

**PEACE CORPS/PARAGUAY
A CASE STUDY OF EFFECTIVE
PEACE CORPS PROGRAMS**

MANAGING THROUGH SYSTEMS



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

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INTRODUCTION

This report is one of nine in the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) Study of Effective Peace Corps Programs. The study consists of nine case studies of Peace Corps programs – three in each region: Africa; Inter-America and Pacific; and Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia. Chosen in consultation with regional management, the posts selected were Niger, Malawi, Mauritania, Panama, Paraguay, Honduras, Georgia, Ukraine, and the Philippines. The purpose of the study was to document what these posts do to effect high quality programs.

We defined high quality programs as:

- Programs that prepare and place Volunteers in sites where they can be productive and are hosted by communities and organizations organized to be their partners in achieving the purpose of their assignment (goal one).
- Programs and assignments that bring Volunteers satisfaction, provide a healthy cross-cultural exchange (goal two), and inspire them to bring the world home (goal three).

The study of these programs was conducted in two phases. In phase I, OIG staff conducted extensive interviews with the staff at each overseas post involved with designing and planning programs; training Volunteers; developing sites; providing technical, medical, emotional, and administrative support to Volunteers; and managing the operational aspects of ensuring that these functions are performing effectively. Initial reports were then drafted and sent to the staff for their review.

In phase II, we spoke with Volunteers, mostly in small groups, about the same subjects: training, site development, site visits, support, and satisfaction with their Volunteer experience. In this phase, we asked Volunteers for their perspective on what the staff described they did in phase I. In three posts, Paraguay, Honduras, and Panama, we also interviewed counterparts during phase II for their viewpoints on implementing an effective Peace Corps program and a mutually beneficial Volunteer site placement and assignment.

The purpose of this study is to describe how some of the agency's best programs are led, managed, and administered: the procedures they use, the management approaches, the staffing assignments, and the programming and administrative details that distinguish one post's operations from another. The objective was to use real life examples as the basis for setting expectations for assessing program effectiveness and as a resource for staff to understand what it takes to run an effective program, as well as to provide some tools and ideas for establishing high-performing programs.

In some of our discussions with Volunteers in phase II, they felt that some of what the staff described to us in Phase I was not actually being done, was not being done effectively, or was not having the intended positive effect. This is not reflected in this

report, because of its focus on describing what the posts do well. But we did we report this information to the staff on an informal basis, and the instances of this type of feedback were not common. In general, the Volunteers' views did not contradict the staff in terms of the principal elements represented in well-run programs that are described here.

In writing these case studies, we decided not to name staff we credit for what we found to work well, but only to make reference to staff position titles. Our intention in doing this was to put the emphasis on the actual accomplishments, rather than who performed them. We do not mean in any way to minimize the credit that many individuals rightfully deserve for their excellent work. What we want to demonstrate is that there are actions that anyone can take or make an effort to initiate that are shown to effect positive Peace Corps program outcomes.

Phase I of the PC/Paraguay case study was conducted by Senior Evaluator Carlos Torres October 16 – 22, 2005 and he conducted interviews with counterparts during phase II, June 19 – 29, 2006. The phase II interviews with the Volunteers were conducted by Senior Evaluator Lynn Khadiagala June 19 – 29, 2006.

BACKGROUND

Peace Corps has operated in Paraguay since 1967, making it one of Peace Corps' oldest continuously operating posts. It established a presence in Paraguay initially through its agriculture extension project and the placement of Volunteers in rural areas. Today, there are approximately 200 Volunteers in Paraguay assigned to several different projects: agriculture, education, environment, health, cooperatives/small enterprise development, municipal services development, and urban youth development. More than 2,800 Volunteers have served in Paraguay.

Located in the heart of South America, Paraguay is surrounded by Argentina, Bolivia, and Brazil. Its population of roughly 5 million lives in a territory the size of California. The country is distinctive among South American countries in that Guaraní, an indigenous language, survived colonialism. About 95% of the native-born population is of mixed Guaraní, and Spanish descent. Even though Spanish is used in schools, government, and formal institutions, almost everyone in Paraguay speaks Guaraní.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

RURAL HEALTH AND SANITATION

Rural health and sanitation Volunteers work with rural communities to improve health, sanitation, and nutrition practices by heightening people's awareness of the relationship between environment and health. The Volunteers conduct educational activities in dental health, parasite prevention, nutrition and cooking, and HIV/AIDS prevention. They

promote improved sanitation practices, such as waste disposal methods and cleaning and protecting water sources.

AGRICULTURE

Crop Extension. Crop extension Volunteers train rural families in soil management, crop diversification, and holistic and sustainable farming practices. The Volunteers serve as links to organizations with the financial and technical resources to assist the communities to improve their agricultural production.

Beekeeping Extension. Beekeeping Volunteers teach farmers in beekeeping techniques, hive production, and marketing of bee products such as honey and wax. The production and marketing of honey assists rural families by providing them with income-generating opportunities and diversification in agricultural production.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND AGROFORESTRY EXTENSION

Environmental Education. The environmental education Volunteers help communities identify local environment issues and empower them to take action to protect or improve their local environment. Volunteers work primarily in the primary schools, assisting teachers in the implementation of educational reforms, which mandate that environmental education be “infused” into the curriculum.

Agroforestry Extension. The agroforestry extension Volunteers work with rural communities to reduce environmental degradation through the protection or restoration of wooded areas. Volunteers teach agroforestry practices, including the planting of trees for shade, fruit production, living fences, windbreaks, forage, woodlots, and soil fertility.

EARLY ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

The early elementary education Volunteers work with school principals, teachers, and students, as well as with parents and communities to strengthen elementary education and students’ performance. The Volunteers introduce new participatory methodologies for teaching communication (speaking, reading and writing), address issues of equal education for girls and boys, and teach math and health.

URBAN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The urban youth development (UYD) project is to integrate high-risk youth into their families and communities through the development of social, professional and life skills. UYD Volunteers work to develop the leadership capabilities of youth, adults, and Paraguayan professionals involved in youth services. This is accomplished by involving youth and adults in organized community activities in the following areas: socio-cultural sports as recreation, mental and physical health, environment, job skills, and community service. Local authorities, government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also involved.

MUNICIPAL SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Volunteers are assigned to municipalities and typically work with municipal employees, city council members, or in a few cases, mayors. They work on projects that aim to improve municipal services by increasing participatory planning and public participation in decision-making processes. They help municipalities create more efficient tax revenue systems through the creation of property tax databases and computer training.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Volunteers share their business skills with cooperatives and farmers' organizations to help them create new services for farmers through improved financial planning and management. Services include the opening up of new markets for farmers and more efficient collection, processing, and marketing of agricultural products.

Table 1. Number of Volunteers by Project.

Project	Rural Health and Sanitation	Urban Youth Development	Environmental Education	Agroforestry Extension	Rural Economic Development	Agriculture	Municipal Service Development	Early Elementary Education
No. of Volunteers	35	19	14	17	18	34	17	14

Source: FY 2005 Project Status Reports

PC/PARAGUAY: MANAGING WITH SYSTEMS

A revolving door is a metaphor often used when referring to the Peace Corps because of the five-year rule and the resulting cycle of U.S. direct hire (USDH) staff arriving and departing. The arrival of new staff gives opportunities for new ideas, but effective and tested programming systems can disappear at the whim of one individual. PC/Paraguay has met this challenge by developing a coherent programming and training system that helps reduce the impact of staff turnover and provides the post's programming and training operations with stability and a wealth of lessons learned.

The success of this plan rests on four components: (1) placement of Volunteers in "nuclei" to promote cross-sectoral work and provide Volunteers with a peer support network; (2) the Work Plan and Project Report, two instruments that facilitate the coordination of the monitoring and evaluation of Volunteer activities; (3) the Volunteer and Community Contact Meeting; and (4) quality training that is provided by an outside contractor.

THE NUCLEI: ENHANCING CROSS-SECTOR WORK AND VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Since 1986, PC/Paraguay has placed Volunteers in “nuclei” to foster cross-sector work and to ensure that Volunteers have a peer support network around them.¹ When Volunteers from different sectors work together on a common project, they bring a variety of skills and knowledge that enables them to accomplish goals they probably would otherwise not be able to do. For example, a Volunteer wanted to start a brick oven project and recruited Volunteers in the municipal service development project to work with mayors to get the resources. Volunteers also count on the members of their nucleus for emotional support.

PC/Paraguay has created more than 20 nuclei. The number of Volunteers varies, but most often a nucleus is comprised of five to eight Volunteers in several sectors. Although not all Volunteers are in nuclei, the goal is to place as many Volunteers as possible in them. The effectiveness of placing Volunteers in nuclei depends on two factors: longevity at site and ability to get along with each other. To address these factors, the APCDs coordinate placements to ensure that at least half of the new Volunteers are placed in sites where they follow a previous Volunteer. Putting new Volunteers in replacement sites guarantees a continuity of the work done by the previous Volunteers. New Volunteers inherit an infrastructure, effective counterparts, supportive communities, and a job. The post places at least three generations of Volunteers in each site.

Paying attention to the dynamics of a group are also important. Staff are sensitive to the changing dynamics that can occur when new Volunteers begin to work with their nuclei. During pre-service training (PST), the APCDs use a written survey and oral interviews to get to know the Volunteers and determine their preferences—positive and negative—about working partners. The staff meet three times per year, one of which occurs as part of the final site selection process, to consider the viability and sustainability of each nucleus.

“Volunteers in the nuclei are placed close together. They can be within short distances from each other so that a Volunteer does not have to travel several hours to help another Volunteer... it is very important to have a peer next door. Also, the cross-sector coordination, if one Volunteer is working in the agriculture sector, he can invite someone from nearby who is a health Volunteer. He is not inviting someone who is five hours away but in the vicinity.” **APCD/Health**

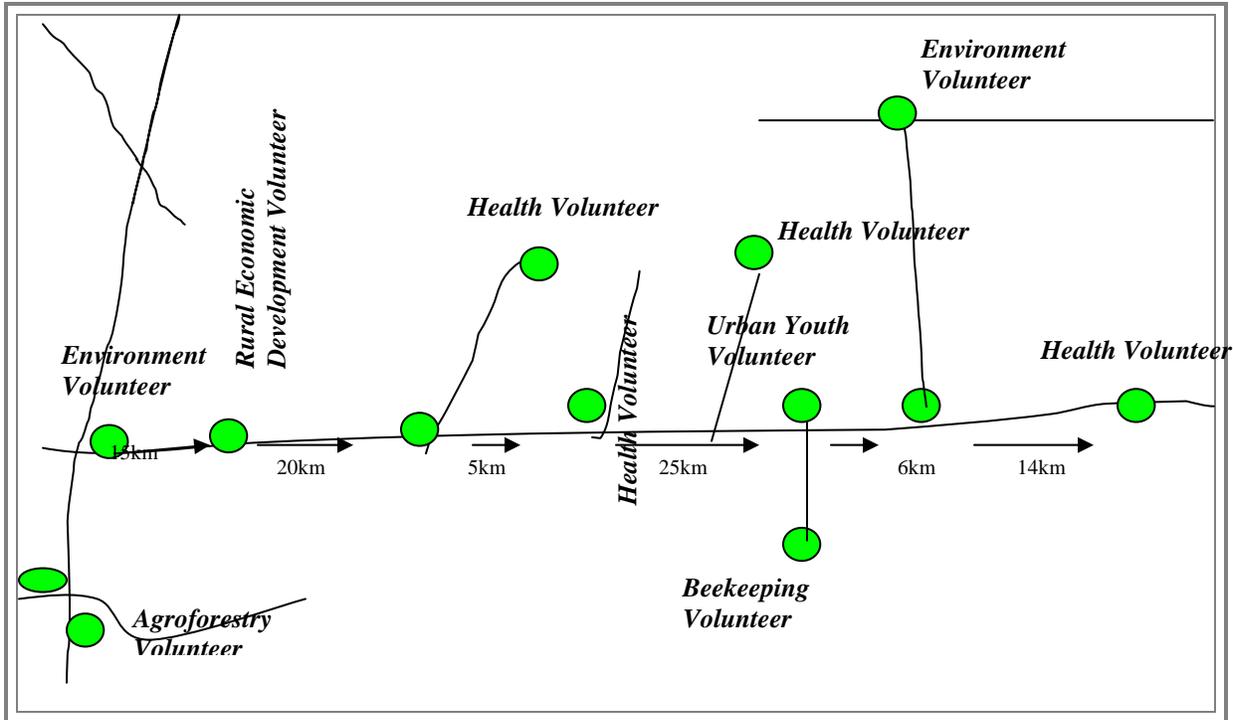
THE SANTANI NUCLEUS

The *Santani Nucleus* is comprised of Volunteers from the agroforestry, education, health, youth development, and economic development sectors and is a mixture of experienced and new Volunteers (see chart below). The nucleus started with four Volunteers and now approaches almost 15 Volunteers. One of their major projects was a health fair, led by the education and health Volunteers. Volunteers and their communities in the area surrounding the pueblo of General Aquino were invited to participate in reproductive health discussions and educational sessions on HIV/AIDS. Free gynecological services were available to women. According to the APCD/Health, “*the participation was*

¹ This is similar to what other posts call “clustering.”

phenomenal, and the results were even better. People wanted more information and were grateful for the health services offered.”

SANTANI NUCLEUS



WORK PLAN AND PROJECT REPORT: TWO INSTRUMENTS THAT FACILITATE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

PC/Paraguay uses a two-prong approach to monitor, evaluate, and support Volunteer projects: the Work Plan and the Progress Report. In the work plan, submitted quarterly, the Volunteer and his/her community contact (counterpart) lay out what they intend to accomplish in the subsequent four months. In the progress report, they report their accomplishments.

The two reports help the APCDs assess how the Volunteers are doing with their projects and check the feasibility of proposed projects. They can compare the accomplishments reported in the progress report against the goals set out in the work plan. The reports also help the APCD determine what resources the Volunteers need for their projects and can direct the Volunteers to agencies and ministries that can provide those resources.

The Volunteer prepares the plan and progress report, but the Volunteer's main counterpart must sign it. The document is the official medium for the counterpart to be abreast of the

activities of the Volunteer, some of which may not be with the counterpart's organization but with other community counterparts or groups.

Volunteers meet with their APCDs to discuss their work plans and progress reports, either at the Peace Corps office or at their site. Sometimes the meetings are at the training center in conjunction with an in-service training (IST). While visiting Volunteers at site, APCDs discuss activities and projects mentioned in the report with the local contacts to get feedback on Volunteers' work as facilitators and help them improve, when needed. The more specific the reports, the easier it is for the APCDs to help the Volunteers to be focused and consistent in their work.

The APCDs stress that a monitoring and evaluation tool is only as good as the validity of the data in it. For example, the instructions to the health Volunteers advise the Volunteers on the importance of reporting accurate numbers: "Do not make up numbers - be realistic and realize that studies indicate that out of 100 people who were introduced to a new topic only about 5-10 will actually understand the new topic and make a change in their behavior. This is normal human nature - and what we are up against as health care workers." APCDs check reported numbers when they are conducting site visits—the size of classrooms, members in community associations, memberships in organizations, and attendance records of meetings sponsored by Volunteers.

Staff are experimenting with another method for Volunteers to record and report their work that staff hope will help them avoid double counting. Volunteers are asked to list the individuals with whom they work on an "Individual Work Partner List." At the end of the month or work period, Volunteers total their numbers from this tool onto the progress report form. It also encourages Volunteers to record their work more regularly, since the detail required by the tool necessitates recording the work soon after it was accomplished. APCDs are also expanding the work plan/progress report tool to allow Volunteers to write about their accomplishments in goals two and three of Peace Corps – sharing American culture and learning host country culture. The APCDs acknowledge that goals two and three are difficult to quantify. By allowing the Volunteers to report their cultural exchange experiences, the staff validate these aspects of the Volunteers' work and acquire interesting and demonstrative insights into these aspects of Peace Corps service.

VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY CONTACT MEETING

PC/Paraguay takes a proactive approach to helping counterparts understand the Volunteers' assignments, the Peace Corps, and cultural differences and to become invested in the partnership with the Peace Corps. They arrange for Trainees to meet their counterparts during a one-and-one-half day retreat where they get to know each other. The retreat occurs as part of PST. During this retreat, the counterparts learn about the Peace Corps, the cooperation between Peace Corps and national agencies, the nature of the Volunteer's work in the community and the project plan, the role and responsibilities of the APCDs, what can and cannot be expected from the Volunteer, and the responsibilities of the community and the counterpart. Together, the Volunteer and the

counterpart plan the work of the Volunteer in the community. At the end of the retreat, the Trainee goes to the community with their counterpart for five days and is introduced to the community.

This meeting introduces both the Volunteer and the counterpart to an intercultural working experience. The handout given to the counterpart says, "Welcome to an intercultural work experience. Working with a Peace Corps Volunteer will allow you to benefit the community and at the same time it will be an intercultural exchange experience."²

The training center plans the retreat in coordination with PC/Paraguay; one contact per site is invited officially to attend the retreat with all expenses paid. The training center uses dynamic activities to teach the contact what PC/Paraguay does and the role of the Volunteer. This meeting typically occurs the ninth week of training, leaving almost three weeks after the meeting before "swearing in."

The APCDs and program assistants are responsible to identify the contacts to be invited. They are in regular contact with the communities. During site development and meetings in the communities, they inform people about the meeting and explain that a representative from the site has to participate, bring the Volunteer to the site, and introduce them to the community. Contacts receive official invitations to the meeting with a map of the meeting place and how to get to it.

PC/Paraguay's experience is that these meetings are highly beneficial. The counterparts get real information and understanding about the Peace Corps, about their role, and about the work the Volunteer will be doing in the community. The meeting is an opportunity, as well, for PC/Paraguay to get out the message about the Peace Corps and for the counterparts to meet more Peace Corps staff. The meeting also ameliorates Trainee anxiety about travel to their community.

About a month after a Volunteer has been in his or her site, the APCD, Volunteer Leader, and the program assistant meet to introduce officially the Volunteer to the community. The presentation can last between an hour and two hours, and is attended by all individuals in the community that are directly or tangentially involved in the Volunteer's project. Community members have an opportunity to ask questions. The presentation serves several objectives:

1. Inform the community at large about Peace Corps' goals and purpose as a volunteer organization.
2. Inform the community about the characteristics of volunteer work.
3. Clarify expectations from the Peace Corps about the community and vice versa.
4. Provide a forum early on for the Volunteer to present the immediate, medium, and long-term goals of the project.

² El Papel del Compañero de Trabajo del Voluntario del Cuerpo de Paz.

5. Send an implicit message to the community that the Volunteer is well supported by the Peace Corps.

TRAINING

WORKING WITH AN OUTSIDE CONTRACTOR

PC/Paraguay contracts with an outside training vendor, CHP International (CHP), to design, plan, and execute pre-service training, in-service training, and sometimes other events, such as project design and management (PDM) workshops. The staff feel that this approach works well for a post that does not have enough training inputs per year to retain training staff year-round. CHP has provided PC/Paraguay with more continuity in training strategies, procedures, and staff than the Post probably would have achieved by keeping training in-house. For example, CHP's language coordinator has been in the same position for 25 years; the master coordinator, the training director, and several language trainers have also provided continuity over several years. Most importantly, the staff feel that CHP has been able to provide them trainers who are specialists in their professions.

PC/Paraguay has developed the following three mechanisms that help ensure that training is effective, control over the process remains in the hands of PC/Paraguay, and CHP is held accountable for the quality of training:

Description of Work (DOW). The DOW specifies what PC/Paraguay expects CHP to accomplish in training (see Appendix A). It is a legal document that binds CHP to conduct training as specified. The programming and training officer (PTO) approves the staffing composition, satellite community sites, overall design, methodologies and integration strategies, time devoted to each component, staff qualification criteria and assessment process, and the list of the training competencies and objectives.

Training Design and Calendar of Training Events. The post's staff sketch out a training design and calendar. These two documents cover all activities involved in training and a schedule of when each activity will occur during PST. In developing these documents, they draw on the description of work, evaluations of previous PSTs and ISTs, project plans, and the Volunteer Assignment Description (VAD).

After the training design and calendar have been established, CHP develops a detailed syllabus that describes the competencies, objectives, and location for each session. This is submitted to the PTO for approval five days prior to the Trainees' arrival, so that any modifications can be made in a timely fashion.

Monitoring and Reporting. The monitoring and reporting system helps the country director, program and training officer, and APCDs to track training events, the

progress of the Trainees, and to ensure that training supports the post's programming objectives. Key elements of this system are:

Progress Reports:

- ▶ Bi-weekly written reports from the training director to the PTO.
- ▶ Progress reports delivered to the post's staff in weeks five and nine of PST.
- ▶ End of Training Report that summarizes the informal evaluations of PST and the two formal Trainee evaluations of the PST program.

Meetings and Communication:

- ▶ Tri-weekly roundtable meetings between CHP staff (training director, master trainer, language coordinator, technical training coordinator, and technical trainers), the programming and training officer, and the APCDs.
- ▶ Regular participation by Peace Corps staff in training events.
- ▶ Attendance of CHP's training director at the post's biweekly senior staff meetings.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE TRAINING STAFF

We asked the training director of CHP and one of the senior technical trainers for their views on what made training effective. Their responses are below:

Language training is tailored to each sector and the needs of the Volunteers.

- The staff recognize the importance of speaking Guaraní in rural areas and move Trainees in the agriculture and agroforestry programs into Guaraní classes as soon as they reach an intermediate low level in Spanish.
- The training staff observe the Trainees closely and use these observations to help them achieve the necessary competencies. They meet individually with the Trainees every Friday to talk about their progress and address issues and problems.
- According to the training staff, about 50% of the Trainees leave PST able to function in Guaraní. By the mid-point of their service, nearly all of the Volunteers have well-developed comprehension skills. The Volunteers attend a PDM workshop facilitated by the language trainers at the end of their first year. Almost all of the Volunteers are able to participate in Guaraní.

The training staff see every staff member at the training center as a resource for training, including drivers, gardeners, guards, and the cleaning staff.

- PC/Paraguay incorporates all staff in training the Trainees. Gardeners offer classes on gardening techniques or the cleaning staff teach the Trainees how to make homemade soap. The Trainees get to practice their Guaraní while acquiring useful skills.

The training staff use Volunteers as a resource for technical training.

The post identifies its best Volunteers as potential technical training resources. CHP trainers spend two days during the training-of-trainers sessions visiting these Volunteers to understand how the Volunteers work and how to make the training relevant. Currently serving Volunteers are seen as credible models. As one APCD put it, “Trainees see in them someone who came with similar needs, was where I am, and [sic] he did it.” The Volunteers invited to training are able to participate in technical training, safety and security, cross-cultural, and project related information-sharing.

The technical, language, and cross-cultural training sessions are integrated, community-based, and functional. PST closely mirrors the conditions Volunteers will experience at their sites.

- The training objectives and competencies are clear. The staff know the skills that are important to each group of Trainees and design lessons that address those objectives. They are constantly reviewing the topics in their lessons to keep training relevant to the needs of the Volunteers.
- The training staff use people and organizations in their training communities to introduce the Trainees to Paraguayan culture and give them opportunities to practice their language skills in settings that resemble their sites.
- Trainees at the novice level visit the families of the language teachers or talk to neighbors near the training site. As the languages skills of the Trainees advance, they visit schools, health clinics, or markets.
- The staff choose topics that are relevant to each project’s area of expertise and relevant to the tasks of the Volunteers.
- Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA) training is part of technical and language training. Staff design practical exercises in which Trainees become comfortable with PACA tools at the same time they learn about the culture and develop the appropriate vocabulary. For example, to learn about family life and women’s roles in the household, the Trainees spend a 24-hour period in which they practice activities typical to the daily lives of a Paraguayan woman.

The training staff work as a team and emphasize the need to stay in close communication. This is especially important when using a community-based training model where Trainees and staff are disbursed across different communities.

- The language faculty meet daily to talk about the progress of the Trainees and make adjustments to their lessons. The language and technical trainers meet weekly to review the weekly written evaluations done by the Volunteer.

The training staff is constantly evaluating their skills as trainers and teachers.

- During the three week training-of-trainers sessions that occur before PST, the technical trainers and language staff spend time giving each other feedback on teaching methods.

- At the end of every PST, the entire staff at the training center gather to evaluate what worked and where they need to make changes for the next PST. This includes the trainers, drivers, gardeners, guards, and cleaning staff.

The staff have years of experience training Peace Corps Volunteers.

- The staff felt the high degree of continuity among the training staff was important. They are building on their past experience rather than reinventing the wheel. When new staff are hired, they have a support structure that acculturates them quickly to Peace Corps methods.

PHASE II: THE VOLUNTEERS' PERSPECTIVE

We met with four focus groups comprised of 28 Volunteers in Misiones, Itapua, Caazapa, and Paraguari. The Volunteers worked in agriculture, cooperatives/small enterprise development, education, environment, health, municipal services, and urban youth.

Volunteers identified training, support, and good counterparts as important to the quality of their Peace Corps service. They stressed that training gave them a set of concrete skills that they were confident about using at their sites and were beneficial to their communities. They praised the quality of the language and cross-cultural training they received and credited the training staff with making their transition from training to living at their sites a smooth one. They have embraced the post's clustering (nuclei) strategy. Clustering is typically used to provide Volunteers with a support structure. But, in Paraguay, several groups of Volunteers have put together integrated projects that combine their skills in ways that maximize the benefits to the communities.

TRAINING

Volunteers gave high marks to language, cross-cultural, and technical training for giving them the skills for implementing their projects and integrating into the culture.

Language. Volunteers credited their ability to communicate in Spanish and Guaraní to the skilled language teachers at PST. Everyone stressed the importance of learning Guaraní, the national language of Paraguay, as a way of reaching out to the Paraguayans and gaining the trust and cooperation of the community. Volunteers appreciated the periodic language workshops that staff hosted, especially Volunteers who relied more on Guaraní than Spanish.

The Volunteers, in trying to explain why language instruction was effective, mentioned several things that most posts do, such as working in small groups and rotating instructors. But they also attributed the quality of training to the cohesiveness of the staff, their ability to listen to the Trainees, and the constant communication among staff on the progress of the Trainees. They felt it also helped that the same set of instructors taught Spanish and Guaraní.

They cited the opportunities for additional language training after PST. The Volunteers felt that the language IST, held after their first three months of service, came at the right time. Many said that they hit a plateau in their language learning. The three-day IST gave them the boost they needed to keep improving. The Volunteers said that being able to hire a tutor was also a good option for motivated Volunteers, especially those who needed more help with Guaraní. Even so, the Volunteers say they can always use more language training.

Cross-Cultural Training and PACA skills. The Volunteers said that the cross-cultural training gave them a realistic understanding of Paraguayan culture and taught them how to deal with cultural differences. Many of the Volunteers credited their smooth transitions into their communities to their ability to use PACA tools. During pre-service training, the language coordinators ran weekly hands-on workshops in which Trainees implemented small projects using specific PACA tools. The language teachers helped the Trainees to adjust PACA to Paraguayan culture, such as inserting jokes into the process to make their interactions with people more effective.

Technical. Volunteers rated their pre-service training highly, because they had training staff who were, for the most part, highly competent. The Volunteers left PST with concrete and useful skills. Volunteers, in most cases, said that they finished pre-service training with a high comfort level in their technical knowledge and an ability to apply it on the ground. Volunteers also felt that the skills they learned in PST would be directly beneficial to the Paraguayans.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

When asked to describe the kind of support they need and who provides it, the Volunteers in our discussion groups identified a wide range of sources. A surprisingly high number of Volunteers said that they turned to their counterparts for technical support and their host families for emotional support. Many of the Volunteers mentioned the high quality of the technical library at the Peace Corps office as a place they regularly consult for finding materials and answers to questions. Volunteers enjoy working together and sharing their experiences.

Host Families and Community Members

Many of the Volunteers in our discussion groups identified their host (or other) families as a significant source of support. For the first two months at site, some Volunteers live with one host family, who is sometimes their counterpart, while others rotate among several houses. Volunteers who rotate house-to-house every two weeks see it as a good way to get to know several families and build a social base in the community. Many of them continued to eat dinner with these families even after they moved into their own house.

Complaints about living with host families were almost non-existent among the Volunteers in our discussion groups. Host families help the Volunteers to build their houses, when necessary. The activity, as one Volunteer explained, gives them a concrete activity around which to build a working relationship. The efforts on the part of the counterpart also convey a commitment to the Volunteer.

For one Volunteer, this strategy of moving around led him/her to an elderly couple who have participated in many of the activities that the Volunteer has initiated and who had mobilized others in the community by demonstrating that the new techniques for planting trees have concrete benefits. Another Volunteer said that she took the advice of the training staff to begin a women's group as a way of getting to know people. While she does not think their projects yielded much in the way of tangible benefits for the members, it turned out to be one of the most significant factors to her experience, because the women in the group have turned out to be her primary support structure. In addition to making sure she stays safe and healthy, they give her advice on how to implement her other projects. They have helped her to integrate into the community so that she rarely feels the need to reach out to other Volunteers for emotional support.

VOLUNTEER CLUSTERS (NUCLEI)

PC/Paraguay offers a good example of the benefits of clustering. Clusters in Paraguay go far beyond their original purpose of providing a support structure for the Volunteers and pooling of the skills sets of the Volunteers in different sectors. Most often, a Volunteer in one sector will invite a Volunteer from another sector to help with a project or participate in a workshop. For example, in a soy milk project for youth, agriculture and health Volunteers worked together to teach youth how to grow soy beans and to talk with them about nutrition. A couple of clusters, however, have put together projects that capitalize on the interdisciplinary qualities of a particular problem. By combining their skill sets, they maximize the benefits of the project to the beneficiaries. Here are two examples:

- **Integrated Watershed Project.** A group of Volunteers from the rural health and sanitation, agroforestry, and municipality projects are working together on a watershed project that is sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The rural health Volunteers are teaching people how to build safe latrines and where to build them when living in a watershed. The agroforestry Volunteers talk about the value of trees to the watershed and are working with communities on tree planting schemes. The municipal services Volunteer worked with communities on how to initiate projects with the municipality. They work with their Paraguayan counterparts and the WWF staff.
- **Environmentally Sound Beekeeping (see box below).** The central focus of the project was to teach beekeeping to communities. But beekeepers in Paraguay face at least two challenges that the Volunteers address with the help of Volunteers from the agriculture and agroforestry projects. One challenge is to maintain the environment so that bees have sources of nectar. The other is building bee boxes that are affordable and environmentally friendly. The

agriculture Volunteer teaches the beekeepers about green manure techniques. Green manure refers to plants that farmers grow but, instead of harvesting, they plough them back into the soil to restore nutrients. In the meantime, the plants provide nectar to the bees. The agroforestry Volunteer introduces tree species that people can grow and use to build bee boxes, and the beekeeping Volunteer teaches how to build boxes and beekeeping techniques.

Beekeeping: An Ideal Peace Corps Project?

The beekeeping Volunteers claimed that they have the best project in Paraguay because:

- Their training focuses on a set of concrete skills that are easy to learn and easy to teach.
- They pass on skills that people can use to generate additional income.
- They gain great satisfaction from teaching women to keep bees, because the income gives them independence and confidence.
- There are health benefits if people substitute honey for sugar in their diet.
- Their project has a strong multiplier effect in that they can train a few people who are then able to teach others.

Staff

Volunteers gave staff high marks for their professionalism, dedication to their jobs and the Volunteers, and responsiveness to Volunteers' queries. They gave special mention to the staff who work hard to keep up with their Volunteers and know what they are doing. They appreciated that staff would call them if in the area, whether for other Peace Corps business or on a private visit, because it indicated to the Volunteers that the staff care about them. These efforts on the part of staff give an important boost to Volunteers' morale and convey the message that staff are there for them if needed.

Libraries and Technical Information

Volunteers identified the technical library and its staff as an important source of technical support. Many said that they stopped by the library to pick up materials or to ask questions of the librarian every time they were in Asuncion. The extensive collection of documents appears to be widely used by the Volunteers. The Volunteers appreciated the willingness of the librarian to help them find materials if the library did not have something they needed. There is a library committee where the staff and Volunteers work together on library issues. Their latest project is to consolidate the technical materials that exist throughout the building in one database so that everyone knows what exists and where to find it.

Volunteer Coordinators

Volunteer Coordinators are third-year Volunteers who assist the APCDs in the areas of Volunteer support and site development. They work out of the Peace Corps office in Asuncion where they are organized by sector rather than region. They tend to view the Volunteer Coordinators as quasi-staff, but with greater accessibility, because their top priority is Volunteer support. They visit the Volunteers twice each year and will do additional site visits if requested by the Volunteer. The Volunteer Coordinators are sector-specific and supplement the technical support offered by the APCDs. Volunteers appreciate the on-the-ground experiences of the Volunteer Coordinators and tend to seek answers from them before approaching their APCDs.

Counterparts and Communities

The Volunteers were adamant that having a strong counterpart was “crucial and vitally important to their success, happiness, and well-being.” Another Volunteer wrote that without a good contact, “nothing can be accomplished in the community,” because they help the Volunteers find work, learn about the community’s needs and wants, and help them to integrate.

Many Volunteers we met said that they turn to their counterparts and other people in their communities for technical and emotional support. They were more likely to do this if they were a second, third, or fourth Volunteer at a site. After hosting one or two Volunteers, counterparts understood the mission of Peace Corps and how to support or deploy the Volunteers. Volunteers at new sites felt that they spent their two years explaining Peace Corps. One Volunteer credits his productive relationship with his counterpart to the three Volunteers who preceded him. They laid the foundation by explaining Peace Corps, starting an agricultural cooperative, getting people to talk to the Volunteers, and helping people to open up to change. It also helped immensely that Volunteers learned Guarani, stayed their full two years, and worked hard.

PRESENTATION OF THE VOLUNTEER TO THE COMMUNITY

Within the first two months of arrival at their sites, APCDs conduct a site visit at which they formally present the Volunteer to the community and to the city council (or equivalent governmental body). One of the purposes is to explain the mission of Peace Corps and the role of the Volunteer. The education and agroforestry Volunteers found these presentations particularly helpful because their APCDs presented them as professionals. They also thought that they were creative in their use of charts and other visual aids to present the objectives of Peace Corps.

Volunteers find Paraguay an accepting culture where they have flexibility in carrying out their projects. They find their counterparts extremely helpful and a key to their acceptance in the community and to the success of their projects. The Volunteers work on practical projects with concrete activities that give them a sense of accomplishment, and they report great support from the Peace Corps staff and at their sites from host

families and community members. The Volunteers particularly enjoy working collaboratively across sectors with other Volunteers located in close proximity to take on projects that require a mix of skills and experience.

CONCLUSION: MANAGING THROUGH SYSTEMS

Two hallmarks of PC/Paraguay are its training program and the clustering of Volunteers (nuclei). PC/Paraguay has developed a successful pre-service training program by contracting a private company, CHP, and monitoring their work through a detailed Description of Work. The Volunteers gave especially high marks to language and cross-cultural training. Trainees whose work assignments require Guaraní are able to achieve reasonable proficiency in both Spanish and Guaraní. Volunteers also praised training for its realism – the similarities between their training communities and permanent sites helped them make smooth transitions from working with trainers to working with their host organizations and counterparts.

The Volunteers see nuclei as serving at least two purposes. First, having other Volunteers nearby ensures that technical and social support is never very far away. This is especially important for new Volunteers and those who are many hours from Asunción. Second, the nuclei serve a programming function. Each nuclei contains Volunteers from different sectors, allowing Volunteers to combine their different skills and technical knowledge around a single, but multi-faceted, project.

APPENDIX A

Description of Work

**DESCRIPTION
OF WORK**

Municipal Services Development
Rural Economic Development

TRAINING CLASS 526-06-02
“Guarambaré 21”

June 1 – August 18, 2006

PREPARED BY PEACE CORPS/PARAGUAY

I. GENERAL TRAINING GUIDELINES

A. Training Matrix

This DOW describes training to be provided to approximately 19 Peace Corps Trainees during the arrival orientation and the following 11-week period, from June 1 – August 18, 2006. Trainees have been invited for the following projects:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Assignment Area</u>	<u>#</u>
<u>Trainees</u>		
Municipal Services Development (MSD))	134/143/145	9
Rural Economic Development (UYD)	140144	10

B. Pertinent Training Dates **

<u>Training Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Week</u>
Trainees Leave Staging Site	May 31	PDO
Group Arrival In-Country: PC/CHP Welcome	June 1	O
Working Orientation	June 1-3	O
Medical Interviews	June 2	O
Start of Training in Satellite Communities	June 5	1
How to Get the Most Out of Training (PTO or CD)	June 5	1
Intro to Project Plans/Sectors (APCD)	June 5	1
First APCD Interviews (choice of 4 mornings)	June 6-9	1
First Medical Orientation	June 7	1
S&S: Security Orientation I (SSC)	June 7	1
Holiday: Paz del Chaco	June 12	2
Peace Corps Office Visit	June 13*	2
S&S: Security Orientation II (SSC)	June 13	2
Peace Corps Volunteer Visit	June 17-20	2-3
Volunteer Site Visit Processing	June 21	3
First Monthly Meeting & Contact Day Plans (10:15 a.m.)		June 21
	3	
Second Medical Orientation	June 21	3
S&S: Security Orientation III (SSC)	June 28	4
Holiday: US Independence Day	July 4	5
PC/P Vision & Integrated Program Strategy (PTO or CD)		July 5
	5	
Third Medical Orientation	July 5	5
Second APCD Interviews (choice of 3 of 4 mornings)	July 10-14	6
Fourth Medical Orientation	July 12	6
Long Field Practicum	July 17-21	7
PTO or CD Interviews (choice of mornings)	July 24-28	8
Volunteer Handbook & Post Policies (PTO or CD)	July 25	8
Second Monthly Meeting & Contact Day Plans	July 25	8
S&S: Security IV EAP & Locator Forms	July 25	8
Site Assignments	July 28	8
Future Volunteer & Community Contact Workshop	August 1-2	9
Future Site Visit	August 3-7	9-10
Site Visit Processing Session	August 8	10
Third Monthly Meeting	August 8	10

** Some of these dates may be changed, if necessary, after consulting with the COR

PC Office Visit: Admin Orient & Bridge to Service	August 11	10
Holiday: Fundación de Asunción	August 15	11
Swearing-In Ceremony	August 18	11

Training Center and PC Holidays:

June 12, Paz del Chaco
 July 4, US Independence Day
 August 15, Fundación de Asunción

0 = Orientation

Training Week # 1 begins on June 5, 2006

C. Pre-Training Research

1. Research Tasks

The training staff should conduct pre-training research for the up-coming PST cycle by:

- a. visiting future Volunteer work sites for each sector represented in this PST cycle to observe living and work situations that Trainees will encounter as Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs);
- b. developing and/or reviewing detailed descriptions and task analysis of each Sector Plan and PCV assignment represented in the training program. This should include all primary tasks which make up each of the jobs as described in the respective project plans according to relative importance, difficulty to perform, and technical language required;
- c. meeting with PCVs presently working in the projects for which Volunteers will be trained, in their sites when possible, to obtain current information concerning typical work requirements and working conditions in Paraguay. Technical trainers should contact the Program Manager/APCD about Close of Service (COS) and other ISTs that will occur prior to the training cycle and should attend these (if possible) to meet with Volunteers.
- d. consulting with appropriate Peace Corps/Paraguay (PC/P) Program Manager (APCD) concerning the design of technical training; potential sites for Long Field Practicum; relative appropriateness of PCVs to host PCT visits and give to charlas; collection of materials necessary for distribution to Trainees during the training cycle;
- e. organizing, conducting and participating in training center staff training to develop a uniform training methodology;
- f. consulting with APCD concerning appropriate technical vocabulary and relaying this information to language trainers;
- g. conducting additional tasks as described in the contract which the training center maintains with Peace Corps;
- h. participating in the Guarambaré 15 COS conference sessions to discuss with PCVs their recommendations and participation in upcoming training.

2. Reference Documents

The following documents should be requested from Peace Corps/Paraguay if they are not already available at the training center:

- a. Project Plans for each sector represented in the training cycle;
- b. Volunteer Assignment Description (VAD) sheets for each position being trained during this cycle;
- c. copies of those Trainee resumes and aspiration statements that Peace Corps/Paraguay has received from Peace Corps/Washington.

Copies of documents a) and b) above should be made available during training for Trainee reference.

Additionally, every effort should be made to collect documentation concerning each of the agencies with which the Trainees will be working as Volunteers and their current development projects. Training center staff should work with the Peace Corps Program Manager to identify appropriate information. Training staff should be familiar with information available in the Peace Corps Volunteer Resource Center and be able to instruct Trainees in its utilization. The Resource Center contains current information concerning local project resources that can be useful to Volunteers in the field. This information is organized by project area. Copies of the most relevant information shall be made available by the training center for each Trainee for use during training and as a Volunteer.

D. Overseas Departure Preparation

Peace Corps' Overseas Departure Preparation (referred to as "Staging") will take place during the two days prior to departure from Miami. The training center will not be asked send a representative to this event. It is expected, however, that the training center participate in the preparation of informational documents about Paraguay ("Country Update") and pre-service training ("Bridge to PST") for distribution to Trainees prior to their departure. The PTO is responsible for updating and sending these documents. Training staff should also be in communication with the PTO to know of any changes in staging, in order to best prepare for the Trainee retreat.

E. Trainee Orientation

The Trainees will participate in a working orientation that will begin immediately upon their arrival in Paraguay. The objectives of this orientation will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. provide Trainees the time and means to relax and begin to assimilate the Paraguayan culture, languages and environment;
2. provide Trainees, training staff and PC/P staff an informal opportunity to get to know one another;
3. provide time for Peace Corps PTO welcome and introduction;
4. present Trainees with an overview of the training program in which they will be involved (this orientation, while initiated during the orientation, may be continued throughout the first week of training).

The APCD will be present at airport welcome. The orientation schedule should include time for individual medical interviews. Trainees will move in with host families on the night of arrival following family interviews and orientation afternoon activities.

F. Training Components

Pre-service Training will include the following components:

1. Language and Communications Training
2. Technical Training
3. Common Areas
 - Family Live-In and Cross-Cultural Issues
 - Peace Corps Country and Work Placement Orientation
 - Role of the Volunteer in Development Work
 - Health and Safety

Details concerning each training component are provided in Section IV: Training Components - Objectives.

G. Participation of Peace Corps Staff

PC/P staff, and Program Managers in particular, should be included in training to:

1. allow the Trainees and PC/P staff to develop personal and professional relationships;
2. assess Trainees' progress and become familiar with Trainees' feelings and problems in order to be able to provide counseling as appropriate;
3. become familiar with and provide guidance for the training program content and operation;
4. provide information concerning Peace Corps programming and training system, projects and project plans, potential sites, the site selection process, work plans and reports; and,
5. deliver, as appropriate, technical presentations and serve as cultural resources.

Participation by Program Managers will take place on a formal and informal basis. Using the training design as a guide, PC/P staff may attend sessions that they consider interesting or of special importance to their groups. When developing specific, technical lesson plans, the training center shall consult with the appropriate Program Managers with respect to which sessions they would like to personally conduct. Particular emphasis will be given to the participation of the Program Managers at special presentations given by Trainees.

After the Training Letter of Understanding (for information concerning the content of the Training Letter of Understanding, see Section II: Reporting Requirements) for the training cycle has been signed by representatives of the training center and Peace Corps/Paraguay, the training center staff shall prepare a detailed list of those events during which Peace Corps staff should participate to review with PC. This list will then become a part of the final Calendar of Training Events with PC staff participation noted where appropriate.

H. Participation of Agency Personnel

Personnel that represent agencies with which Trainees will be working as Volunteers should participate in training by providing orientation concerning the agencies which they represent and discussing the role of the Volunteer within the agency. Whenever possible, agency personnel should also be invited to attend training sessions, to allow them to understand what type of training each Volunteer is receiving and to allow Trainees to begin to develop a relationship with representatives of the agencies with which they will be working. Panel presentations, and/or meetings with representatives from the organizations with whom the Trainees will be working, should be held when appropriate. An effort should be made to include the Trainees' future Contacts in training in order to establish a relationship between the Trainee and his/her Contact, provide information concerning Contact expectations, and to provide future Contacts with information concerning the training which future Volunteers receive. PC/P Program Manager will provide a list of possible participants upon request.

The training center's technical coordinator and/or technical trainers, in collaboration with the appropriate Program Manager, will be responsible for making necessary contacts with appropriate host-country agency officials and preparing them for their participation in training. Careful planning, including reconfirmation of participation, should be done with agency personnel to ensure that they can participate and that their presentations will be both appropriate in timing and content for the Trainees. Contact with all host agency personnel should be made by the APCD, or by training center staff with prior APCD approval. Additionally, each Trainee may visit the ministry and/or agency to which he/she will be assigned. This should be arranged with the cooperation of the appropriate APCD. If requested, this is a part of the technical guidelines in Section IV.C of this DOW.

I. Participation of Volunteers

Volunteers should participate in training to provide perspective concerning Volunteer lifestyles, personal and working relationships with Paraguayans, and to provide specific technical information. The Volunteers who participate and the subjects they address will be selected collaboratively by the training center and Peace Corps. The logistics of each session will be the responsibility of the training center. Prior to the start of the training cycle, the training center will submit a written request to the PTO, with copies to the APCDs, indicating the names of the Volunteers recommended to participate in training, their suggested topics and dates they will participate. Upon review and further consultation with CHP, the PTO and CHP will confirm the list of Volunteers and their topics, and Peace Corps will authorize these Volunteers to leave their work sites to participate in training. Technical Trainers will coordinate lesson content and methodology with each Volunteer.

In addition to the original list of Volunteer participation in PST, the training center shall request from the APCDs (who will respond in a timely manner) either in writing or verbally, authorization for Volunteers to participate in the training program if there has been any change in the original list on a given topic the following week.. A written notice of this participation shall be sent to the Peace Corps Administrative Officer to allow Peace Corps to provide Volunteers with per diem for the time they participate in training. After approval by Peace Corps, the training center will be responsible for contacting PCVs who will participate in training activities to confirm their participation. Peace Corps will assume responsibility for reimbursement of all PCV travel and per diem related expenses.

In an effort to control costs, the training center will be provided with a limited number of PCV visits for which PCVs may be reimbursed travel and per diem costs. Each Technical Trainer must coordinate their requests with full knowledge of this limitation. Also, trainers should consider having PCVs come for two consecutive days for related topics rather than invite two separate PCVs and rather than inviting one Volunteer to come on two separate occasions. For this cycle, the limit is 12 PCVs per technical project group. The number of Common Areas invitations is not limited but trainers should make every effort to coordinate.

Both PC and CHP staff should impress upon those Volunteers who will participate in training the impact that they can have on impressionable Trainees. Volunteers need to dress appropriately, provide an explanation if they display something that is “prohibited” during the first 6 months, and strive to be realistic but positive in their presentations.

J. Trainer Behavior Guidelines

Professional behavior must be a hallmark of all training programs. Trainers have a responsibility to provide adult training experiences of the highest quality throughout pre-service training. In fulfilling this responsibility, Trainers are expected to conduct themselves at all times as professionals.

Underlying Assumptions:

To work as a professional, a trainer:

1. Acquires the knowledge and skills needed to fulfill job requirements, and continues to develop additional knowledge and skills.
2. Applies knowledge and skills effectively on the job.
3. Maintains the highest personal standards of honesty and integrity in his/her work and relationships.
4. Has and applies a vision and philosophy of development compatible with that of Peace Corps.

Guidelines for the Trainer as a Professional:

1. Puts the needs of Trainees to learn to be effective Volunteers ahead of his/her own needs.
2. Is clear in making and fulfilling work commitments and is well prepared to conduct training sessions.
3. Is willing to have performance evaluated by supervisors, peers and Trainees; does not respond defensively to feedback.
4. Is willing and able to give appropriate verbal and written feedback to Trainees and other staff.
5. Attempts to demonstrate the personal and interpersonal skills that Trainees are expected to learn.
6. Recognizes that in a new and different culture Trainees may be strongly influenced by what trainers tell them and does not use this influence to make Trainees dependent on him/her.

7. Does not make verbal or physical sexual advances to Trainees or other staff and rejects such advances if others make them. Does not subject others to any type of personal harassment or threat.
8. Attempts to maintain open communication with all Trainees and staff, avoiding cliques or favoritism so others will feel free to approach him/her to discuss training or personal concerns.
9. Understands the limits of confidentiality with Trainees and explains to them if information revealed in confidence needs to be shared with a higher authority.
10. Is willing to say "I don't know" or "I made a mistake" and to ask for assistance and support from others.
11. Does not try to have everyone like him/her or to make everyone happy at all times; is willing to deal constructively with problems and conflicts that arise during training and is able to resolve differences in an adult manner.
12. Does not talk in derogatory terms about Trainees or staff, but gives feedback directly to the persons involved.
13. Respects the chain of command in PST. Informs his/her immediate supervisor before registering a complaint about him/her to a person in higher authority. Supports PST team.
14. Supports PST team efforts and decisions.
15. Respects/follows Peace Corps policy, procedures, & guidelines.

Responsibility:

1. The Training Director has the ultimate responsibility, and is accountable, for training staff's behavior while under contract with Peace Corps.
2. Each coordinator has the responsibility to implement these guidelines with the staff they supervise.
3. If questionable behavior on the part of staff occurs, the following steps are to be followed:
 - a. The Training Director or immediate supervisor talks to the individual(s) concerned, pointing out the behavior, its effects and the corrective action to be taken.
 - b. If additional behavior violating a guideline occurs, the individual should be made aware through a memo.
 - c. If, despite the memo, the behavior persists, the Training Director takes the appropriate action, which may be to suspend or to dismiss.
4. If, in the judgment of the Training Director, there has been a serious violation of professional conduct, he/she will take immediate action. In such cases, the steps described above may not be followed.

II. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A. General Requirements

The Training Center's reporting requirements will be followed as required by contract, with the following additions:

1. The training center will provide the PTO with a list of Trainees that includes the names and telephone numbers (when available) of the families with whom they will be living. A map showing location of homes should also be provided, especially in the case that "compañías" of Guarambaré or other municipalities are utilized. The map should include enough detail that someone unfamiliar to the community can find it, as well as the training site and Trainee homes. The telephone number of the CHP cellular phone located in each training site should also be provided.
2. The Training Director and other members of the training staff will meet once a month (approximately) with the PTO, Country Director (when possible), and appropriate Program Managers to discuss training and the Trainees' progress in relation to established qualification criteria. The exact dates of these meetings (referred to as "Monthly") are established in Part I of the DOW and may be confirmed during Week # 1 of PST.
3. Approximately one week before Trainees are assigned their future sites, information will be shared between the trainer for each sector and the Program Manager for each sector. The purpose of these meetings will be to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, skills and abilities of each Trainee as demonstrated during training. Preferences that Trainees have expressed concerning future sites and the trainer's recommendations concerning the characteristics of an ideal site for each Trainee will be discussed. This information will allow each Program Manager to make a more informed decision regarding the site assignment for each Trainee.

B. Training Design and Plan

To provide a challenging training program, a 44-hour work week should be scheduled. The Training Design and Plan should reflect the variety of activities and materials necessary to prepare an individual to serve effectively in the sector for which he/she has been invited. The Training Design and Plan is deliverable 7 days before the initiation of the PST cycle and must be approved by the COR before implementation. A meeting will be held between the training and Peace Corps staff to review and discuss the document. Once the Training Design and Plan has been approved, the training center must consult with the COR before any changes in the training design or the weekly, general schedule are made. Consultation should be made in the form of a memorandum or personal conversation in which rationale for the change is explained and the impact on the training program explored.

The Training Design and Plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Narrative description of the overall design of the training program. This narrative shall pay particular attention to the integration of training components and shall describe the flow of training.
2. Location of the training sites outside of Guarambaré (including locations in other municipalities). The Training Design and Plan or Syllabus should include a map of the Guarambaré area and adjacent municipalities indicating the placement of Trainees and community-based training events.
3. Amount of time devoted to each training component.

4. Areas of similarity between each technical sector and plans for integrated training of these components.
5. Training methodology.
6. Training Competencies are written for Language, Common Areas and Technical Components of training in such a way that they reflect the DOW; they should be included in the training design and/or syllabus.
7. Volunteer Qualification Criteria and explanation of Trainee Assessment Packet (TAP).

C. Calendar of Training Events and Syllabus

The Training Director, in coordination with the training staff, will prepare the Calendar of Training Events (COTE) and Syllabus which will be presented to the COR no later than one week before the initiation of the training cycle. The COTE shall include a detailed description, in calendar form, of when each training component described in the Training Design and Plan will take place. PC/P does not believe there is a need to provide the training center with a detailed, hourly breakdown by topics or components. General content requirements are provided in the training contract and throughout this document; however, the training center is responsible for the final planning/design of the COTE. It will be left to the discretion of the training staff to determine if all Saturdays or parts of other days will be scheduled during the training cycle. A copy of the syllabus developed specifically for this training cycle will be given to each Trainee by the training center. The syllabus shall contain, but not be limited to the following:

1. Introduction/Welcome to training.
2. Information contained in the approved Training Design and Plan, in abbreviated form, including:
 - a. Narrative description of the overall design of the training program.
 - b. Training Methodology
 - c. Training Objectives
 - d. Volunteer Assessment Criteria
3. Basic health information.
4. List of Training staff including: organizational chart, description of staff functions, addresses, telephone numbers and emergency contact information.
5. List of Peace Corps personnel including: organizational chart, description of staff functions, addresses, telephone numbers and emergency contact information.
6. Procedures and norms for sending and receiving mail, including routine mail deliveries and pick-ups. The syllabus should also give basic information for making long-distance telephone calls.
7. Maps showing location of auxiliary training sites and Trainees' homes, along with specific information regarding transportation from each training site, both to and from Guarambaré, as well as to and from Asunción.
8. List of basic "survival" Spanish and Guarani words and phrases.

9. Description of the Contract Company and experience conducting training programs.

A meeting will be held between the joint training and program staffs of the Contractor and Peace Corps/Paraguay to carefully review and discuss development or any needed modifications of these documents. The COR will give final approval for the Calendar of Training Events and Syllabus.

- D. Training Letter of Understanding:** Following the approval of the Training Design and Plan, COTE, and Syllabus, the COR and the Training Director will draft a Training Letter of Understanding in which the Training Director will agree to implement the requested Pre-Service Training. If there are any exceptions to the information presented by Peace Corps, these will be duly noted by the Training Director. This document, when signed, will constitute the final Description of Work for the Training Cycle.
- E. Design of the Training of Trainers Workshop:** Due not later than one week prior to the workshop.
- F. Training of Trainers Report:** Due not later than 10 days after the end of staff training.
- G. PST Progress Reports:** Due two times during the PST cycle. These will complement the bi-weekly Tuesday progress reports called for by the contract.
- H. Evaluations of Training:** By contract, the contractor is required to ensure that feedback is obtained from Trainees and about Trainees on a regular basis throughout training. Copies or summaries of all written evaluations obtained from Trainees which detail training strengths and weaknesses from their perspective shall be shared with the COR. These documents are in addition to the Trainee Assessment Packets that constitute the training staff evaluations of Trainees that should be presented in intervals that roughly coincide with each PST progress report. The evaluation of training and of Trainees should include both formal and informal formats.
- I. End of Training Report:** Due 3 weeks after end of training, the End of Training Report shall include, but not be limited to, an assessment of each component listed in the Training Plan. The assessment shall cover, for each component, the degree to which objectives were achieved and the strengths and weaknesses of content, methodologies, and materials as well as specific recommendations for future training cycles.

III. TRAINEE QUALIFICATION GUIDELINES

The pre-service training program must prepare Trainees for their Volunteer assignments. In addition, training should provide Trainees, training staff and Peace Corps staff the opportunity to evaluate Trainees' motivation, commitment and ability to adjust to the Paraguayan culture, competence in language and technical skills, willingness and ability to be responsible for personal safety & security, and general suitability for Peace Corps Service.

Trainees need to be conscious of the fact that Peace Corps is responsible to the host government, ministries, agencies and organizations with which it works, to the communities where PC's are assigned, and to the current Peace Corps Volunteers serving in Paraguay; therefore, Peace Corps is committed to sending only well-prepared, motivated individuals to serve as Volunteers. The competency-based training model to be employed by the training

center for the preparation of Peace Corps Volunteers should facilitate the fulfillment of this commitment by specifically defining that which is expected of each person by the end of training - personally, culturally, technically, linguistically and as regards safety & security.

There should be a constant flow of information between the training center and Peace Corps personnel. Events and instances that exemplify Trainees' behavior should be recorded in the Trainee Assessment Packets (TAPs), in informal summaries, and/or in the PST reports. The TAPs should provide data on the individual progress of each Trainee and should include clear, detailed, objective comments with adequate detail to understand and document each Trainee's motivation, adaptation, interpersonal, language and technical skills (or lack thereof) and self-image. Peace Corps staff should be notified when there is a particular concern regarding a Trainee. The PST reports should describe particular cases for each group of Trainees. The criteria detailed in the training contract should be utilized in the development of these reports. The monthly meetings should be utilized to inform Peace Corps personnel about each Trainee's progress. In addition, Technical Trainers should meet with their respective APCD to give input on site placement.

A. Development of Competencies

Competencies will be developed for each component of training and be included in the syllabus received by each Trainee. Trainees should be encouraged to review these frequently and to advise the training staff when competencies are not being met. Training objectives, milestones and expectations associated with the competencies should be shared and discussed with Trainees during the first week of training. It is encouraged that these be presented in relation to the Project Plan. It must be made evident to the Trainees, and reflected in the program and the training center environment, that the adequate completion of training objectives is a responsibility shared by the Trainees, the training staff and Peace Corps/Paraguay staff. Trainees should, however, be advised that the practical application of the adult education model requires their active participation during training and that they are ultimately responsible for ensuring that their own learning needs are met. The Trainee Assessment Packet should include an evaluation of each Trainee's progress in meeting selected key competencies and their milestones.

B. Trainee Dress Code

Dress and appearance are aspects of the professionalism that Peace Corps strives to portray. The training center should develop its own guidelines for dress and behavior; however, the following dress code (which is included in Peace Corps/Paraguay's Volunteer Handbook) should be incorporated into the training center's guidelines:

1. general cleanliness
2. beards may be worn only if kept neatly trimmed and clean
3. no shorts worn in class*
4. shirts must be worn
5. no tank tops for men
6. no earrings for men, no facial jewelry for women
7. bras must be worn by women
8. no hats in the class
9. no rubber thongs or Gingas
10. males may not have hair longer than a standard shirt collar. They are not permitted to have beards, braids, ponytails or dreadlocks

Trainees of both sexes should be discouraged from displaying tattoos, or using body ornaments, pierced or otherwise, other than earrings for women. Staff should explain the cultural reasons for encouraging conservative dress and behaviors, as well as the safety aspects of drawing undue attention as an obvious (vulnerable) "outsider."

If a Trainee does not respect the above guidelines, language and/or technical trainers should call his/her attention to the fact and discuss it with the Trainee. If the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the training staff, or if the discrepancies are serious, the Training Director will discuss the issue with the Trainee. The Trainee should be reminded that the above listed guidelines have been established in adherence with Paraguayan cultural norms for a professional at any level.

C. Trainee Participation

All Trainees must participate in all training activities unless excused by the Training Director or unless alternative training activities have been developed to meet individual needs. Unjustified absences will be noted and repeated absences will be interpreted as a lack of commitment to, or motivation for, Volunteer assignment in Paraguay. Repeated absences will be reported to PC/P. The Trainee will be:

1. asked to explain his or her absences;
2. reminded of PC/P's and Training Center's interpretation of such absences; and,
3. provided with a written recommendation which includes suggestions to allow the Trainee to alter his/her behavior.

D. Feedback

During training Trainees should receive adequate feedback, both formal and informal, to assist them in assessing their suitability for Peace Corps service. Feedback must be specific and timely in order to challenge Trainees, and should provide direction to allow Trainees to obtain the maximum benefit possible from the qualification process. Training Center and Peace Corps staff should be involved in the qualification process. Training center staff will provide formal written and informal verbal feedback to each Trainee concerning their progress on a regular basis. Problem cases should be brought to the attention of the PTO as early as possible.

E. Interviews

Feedback sessions should take place after the training staff has met to discuss each Trainee's progress in each of the training components. Discussions with, and assessment of, the Trainees will be documented. Additionally, feedback should be offered to Trainees on an informal, daily basis as appropriate to stimulate self-assessment and reinforce positive behaviors.

Program Managers will meet individually with each of the Trainees in their sector(s) at least twice during the first six weeks of training. No more than one PCVC should be present in these meetings. The PTO and/or the Country Director will meet with Trainees for at least one individual interview during the training cycle.

During the final week of training, CHP or Peace Corps may opt to arrange a formal meeting to discuss final Trainee evaluations. At this point, the training staff will provide a written statement concerning each Trainee's suitability for Peace Corps Volunteer service in Paraguay. This statement should reflect the joint decision of the training center staff and should be signed by both the Training Director and the Technical Trainer to demonstrate their concurrence with the decision. The Trainees by this time should have had the opportunity to meet all qualification requirements. Completion of training objectives will be interpreted as being the minimum preparation that a Volunteer will need to begin working in their site. The Peace Corps Country Director will consider the recommendations and comments made by the training center staff and will decide for each Trainee: if he/she should be sworn-in as a Volunteer; if further information is required in order to make a decision; or if administrative separation procedures should be initiated.

IV. TRAINING COMPONENTS-OBJECTIVES

A. Language and Communication Training

The language-training component should provide Trainees with the necessary skills to be able to communicate effectively, both socially and professionally, as Peace Corps Volunteers, as well as in a manner that contributes to Volunteer safety & security. The linguistic needs of the members of the training group will be diverse; the "work" positions, sites, and the community and institutional contacts will also be varied. Peace Corps would like to ensure that language and communication training responds to this diversity.

The contractor shall employ a competency-based approach to language learning. The evaluation system to be utilized shall be the ACTFL speaking proficiency scale. This system of evaluation should allow language trainers to accurately assess each Trainee's acquired language competency.

All Trainees should learn both Spanish and Guaraní. By the end of training, Trainees in RHS, EEE and UYD are required to reach a Spanish ACTFL level of Intermediate Mid as judged by an outside tester and/or a consensus of language trainers. Trainees that arrive with an Intermediate Low level of fluency in Spanish take Guaraní classes throughout Training. Trainees that arrive with less Spanish will study Spanish until they reach an Intermediate Low level of fluency and only then initiate their study of Guaraní. Technical vocabulary (for example: common names of plants and animals and diseases) that is commonly used in Guaraní should be taught to Trainees from the start of training. In addition, all Trainees, even beginning Spanish speakers, will receive basic "survival" phrases in Guaraní before going to their sites.

Trainees should be encouraged to initiate their study of Guaraní as early as possible during the training cycle. Trainees should be provided with target levels for Guaraní based on the number of weeks that they study that language, and on levels established by the training center to coincide with target levels as established in the Statement of Work (SOW) for the training contract. For example, those who study Guaraní from the outset of training are expected to reach at least an Intermediate-Low in Guaraní by the end of training. By not achieving this level, the PCT would have effectively demonstrated unsatisfactory levels of Social Sensitivity and Motivation. This could be grounds for Administrative Separation in the same way that a lower than minimum required level in Spanish may disqualify a PCT with that circumstance.

Those who request Guaraní study without having reached a Spanish ACTFL target level of may do so if, in the opinion of the training staff, it is likely that the Trainee will be able to meet the Spanish proficiency requirement by the end of training. In these cases, the training staff should propose to the PTO/COR, on a case-by-case basis, that an exception be made for each Trainee to initiate Guaraní studies. Transition from Spanish to Guaraní should include a maximum of one week of mixed Spanish and Guaraní study. Thereafter, formally planned language hours should be dedicated to the study of Guaraní. Those Trainees who express a need to continue Spanish study may be accommodated by self-planned training requests or during those language hours devoted to English explanations of grammar doubts.

The language staff must evaluate carefully and fairly each Trainee's ability to communicate in Spanish and Guaraní (if appropriate). When, by the end of training, a Trainee does not reach the required language level as judged by the outside tester or the consensus of CHP language trainers, the training center must recommend the Trainee for administrative separation. In these cases the training center should also provide Peace Corps with an objective evaluation of the Trainee's communication ability with a statement as to whether the final ACTFL score accurately reflects the Trainee's ability to communicate. Training staff should also consider the Trainee's performance doing "charlas" and other communication tasks in making this judgment. If, in the opinion of the training center, a Trainee could reach the required ACTFL level through further language instruction (or an individual tutor) for a limited period of time, this information should also be provided. In all cases, the decision to administratively separate a PCT can be solely based on non-achievement of the minimum requirement for language. In practice, this decision will be made if the PCT is judged to be unsatisfactory in any other of the four principal dimensions (Motivation, Social Sensitivity, Emotional Maturity and Professional Competence). This decision may also be made in the case that a PCT has satisfied the non-communication ability dimensions but is judged to be far from achieving the minimum required level for communication ability.

All Trainees will be evaluated at approximately the midpoint of training, utilizing either the standard ACTFL evaluation criteria or a series of simulations, interviews, and activities with multiple language staff. At the end of training Trainees will be evaluated in Spanish and Guaraní (if appropriate) utilizing the standard ACTFL evaluation criteria regardless if they had previously reached the required language level. If there is a discrepancy between an outside tester's ACTFL rating, and that of the language staff, this information should be shared in the final report. The Trainee should receive this information, as well.

1. General Guidelines for language training:

- a. Language training should be active and practical. In order to complement classroom learning, activities should be conducted outside of the classroom whenever appropriate. Simulations of practical situations that incorporate the use of technical language should be conducted frequently.
- b. Technical Vocabulary lists of at least 200 words should be prepared for each technical program, distributed to each Trainee and incorporated into specific competencies that will be covered during language and technical classes. These lists should be prepared and presented to Peace Corps Program Managers. Trainees should be periodically tested to insure that they are incorporating these technical terms into their vocabulary.

- c. Language instructors should employ teaching methods that allow for practical application of technical vocabulary, such as role-plays, field classes, and community visits.
- d. Trainees should receive instruction and practice in organizing and presenting talks in Spanish and, when appropriate, in Guaraní. These talks should take place on a regular basis. Additionally, Trainees should give at least one talk or method demonstration during the training cycle for an audience other than Trainees and staff, and in an environment similar to that which the Trainee can expect as a Peace Corps Volunteer in their particular sector. These “talks” should be assessed by the language staff, and observations made and included within each Trainee progress report.
- e. Trainees should receive instruction and practice in vocabulary and phrases, in Spanish and/or Guaraní, that may contribute to their safety & security. This includes the ability to make inquiries concerning personal safety and to respond appropriately to unwanted attention.
- f. Linguistic instruction should include a comparative study of Spanish/English phonetics and phonemics. Those studying Guaraní should receive some comparative orientation to other systems of phonetics they are apt to see in books and street signs.
- g. Trainees should be encouraged to develop attitudes, habits, and skills that will enable them to continue their language acquisition outside of the classroom and as Volunteers.
- h. Trainees should receive materials concerning common Paraguayan idioms and instruction in their proper usage and materials and/or practice in how to write formal communications common in Paraguay.
- i. Linguistic training should include instruction in gestures and other non-verbal communication techniques utilized in Paraguay. Trainees should be encouraged to develop and practice these gestures (when appropriate) and other, non-verbal communication skills throughout training.
- j. Special assistance should be offered to those Trainees who have difficulties in acquiring new languages. This special assistance may include (among other techniques): individual classes, reading material, extra hours of language instruction, written exercises, and language tapes.
- k. Training staff should serve as role models for Trainees by speaking Spanish and/or Guaraní in the training center as much as possible. Trainees should be encouraged to speak Spanish and/or Guaraní on training center grounds after the second week of training and be encouraged to establish group norms to ensure that Spanish and/or Guaraní is spoken to the maximum extent possible throughout training.
- l. English should be utilized to explain grammatical rules when requested by Trainees as long as this does not interfere with a planned methodology. If this is the case, optional hours should be set aside for English translation.
- m. Each technical group should be assigned language instructors. These instructors should travel with the technical groups to reinforce language acquisition when Trainees are away from the training center.

- n. Trainees should receive instruction on when Paraguayan custom requires the usage of formal and informal Spanish.

2. Continued Language Instruction:

Due to the difficulty of learning two languages during an 11-week pre-service training, the majority of Trainees will be required to continue their study of Spanish or Guaraní individually or by contracting a tutor during their first one to three months as a Volunteer. To facilitate the process of language acquisition as Volunteers, the training center shall provide Trainees with independent study materials appropriate to their Spanish and/or Guaraní level to enable them to continue studying in their assigned sites.

Due to budget constraints, Peace Corps/Paraguay is unable to provide a tutor for all Volunteers. Therefore, during training, the program for continued study should emphasize a program of self-study and not a study program that depends on a tutor. However, Peace Corps will continue to offer a three-month language IST for all Volunteers. Therefore, the language study program may be designed with the objective of providing assistance during this IST based on the study program initiated during PST.

B. Common Areas

“Common Areas” is the core curriculum component of pre-service training that serves as an introduction to several subject areas that are critical to successful Volunteer service, and includes professional areas that are critical to all Technical projects. The core curriculum includes training in the following:

1. Family Live-In and Cross-Cultural Issues
2. Peace Corps Country and Work Placement Orientation
3. Role of the Volunteer in Development Work: includes adult education and non-formal, participatory methods for education, extension and facilitation; participatory community analysis, resource identification, project planning, management, and evaluation; group formation and motivation training; gender and development; and appropriate technology.
4. Health and Safety: includes health and volunteer personal support (Diversity, HIV/AIDS, General Health, Peer Support Groups), safety & security

In order for the core-curriculum training component to be effective, every core curriculum session must be closely integrated with technical training, language training, and related to the Trainees’ future assignment and responsibilities. Core curriculum should not be treated as an isolated component.

1. Family Live-In and Cross Cultural Issues

The major goal of cross-cultural training is to provide Trainees with the opportunity to develop skills that will enable them to work successfully and live safely within Paraguay’s cultural framework. The environment that the training staff creates in order to explore cross-cultural issues is crucial to the success of this training component. Staff must strive to create an environment of active learning within which the Paraguayan culture is explored; the goal is to learn about cultural norms, how to live and work within them, and how to modify behaviors when appropriate. Trainees must understand that it is “O.K.” to make

mistakes during training and that the group will be constantly learning based on the mistakes that are made.

The following are guidelines that shall be followed in the development of the cross-cultural training component:

- Sessions should be designed that provide Trainees the opportunity to reflect on the culture they have left and how that culture has influenced the pre-conceptions they have about other countries and cultures.
- Trainees will be provided information on the political, administrative, social and religious systems that function in Paraguay, how they have influenced the past and present, and how they could influence the future of Paraguay, including how they could affect their lives and their work as Volunteers. Reading material in English and Spanish should be available for Trainee reference concerning Paraguayan history, including Paraguay's diplomatic relations and economic ties with neighboring countries.
- Trainees will be provided information on the distinct roles of the Paraguayan male and female regarding legal, social, economic and cultural status. Personal and professional conflicts that women and men may encounter living in a culture where gender roles are strictly defined shall be explored.
- Trainees should be provided with a list of Ministries and national agencies that exist in Paraguay. The political structure of the government should be explained, including that of local government.
- Methods will be explored to meet Volunteers' personal needs within the cultural/social context of Paraguay, while being sensitive to the bureaucracy, sex roles, sexual mores, dress expectations and the family structure. Trainees should be made aware of local courtship customs and issues related to cross-cultural marriage. Possible conflicts related to borrowing and lending personal possessions and money in a community and the possible consequences of possessing luxury items (especially cameras) in areas where per capita income is limited shall be explored. A round table discussion that includes current Volunteers would be an appropriate forum to explore these issues.
- The importance of agricultural cycles (planting and harvesting seasons of cash and basic food crops) and their effect on the economy in general, but especially on rural communities and labor availability, should be explored. Trainees should be made aware of the effect that timing of projects in relation to the availability of money and of labor can have on a project's success.
- Trainees shall be provided with demographic information including: sex ratio, age composition, population pyramid, racial and ethnic composition, fertility and mortality, population change, migration and family organization.

In order to provide an unbiased view of the Paraguayan culture and Paraguayan thought, the training center should utilize a variety of experiential and lecture format sessions during which Trainees will be exposed to different opinions and aspects of the culture. Paraguayan consultants as well as training staff should be utilized as resources during these sessions.

2. Peace Corps Country and Work Placement Orientation

Throughout training, Trainees should be provided with ample opportunity to learn about Peace Corps/Paraguay, their particular program and the sites where they will eventually be assigned to work for two years.

a. Orientation to Peace Corps

During the Trainee retreat, Trainees will receive specific orientation concerning Peace Corps' programs, goals and expectations regarding training and Volunteer service. As part of each technical project orientation, Trainees will receive information regarding sector specific work situations. This orientation will include:

- history of the project;
- project purpose, goals and expectations;
- relations with Paraguayan agencies, NGO's, etc.; and,
- the organizational structure of the most pertinent agency/organization(s).

Initial orientation to the technical project may be given by the APCD, PCVC, or Technical Trainer as agreed upon by the APCD. This orientation will be ongoing throughout training.

At least two sessions will be offered for each technical project during which the appropriate APCD and PTO will explain the Project Plan. One session will deal with the goals, objectives, and the specific tasks that the Volunteers will be responsible for completing. Another session will focus on the monitoring component of the Project Plan, and the Volunteers' responsibility to submit a work plan (PTIP) every four months. During this session, APCDs will explain how to complete the form and when and how they must be presented. Key to this session is the "why" of planning and reporting. The APCD will also describe the type of support that the APCD provides to the PCV in the field (site visits, work plan review, etc.). This session should be offered towards the end of training.

During training, specific orientation will be offered concerning Peace Corps policies, rules and regulations that affect the Trainees as well as Volunteers. Peace Corps/Paraguay's Volunteer Handbook will be distributed and discussed with the Trainees. A session should be offered to present Trainees with an orientation to the financial resources that are available to support Volunteer projects. Trainees should also be given a tour of the Peace Corps office and be introduced to Peace Corps personnel and be offered an orientation concerning the support services that are provided for Volunteers by Peace Corps personnel. Peace Corps will provide the agenda and organize the day and may include such sessions as an overview by Program Managers of the goals, objectives and major activities of other PC/Paraguay projects as well as opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration. Time will be scheduled to provide Trainees an explanation of the paperwork that they will be responsible for providing to PC/P and host-agencies.

All Peace Corps Country Orientation sessions must be coordinated with and supported by the CHP Training Center. Peace Corps Orientations are aimed at cultivating a "can do" spirit as well as a self-starting work ethic. Without these, a Peace Corps Volunteer's work will be mediocre at best, and far from what it could be. It is recommended that at least one CHP Trainer attend all PC Orientation sessions, to serve as a resource for the other CHP Trainers, staff and Trainees, and to assure that CHP and Peace Corps messages are in consonance.

b. Peace Corps/Paraguay's Programming Strategy

Peace Corps/Paraguay is dedicated to an integrated programming strategy in which Volunteers from complementary projects are placed in close proximity in order to encourage cross-sectoral collaboration to better meet diverse community needs, strengthen the

Emergency Contact System, facilitate peer support, implement agency initiatives, and promote networking among Volunteers, local agencies/government and project participants within a given area.

Before the Future Site Visit, the PTO or CD will provide the Trainees with an orientation concerning Peace Corps' integrated programming strategy and will explain the site selection/assignment process. This orientation will include:

- PC programming strategy
- PCV assignment strategy
- process of site selection
- how Trainees are chosen for a particular site assignment

Site selection is a priority for all Program Managers, and they continuously explore new possibilities for Volunteer placement. Program Managers also share prospective sites at staffing meetings in order to determine where the best possibilities for integrated programming exist. After initial site selection for a cycle has been completed, the sites are discussed in a programming staff meeting in order to share any previous knowledge that exists about the site.

1) Volunteer Role and Assignment to Nuclei:

- Assignment of Volunteers is done with the collaboration of the communities affected and the institutions involved. Sites are selected to provide continuity for projects initiated by previous Volunteers and to complement the work of current Volunteers in the nucleus. However, Peace Corps' placement priorities should not outweigh host-country priorities.
- Every effort will be made to assign new Volunteers to nuclei where current Volunteers are already working. In this manner, it is hoped to maintain a combination of experienced and new Volunteers in each nucleus in order to help incoming Volunteers adapt to their new environment.
- Each Volunteer's primary assignment is to develop projects with his/her community (approximately 80% of his/her time will be spent on local community activities and 20% on activities in other sites in the nucleus).
- The average number of Volunteers assigned to each nucleus should be 4 - 7.
- Members of a nucleus are located in the same geographical area who have the opportunity to share technical and, as needed, emotional support.

c) **Site Selection and Assignment Strategy**

The Program Manager is ultimately responsible for Volunteer site assignments, but he or she should take into consideration input from the PCV Coordinator, Technical Trainer and other training staff as appropriate. Site assignment should consider information gathered from Trainee resumes and personal statements, interviews with APCD and CD/PTO, TAPS interviews, Site Assignment Survey, etc. It should be made clear to Trainees throughout training that Peace Corps seeks to assign them to sites in which they are needed, and where we feel they can best serve. Although we take into account Volunteer preferences and desires, they are not the basis upon which decisions are made.

Peace Corps/Paraguay is committed to providing continuity to Volunteer assignments over a period of at least 3 Volunteer “generations,” or six years. Information obtained from community analyses, Volunteer reports, conversations with community members, and analysis conducted by Program Managers are utilized to determine which Volunteer project assignments would be the most beneficial given the specific requirements of a particular site. Volunteers assigned to a site to provide continuity are therefore expected to continue the work initiated by previous Volunteers. “Follow-up” Volunteers must have a special capacity and disposition, and must be able to effectively analyze the current state of projects that have been implemented by previous Volunteers. Trainees should be given the opportunity to examine site reports, community analyses, and other documentation available concerning potential sites and develop the ability to analyze and verify data.

d. Work Placement Orientation

Throughout training, Trainees should have numerous opportunities to gather and confirm information relevant to their specific assignment. When these experiences will take place, and the specific goals, will vary depending on the technical project. Additionally, the following field experiences will be provided for all Trainees:

Peace Corps Volunteer Visit:

Training staff will arrange for each Trainee to visit a current Volunteer for 4 days. The purpose of this visit is to provide a brief exposure to the social and professional life of a Volunteer working in a community development program. During this visit, Trainees will have the opportunity to utilize their cross-cultural and language skills through interactions with Paraguayans they encounter while traveling and during their visit. The specific objectives of this visit are to:

- become acquainted with a Volunteer’s social and professional activities;
- become acquainted with the typical lifestyle of a Volunteer, and the ways in which Volunteers overcome challenges in adapting to the lifestyle;
- observe geographic and cultural characteristics of the region visited;
- explore personal factors that could enhance or erode Volunteer commitment to Peace Corps service; and,
- clarify personal impressions concerning the Volunteer’s role in development work.

An effort should be made to have Trainees visit Volunteers in their same project. Also, whenever possible, Trainees should visit Volunteers that face challenges similar to their own (couples, of same minority group, etc.). The selection of Volunteers to be visited will be made jointly by the training center and Peace Corps staff, taking into consideration travel time and personal characteristics of each Trainee and Volunteer. To avoid potential problems, to protect the privacy and professional relationships which Volunteers have established within their communities, and to demonstrate consistency with safety & security recommendations, if sent to opposite sex PCV, must stay with Paraguayan host family.

Individual Volunteers should be contacted by the training center at least two weeks in advance of scheduled visits. The Training Center should request a list of PCVs from each Sector from the appropriate APCD. At this time, the APCD should indicate any PCV who should not be asked to receive a PCT for reasons that could include vacation, work

considerations, negative attitude, etc. Volunteers should be informed of the tasks that Trainees are expected to accomplish during this visit, and other relevant information that will help to make this field visit a productive learning experience. Volunteers shall be encouraged to develop specific activities within their project area to take place during the Trainee's visit. Trainees should be instructed to go directly to the Volunteer's site so as to not negatively affect any activities that the Volunteer may have organized. Additionally, Trainees should be reminded that they should not represent a burden to the Volunteer they visit. Trainees should offer to share in the expense of meals eaten at the Volunteer's home, and to help with domestic chores if appropriate.

Future Site Visit:

During the ninth-tenth week, all Trainees will visit their future work sites. Orientation concerning the future site visit will be conducted jointly by Peace Corps and training center staff at a 1 ½-day Encuentro, off site event. General objectives for the future site visit will be developed by training center staff taking into consideration the guidelines provided below. Specific, technical objectives for this visit will be developed by the technical trainer in communication with the appropriate Peace Corps Program Manager.

Prior to the Trainee's visit, the APCD is responsible for making sure that the visit has been reconfirmed with all appropriate site and agency contacts, that a family has been identified with whom the Trainee may stay, and that the Trainee has detailed instructions in order to travel safely to the site, including contingency plans in case of rain, etc. Logistical arrangements (as necessary, could include bus tickets, hotel arrangements, final arrival information for site) are the responsibility of the training center.

Trainees should be informed that they are expected to remain in their assigned sites throughout the established time for the visit. The goals of this visit are to:

- become familiar with the local community and agency personnel located at or near the Trainee's future work site and to investigate possible living accommodations;
- explore with future contacts the expectations Trainees have concerning their Volunteer service and those that the agency/organization/community has of the Volunteer and of Peace Corps;
- identify the principle challenges that the site presents, and how they relate to the Volunteer's professional and personal life;
- identify needs for the remainder of training, in order to be better prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities offered by the site; and,
- provide Trainees a time for reflection concerning personal commitment to Peace Corps, their project, and to the community to which they have been assigned.

A discussion session will be conducted at the training center immediately following the return of Trainees from their future sites. Technical trainers will facilitate this session, which is attended by the appropriate APCD and PCVC. During this session, Trainees will be expected to provide training center staff information concerning specific training needs for the remainder of training.

Self-Planned Training

Self-planned training should be provided for Trainees to carry out independent investigation and/or self-planned training in areas or topics they feel are of value for their preparation to serve as Volunteers. This is aimed at providing the Trainees an opportunity to design their own training and to demonstrate their ability to take responsibility for their own learning, while simulating the reality that as Volunteers they will continuously need to seek out information in order to implement both primary and secondary projects.

Language and other training activities will be based on site and project-specific needs. The Contractor should provide language and other optional sessions as requested by the Trainees. The amount of time to be spent at the Peace Corps library should be limited except under special circumstances. Training staff and the APCDs may provide input on the material to be covered by each Trainee. The time may be spent on individual objectives or in choices from a round robin series of activities scheduled to meet Trainee requests.

3. Role of the Volunteer in Development Work (RVDW)

a. Peace Corps' Development Philosophy

Development in its broadest sense is any process that promotes the dignity of a people and their capacity to improve their own lives. Peace Corps takes a human capacity building approach to development. This approach focuses on helping people learn to identify what they would like to see changed, use their own strengths and learn new skills to achieve what they believe is most important.

Throughout pre-service training, Trainees should receive specific information concerning their role as a Peace Corps Volunteer. The fulfillment of this training goal should provide Trainees with the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to work successfully as catalysts, facilitators and consultants to community groups. The development of the RVDW training component will be closely coordinated with Peace Corps' PTO.

The RVDW training component should allow Trainees to have the opportunity to explore issues through participatory classroom exercises and through activities with the local community, to apply their acquired knowledge in practical situations. The philosophy from which the Volunteer's role in development will be defined should take into consideration all members of the community including: men, women, older individuals, youth, children and the handicapped. Trainees should examine the significant role that each of these community members play in the development process and to develop strategies for involving them in the key aspects of their Project Plans as well as in secondary projects. Additionally, during the RVDW training component, each Trainee will:

- understand the process of development and Peace Corps' approach to development;
- examine the role of the PCV as an agent of change, emphasizing the fact that a PCV's work should not be Volunteer-centered, but that the PCV's chief role is as catalyst and facilitator;
- be instructed in theories of development and of developmental strategies utilized in Paraguay. The levels or approaches to development utilized by Peace Corps, as compared to those used by other international development institutions, should be explored. Trainees will examine the three goals of the Peace Corps. Successful Peace

Corps projects in Paraguay should be examined and compared with less successful projects;

- heighten awareness of **the role of gender** in community and family roles, and of how every person in a family and community plays a key role in the development process; promote the consideration of gender issues in project planning (this should be complemented by sessions in the Technical component of training that provide Trainees with insight into gender issues related to their project area and tools with which to incorporate gender into their work);
- develop strategies for capacity building within the community that will enable it to seek out and manage its own resources, to make its own decisions, and basically to take responsibility for its own well-being and that of its members;
- examine the Volunteer/contact relationship, how to work within the bureaucracy, and appropriate ways of interacting with the Volunteer's sponsoring agency.
- be made aware of target groups that the Volunteer may address through his/her primary and/or secondary activities, being especially sensitive to a project's potential impact on the disabled and other groups whose roles in and importance to the community are often ignored by development institutions;
- be made aware of the importance of including youth in both primary and secondary projects, in order to provide them with constructive activities as well as with opportunities to build self-esteem and for personal development;
- be instructed in the recognition and understanding of community structures and processes, and in leadership models and group dynamics. Trainees should be made aware of how to act as a consultant/facilitator in a patron system;
- participate in general sessions on how to work with contacts, how to work with groups, and how to promote community leadership. Using these sessions as a foundation, each technical project will then explore how to apply this information given the requirements of their specific, technical project; and,
- receive an orientation concerning how to promote community self-sufficiency. This concept should be reinforced and be included as an integral component of technical training.

b. Participatory Methodologies

Participatory methodologies (PRA, PACA) together constitute an essential component of any development effort that seeks to build human capacities and to empower people to take charge of their own lives. During training, Trainees should:

- explore participatory techniques which may be used to: analyze a community's situation, needs and/or desired changes; promote interchange within the community; instill a sense of ownership in projects; develop appropriate technologies; or introduce new ideas to communities. Trainees should not only practice these techniques within the confines of their training group, but should also practice them in real situations, and learn to explain and facilitate the use of these techniques.
- learn participatory techniques to analyze gender roles; Using the current training scheme, this should include incorporating information from "shadow days" into the session on Gender Roles, as well as into the session on community analysis.

There should be an articulated strategy to complement sessions on PRA/PACA in Reconnect ISTs, Technical Technical ISTs and in the Project Design and Management Workshops, all of which should contain additional participatory techniques sensitive to gender. Handouts and other resources for Gender Analysis and Participatory Techniques should be made available to all Trainees.

Community Analysis/Resource Identification

All Volunteers are required to complete a community or situational analysis in their sites. Trainees should receive instruction on ways to effectively conduct this analysis and how to interpret and compile the data that is gathered. Program Managers should be consulted in identifying the appropriate instrument for each Project and Sector. By the end of training, Trainees should have received an appropriate orientation on the following:

- how to utilize available instruments (consult with APCD) and interview techniques (survey, forms, other formats) to conduct a community analysis.
- how to utilize at least one Participatory Rural Analysis (PRA) technique to involve community members in the information collection (mapping technique is highly recommended). Discussion of the method should include ways it could be adapted to various situations (i.e. a larger town or city, an institution, etc.) and incorporate the concept of Gender Analysis.
- describe how information obtained from a basic community analysis can be utilized in the identification of resources that may be used in the development of projects that meet community needs. These may take the form of primary or secondary secondary projects.

Community Project Management

All Trainees should be provided with the opportunity to develop skills that are useful for the development and management of primary and/or secondary projects (depending on the sector, this may be complemented with a Project Design and Management IST after 6 months).

By the end of training, all Trainees should be able to:

- describe strategies for identifying resources including: government agencies, community groups and leaders, and how these resources could be utilized to assist in project design and implementation; for specific projects (for example Agriculture Sector), this may involve the use of a Regional Resource Survey; Health Projects utilize a "Health/Sanitation Survey." Tech Trainers should consult with appropriate APCD for suggestions or samples of recommended instruments or survey forms.
- Identify fund-raising activities appropriate for Paraguayan communities and institutions. PCVs should be consulted in providing PCTs with a list of possible activities including "rifas," "tallarinadas," "bingo," or other.

c. Working with Groups

By the end of training, Trainees should be able to:

- discuss participatory methods (PRA) utilized to analyze a community's situation, increase community awareness and promote group motivation (depending on the sector, this may be reinforced with an IST on PRA methods after 6 months);
- identify strategies to effectively organize community groups and increase community participation in projects; and,
- identify methods of joining/forming groups including setting goals and establishing objectives and developing activities to achieve goals. Common obstacles which Volunteers face when forming and working with groups should be explored including: cultural resistance to committing one's self to co-responsibility and sharing resources (especially money) and resistance to cooperation due to the individualistic nature of the Paraguayan society.
- develop recreational and organizational skills that can be used in the formation and maintenance of clubs, teams and other community activities for all age groups. Trainees should receive information on established groups commonly found in a community. Trainees should develop adult education techniques to teach organizational skills to community members;
- outline what constitutes an officially recognized "Comite," or "Comisión", the advantages of forming such a group, and methods of stimulating leaders to organize the group to incorporate participation of all of its members;
- discuss advantages & disadvantages of working on a group or individual basis, and when each method would be appropriate.

d. Adult Education / Extension Methodology

All Volunteers must be able to effectively transfer technical knowledge to their counterparts and other community members. Volunteers must be skilled in the preparation of educational materials and must possess knowledge of adult educational techniques in order to effectively transfer technical skills and information.

Trainees should be provided with the opportunity to discuss and practice adult education/extension techniques. These techniques should be compared with traditional Paraguayan educational practices, and possible resistance to adult education methodologies should be explored. Trainees should be exposed to different methods utilized to transfer information such as formal lectures, group participation, puppet shows and method demonstrations, among others. The advantages and disadvantages of each method and when they could be most effectively utilized should be explored.

By the end of training, all Trainees should demonstrate the ability to:

- develop and effectively utilize visual aids, such as flip charts, slides, drawings, stories, etc.,
- develop and present formal technical lectures ("charlas"), which are appropriate given the background and education of the target audience e.g., school children, teachers, campesinos, neighborhood, youth and church groups, among others;
- develop extension skills to include women as project implementers and participants, and evaluation skills to assess a project's impact on women.
- demonstrate the ability to be an effective facilitator of group discussions; and,

- demonstrate competence in developing and conducting a method demonstration or other non-formal education technique (in addition to formal “charlas”).

Topics chosen by Trainees to practice adult education techniques should be directly related to their technical project and future assignments.

e. Appropriate Technology

Appropriate Technology (AT) is a term that represents a particular view of how technologies, tools and strategies should be designed to meet specific needs or problems in relation to local economic, social and technical conditions at the site of application. Since technologies can only be considered as being “appropriate” given site and project-specific variables, AT should be examined during training in a project-specific context and integrated throughout technical training. AT should be introduced during the RVDW and cross-cultural components of training by discussing the importance of self-sufficiency and community involvement in development projects. How to design projects and introduce technologies in such a manner that is sensitive to cultural practices and values should be explored. Later, Trainees should examine specific, project related technologies that utilize locally available and affordable materials.

f. Resources

Publications available from Peace Corps (Office of Information Collection and Exchange, “ICE”) which should be consulted by trainers and available to trainees include the following: *PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action; Gender & Development Trainer's Manual; Another Point of View: A Manual of Gender Analysis Training for Grassroots Workers; The New Role of the Volunteer in Development Work; Women Working Together; Navamaga; Helping Health Workers Learn; Two Ears of Corn; Farmer First; Third World Women*; among others) .

4. Health and Safety

a. Health and Volunteer Personal Support

The Volunteer Personal Support training component should allow Trainees to acquire those skills that will allow them to become self-sufficient in Paraguay, in a manner that also promotes their safety and security. The health orientation component of personal support training is designed to provide information to Trainees concerning health issues related to Volunteer life in Paraguay. Trainees will be made aware of issues related to cultural integration, culture shock (and methods of dealing with it), and isolation. The Paraguayan diet should be discussed and Trainees should learn how to utilize locally available foodstuffs to prepare meals that are nutritionally balanced.

Specific information to be included within this training component:

Health of the PCV - This information will be delivered by the Peace Corps Medical Contractor (PCMC) with the input of PCVs living in rural and urban areas, as well as those working in the health sector. These presentations should cover common health problems and diseases that Volunteers experience and provide information on the general state of health of the PCVs. The Trainees should receive instruction on (1) how to maintain personal

hygiene and prevent infections without the availability of clean, running water, (2) the availability of local medicines, and (3) what to do in the event of a medical emergency. This subject area should also involve a presentation on alcohol abuse, and information on poisonous snakes and spiders.

Nutrition of the PCV - Locally available foods should be described and ways of maintaining a balanced diet using these foods should be discussed. Helpful tips on cooking, storing and preservation of foods such as meat and milk should also be given. If possible, Trainees should also be given the opportunity to practice preparing local foodstuffs for consumption.

Home Gardens - All Trainees should receive an introduction in how to prepare, plant and care for a vegetable garden during training. By the end of training, every Trainee should be able to discuss the importance of including vegetable in the diet for themselves and community members; and should receive basic instruction and handouts on how to prepare, plant, and care for a year-round vegetable gardens (additional guidelines for gardens may be included in the technical sections which follow).

Personal Support of the PCV - This subject area should emphasize time and stress management and will help the Trainees with the transition from the controlled, family-style training environment to the often unstructured, lonely and isolated existence of a new Volunteer. Techniques on entering a new community, basic counseling for giving support to peers and co-workers, and identifying ways to deal with personal problems should be explored. Trainees should be introduced to games and hobbies that can be used to combat loneliness and boredom in their work sites.

Volunteer Diversity - In addition to that mentioned in c., Volunteers should be made aware of the richness of diversity within their own group, and how they must be prepared to be primary supports for each other in view of potential difficulties they are apt to face while trying to integrate into Paraguayan society. It is suggested that the concept of "visible" and "invisible" diversity be explored. Also, it is recommended that current PCVs provide input for this session.

Sexuality of the PCV - this subject area should address how female and male Volunteers cope with their sexuality given the cultural and society mores of Paraguay. Detailed information on how to use and where to obtain birth control methods should be provided for all Trainees. All Trainees must view and discuss a video on AIDS. Training orientation must also cover other sexually transmitted diseases.

Personal Safety and Rape Prevention - This subject area will address personal safety and rape prevention in both urban and rural areas. Trainees should receive advice from PCVs and staff on how to reduce the chance of sexual harassment and assault; particular attention should be given to cross-cultural communication and cues that could potentially put a Volunteer at risk. The session will also include steps to follow if a rape should occur. The PCMC should assist in this session to outline the legal realities in Paraguay and Peace Corps policy. These sessions will not be combined with the session on sexuality of the PCV, but should make reference to the cross-cultural miscommunication within the context of male-female relationships that could put Volunteers at risk harassment session here. Sessions on personal safety should always include PCVs that correspond to that cycle as well as selected PCVs. Sessions on personal safety and personal property protection should be complemented by follow-up sessions at the 3-month and 1-year In-Service Trainings for each group.

Self-Defense – At the current time, it is not requested that Trainees be provided with the opportunity to attend self-defense sessions or sessions, due to the fact that it would be difficult to prepare Trainees within a limited time to use self-defense practices effectively. However, Trainees should be aware of the horns made available to them by PC, and know how to use them.

Appropriate Volunteer Housing - A session concerning appropriate Volunteer lifestyle and housing will be offered to all Trainees immediately before or after they have had the opportunity to visit their future sites. During this session, Trainees should be presented with information concerning appropriate housing situations for Volunteers including:

- tips on how to find a home at reasonable cost and that fulfills requirements to promote safety & security (such as distance from other homes);
- safety considerations (discuss practical examples of how to secure a PCV home, as well as behavior that contributes to home safety such as use of candles, not leaving the house after dark, etc.);
- advantages of living with a family (emphasis for Youth PCTs); and,
- importance of living at the level of the community to which the Volunteer is assigned.

Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC): The Peace Corps (VAC) Chairman or a Regional VAC representative may be invited to speak to Trainees to explain the function of the VAC and how different regions of the country elect VAC representatives. This may be coupled with the Administration Orientation at the PC Office or may be a Trainee representative invited to attend a meeting of the NVAC.

Bicycle care and safety: Many Trainees from this group will receive a Peace Corps bicycle (and helmet) from the outset of their service. All Trainees should receive an orientation on basic bicycle maintenance and on safe use of bicycles, and should understand that Volunteers must use a helmet when riding a bike. PCTs and/or PCVs may be used as consultants for this session.

Trainees from a given group may be assigned to rural and/or varying degrees of what could be qualified as urban sites. Therefore, Trainees should receive an orientation concerning the some of the differences between the motivation, customs, and beliefs of urban and rural Paraguayans. This **may** include including sports, bodily adornment, community organization, cooking, cooperative labor, courtship, education, ethics, faith healing, family, folklore, funeral rites, government, hospitality, inheritance rules, language, marriage, mythology, religious ritual, sexual restrictions, soul concepts and status differentiation. The orientation or session cannot possibly be all-inclusive, nor should it try to make sweeping generalizations. Rather, the Training staff should provide some clear examples and make available additional resources to help Trainees make useful frameworks for distinguishing between rural and urban culture.

b. Safety & Security Training

The safety & security aspects of each of the above areas should be stressed, especially within the areas of cross-cultural and Volunteer personal support training. In addition to this, Trainees need to learn specific policies and procedures that they need to follow during

PST as well as throughout their service, in order to further Volunteer safety & security and overall well being. Orientation should be coordinated with the PTO and the Safety & Security Coordinator, and should include the following:

- importance of incident reporting and procedure to report incidents;
- importance of the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), procedures they should follow in case of a national emergency, identification of Emergency Contact Group Coordinator and location of consolidation point;
- importance of locator form and procedures for correctly filling it out;
- Peace Corps/Paraguay's policies and procedures;
- Paraguayan Criminal Law that may have implications for Volunteer Safety & Security.

GENERAL COMPONENTS FOR ALL TECHNICAL TRAINING**

1. INTRODUCTION

Technical training should incorporate and reinforce core curricula while Trainees develop or improve technical competencies. To facilitate the acquisition of specific, technical competencies during training and to encourage the application of these competencies by Trainees, the training center should utilize a flexible, learner-centered, experiential learning approach for technical training. Experiential learning occurs when a Trainee engages in an activity, reviews this activity critically, abstracts useful insight from the analysis, and applies the result in a practical situation. This learning process will help Trainees minimize subjective reactions and draw out objective elements from their experiences.

Technical training curriculum will have to be flexible enough to meet the needs of generalists who have not yet acquired specific technical skills, and specialists who will need to adapt their technical skills to be able to effectively apply them as a Volunteer in Paraguay. All Trainees may need to develop and/or strengthen skills that facilitate sharing of knowledge. It is suggested that ample time be allotted to case studies, role plays and other methods that focus on these areas. Training should be sensitive to individual needs and strengths and make the best use of the Trainees' and trainers' time, energy, skills and knowledge.

Trainees should be allowed to have the opportunity to serve as resource persons to the other Trainees in their own project and to the Trainees of other projects. Groups' sessions may be planned where Trainees from different projects are combined and/or the Trainees from one project provide technical information to the Trainees from another project.

The development of technical training lesson plans should be done in collaboration with the appropriate Peace Corps Program Managers.

**** The technical project specific sections complement and provide additional, project-specific information concerning the topics discussed previously.**

2. TECHNICAL TRAINING - GENERAL GUIDELINES

The technical training tracks of this cycle's Sectors have several common frameworks and topic areas that must be taken into consideration in the pre-service training design. The following are some general guidelines that are then followed by specific objectives that will be incorporated into each technical training component:

a. **Qualification for Volunteer Service:**

By the end of training, each Trainee must clearly demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the technical training staff and Peace Corps/Paraguay, the ability and willingness to successfully perform each of the technical tasks required for his/her position in order to qualify for Volunteer service. The basic requirements for Volunteer service are described throughout this DOW. However, the training must develop specific, measurable behavior objectives for each technical project staff before the initiation of training. The development of these objectives must be done in collaboration with the appropriate Program Managers and be included in the Training Design which is delivered to Peace Corps by contract.

b. **Training Methodologies:**

At least 60% of technical training will be geared to practical and active learning activities. When possible, these activities should include information and practical experience that are consistent with the goal of introducing appropriate technology at the community level. Whenever possible, this practical training should involve teaching and working situations in or near Guarambaré or other areas where "hands-on" experience can be gained.

c. **Technical Handouts:**

Each Trainee should be provided with a loose-leaf notebook for the accumulation of notes, handouts and other technical materials or information that will be useful as reference materials during Volunteer service. Technical handouts may be given to Trainees for each topic area covered during training. These handouts may be given to Trainees prior to the training session in which they will be discussed.

3 Rural Economic Development Sector

The Rural Economic Development (RED) Sector is comprised of one single project: Rural Economic Development project. The Project Director (APCD) for the RED Sector is _____, the Peace Corps Volunteer Coordinator _____ and the Program Assistant is _____.

a. **Project Objectives**

The RED sector is currently comprised of a single project, Rural Economic Development. Peace Corps Volunteers in this project work primarily with production, multi-purpose cooperatives and with groups of farmers working in association. The target group of this project is farm families that have gathered to work together in associations, committees or cooperatives in an attempt to have access to several resources including production inputs,

markets, and credit. Due to several problems faced by these farmers in the past, such as bad weather, low prices of their agricultural products, and lack of agricultural marketing expertise, many farmers have fallen behind in their credit obligations and are not benefiting from services provided by organizations. Amongst these cooperatives and other more informal associations, common problems often exist which include: poor financial planning and administrative control, lack of adequate operating capital and financial resources, low productivity and member participation, and lack of understanding of cooperative philosophy.

The goals of the Rural Economic Development Project are:

Goal 1: Cooperatives and local associations will implement improved internal and external management practices. (Includes planning, record keeping, financial analysis, credit management and marketing).

Goal 2: Board and staff members of cooperatives and local associations will demonstrate improved management practices and support for their beneficiaries.

Goal 3: Individuals* associated with cooperatives and local associations will increase their economic opportunities through the use of services provided by these organizations. (* 'Individuals' refers to female and male, non-staff and non-board members of cooperatives and local associations.)

By the end of training, all RED Trainees should demonstrate the ability to perform successfully the following:

1. discuss the history of Small Enterprise Development initiatives worldwide, noting those, which have been tried in Paraguay (including the cooperative movement and the promotion of small enterprises);
2. accurately describe the current economic situation in Paraguay, including Paraguayan market cycles (with special attention given to agriculture's effect on product demand) and various macroeconomic variables such as lending and savings rates, the Paraguayan tax system, inflation, and currency stability (with respect to the Dollar, Argentinean Peso and Real);
3. identify the most common problems faced by farm family enterprises (including women and youth) and their participation in cooperatives and other farmers' organizations;
4. correctly describe basic cooperative organization, including the roles and responsibilities of cooperative directors, committees, employees, and members, and identify strategies to raise participation at all levels of the cooperative or farmers' organization;
5. describe, in Spanish, a reasonable approximation of the history and key principles of cooperatives and be able to cite the principal points with Paraguayan Law 438 governing the organization and functions of cooperatives in Paraguay;
6. identify resources, including credit sources, related to the RED Sector including host country organizations, government institutions, and international organizations that work within both the public and private sectors;

7. demonstrate the skills of basic business management which will be necessary for RED Volunteers to work in Paraguay, including key aspects of marketing, bookkeeping and accounting, feasibility studies, personnel management, credit analysis, financial planning, pricing, packaging and inventory management;
8. demonstrate the ability to work with groups including steps to group formation and facilitation skills through:
 - a. presentation of two participatory technical lectures;
 - b. successful completion of two of the following tasks
 - participate in at least one local group meeting, such as the local savings and loan cooperative or
 - work directly with a local small business or cooperative, observing their management practices and identifying areas requiring improvement.
9. show an awareness of Paraguayan business ethics and how they may differ from those that the Trainee is accustomed to in the United States. Orientations should include discussion and development of appropriate ways of dealing with situations where it appears that one's ethics may be compromised;
10. identify specific administrative needs within a cooperative as well as demonstrate the ability to perform financial analysis of cooperative activities, including an understanding of appropriate cooperative earnings distribution methods;
11. demonstrate an ability to complete a survey of current and past agricultural production as well as the traditional sources of marketing and credit;
12. demonstrate the ability to analyze member and community needs, attitudes, local resources and prospects regarding present or future cooperative and farmers' association projects;
13. identify potential income-generating activities for farm families as well as available resources for marketing, savings, training, agro-industries, project funding and support;

The APCD and the PCVC for the RED Sector will work with the technical trainers for the RED project to select appropriate sites for each Trainee beginning in the fifth week of training. Before the future site visit, each Trainee should participate in case studies with problematic situations from real volunteer sites. Information for each case study will be developed by the training center in collaboration with the APCD of the RED Sector. The case studies will reflect potential work situations of the tentative future site of the trainees. During the actual site visits, the trainees will analyze the case studies based on their experience in their future sites.

5. Municipal Service Development

Peace Corps Volunteers in the Municipal Services Development Program will work mainly in small to mid-size municipalities. Common problems which exist are: understanding the basic principles of self-governance; poor internal administration and personnel management; inability to provide efficient and effective public services; non-existent/or poorly managed property tax

systems; lack of civic education and community awareness programs; and lack of involving citizen participation in municipal projects.

The goals of the Municipal Services Development program are to:

GOAL #1: Local governments will increase the type, scope, quality, and efficiency of public services by improving their planning, management, and evaluation practices.

GOAL #2: Local governments will improve their financial management practices by updating their revenue, expenditure, and budgetary systems and making these systems more transparent to citizens.

GOAL #3: Citizens and community organizations will increase their participation in local government decision making by improving their ability to organize into groups, plan and manage projects, and monitor governmental activities.

At the end of training, all Municipal Services Development Trainees should have demonstrated the ability to perform the following:

1. Accurately describe the Paraguayan political history, including the significance of the 1989 coup, the transition to a democratic government, and the 1992 Constitution. Understand the events of March of 1999 and its implications for the current political situation.
2. Describe the following (in Spanish):
 - the structure of the government and the political parties
 - the role of the municipality, the mayor and city council
 - how the structure and current responsibilities of local government differ from those under the dictatorship
 - the rights and obligations of citizens
3. Demonstrate business management skills needed to improve the internal administration system, such as conducting a needs assessment, problem solving techniques and personnel management.
4. Demonstrate skills needed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the public services administration system, such as conducting needs assessments, feasibility studies, project design and management, and evaluation techniques.
5. Demonstrate understanding of the property tax management systems. Be able to analyze current *catastro* (tax mapping) records and to develop action plans to improve/implement the current *catastro* system.
6. Show an awareness of financial management techniques, which involve citizen participation in planning the municipal budget, as well as controlling revenues and expenditures.
7. Identify a variety of methods to improve transparency in local government, such as public accountability, civic education and community awareness programs.

8. Develop a plan to strengthen the relationship between the municipality and the neighborhood commissions and special interest groups, with a focus on increasing women and youth participation.
9. Describe the administrative hierarchy of the municipality and dependent outlying communities (*compañías*), the reciprocal obligations between the municipality and those communities, and the ways those communities can leverage municipal action to their benefit.
10. Demonstrate the ability to work with neighboring commissions in community projects, understand the commissions' dynamics.
11. Identify resources (governmental and non-governmental organizations), which work with strengthening local governments.
12. Demonstrate the skills needed to write formal business letters and invitations (in Spanish).
13. Demonstrate skills to do feasibility studies, cost analysis on solid waste management (collection and disposal). Understand the complexity of starting and developing environmental projects.

In order to achieve the most effective mix of formal technical training with opportunities to practice skills learned, the Municipal Services Development Trainees will be divided into two groups, based on language level. Trainees have to be aware at the end of training of the difference of working with small and bigger municipalities. For that purpose, Trainee visit to two small municipalities will be arranged during training. The Trainees will receive formal language classes in the respective training sites.

The majority of the formal technical training classes will be held at the Training Center or in another central location in Guaramaré. However, to the extent possible, each formal technical training class will be reinforced by a technical practice assignment, which each small group of Trainees will be expected to complete satisfactorily in their respective training community. In order to complete those assigned tasks, the Trainees can expect the assistance of the Language Professor, as well as other persons or resources identified in the training community.

Finally, each Trainee will complete a Community Counterpart Activity within the training community. Although each Trainee will be responsible for determining the scope of the CCA, training staff will provide the trainees with instructions and support necessary to complete the CCA by the end of training.

The APCD and the PCVC for the RED Sector will work with the technical trainers for the RED project to select appropriate sites for each Trainee beginning in the fifth week of training. Before the future site visit, each Trainee should participate in case studies with problematic situations from real volunteer sites. Information for each case study will be developed by the training center in collaboration with the APCD of the RED Sector. The case studies will reflect potential work situations of the tentative future site of the trainees. During the actual site visits, the trainees will analyze the case studies based on their experience in their future sites.