out all aspects of their PCV service.

Documents to be Submitted:

- “Training Section” of current approved Implementation Plan
- COTE for Next PST (May – August 2021)

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2021

Recommendation 5

That the director of programming and training incorporate more opportunity for education project trainees to practice teaching before going to their permanent sites, and ensure staff observe, assess, and document trainees' acquisition of teaching skills prior to their swearing-in.

Concur

Response: PC/ Eastern Caribbean is moving to a Two-Phase PST that includes a Practice School and an updated TAP policy and process. The P&T team has spent the first five months of 2020 further developing the ideas and concepts that emerged at its Retreat, particularly associated with the development of a new Primary School Literacy Project.

Documents to be Submitted:

- P&T Team Dec 2019 Retreat
- COTE for Next PST (May – August 2021)
- Trainee Assessment Portfolio (TAP)

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2021

Recommendation 6

That the director of programming and training ensure that the post adheres to its standard operating procedure for the collection, documentation, recordation, and proper utilization of site history files.

Concur

Response: The Programming & Training (P&T) Unit in coordination with the Safety and Security Manager (SSM) is currently reviewing and updating all site identification and approval forms, in addition to updating the Standard Operating Procedures. The next step is training for the P&T staff, the SSM, and Administrative Assistants on each island.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Updated Site History Forms
- Updated Draft SOP
- Email of SOP to appropriate staff
- Agenda from staff training

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2020

Recommendation 7

That the country director oversee improved staff training and processes for updating Volunteer contact information in the Volunteer Information Database Application.

Concur

Response: The current SOP for Site Contact forms is being reviewed by the staff who have been responsible for gathering the information from Volunteers and submitting it to VIDA. Once the SOP is revised to ensure that future gaps in contact information do not occur, staff will be trained by the Safety and Security Manager.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Updated SOP, Site Contact forms
- Site contact form training agenda

Status and Timeline for Completion: July 2020

Recommendation 8

That the director of management and operations train staff on how to conduct market-basket surveys and have staff conduct a market-basket survey for each island, as required by Manual Section 221

Concur

Response: The DMO reviewed the available literature on the market-basket survey and then led and trained Post staff in conducting market basket surveys in Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines in January and February 2020.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Market Basket Survey All Islands
- Narrative of training experience

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed, June 2020

Recommendation 9

That the country director and director of management and operations work with Volunteers to increase living and settling-in allowance survey participation.

Concur

Response: The living and settling-in allowance surveys initiated by the DMO in December 2019 resulted in increased rates of participation as compared to the prior year's surveys, as the result of an increased information campaign to PCVs and several rounds of direct contact by multiple staff members with volunteers. The prior year settling-in allowance survey participation rate was 22%, whereas the December 2019 version produced a 44% response rate. The prior year living allowance survey response rate was 41%, and the December 2019 version's response rate was 83%.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Eastern Caribbean 2019-2020 living and settling-in allowance survey response tracker
- Example emails from the increased information campaign

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed, June 2020

Recommendation 10

That the country director work with relevant headquarters offices and post staff to improve and assess employee engagement in decision-making and foster an environment that supports better communication, collaboration, and information sharing among staff.

Concur

Response: PC/ Eastern Caribbean is developing a staff retreat to help improve employee engagement, empowerment in decision making, and improved communication amongst all staff. To date the team has completed a Needs Assessment and a draft TOR for an external, local Retreat Facilitator. The plan is to hold the Staff Retreat when Regional Travel restrictions are lifted, perhaps in July, and staff can meet personally rather than virtually.

Documents to be Submitted:

- First 90 Days Work Plan Presentation to IAP 08/2019 (slides 3 & 6)
- 12/06/19 Email to Staff about results of 2019 HCSS and request for additional, more detailed feedback
- Email to LES Staff Planning Team for Staff Retreat
- Needs Assessment for Staff Retreat
- Email from Staff Retreat Planning Team to staff regarding the Needs Assessment.
- Draft TOR for Staff Retreat Facilitator

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2020

Recommendation 11

That the country director establish processes and practices that improve communication lines between staff, including those across different islands.

Concur

Response: PC/Eastern Caribbean has already made progress with this issue, particularly since the start of 2020, with more regular meetings of various teams, between teams, and all staff members. Staff also have expressed appreciation for the efforts to involve everyone in developing and understanding the Post budget during the preparation of both the FY20 and FY21 IPBS submission.

This issue will be a key topic at the All Staff Retreat Addressing this complicated and important topic at the retreat will fully focus more staff members and having an external facilitator will help ensure that everyone is involved in the decision-making process.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Current schedule of Routine Meetings
- Email to LES Staff Planning Team for Staff Retreat
- Needs Assessment for Staff Retreat
- Email from Staff Retreat Planning Team to staff regarding the Needs Assessment.
- Draft TOR for Staff Retreat Facilitator

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2020

Recommendation 12

That the country director develop a memorandum of understanding or similar agreement for the literacy project with the appropriate ministry or national-level government partner for each country.

Concur

Response: Although there are not any current Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) with any of our National Ministries of Education (MOE), there are Memorandum of Agreements (MOA), referred to as a Country Agreement, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in each of Post's four countries. Additionally, Grenada established a country contribution in 2018 as part of the MOA. Post has drafted a Project MOU and is currently vetting it with the Programming & Training Unit and HQ leadership. The CD, DPT and Program Managers will engage Ministry officials to review the project framework and sign an MOU in support of the project.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Final signed MOU

Status and Timeline for Completion: January 2021

Recommendation 13

That the country director establish a project advisory committee for each country.

Concur

Response: One effort that post has started was organizing Stakeholder Workshops in each country from November 2019 to January 2020 with participant lists based on the current PAC members. These workshops are an important part of the process in developing a new project, and focus on the strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned of the previous project, and ideas, suggestions and advice on the development of a follow-up project.

Once OPATs and the Region approve the new project, Post will reconvene the participants from the Stakeholder Workshops held in each country to present the new project plan for their review and comments. The meeting will also focus on how best to revive the PACs in terms of membership structure and procedures.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Reports on Stakeholder Workshops in each country from November 2019 through January 2020.
- Project Advisory Committee documentation for each country

Status and Timeline for Completion: January 2021

Recommendation 14

That the country director develop and implement a plan to address staff training needs.

Concur

Response: Post senior staff noted the poor result in the HCSS of 2018 regarding staff training, and again in 2019, when the results were released in December. The first response by the CD in December was to request all staff to present their staff training needs and requests to their supervisors by mid-January. Staff and supervisors also were instructed to include training needs/requests in the mid and final appraisal interviews and reports.

These efforts have resulted in supervisors and staff taking more steps to seek out and provide training. Many staff are doing more training after COVID-19 required teleworking from home. Post also is working with staff to identify to implement the \$500 per staff member IAP training budget provided to all Posts.

The next steps are to create a structure that will formalize training considerations by both supervisors and staff, and make it less likely that training will inadvertently be minimized or even ignored by both staff and supervisors due to other priorities. Post also will endeavor to ensure that funding for staff training is one of the last items to be cut during the IPBS process when the Budget Mark received is not enough to fund all that the Post hopes to implement.

A final plan that addresses staff training needs will be drafted at the All Staff Retreat.

Documents to be Submitted:

- 12/9/2019 Email to Staff on Staff Training
- 1/13/2020 minutes of Senior Staff Meeting where DEFAT was approved
- Professional Development Request Form distributed to staff in May 2020
- Worksheet – Identifying Individual Development Goals
- Worksheet – Individual Development Plan
- Worksheet – IDP Milestone Planner
- Worksheet – Ensuring Use of New Skills

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2020

APPENDIX E: OIG COMMENTS

Management concurred with all 14 recommendations, all of which remain open. 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.

OIG will review and consider closing recommendations 1, 3-9, and 12-14, when the documentation reflected in the agency's response to the preliminary report is received. For recommendations 2, 10, and 11, additional documentation is required. These recommendations remain open pending confirmation from the chief compliance officer that the documentation reflected in our analysis below has been received.

Recommendation 2

That the country director develop a plan to improve management of key aspects of the post's Response program, including: identification and vetting of Response Volunteer assignments, selection and preparation of work sites and partners, training of Response Volunteers on local language and culture, and staff communication and collaboration to support the program.

Concur

Response: Based on the 2018 and 2019 Response Volunteer surveys and conversations between senior staff and Response Volunteers, PC/ Eastern Caribbean identified that a review of the Response Program was needed. Plans to improve the Response program have already begun and include expanding the role of the Response Volunteers at their sites, improving supervisor and counterpart training, and an increase in language training hours.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Revamp Meeting (Agenda) – Counterparts Supervisor Workshop Agenda for meeting with Response Volunteers to review and revise session plans for RV Counterpart Workshop
- Counterpart – Supervisor Session Summaries
- Revised draft session plans for Response Volunteer Counterpart Workshop (Session – Workplan and Orientation Session; and; Sustainability Session Plan)
- Final Roll-up Plan for improving management of key aspects of the post's Response program

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2020

OIG Analysis: OIG understands from the agency's response that the post's plans include improving training and preparation of Response Volunteer counterparts and supervisors. It is unclear to OIG whether the 'Final Roll-Up Plan' document addresses the other aspects of the recommendation. OIG requests that the "Final Roll-Up Plan" include information on how the post plans to improve the identification and vetting of Response Volunteer assignments, the selection of work sites and partners, training of Response Volunteers on local language and culture, and staff communication and collaboration to support the program.

Recommendation 10

That the country director work with relevant headquarters offices and post staff to improve and assess employee engagement in decision-making and foster an environment that supports better communication, collaboration, and information sharing among staff.

Concur

Response: PC/ Eastern Caribbean is developing a staff retreat to help improve employee engagement, empowerment in decision making, and improved communication amongst all staff. To date the team has completed a Needs Assessment and a draft TOR for an external, local Retreat Facilitator. The plan is to hold the Staff Retreat when Regional Travel restrictions are lifted, perhaps in July, and staff can meet personally rather than virtually.

Documents to be Submitted:

- First 90 Days Work Plan Presentation to IAP 08/2019 (slides 3 & 6)
- 12/06/19 Email to Staff about results of 2019 HCSS and request for additional, more detailed feedback
- Email to LES Staff Planning Team for Staff Retreat
- Needs Assessment for Staff Retreat
- Email from Staff Retreat Planning Team to staff regarding the Needs Assessment.
- Draft TOR for Staff Retreat Facilitator

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2020

OIG Analysis: In addition to the documentation listed in the agency response, OIG requests that the country director provide a summary of the results of the staff retreat and a description of the steps or decisions being taken to improve employee engagement in decision-making, and staff communication.

Recommendation 11

That the country director establish processes and practices that improve communication lines between staff, including those across different islands.

Concur

Response: PC/Eastern Caribbean has already made progress with this issue, particularly since the start of 2020, with more regular meetings of various teams, between teams, and all staff members. Staff also have expressed appreciation for the efforts to involve everyone in developing and understanding the post budget during the preparation of both the FY20 and FY21 IPBS submission.

This issue will be a key topic at the All Staff Retreat. Addressing this complicated and important topic at the retreat will fully focus more staff members, and having an external facilitator will help ensure that everyone is involved in the decision-making process.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Current schedule of Routine Meetings
- Email to LES Staff Planning Team for Staff Retreat
- Needs Assessment for Staff Retreat
- Email from Staff Retreat Planning Team to staff regarding the Needs Assessment.
- Draft TOR for Staff Retreat Facilitator

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2020

OIG Analysis: In addition to the documentation listed in the agency response, OIG requests that the country director provide documentation of steps being taken, or agreed to after the All Staff Retreat, to improve communication lines between staff, including those across different islands.

APPENDIX F: PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION AND OIG CONTACT

PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION

This program evaluation was conducted under the direction of Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Jerry Black, by Senior Evaluator Paul Romeo, Evaluator Alexandra Miller, and Evaluations Fellow Rishi Udeshi. Additional contributions were made by Senior Evaluator Kris Hoffer.



OIG CONTACT

Following issuance of the final report, a stakeholder satisfaction survey will be distributed to agency stakeholders. If you wish to comment on the quality or usefulness of this report to help us improve our products, please contact Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Jerry Black at jblack@peacecorpsoig.gov.

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

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

Contact OIG

Reporting Hotline:

U.S./International: 202.692.2915

Toll-Free (U.S. only): 800.233.5874

Email: OIG@peacecorpsoig.gov

Online Reporting Tool: peacecorps.gov/oig/contactoig

Mail: Peace Corps Office of Inspector General
1275 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20526

For General Information:

Main Office: 202.692.2900

Website: peacecorps.gov/oig

 Twitter: twitter.com/pcoig