

PEACE CORPS
Office *of* Inspector General



Evaluation of
Peace Corps/Madagascar

IG-25-02-E

September 2025

ABOUT THIS REPORT

WHY OIG CONDUCTED THIS REVIEW

On February 9, 2024, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) announced its evaluation of Peace Corps/Madagascar (hereafter referred to as “the post”). The Peace Corps mission is made possible by Volunteers, and, through its oversight, OIG remains committed to supporting their overall safety, well-being, and success. Evaluations are a key tool in helping OIG fulfill its mission to provide independent oversight of Peace Corps operations and programs. Specifically, post evaluations address efficiency and effectiveness, identify best practices, and recommend improvements to help Peace Corps achieve its mission: to promote world peace and friendship through community-based development and cross-cultural understanding.

HOW OIG CONDUCTED THIS REVIEW

The scope of this evaluation extended to the post’s programs, operations, and activities from October 2021 to May 2024. OIG evaluation activities included: Volunteer and post staff surveys; interviews with staff, Volunteers, and stakeholders; document collection and analysis; and in-person observations and inspections. Evaluators performed on-site work at the post from May 4 to May 24, 2024, where they closely collaborated with post leadership and staff to learn more about past and present operations. OIG’s post evaluations are unique because evaluators gather Volunteers’ first-hand perspectives in the field. During this review, OIG traveled to Volunteers’ homes and work sites for in-person observations and interviews.

The evaluation team experienced effective collaboration and communication with post leadership, staff, and Volunteers. The team greatly appreciates the country director (CD) who was in place during the time of OIG’s review and all post staff, Volunteers, headquarters staff, and other stakeholders for their assistance and cooperation during this evaluation.



Image 1: Volunteer in Madagascar with rice planting farmers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT OIG FOUND

The evaluation revealed opportunities for improvement across all five of the objectives OIG assessed at Peace Corps/Madagascar, including notable issues with host country agreements, safety and security training and procedures, Volunteer housing, and the post's assessment of referral healthcare facilities and consultants.

While Peace Corps/Madagascar's three project sectors (Agriculture, Education, and Health) were impactful and aligned with Madagascar's priorities and needs, OIG found that the post's ministry partners wanted more clarity about the Peace Corps. Post leadership and ministry representatives reported that they were working together to establish memoranda of understanding (MOUs) that will improve their collaboration on Peace Corps goals and projects.

Although the post received qualified Volunteers, OIG found that over the past 3 years the post received fewer Volunteers than it had requested—an agencywide challenge that has impacted many Peace Corps posts. These shortfalls for Peace Corps/Madagascar limited the Peace Corps' impact in a country with significant needs, reduced communities' trust that they would ever get a Peace Corps Volunteer, and adversely affected staff morale.

While Volunteers reported that trainings for the Health and Education sectors were satisfactory, Agriculture sector Volunteers reported that the training they received at the post did not provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to successfully conduct their project work and meet their site goals. Additionally, the agency's Volunteer Reporting and Grants (VRG) tool did not work as intended, primarily due to the country's limited electricity and internet availability, which impacted the reliability of the post's reporting data.¹

OIG found that the Peace Corps/Madagascar Volunteer safety and security program met various agency requirements, but it was not fully compliant with others that could present serious risks to Volunteers. For example, while the post effectively monitored Madagascar's security environment and informed Volunteers of the most significant safety and security risks, Volunteers told OIG that the post did not provide them with effective sexual harassment and assault training that was specific to Madagascar. In addition, OIG learned that Volunteers were not reporting safety and security incidents due to a lack of trust with post staff. Moreover, the post did not have sufficient incident response procedures, as required, which may have created gaps in its response process for documenting Volunteer incidents.

OIG also observed multiple Volunteer houses that did not meet established agency criteria and presented health and safety risks for the Volunteers; several Volunteers told OIG that their exposure to mold in their homes led to health issues, and others shared frustrations with what they described as rat "infestations."

¹ The agency uses the VRG system to plan, manage, and share information about Volunteer programmatic activities and their results.

The post's Volunteer health program largely complied with agency requirements and received high marks from staff and Volunteers for its provision of effective training and healthcare. However, OIG identified two areas where the post needs to improve its adherence to medical technical guidelines. Specifically, the Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMO) were not conducting required Volunteer site visits, and some medical facilities and consultants listed in the post's medical action plan (MAP) were not assessed as required.

Finally, while post leadership generally supported Volunteers and staff by complying with personnel requirements and conducting effective emergency planning and testing, work remains to repair issues of distrust and low morale among Volunteers. Of the Volunteers OIG surveyed, 37 percent (16 of 43) of respondents reported that they were not confident that sensitive and personal interactions with post staff would remain private. OIG heard from staff and Volunteers that some of the distrust stemmed from previous post leadership, but that the CD in place at the time of OIG's review had made improvements. Given the prevalence of both Volunteers' and staff's concerns about distrust and poor communication, sustained attention from post leadership on these issues is required to create an atmosphere of open communication, accountability, belonging, and trust—an expectation Peace Corps outlines for all staff in the agency manual.

WHAT OIG RECOMMENDS

This report contains 13 recommendations: 1 focused on project activities, 3 concerning Volunteer qualifications and support, 7 regarding Volunteer safety and security, 1 associated with Volunteer healthcare, and 1 related to post leadership. For the full list of recommendations, see page 20 of this report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About This Report	i
Why OIG Conducted This Review.....	i
How OIG Conducted This Review	i
Executive Summary	ii
What OIG Found.....	ii
What OIG Recommends.....	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Country Background - Madagascar.....	1
Peace Corps/Madagascar	2
Evaluation Results	3
Objective 1: Were the post's project activities aligned with host country's needs and impactful?.....	3
What OIG Found.....	3
Objective 2: Were volunteers qualified and effectively supported for their project activities?	4
What OIG Found.....	4
Objective 3: Was the post's volunteer safety and security program in compliance with agency requirements and effective?.....	7
What OIG Found.....	7
Objective 4: Was the post's Volunteer health program in compliance with agency requirements and effective?.....	14
What OIG Found.....	14
Objective 5: Did the post's leadership effectively support Volunteers and staff?	16
What OIG Found.....	16
Recommendations	18
OIG Response to Agency Comments	19
Appendix A: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology.....	20
Appendix B: OIG Interviews	21
Appendix C: List of Acronyms	23
Appendix D: Agency Comments.....	24
Appendix E: Key Contributors	34

COUNTRY BACKGROUND - MADAGASCAR



Figure 1: Map of Madagascar

Madagascar is an island nation off the Southeastern coast of Africa. It has more than 228,000 square miles, with approximately 3,000 miles of coastline. Madagascar was an independent kingdom until it was colonized by France in the late 19th century and gained independence in 1960. Madagascar is a diverse nation made up of more than 20 ethnic groups and has 2 official languages: Malagasy and French.

Madagascar has high poverty levels, with most of the population impacted by food insecurity. Many households lack access to reliable electricity, safe drinking water, and adequate sanitation. Half of the population depends on the country's rich biodiversity for subsistence.

The country is vulnerable to seasonal storms and extreme weather events such as heavy rains, cyclones, droughts, and heatwaves. Over the past 2 decades, Madagascar has been impacted by approximately 8 floods, 5 severe droughts, and almost 40 cyclones. Roads outside of major cities are poorly maintained and require caution when traveled.

Table 1: Overview of Madagascar

Overview of Madagascar	
Population	31,195,935
Official Languages	Malagasy and French
Economy	GDP Per Capita: \$506.20 Unemployment: 3.1% National Poverty Rate: 80.7%
Health	Life Expectancy: 65 years
Human Development Index	Rank: 177; 0.487, Classification "Low"
Education	No Education: 21% of population Primary Education: 44.7% of the population Secondary Education: 31% of the population

Note: Table compiled from most recent data presented by World Bank (2023 Population, Economy, and Health data), United Nations Development Programme (2022 Human Development Index data), and Education Policy Data Center (2018 Education data).

PEACE CORPS/MADAGASCAR

Table 2: Overview of Peace Corps/Madagascar

Overview of Peace Corps/Madagascar	
Dates of Operation ²	1995-2002; 2002-2009; 2009-Present
Volunteers (all time)	Approximately 1,700
Volunteers at post ³	46
Project Sectors	Agriculture, Health, and Education
Post Staffing Positions ⁴	3 USDH, 1 FSN, 58 PSC*
Budget ⁵	FY 2024: \$1,866,800

*United States direct hire (USDH); foreign service national (FSN); personal services contractor (PSC)

Peace Corps Volunteers returned to Madagascar in August 2022 following the global suspension of Peace Corps operations in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Volunteers in Madagascar work on projects in the Agriculture, Education, and Health sectors.

Peace Corps Volunteers' project work in Madagascar focuses on the following:

- **Agriculture Volunteers** help farmers and their households achieve climate-resilient food security.
- **Education Volunteers** work with Malagasy teachers to improve their English and provide general teaching knowledge and skills to help improve students' communication skills that will access academic and/or professional opportunities.
- **Health Volunteers** work at local clinics and partner with local communities to support global and national efforts to end preventable child and maternal deaths.

² Peace Corps/Madagascar experienced brief interruptions in operations that lasted less than one year each in 2002 and 2009.

³ As of January 2024.

⁴ United States direct hire (USDH); foreign service national (FSN); personal services contractor (PSC).

⁵ This amount is reflected in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Operations Plan and does not include the salaries, benefits, and related costs of USDH assigned to post and other costs the agency has determined should be centrally budgeted.

EVALUATION RESULTS

OBJECTIVE 1: WERE THE POST'S PROJECT ACTIVITIES ALIGNED WITH HOST COUNTRY'S NEEDS AND IMPACTFUL?

OIG addressed this objective by answering the following researchable questions:

1. Were the post's projects focused on host country needs?
2. Did Volunteers meet key project expectations?

WHAT OIG FOUND

OIG determined that the post's activities aligned with the host country's needs and were impactful. Specifically, OIG found that the goals of the Peace Corps' project areas generally aligned with the government of Madagascar's priorities: to support local health centers address child and maternal mortality; to improve food production; and to increase the teaching skills of local English teachers.

Volunteers and staff reported that the Volunteers met key project expectations by working with their counterparts and community members on locally identified projects. Most of the 20 Volunteers OIG interviewed expressed sentiments of having a positive impact through their project work, to include transferring knowledge and generating excitement through community engagement. However, in reviewing the alignment between the post's three sectors and host country needs, OIG found that project and programming expectations between the post and Malagasy government were unclear.

Finding 1. Project and Programming Expectations with Host Government Ministries Were Unclear

Although the post signed a country agreement with the Malagasy government in 1992, it did not clarify the project and programming expectations between the post and host country ministries. Specifically, the post did not have MOUs with the Malagasy government ministries of education, health, or agriculture. The agency's Project Implementation Plan Guidance states that each sector should have formal MOUs or informal agreements with in-country project partners "that establish a clear understanding of the goals, objectives, and working relationship between the Peace Corps and the partner agency/organization."

Several representatives from the three ministries OIG met with stated that they were unfamiliar with Peace Corps programming and wanted more clarity. Post leadership and ministry representatives reported that they are currently working together to establish MOUs that will improve collaboration between Peace Corps and the Malagasy government.

OIG recommends:

1. The Country Director establishes memoranda of understanding, or informal cooperative agreements with clear expectations, with the Madagascar ministries of health, education, and agriculture.

OBJECTIVE 2: WERE VOLUNTEERS QUALIFIED AND EFFECTIVELY SUPPORTED FOR THEIR PROJECT ACTIVITIES?

OIG addressed this objective by answering the following researchable questions:

1. Did the post provide host communities with qualified and trained Volunteers?
2. Did staff effectively support Volunteer project work?

WHAT OIG FOUND

While the post provided host communities with qualified Volunteers, OIG found that Peace Corps headquarters did not fill the last four Madagascar cohorts with the requested number of Volunteers. In addition, while post staff reported that Volunteers were sufficiently trained to be successful in their projects and Volunteers reported that trainings for the Health and Education sectors were satisfactory, OIG found that Agriculture Volunteers did not receive sufficient technical training.

Additionally, OIG determined that the post's staff effectively supported Volunteer project work by performing site visits, as required by the post's policy. However, OIG found that the VRG tool was not effective for reporting project-related data from staff and Volunteers.

Finding 2. The Post did not Receive the Full Cohorts of Trainees Requested

Before the 2020 evacuation of all Peace Corps Volunteers, Madagascar had 150 Volunteers working in the Health, Agriculture, or Education project sectors. The Peace Corps Act established that the agency provides qualified Trainees to help interested countries meet their needs for trained Volunteers.⁶ However, after Volunteers returned to service in 2022, the post has received significantly fewer Trainees than the number it requested, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Peace Corps/Madagascar Fill Rate by Year and Project Sector

Trainee Cohort Arrival Date	Project Sector	Number of Trainees Requested by the Post	Number of Trainees Who Arrived at Post	Trainee Fill Percentage
August 2022	Agriculture & Education	30	22	73.3%
February 2023	Health	35	24	68.6%
September 2023	Agriculture	35	23	65.7%
June 2024	Education	50	11	22.0%

The Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS) is responsible for the recruitment, placement, and delivery of qualified and suitable Trainees to overseas posts. Since the return to service, VRS has experienced challenges in recruiting and retaining applicants, which has

⁶ Section 2 of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. § 2501 (a)).

impacted many Peace Corps posts. According to VRS staff, applications specifically for Madagascar have diminished based on applicant concerns over safety and health challenges, the perceived difficult living conditions, and the country's indigenous language, which may not be as appealing to learn as other, more common languages. The post is also a difficult location for some applicants to medically qualify for, due to a limited medical infrastructure that cannot support some medical needs, which further reduced the applicant pool.

Post staff identified low Trainee numbers to be one of the most significant challenges facing the Madagascar program. The staff, Volunteers, and in-country stakeholders who OIG interviewed emphasized that Trainee shortfalls have limited Peace Corps' impact in a country with significant needs. In addition, while host country communities are not guaranteed a Volunteer placement, staff reported that some communities who wanted Volunteers have lost hope that they will ever get one, which can influence their trust or optimism about the Peace Corps. The Trainee shortfalls also adversely affected post staff morale, believing that fewer Volunteers may result in staffing cuts or the post's closure.

OIG's ongoing evaluation of the Peace Corps' Volunteer Delivery System will further examine the agency's challenges with applicant recruitment and retention across all posts. To increase Trainee numbers in Madagascar, the post should collaborate with VRS and the Office of Communications to address the negative perceptions of the country that may deter some applicants from considering service in Madagascar.

OIG recommends:

2. The Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, the Office of Communications, and the post work together to develop and implement strategies that address applicant concerns specific to Madagascar to increase application and retention rates.

Finding 3. Technical Training for the Agriculture Project Sector was not Sufficient

Volunteers in both Peace Corps/Madagascar Agriculture cohorts⁷ reported that the training they received did not provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to successfully conduct their project work and meet their goals. Of the Volunteers OIG interviewed, Agriculture Volunteers were significantly more dissatisfied with their technical training than the Education and Health Volunteers. According to the Agriculture sector's learning development plan, training should enhance Volunteer knowledge and skills to conduct project work and meet project sector goals.

Agriculture Volunteers reported that the post did not understand the Volunteers' varied training needs to address the regional differences in challenges, resources, and topography. Some Volunteers reported that they were trained in composting or on hillside farming techniques, but their sites needed guidance and support on seed management, vegetable planting, and nutrition. Additionally, Volunteers reported that the training did not have enough of a "hands-on" approach, such as practicing different farming and planting techniques.

⁷ At the time of the OIG's visit to Madagascar, post had two cohorts of Agriculture Volunteers in country: one cohort (MADA G57) arrived in 2022, and the second cohort (MADA G59) arrived in 2023.

Agriculture Volunteers reported that the lack of site-appropriate, hands-on technical training left them without the practical skills necessary to address their sites' needs, resulting in a lack of confidence in their projects and an inability to meet their project goals. OIG's findings matched the post's All-Volunteer Survey⁸ results, which indicated that Agriculture training was far less effective than the post's other two sectors in preparing Volunteers to apply and transfer their knowledge and skills through their project work.

OIG recommends:

3. The post develops and delivers technical training for Agriculture Volunteers that is practical and aligns with site needs.

Finding 4. The Volunteer Reporting and Grants (VRG) Tool Was Difficult for Volunteers to Use

Post staff and Volunteers reported that VRG was very difficult for some Volunteers to access and use because their worksites lacked electricity or had poor internet connectivity that could not meet VRG's bandwidth requirements. The agency uses VRG to manage and share information about programmatic activities and their impact. Volunteers are expected to regularly report qualitative and quantitative project data into VRG, which is accessed through a browser-based website.

Volunteers reported that it was not possible to access VRG through their phones because the program used too much cellular data and was not mobile phone-friendly. One Volunteer said that even in larger banking towns, there was insufficient electricity and wireless internet to successfully input the required VRG data. Volunteers described VRG as "stressful" and "the worst" and one Volunteer said "[VRG] takes a lot of data, it crashes, it's not easy to use."

As a result of these obstacles, some Volunteers did not use VRG to report their activities. The inconsistent entries resulted in unreliable data that the post and the agency could not adequately use to support programmatic activities for planning, management, and reporting purposes.

The Volunteers' VRG frustrations were a topic of discussion at the post's Service Improvement Committee (SIMCOM) meetings and in-service training events. Staff have implemented some temporary solutions, such as providing Volunteers with extra time to input data into the system or enter the data offline, which staff would then upload into VRG at post. But these workarounds are laborious and time-consuming for both staff and Volunteers and continue to cause information gaps in VRG regarding reported Volunteer activities. Therefore, the post needs to capture project data in a way that is manageable by staff and Volunteers.

OIG recommends:

4. The Office of Global Operations works with the post to ensure that Volunteers can efficiently and consistently report their project data.

⁸ The All-Volunteer Survey (AVS) is an annual survey sent from the agency to all Peace Corps Volunteers to gather information about their experience as a Volunteer.

OBJECTIVE 3: WAS THE POST’S VOLUNTEER SAFETY AND SECURITY PROGRAM IN COMPLIANCE WITH AGENCY REQUIREMENTS AND EFFECTIVE?

OIG addressed this objective by answering the following researchable questions:

1. Did the post monitor the security environment and communicate that information to Volunteers and Trainees?
2. Did the post provide effective safety and security training to Volunteers and trainees?
3. Did Volunteer sites and housing meet established requirements?
4. Did the post comply with procedures for reporting and responding to Volunteer and Trainee incidents?
5. Did Volunteers and staff report that the post’s safety and security program was effective?

WHAT OIG FOUND

While the post’s Volunteer safety and security program met some agency requirements, it was not fully compliant with others which could present serious risks to Volunteers. OIG found that the post complied with the requirement to monitor the country’s security environment by working with embassy staff, tracking regional and national news, and collecting feedback during Volunteer site visits. The post also effectively informed Volunteers of the country’s most significant safety and security risks. However, Volunteers told OIG that the post did not provide effective sexual harassment and assault training.

In addition, OIG observed multiple Volunteer sites and houses that did not meet established agency criteria and presented health and safety risks for Volunteers. For example, several Volunteers told OIG that their exposure to mold at site housing led to health issues, and others described the presence of rodents in their respective homes as an “infestation.” Additionally, OIG learned that Volunteers were not reporting safety and security incidents due to a lack of trust with post staff and that post did not have sufficient incident response procedures as required. Finally, OIG reviewed site history files in the Volunteer Information Database Application (VIDA)—which is used for maintaining the required Volunteer site history documentation—for 20 Volunteer sites and found that some were missing required documentation.

Finding 5. The Post’s Sexual Assault and Harassment Training for Volunteers Lacked Information Specific to Madagascar

Volunteers reported to OIG that the post did not provide sexual assault and harassment trainings that were sufficiently tailored to Madagascar-specific risks, threats, and mitigation strategies during Pre-Service Training. Providing post-specific sexual assault and harassment trainings is critically important in Madagascar, where safety and security staff indicated that Volunteers have experienced a high frequency of non-aggravated sexual assault and harassment. According to the agency’s Safety and Security Training Curriculum guidance, “All posts must train Volunteers and Trainees on post-specific security risks, threats, and mitigation strategies.” Moreover, the Kate Puzey Volunteer Protection Act of 2011 requires that Volunteers are provided training

tailored to the country of service, to include cultural training related to sexual assault risk-reduction strategies and treatment.⁹

OIG found that the Safety and Security Manager (SSM) provided Volunteers with training on sexual assault and harassment during Pre-Service Training in accordance with headquarters guidance, however, Volunteers reported that the post's training did not teach them practical or realistic strategies for mitigating or responding to sexual assault and harassment. Volunteers who OIG interviewed said the advice they were given was based on avoidance and running away from an attacker, which is not always practical. One Volunteer said, "the training didn't provide anything about how to manage the situation once it happens." Volunteers told OIG that their questions were avoided and that they were not provided with concrete solutions they could employ.

The Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer's (PCSSO) 2022 Five-Year Risk Assessment report states that sexual assault is a high risk for Volunteers in Madagascar. Due to the prevalence of aggravated and non-aggravated sexual assault of Volunteers, the report recommends that the post aids Volunteers in developing personal strategies to prevent assaults and lower risks based on examples provided by staff. The CD in place at the time of OIG's review said there is a need to do more practical training on sexual assault and harassment.

OIG found that the current SSM lacked support from key leadership to provide effective sexual assault and harassment training. Staff reported that the CD in place prior to the time of OIG's review was not comfortable with the topic of sexual assault and harassment and inadequately addressed the topic with Volunteers. The PCSSO visited the post in 2019 and provided training for the current SSM, who at that time was the post's safety and security assistant. However, due to subsequent COVID travel restrictions and turnover of the CD and PCSSO, the SSM did not receive another PCSSO visit until 2022.

According to Peace Corps Safety and Security Instruction (SSI) 130 that was in place during the time of the OIG's review, PCSSOs were required to visit the posts they support at least once a year.¹⁰ The PCSSOs' role is to provide SSMs with technical support, oversight, and assistance in incorporating country-specific information into post training.

OIG recommends:

5. The Safety and Security Manager works with the Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer to tailor Volunteer sexual assault and harassment training as required by policy and law.

⁹ See also the Kate Puzey Volunteer Protection Act of 2011, which amended Section 8A of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. § 2507a) providing that "Once a Volunteer has arrived in his or her country of service, the President shall provide the Volunteer with training tailored to the country of service that includes cultural training relating to gender relations, risk-reduction strategies, treatment available in such country (including sexual assault forensic exams, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV exposure, screening for sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy testing), medical evacuation procedures, and information regarding a victim's right to pursue legal action against a perpetrator."

¹⁰ At the time of OIG's review, the SSI 130, dated April 2023, was in effect. However, the Office of Safety and Security updated this policy in July 2025, now requiring PCSSOs to visit at least 80 percent of their posts once per year.

Finding 6. Some Volunteers Were Placed in Houses That Did Not Meet Safety and Security and Health Standards and Negatively Impacted Volunteers' Health

OIG inspected 16 of the 46 Volunteer homes to assess compliance with the post's housing standards.¹¹ OIG found that only one house met all the standards related to Volunteer health and safety. The table below shows rates of noncompliance with housing criteria related to Volunteer health and safety.

Table 4: Rates of Noncompliance with Housing Criteria in Madagascar

Madagascar Housing Criteria Related to Health and Safety	Number of Visited Houses Noncompliant	Percentage of Visited Houses Noncompliant
There are no signs of structural damage. Roof does not leak. The roof is substantial enough to provide protection from the elements.	12	75%
The house has clean walls without cracks and holes in either plaster or finished brick.	7	44%
Walls and roof do not have gaps greater than 10 cm, and limit vermin access.	6*	43%
No reports of security incidents in the last 6 months within the homestay family, or in the neighboring houses.	4**	27%
If electricity is present, wiring appears to be in good condition with no visible breaks, burns, melts, or naked wiring. Electrical outlets and switches are in working condition. House has a formal electrical meter.	3***	33%
The cooking area of the house is free of pests (such as rodents) or other animals (such as guinea pigs, chickens, or household pets).	7	44%
House and surrounding area is free from rodents.	11	69%
The family does not conduct any kind of open business that frequently brings many people to the home (busy shop, food stall, alcohol selling, bar, school, etc.)	5	31%
If gas is used as a cooking fuel: a. When possible, propane tanks/cylinders are placed outdoors. If outdoor placement is not possible then; b. There is adequate ventilation within the home for cooking and there is sufficient space to allow the tank to be placed at least 1.5 meters from the stove (means longer hoses and a prohibition on the use of tank-top stoves). *If neither a nor b is possible, Volunteer must be trained in conducting monthly safety tests on gas tank. If wood is used as a cooking fuel, fire smoke has a chimney outside the kitchen area or there is adequate ventilation.	8	50%

*This was out of 14 homes inspected for this criterion.

**This was out of 15 homes inspected for this criterion.

*** Of the 16 inspected homes, 9 had electricity.

¹¹ OIG reviewed 48 housing standards at each inspected house.

Appropriate housing is a critical agency requirement for Volunteer safety and health. Per Manual Section (MS) 270 Volunteer/Trainee Safety and Security, “Each post must ensure that Volunteer sites, housing, and work assignments are appropriate and meet all Peace Corps and post-established criteria.”

OIG was particularly concerned about the post’s noncompliance with standards regarding rodents and roof leaks. Multiple Volunteers referred to “infestations” of rats in their homes. Four of the seven Volunteers with leaks or cracks in their roof reported mold in their homes, and three reported health issues because of the mold. PCMOs also reported to OIG their concerns about the health risks of mold and rats in Volunteers’ homes. OIG requested immediate resolution of two specific instances regarding rats, which the post fixed promptly. The post’s response included detailed action plans and Volunteer testimonials and photos demonstrating that the plans were effective.

Additionally, OIG observed that 25 percent (4 of 16) of the Volunteer houses had propane tanks placed closer than 1.5 meters (approximately 5 feet) from the stove. This can be permitted if Volunteers are instructed to conduct monthly testing and provided explosive gas detectors, however, OIG found no evidence that these provisions had been met. OIG has consistently reported on the importance of propane/gas tank placement and related safety requirements and concerns, which is detailed in Safety and Security Instruction 410.

As a result of an OIG review of a Volunteer death in Ghana, OIG issued a Management Advisory Report (MAR) in 2020 that focused on gas cooking safety.¹² The recommendations from the MAR were closed after the agency issued guidance and conducted training addressing this issue. OIG will continue to focus on compliance with relevant gas tank requirements in future evaluations.



Image 2: OIG evaluator inspecting Volunteer’s home in Madagascar

¹² [Management Advisory Report: Peace Corps/Ghana Gas Tank Cooking Safety \(IG-20-02-SR\)](#)

OIG determined that the programming team did not fully meet their responsibility to find safe and appropriate housing. Staff explained that it's a challenge to find appropriate housing that meets Peace Corps' requirements in Madagascar. However, one staff member told OIG that the programming team could be more rigorous in meeting housing criteria and another reported that the housing approval process failed to coordinate all staff involved in the process. To improve its housing assessment and approval processes, the post conducted a three-day site management staff training in February 2024 and a two-day follow-up meeting in October 2024. The post also issued a Volunteer survey in May 2024 that solicited Volunteer feedback about their housing concerns, which could help staff improve their identification, assessment, and preparation of acceptable Volunteer housing.

OIG recommends:

6. The Country Director ensures that current Volunteer housing meets the post's housing criteria, including verifying that the post's gas stove standards are met at all sites, in accordance with Safety and Security Instruction 410.
7. The Director of Programming and Training increases oversight of the site assessment and verification process to ensure housing standards are met.

Finding 7. Volunteers Were Not Reporting Safety and Security Incidents

While post staff told OIG they have encouraged Volunteers to report any safety and security incidents, 40 percent (17 of 43) of the Volunteers OIG surveyed responded that they "never" or "sometimes" (less than 50 percent of the time) report safety and security incidents to staff. According to MS 270, incident reporting allows staff to provide Volunteers with "appropriate and timely support to assist in addressing physical, emotional, financial, and legal needs, in addition to immediate security concerns" and strongly encourages Volunteers and Trainees to report safety and security incidents to post staff.

OIG found that Volunteers were not reporting safety and security incidents because of their negative interactions and distrust of staff and the post's response process. OIG heard, for example, that staff responses to reported incidents were unprofessional, demeaning, or did not take the incident reports seriously. Volunteers expressed concerns that the incident response process involved too many staff. They also shared concerns that reporting incidents could lead to unwanted site change or separation from the post. Volunteers' comments reflected a prevailing atmosphere of distrust with staff, which is examined in further detail under Objective 5 below.

Volunteers will only receive appropriate and timely support if they openly and immediately report safety and security incidents. In turn, the post relies on Volunteer reporting to collect incident data to review and analyze victimization trends that can help them improve training, better allocate resources, and make other program adjustments to improve the Volunteer safety and security program. An established relationship of communication and trust between Volunteers and post staff is integral in ensuring that safety and security incidents are addressed quickly and prevented when possible.

OIG recommends:

8. The Country Director ensures staff with safety and security incident response duties are provided with additional training in appropriate areas, including an emphasis on active listening and professionalism.

Finding 8. The Post Did Not Have Adequate Procedures to Receive or Respond to Safety and Security Incidents

The post did not develop specific procedures for receiving and responding to safety and security incidents, as required by MS 270. Instead, staff followed the requirements of the Peace Corps' Manual Sections and Safety and Security Instructions when responding to incidents. However, these agency documents do not include clear guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of post staff. Posts must develop internal standard operating procedures (SOP) to ensure the various post staff roles and responsibilities are effectively carried out.

OIG determined that the post's unclear roles and responsibilities for safety and security incidents may have resulted in gaps in the post's response process for Volunteer incidents. For example, OIG reviewed the post's Security Incident Management System (SIMS)¹³ and found two instances in which there was no documentation showing that staff provided the victims with the required Office of Victims Advocate contact information. There was also no documentation in SIMS that the PCMO reached out to the victims within 72 hours of the incident, as required. OIG also assessed seven incident reports in SIMS and found that two were missing the required Volunteer Preference Forms¹⁴ four did not contain a SIMS number, and one was not signed by staff as required.

OIG recommends:

9. The Country Director develops post-specific procedures for receiving and responding to safety and security incidents, to include roles and responsibilities, and then trains staff in those procedures.

Finding 9. The Post's Site History Files Were Incomplete

OIG reviewed site history files in VIDA for 20 Volunteer sites and found that some were missing required site history documentation:

- 10 were missing site selection checklists,
- 6 were missing site survey forms,
- 6 were missing housing criteria checklists, and
- 10 housing criteria checklists were missing required signatures.

¹³ SIMS is the agency's safety and security case management system that collects reports of security incidents and services provided in response to those incidents.

¹⁴ Volunteer Preference Forms are stored in SIMS and help staff explain to Volunteers information about the services provided under the standard and restricted reporting options available to victims of sexual assault.

Each Peace Corps post is required to maintain a system to document each site's history. According to SSI 401, all posts must upload their site history files and documentation into VIDA.¹⁵

OIG determined that the missing and incomplete site history files were the result of programming staff failing to complete their site history file tasks, along with a need for more consistent oversight by the Director of Programming and Training, who is responsible for this function according to the post's Site History File SOP and SSI 401. The site history files are used to help staff make informed selections and improve the quality of Volunteer sites. Missing and incomplete site history information impacts staff who are involved in identifying, vetting, and preparing sites and may not have all the information needed to match Volunteers with appropriate sites and meet site management standards and requirements.

OIG recommends:

10. The Country Director ensures that Peace Corps/Madagascar is up to date with the collection, documentation, and recording of site history files.
11. The Director of Programming and Training increases oversight of the site history file maintenance process.

¹⁵ In April 2025, Peace Corps implemented VIDA+ which will eliminate the need to upload site history forms into VIDA.

OBJECTIVE 4: WAS THE POST'S VOLUNTEER HEALTH PROGRAM IN COMPLIANCE WITH AGENCY REQUIREMENTS AND EFFECTIVE?

OIG addressed this objective by answering the following researchable questions:

1. Did the post implement health risk prevention, as required?
2. Did the post meet key agency requirements for the provision of in-country health care?
3. Did the post implement quality improvement activities, as required?
4. Did Volunteers and staff report that the post's health program is effective?

WHAT OIG FOUND

OIG determined that the post's Volunteer health program largely complied with agency requirements and was effective. In an OIG-conducted survey of the Volunteers, 81 percent of respondents (35 of 43) reported that they were "very satisfied" with the physical health care they received from PCMOs. The Volunteers described the PCMOs as "exceptional," "incredible," "great," and expressed high levels of satisfaction with the care they received. ***Volunteers described the PCMOs as "exceptional," "incredible," "great," and expressed high levels of satisfaction with the care they provided.*** OIG's review found that the post provided the required Volunteer health training and had closed all but one recommendation from a health unit site assessment conducted by the agency's Office of Health Services (OHS) in October 2023. OHS had not received any complaints regarding Volunteer healthcare in Madagascar since the Volunteers' return to post in August 2022.

While the post's Volunteer health program was determined to be effective, OIG found that the post did not fully comply with two requirements in agency technical guidelines (TG), specifically TG 204; PCMOs were not conducting Volunteer site visits as required, and some medical facilities and consultants listed in the PCMOs' medical action plan (MAP) were not assessed.

Finding 10. PCMOs Were Not Conducting Medical Volunteer Site Visits or Assessing Referral Medical Facilities and Consultants as Required

OIG's review of documentation for 20 sites revealed that only one Volunteer had been visited by a PCMO since Volunteers returned to the post in August 2022. TG 204, Section 4(C) states, "PCMOs should conduct as many medical Volunteer site visits as practical, coordinating with non-clinical post staff conducting site visits whenever possible." The TG explains that the health and well-being of Volunteers at site is more extensively assessed by medical staff than non-clinical post staff, underscoring the benefit of PCMOs visiting more Volunteers.

OIG also found that the PCMOs had only completed assessments for 5 of the 12 referral facilities and 2 of the 32 referral consultants being used by Peace Corps/Madagascar. Posts are required to visit and assess referral facilities and consultants every 3 years. The PCMOs reported to OIG that they did not have enough time to meet the TG 204 requirements due to the increased administrative responsibilities for providing Volunteer healthcare at the post. One PCMO

reported that “even with only 43 Volunteers, it’s impossible” for two PCMOs to do site visits and assess all the facilities within the required timeframes. They also noted that weekly staff meetings required them to be physically present at the office. OIG also learned that deteriorating road conditions in Madagascar has greatly increased travel times, compounding the challenges the PCMOs relayed in their interviews. Compliance with the agency’s referral facility and consultant assessment requirements is essential to avoid the risk of sending Volunteers to facilities or consultants that have not been fully vetted, which could compromise the quality and safety of care they receive.

OIG recommends:

12. The Country Director works with the Peace Corps Medical Officers to ensure they visit more Volunteers at site per TG 204 requirements and develop and implement a plan to assess healthcare facilities and consultants as required.

OBJECTIVE 5: DID THE POST’S LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF?

OIG addressed this objective by answering the following researchable questions:

1. Did the post’s leadership comply with personnel and planning requirements?
2. Did the post’s leadership comply with key Volunteer support requirements?
3. Did Volunteers and staff report that leadership is effective?

WHAT OIG FOUND

OIG determined post leadership effectively supported staff, however, Volunteers reported that communication issues impacted their trust in staff. The post met staff training requirements and complied with both strategic¹⁶ and emergency planning requirements. The post’s emergency planning warranted recognition for its thorough development and testing of emergency action plans (EAP), Death of a Volunteer procedures, and medical evacuation scenarios. The post and the U.S. Embassy have also been successfully coordinating on developing and executing emergency planning, to include scenario testing and submitting the post’s EAP documentation into VIDA. Critical staff completed most of their mandatory training, and staff reported that the post’s current leadership supported them in their job performance, provided adequate professional development opportunities, and conducted sufficient performance management. Post staff reported experiencing a sense of teamwork and collaboration when working with one another.

Although staff and Volunteers reported that communication was better with the CD in place at the time of OIG’s review than under previous leadership, trust and communication between staff and Volunteers remained a concern.

The post also met the majority of its key Volunteer support requirements. The post reestablished the SIMCOM in August 2023. Volunteers reported to OIG that post leadership worked with the SIMCOM on significant Volunteer concerns, such as the presence of rats and mold in Volunteer houses and the staff’s challenges in communicating with Volunteers about their concerns. The post also communicated with the Volunteers on how to report to OIG and the Office of Victim Advocacy. However, at the time of OIG’s visit, the post had not conducted its required market basket survey¹⁷ to assess Volunteer living allowances but did complete the survey shortly after OIG’s departure from Madagascar.

¹⁶ OIG reviewed the post’s Program Plan to measure its compliance with strategic planning requirements. The Program Plan replaced the agency’s Integrated Planning and Budget System as a key piece of the agency’s program and resource management planning process.

¹⁷ Per Peace Corps MS 221 Volunteer Allowances paragraph 5.6.2, a market basket survey consists of selected staple items, commonly appearing on the Volunteer living allowance survey from each allowance category, which should be priced by staff in multiple locations. The survey is to be used as a guide to validate the cost data on the Volunteer living allowance survey submissions.

Although staff and Volunteers reported that communication was better with the CD in place at the time of OIG's review than under previous leadership, trust and communication between staff and Volunteers remained a concern.

Finding 11: Volunteers Reported Longstanding Distrust of Staff

OIG learned that Volunteers distrusted staff due to poor communication between staff and Volunteers at the post. According to MS 647 Staff Responsibilities and Conduct, staff are required to "collaborate with staff, Volunteers, Trainees, and community partners to create an atmosphere of open communication, accountability, belonging, and trust."

OIG heard from staff and Volunteers that Volunteer distrust of staff persisted from their experiences with previous post leadership. One USDH staff reported that trust between staff and Volunteers eroded under the former CD. One Volunteer described the environment under the previous CD as "us versus them" and stated that the trust Volunteers had in staff upon arrival at post quickly evaporated. OIG also learned that the poor interactions continued. OIG heard from many Volunteers who reported that some USDH staff were unhelpful or indifferent in responding to their concerns. For example, one Volunteer described their interactions with the staff as "walking on eggshells." Another used the word "abrasive" to describe the interactions. One other Volunteer relayed that a USDH staff responded to their housing concern with an inappropriate "toughen up buttercup" response. Another shared that they thought the same staff member was saying "this is a 'you' [Volunteer] problem" when the Volunteer brought a concern.

It is worth noting that several staff and Volunteers remarked that the CD who was in place at the time of OIG's review had improved the environment since the departure of previous leadership. Despite this progress, multiple staff members cited the need for staff to make better connections with Volunteers. Of the Volunteers OIG surveyed, 37 percent (16 of 43) of respondents reported that they were not confident that any sensitive and personal interactions with post staff would remain private. Without open communication and trust between staff and Volunteers, post leadership risks having Volunteers withhold important information, including concerns related to health and safety that could go unaddressed.

OIG recommends:

13. The Country Director develops and implements a plan that improves communications and trust between staff and Volunteers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

OIG RECOMMENDS:

1. The Country Director establishes memoranda of understanding, or informal cooperative agreements with clear expectations, with the Madagascar ministries of health, education, and agriculture.
2. The Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, the Office of Communications, and the post work together to develop and implement strategies that address applicant concerns specific to Madagascar to increase application and retention rates.
3. The post develops and delivers technical training for Agriculture Volunteers that is practical and aligns with site needs.
4. The Office of Global Operations works with the post to ensure that Volunteers can efficiently and consistently report their project data.
5. The Safety and Security Manager works with the Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer to tailor Volunteer sexual assault and harassment training as required by policy and law.
6. The Country Director ensures that current Volunteer housing meets the post's housing criteria, including verifying that the post's gas stove standards are met at all sites, in accordance with Safety and Security Instruction 410.
7. The Director of Programming and Training increases oversight of the site assessment and verification process to ensure housing standards are met.
8. The Country Director ensures staff with safety and security incident response duties are provided with additional training in appropriate areas, including an emphasis on active listening and professionalism.
9. The Country Director develops post-specific procedures for receiving and responding to Safety and Security incidents, to include roles and responsibilities, and then trains staff in those procedures.
10. The Country Director ensures that the post is up to date with the collection, documentation, and recording of site history files.
11. The Director of Programming and Training increases oversight of the site history file maintenance process.
12. The Country Director works with the Peace Corps Medical Officers to ensure they visit more Volunteers at site per TG 204 requirements and develop and implement a plan to assess healthcare facilities and consultants as required.
13. The Country Director develops and implements a plan that improves communications and trust between staff and Volunteers.

OIG RESPONSE TO AGENCY COMMENTS

OIG appreciates the Peace Corps' collaboration throughout this evaluation. Specifically, post and the agency acted promptly to respond to critical issues the OIG evaluation team immediately communicated following field work. Moreover, since that time, post has made meaningful progress in addressing other issues, as reflected by the number of closed recommendations.

In response to the preliminary report, the Peace Corps concurred with all thirteen recommendations. Upon reviewing the agency's submitted evidence of corrective actions, OIG is closing nine recommendations, including 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 13. OIG will consider closing the remaining four recommendations upon confirmation from the Chief Compliance and Risk Officer that corrective actions listed in the agency's response are documented and complete.

OIG wants to note that in closing recommendations, OIG is not certifying that OIG has reviewed their effects. For the full text of the agency's comments, see Appendix D.

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

OIG conducted the evaluation of Peace Corps/Madagascar by addressing the following objectives:

1. Were the post's project activities aligned with host country needs and impactful?
2. Were Volunteers qualified and effectively supported for their project activities?
3. Was the post's Volunteer safety and security program in compliance with agency requirements and effective?
4. Was the post's Volunteer health program in compliance with agency requirements and effective?
5. Did the post's leadership effectively support Volunteers and staff?

The scope of this evaluation extended to the post's programs, operations, and activities over the period October 2021 to May 2024.

To address the objectives, OIG evaluators reviewed Federal laws and regulations as well as post and agency policies relating to post operations. OIG distributed surveys to all 46 Madagascar Volunteers and 43 surveys were completed. OIG also distributed surveys to 59 staff and 52 surveys were completed. Evaluators interviewed Peace Corps headquarters staff, post staff, and a sample of 20 Volunteers as described in Appendix 2. Evaluators traveled to the post from May 4 to May 24, 2024, to meet stakeholders, conduct interviews, inspect Volunteer sites, and collect further documentation.

OIG conducted this evaluation in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation* (December 2020).

APPENDIX B: OIG INTERVIEWS

At the time of announcement, there were 46 Volunteers at the post. Table 5 provides demographic information for the post's Volunteers. OIG interviewed a stratified, judgmental sample of 20 Volunteers which reflected these demographics.

Table 5: Volunteer Demographic Information

Project	Percentage of Volunteers
Agriculture	42%
Education	21%
Health	37%
Gender	Percentage of Volunteers
Female	70%
Male	30%
Age	Percentage of Volunteers
25 or younger	44%
26-29	37%
30-49	19%
50 and over	0%

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

At the time of announcement, the post had 59 full-time staff. Table 6 lists post's staff interviewed by the OIG.

Table 6: Post Staff Interviews

Position	Status*
Country Director	USDH
Director of Management and Operations	USDH
Director of Programming and Training	USDH
Peace Corps Medical Officers (2)	PSC
Program Manager (3)	PSC
Regional Coordinator	PSC
Safety and Security Assistant	PSC
Safety and Security Manager	PSC
Training Manager	PSC

**United States direct hire (USDH); personal services contractor (PSC)*

OIG interviewed key stakeholders, including Peace Corps headquarters staff, host country partners, and diplomatic officials with the U.S. Embassy in Madagascar. OIG stakeholder interviews are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Stakeholder Interviews

Position	Organization
Ambassador	U.S. Embassy in Madagascar
Regional Security Officer	U.S. Embassy in Madagascar
Director of Planification and Monitoring and Evaluation	Ministry of Agriculture
Director of Support Unit to the Coordination and Project Conception	Ministry of Agriculture
Director of Support of Vegetable Production	Ministry of Agriculture
Director General of School Establishment	Ministry of Education
Director of National Center for Pedogeological Tools	Ministry of Education
Head of Partnership and International Relations Department	Ministry of Education
Physician	Ministry of Health

APPENDIX C: LIST OF ACRONYMS

CD	Country Director
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
FSN	Foreign Service National
MS	Manual Section
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PCMO	Peace Corps Medical Officer
PCSSO	Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer
PSC	Personal Services Contractor
SIMCOM	Service Improvement Committee
SIMS	Security Incident Management System
SSA	Safety and Security Assistant
SSM	Safety and Security Manager
USDH	United States Direct Hire
VRG	Volunteer Reporting & Grants
VRS	Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

APPENDIX D: AGENCY COMMENTS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED



MEMORANDUM

TO: Joaquin Ferrao, Inspector General

FROM: Kris Besch, Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Kris Besch

Digitally signed by Kris Besch
Date: 2025.09.03
08:21:32 -04'00'

CC: Paul Shea, Chief Executive Officer
Karen Roberts, Acting Chief of Staff
Lisa Heintz, Peace Corps/Madagascar Country Director
Glenda Green, Acting Regional Director, Africa Region
Nancy Herbolzheimer, Associate Director, Office of Global Operations
Shawn Bardwell, Associate Director, Office of Safety and Security
Devin Meredith, Acting Associate Director, Office of Health Services
David Walker, Associate Director, Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection
Brian Fauls, Acting Associate Director, Office of External Affairs
Emily Haimowitz, Chief Compliance and Risk Officer
Kathryn Wallace, Acting General Counsel
Jennifer Piorkowski, Director, Executive Secretariat
Julie Nelson, Compliance Officer Audit Liaison

DATE: September 8, 2025

RE: Agency Response to the Evaluation of Peace Corps/Madagascar

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this preliminary report from the Office of Inspector General (OIG). Enclosed please find the agency's response to the recommendations made by the Inspector General as outlined in the OIG's *Evaluation of Peace Corps/Madagascar* sent to the agency on July 25, 2025.

The agency notes that the findings and recommendations in this report are reflective of the issues identified by the OIG during their field visit to Peace Corps/Madagascar in May 2024. In the 16 months since then, the post has made changes that have addressed many of the findings. In addition, post leadership prioritized and resolved all issues previously communicated by the OIG that affected Volunteer health, safety, and security immediately after the visit.

While the agency concurs that the issues identified in this report were reflective of the post at the time of fieldwork, it is important to note that this is not an accurate reflection of Peace Corps/Madagascar in September 2025.

Recommendation 1

The Country Director establishes memoranda of understanding, or informal cooperative agreements with clear expectations, with the Madagascar ministries of health, education, and agriculture.

Concur

Response: Even before the OIG's visit, Peace Corps/Madagascar started working closely with local Malagasy government representatives towards developing a greater understanding of the Peace Corps and improving collaboration. For example, post organized a Program Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting about the three sectors (Agriculture, Education, Health) with Volunteers, counterparts, and ministry representatives, with multiple government representatives present for each sector. Since the OIG's visit, post and the Government of Madagascar have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Education and are working towards establishing MOUs or agreements with the Madagascar ministries of health and agriculture.

Documents to be Submitted

- Agreements with the Madagascar ministries of health, education, and agriculture

Status and Timeline for Completion: December 2025

Recommendation 2

The Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, the Office of Communications, and the post work together to develop and implement strategies that address applicant concerns specific to Madagascar to increase application and retention rates.

Concur

Response: Since the OIG's visit, Peace Corps/Madagascar has taken steps to raise awareness and increase engagement with the public. These efforts have included: ramping up social media posting frequency, creating opportunities for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Madagascar to connect with post, assigning new communications coordinator responsibilities to key staff to better lead post social media efforts, establishing a Volunteer committee to support post communications and create content relevant to prospective Volunteer concerns, appointing Peace Corps brand ambassadors to participate in online recruitment, developing targeted video content to reach audiences in a new way, and utilizing a social media content planning calendar for strategic

communications. In 2025, Peace Corps/Washington has taken several actions, including the Peace Corps flagship accounts (@peacecorps) highlighting the work and Volunteer opportunities of Peace Corps/Madagascar in 26 social media posts across multiple platforms, and the mid-service leave recruitment pilot, yielding significantly more applications for Madagascar.

The agency acknowledges that the application and attrition rates for Peace Corps/Madagascar are still not what is desired. While this issue is not specific to this post, the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS), the Office of Communications within the Office of External Affairs, and Peace Corps/Madagascar will work together on a plan for increasing application and retention rates, including the actions described above.

Documents to be Submitted

- Plan for increasing application and retention rates in Peace Corps/Madagascar

Status and Timeline for Completion: December 2025

Recommendation 3

The post develops and delivers technical training for Agriculture Volunteers that is practical and aligns with site needs.

Concur

Response: Peace Corps/Madagascar programming and training (P&T) staff adjusted technical training content for pre-service training (PST) and in-service training (IST) for Agriculture Volunteers to include topics that align with site needs. For sustainability and continuity, new Trainees who will swear-in December 2025 will be assigned to the same sites as Agriculture Volunteers who complete their service in November 2025. Accordingly, areas of training focus have been largely informed by current Volunteer feedback and aligned closely with Volunteer placement, covering topics that are relevant to the exact sites in which the upcoming group of Agriculture Volunteers will be placed.

Documents Submitted

- Narrative describing actions taken to address this recommendation
- IST schedule – Aug 2024
- Volunteer evaluation feedback on AG IST - August 2024
- Counterpart evaluation feedback on AG IST - August 2024
- PST schedule – Sept-Nov 2025

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2025

Recommendation 4

The Office of Global Operations works with the post to ensure that Volunteers can efficiently and consistently report their project data.

Concur

Response: post, region, and the Office of Global Operations considered different options for addressing this issue and decided that it is best for post to continue to use the Volunteer Reporting and Grants (VRG) tool to report project data. post has taken actions to resolve the issues of using the system identified in this report. Considering limited bandwidth and connectivity issues, Peace Corps/Madagascar has authorized special travel to banking towns on a monthly basis to ensure Volunteers are entering data more frequently so that instances of insufficient electricity do not prohibit Volunteer reporting. post provides Volunteers with the funds required for additional travel.

Relevant Peace Corps/Madagascar staff have received professional development and coaching on monitoring and evaluation from a VRG expert at Peace Corps/Washington. Volunteers have also been provided access to virtual and in-person trainings and support in resolving reporting challenges. The increased number of Volunteers reporting activities with indicator results in VRG demonstrates that post's efforts to support Volunteer reporting are producing results.

Documents Submitted

- September 2024 Newsletter – Communication to Volunteers about special travel and funds to support the reporting of their project data
- Documentation from coaching received by relevant staff
- Email regarding VRG support provided to Volunteers by staff

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2025

Recommendation 5

The Safety and Security Manager works with the Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer to tailor Volunteer sexual assault and harassment training as required by policy and law.

Concur

Response: Following the OIG's visit, Peace Corps/Madagascar, with the assistance of the safety and security manager (SSM), tailored sexual assault and harassment trainings to include local considerations and input from current Volunteers. A language class was added to the PST schedule, led by language and cultural facilitators on how to deter unwanted attention, including how to respond in the Malagasy language, phrases to use, body language, and inflection that would best prevent further harassment. Another tailored PST session includes a Volunteer panel involving three Volunteers who have experienced

unwanted attention, including sexual harassment, to share their experiences, their coping methods, strategies for prevention, and successes and challenges with this issue. A sexual harassment safe space discussion, including realities around sexual harassment in Madagascar, has also been added to the upcoming PST calendar of training events.

The SSM will continue tailoring Volunteer sexual assault and harassment trainings in coordination with the Peace Corps safety and security officer (PCSSO) to ensure that content is useful and applicable for Volunteers in Peace Corps/Madagascar.

Documents to be Submitted

- PST schedule – Sept-Nov 2025
- Example of tailored training materials

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2025

Recommendation 6

The Country Director ensures that current Volunteer housing meets the post's housing criteria, including verifying that the post's gas stove standards are met at all sites and conform to agency requirements, with guidance provided by the Office of Safety and Security.

Concur

Response: Peace Corps/Madagascar is ensuring that Volunteer housing meets post's housing criteria, including gas stove standards. Immediately following the OIG's visit in May 2024, post staff visited each current Volunteer to assess gas stove placement and made adjustments as needed to meet requirements, including post staff installing new gas hoses. Staff maintain ongoing trackers to document Volunteer gas stove compliance and gas detector installation. Staff also addressed other housing issues identified by the OIG, including rodents and roof leaks, and shared guidance on rodent prevention with all Volunteers.

Relevant post staff attended a "site management summit" in October 2024 to discuss key changes to site management and related safety and security instructions and forms, and to consider a plan for the next intake of Volunteers and identification of host families. The housing criteria checklist, where staff document that housing standards have been met, is now stored in the Volunteer Information Database Application (VIDA+) and is required to be completed as part of the overall site approval and assignment process moving forward.

Documents Submitted

- Tracker for gas stove compliance
- Tracker for gas detector installation

- June and August 2024 newsletters to all Volunteers with rodent prevention information
- Site management summit report

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2025

Recommendation 7

The Director of Programming and Training increases oversight of the site assessment and verification process to ensure housing standards are met.

Concur

Response: The Peace Corps/Madagascar director of programming and training (DPT) has increased oversight of the site assessment and verification processes. The DPT confirms that all staff receive proper site assessment and verification training before they begin conducting independent site assessments and housing inspections. For example, the site management summit mentioned in the previous recommendation ensured that all staff involved in site assessment and housing inspections were sufficiently trained on all aspects of the process, standards, and documentation requirements. In addition, Peace Corps/Madagascar developed an updated site management manual and a site management timeline to ensure enough time for all necessary steps when assessing and verifying sites and housing locations leading up to Volunteer arrival.

The DPT holds weekly meetings with the P&T staff to discuss elements of the site assessment and verification process, including housing. These conversations cover details of sites and houses under review to ensure any concerns are addressed and housing standards are met for every housing location prior to approval and Volunteer placement. Staff from across units hold a detailed in-person meeting to discuss each site and housing location prior to site selection and approval. The DPT in place at the time of the OIG's fieldwork has visited over 70 percent of the current Volunteers in country at their sites and in their homes, paying particular attention to the housing requirements, allowing the DPT to identify if standards are not being met and immediately working to resolve any issues.

Documents Submitted

- Site management summit report
- Site management manual
- Site management timeline
- Invitation to detailed site and housing location discussion prior to selection and approval
- USDH site visit tracker

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2025

Recommendation 8

The Country Director ensures staff with safety and security incident response duties are provided with additional training in appropriate areas, including an emphasis on active listening and professionalism.

Concur

Response: Relevant staff are trained on active listening, providing and receiving feedback, and professionalism during “general training of trainers” leading up to each PST, which includes a session on giving and receiving feedback. post leadership also organized a professional development session in cooperation with USAID on giving and receiving feedback that included role plays and action planning worksheets. Peace Corps/Madagascar organizes an in-person annual staff training in the Malagasy language to review the content of the mandatory staff training on trauma-informed communication, providing the opportunity for further discussion and ensuring full understanding. In addition, quarterly meetings are held with all designated staff, including the CD, to review processes for responding to incidents, review example scenarios, and cover topics such as being trauma-informed.

To further address concerns with Volunteer reporting of safety and security incidents, Peace Corps/Madagascar held two roundtables for Volunteers and staff in July 2024, with two Malagasy staff members sharing techniques that they use to prevent or deter unwanted attention. The roundtables included role plays in the Malagasy language. Subsequently, a newsletter sent to all Volunteers included information informed by the roundtables and mandatory training all staff receive on responding to incidents. Following these actions Volunteer reporting has increased, indicating increased trust and comfort with post staff with safety and security incident response duties.

Documents Submitted

- Example of training materials from professional development sessions on topics such as active listening and feedback
- Example of training materials from quarterly designated staff meetings
- Example of training materials from trauma-informed session for all staff
- Newsletter with article about incident reporting
- Data showing changes in Volunteer reporting

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2025

Recommendation 9

The Country Director develops post-specific procedures for receiving and responding to Safety and Security incidents, to include roles and responsibilities, and then trains staff in those procedures.

Concur

Response: In collaboration with the PCSSO, post will establish specific procedures aligned with MS 270 for receiving and responding to safety and security incidents, including outlining roles and responsibilities. All related staff will be trained on the updated procedures.

Documents to be Submitted

post-specific standard operating procedures for receiving and responding to incidents

Training materials

Status and Timeline for Completion: December 2025

Recommendation 10

The Country Director ensures that the post is up to date with the collection, documentation, and recording of site history files.

Concur

Response: Immediately following the OIG's visit in May 2024, staff uploaded all missing site history documents into VIDA+.

VIDA+ was launched in April 2025 with expanded site management capabilities to support the implementation of the updated tri-regional site management guidance. All site information is collected and input into VIDA+, including what the agency has referred to as "site history files." In order for a site to be approved, required fields must be completed, and key staff members must sign-off on their areas of responsibility. The country director provides final approval of all sites before Volunteer placement.

For sites that were approved prior to the VIDA+ launch, post has ensured that site history files are uploaded into VIDA+. A quality assurance specialist (QAS) was hired in June 2024, who works closely with the CD to promote compliance with, among other things, site history file requirements. The QAS monitors compliance with required site management documentation in VIDA+ and advises staff on status and required actions.

Documents Submitted

- QAS Statement of Work
- VIDA+ site history documentation on sites and housing locations – to be reviewed by the OIG

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2025

Recommendation 11

The Director of Programming and Training increases oversight of the site history file maintenance process.

Concur

Response: The DPT oversees the site history file maintenance process in close coordination with the QAS. As discussed in the agency's response to recommendation 10, all "site history files" are now housed in VIDA+. The QAS conducts random checks and monitors any missing information on records, including Volunteers, sites, housing locations, work locations, and community contacts, and works with the DPT and relevant staff on ensuring that records are complete. The QAS tracks whether all site history documentation is complete and entered into VIDA+. The DPT is required to sign off on all sites before final approval by the country director.

Documents Submitted

- Example of QAS tracker for VIDA+ documentation
- VIDA+ site history documentation on sites and housing locations – to be reviewed by the OIG

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2025

Recommendation 12

The Country Director works with the Peace Corps Medical Officers to ensure they visit more Volunteers at site per TG 204 requirements and develop and implement a plan to assess healthcare facilities and consultants as required.

Concur

Response: In collaboration with the Office of Health Services, Peace Corps/Madagascar is working to assess and determine the practical number of Volunteer site visits that PCMOs may conduct, per TG 204, and create a plan to ensure that PCMOs are supported to conduct the required number of visits.

The Peace Corps/Madagascar PCMOs have also made significant progress in assessing healthcare facilities and consultants. post has ensured that only those facilities and consultants that post intends to use are included in the medical action plan and all those facilities and consultants are visited every three years, as required.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Plan for Volunteer site visits by PCMOs

- Documentation of PCMO assessment of healthcare facilities and consultants

Status and Timeline for Completion: October 2025

Recommendation 13

The Country Director develops and implements a plan that improves communications and trust between staff and Volunteers.

Concur

Response: Peace Corps/Madagascar has initiated a number of activities to improve communication and trust between staff and Volunteers. For staff, these include: monthly all staff meetings, the country director maintaining an open-door policy, suggestion boxes in the office that receive responses monthly, off-site meetings, and an active all staff WhatsApp group. For Volunteers, post has activated a Service Improvement Committee, Peer Support Network group (including a staff point of contact who attends), monthly newsletters, and an all PCV WhatsApp group. Site visits from the country director (CD) or DPT to Volunteers build trust, understanding, and rapport between leadership and PCVs. In fact, between the DPT and former CD, 73 percent of current Volunteers received an in-person site visit within the last two years.

Documents Submitted

- Example of all staff monthly meeting agenda
- Example of off-site meeting report
- Example of a Service Improvement Committee meeting agenda
- Example of the Peer Support Network members' training schedule
- Example of a newsletter distributed to all Volunteers
- USDH site visit tracker

Status and Timeline for Completion: September 2025

APPENDIX E: Key Contributors

Paul Romeo	Senior Evaluator & Team Leader
Tanique Carter	Senior Evaluator
Erin Balch	Senior Evaluator
Belen Carriedo	Evaluator
KJ Adler	Writer-Editor
Carissa Anderson	Administrative Specialist
Rashawna Alfred	Supervisory Evaluator
Reuben Marshall	Assistant Inspector General for Evaluation

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 call or write 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@peacecorpsig.gov

Online Reporting Tool: www.peacecorpsig.gov/hotline

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

For General Information:

Main Office: 202.692.2900

Website: peacecorpsig.gov



[x.com/pcoig](https://twitter.com/pcoig)

