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To: Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Director
Daljit Bains, Chief Compliance Officer

From: Kathy A. Buller, Inspector General 

Date: September 16, 2014

Subject: Final Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Philippines
(IG-14-06-E)

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

Management concurred with 11 of 12 recommendations. Management concurred with 11 of 12 recommendations. All recommendations remain open. OIG will review and consider closing recommendations 1 to 11 when it receives the documentation reflected in the agency's response that demonstrates actions the agency has taken to address the recommendation. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities. In order for OIG to consider closing recommendation 12, additional documentation is required.

Our comments, which are in the report as Appendix E, address these matters. Please respond with documentation to close the remaining open recommendation within 90 days of receipt of this memorandum.

You may address questions regarding follow-up or documentation to Assistant Inspector General for Evaluation Jim O'Keefe at 202.692.2904 or to Senior Evaluator Jerry Black at 202.692.2912.

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

cc: Jacklyn Dao, White House Liaison
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Peace Corps Office of Inspector General



Peace Corps/Philippines Volunteers Michelle Taylor (2nd from left) and Laurenia Mangum (2nd from right) with counterparts



Flag of the Philippines

Final Program Evaluation Report: Peace Corps/Philippines IG-14-06-E

September 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

More than 8,755 Peace Corps Volunteers have served the people of the Philippines, making Peace Corps/Philippines (hereafter “the post”) by far the agency’s largest post in terms of the total number of Volunteers to have served since it opened in 1961. There are currently three projects in the Philippines: literacy in English education (education), children, youth, and family services (CYF), and coastal resource management (CRM). At the onset of this evaluation, 130 Volunteers were serving in the Philippines, including five Peace Corps Response (PCR) Volunteers.¹ Each July the post receives a new group of two-year Peace Corps trainees. The post’s fiscal year (FY) 2014 budget was US \$3.03 million.² At the time of the evaluation, the post had 36 staff and 130 Volunteers, including five PCR Volunteers.

WHAT WE FOUND

The overall condition of programming at the post was sound. Coordination with the government of the Philippines was excellent at the national and local levels. Host country officials we interviewed understood the goals of the three projects, how they supported the development priorities of the Philippines, and had positive views regarding the contributions Volunteers were making. Coordination between Peace Corps and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) functioned particularly well. The DSWD representative had a long-standing involvement with and in-depth understanding of the children, youth and families (CYF) project. Volunteers generally felt able to contribute at their sites to the objectives of the education, environment and CYF projects. With few exceptions Volunteers had established, effective working relationships with their counterparts and host agencies. Staff was well aware of programmatic challenges some Volunteers were experiencing at their sites and had strategies and plans to address them.

The Philippines experiences frequent natural disasters. The evaluation uncovered weaknesses in the post’s safety and security program, including emergency preparedness. Volunteers were unfamiliar with the post’s emergency action plan (EAP) and lacked confidence in their consolidation points. Volunteer site locator forms lacked information necessary to find the Volunteer. Volunteer security warden training took place a few months after pre-service training (PST), too late for new wardens to assist in emergencies that occurred during Volunteers’ first months at site; and wardens lacked accurate information about Volunteers in their area. Volunteers’ adherence to the post’s whereabouts notification policy was inconsistent. Some Volunteer residences did not have required locks. The post did not maintain important safety and security documentation in its site history files. The agency’s regional security officer for the Philippines was based in the South Pacific, making it difficult to visit the post or provide safety and security support by phone.

¹ Peace Corps Response provides qualified professionals the opportunity to undertake short-term assignments in various programs around the world.

² This amount does not include the salaries, benefits, and related cost of U.S. direct hires assigned to post and other costs the agency has determined should be centrally-budgeted.

Apart from the weaknesses noted in the post's safety and security program, the quality of Volunteer support in the Philippines was high. Volunteers gave all staff high marks for the quality of support, and reported that staff had been responsive to issues and problems they raised. The post had made changes to the medical unit that resulted in higher levels of Volunteer satisfaction with medical support. The director of programming and training (DPT) was working with program staff to improve communication with Volunteers on their work reports.

The training program in the Philippines was working well to prepare Volunteers for most aspects of their Peace Corps service. Post had established learning objectives that applied to all Volunteers as well as sector-specific learning objectives. Language testing scores showed that Volunteers generally met the post's local language requirements. Staff evaluated and adjusted trainings based on their observations of trainee performance, weekly reviews of trainee progress toward learning objectives, and feedback from Volunteers.

We found post's resources and management practices were adequate for effective post operations. The U.S. direct hire (USDH) leadership team was well respected and had created a positive work environment. Management had replaced under-performing staff. Planning and budgeting processes had resulted in sufficient financial and staff resources to support operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF

Our report contains 12 recommendations to improve the post's safety and security program. When fully implemented the actions taken to address our recommendations should strengthen post operations and correct the deficiencies detailed in the accompanying report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
HOST COUNTRY BACKGROUND	1
PEACE CORPS PROGRAM BACKGROUND.....	3
EVALUATION RESULTS	4
PROGRAMMING.....	4
VOLUNTEER SUPPORT	8
TRAINING	18
MANAGEMENT CONTROLS	20
LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS	22
APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY.....	24
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED	25
APPENDIX C: LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	29
APPENDIX D: AGENCY’S RESPONSE TO THE PRELIMINARY REPORT.....	30
APPENDIX E: OIG COMMENTS.....	40
APPENDIX F: PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION AND OIG CONTACT.....	42

HOST COUNTRY BACKGROUND

The Republic of the Philippines is a group of more than 7,100 islands in southeastern Asia, east of Vietnam and north of Indonesia. The total population in 2013 was estimated to be 105 million, almost half of whom live in urban areas. A little more than 10 percent of the population lives in Manila, the capital city on the island of Luzon. Filipino and English are the official national languages.

Figure 1. Map of the Philippines



The Philippines was a colony of Spain from the 16th century until the end of the 19th century. After the Spanish-American War, the Philippines was under American colonial administration for the first half of the 20th century. During World War II Japan conquered and occupied the islands from 1942 to 1945. On July 4, 1946 the country gained its independence, and a period of post-war U.S.-assisted reconstruction began.

President Ferdinand Marcos ruled the Philippines for more than 20 years from 1965 to 1986, and put the country under martial law for most of the 1970s. The Marcos regime ended in 1986. Corazón Aquino became the country's eleventh President in 1986, the first female president in Asia. Under President Aquino the country adopted a new constitution that put limits on presidential powers, and democratic institutions that Marcos had suspended started functioning again. President Aquino put more emphasis on civil liberties, human rights, efforts to resolve internal insurgencies and secession movements, and restoring the country's economic health.

The current president of the Philippines, Benigno "Pinoy" Aquino Jr. is the son of former President Aquino. President Benigno Aquino has focused on anti-poverty and anti-corruption efforts, has furthered cooperation with the United States in terms of security assistance, business, and development support. His administration has responded to the country's economic challenges

by seeking to increase budgets for education, health, cash transfers to the poor, and other social programs, as well as looking to the private sector to invest in large infrastructure projects.

The Philippines was among the fastest growing economies in the region in 2013. Domestic consumption, remittances from millions of Filipinos working in other countries, and an expanding outsourcing industry contributed to the country's economic growth. Despite these economic conditions and macroeconomic growth that averaged 4.5 percent under the previous administration, poverty and unemployment remain high, and significant income inequality persists. An estimated 40 percent of workers are in the informal sector.

According to the United Nations Development Program's "2013 Human Development Report" the Philippines human development index placed it in the "medium human development" category and ranked 114 out of 187 countries. Current environmental problems in the Philippines include deforestation of watershed areas, soil erosion, air and water pollution in urban areas, and degradation and pollution of coastal areas including mangrove swamps and fish breeding grounds.

The country experiences frequent natural disasters. It sits in a "typhoon belt" and is hit five or six times each year by powerful storms. A cyclone that hit in November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan (referred to as Typhoon Yolanda in Asia), was one of the strongest recorded tropical cyclones: over 6,000 people died from the storm, more than a 1,000 remain missing, and the monetary damage was estimated at almost \$3 billion. Landslides, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions also occur.

Figure 2. Warehouse Damaged by Typhoon Yolanda



Source: OIG evaluator

PEACE CORPS PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The post was started in October of 1961, making it the organization's second oldest program. The agency suspended operations in the Philippines for security reasons from 1990 to 1992. More than 8,755 Volunteers have served in the Philippines, making it by far the largest Peace Corps program based on the total number of Volunteers to have served in one country over time. There are three projects in the Philippines: literacy in English education; children, youth and family services; and coastal resource management. Each July the post receives a new group of two-year Peace Corps trainees who swear in formally as Volunteers in September. There have been more than 270 groups of Volunteers in the Philippines since 1961.

The post's fiscal year (FY) 2014 budget was U.S. \$3.03 million.³ At the time of the evaluation, the post employed 36 staff (three positions were vacant) and supported 130 Volunteers. The Volunteer population included 63 from group 272 (in their sixth month of service), 55 from group 271 (in their 18th month of service), seven third year Volunteers from group 270, and five PCR Volunteers.

A more detailed explanation of the project areas is presented below:

- **Literacy in English Education (Education)**

The education project's three goals focus on improving teaching, improving student achievement in English, and improving community participation in the school and educational activities. Education Volunteers co-plan and co-teach with their Filipino teacher counterparts, encourage use of communicative teaching methods in the classroom and provide opportunities for Filipino teachers to improve their English through collaboration with the Volunteer. Volunteers also assist Filipino teachers to design and conduct remedial courses for students who require extra English and literacy instruction. The education project was evolving toward more non-formal education activities (also called alternative learning systems) in order to reach out of school youth. At the time of fieldwork for the evaluation, 43 Volunteers served in the education project.

- **Children, Youth, and Family Services (CYF)**

The goals of the CYF project include working directly with youth to develop and enhance their life skills and increasing the capacity of Filipino agencies that are providing direct services to at-risk children and youth. CYF Volunteers work in centers and facilities operated by the Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), local government units (LGUs), and various faith-based and non-government organizations. These facilities serve at-risk children and youth as well as some adults. Volunteers work with children in conflict with the law; abandoned, neglected, and abused children and youth; and children and adults with physical and mental disabilities. At the time of fieldwork for the evaluation 48 Volunteers served in the CYF project.

³ This amount does not include the salaries, benefits, and related cost of USDH assigned to post and other costs the agency has determined should be centrally-budgeted.

- **Coastal Resource Management (CRM)**

The CRM project's goals are to build community support for CRM initiatives, and to promote the ability within LGUs to manage coastal and marine resources. Through participatory community action and environmental education, CRM Volunteers assist coastal communities' efforts to restore and protect marine habitats and to enhance their food security. Based in LGUs, CRM Volunteers work with surrounding coastal populations and fishing communities (known in the Philippines as "fisherfolk") to develop and implement integrated CRM plans as well as to organize environmental education and training and establish legal protection of fish stocks and marine habitats. At the time of fieldwork for the evaluation, 34 Volunteers served in the CRM project.

- **Peace Corps Response (PCR)**

The PCR program began in 2007 following a super typhoon (Typhoon Durian) that devastated the Bicol region in late November 2006. It focuses on humanitarian assistance and disaster preparedness and mitigation. Partnered with local government units, non-governmental or faith-based organizations, PCR Volunteers have conducted a variety of disaster preparedness activities including nutrition and socio-economic assessments, food security and alternative livelihood projects, shelter construction, and administration planning to address the needs of internally displaced persons. There were five PCR Volunteers serving in the country at the time of fieldwork for the evaluation, and post had plans to grow the program.

EVALUATION RESULTS

PROGRAMMING

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

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

The overall condition of programming at post was sound. Coordination with the government of the Philippines was excellent at the national and local levels. Projects were designed to meet important development priorities of the country. Volunteers generally felt able to contribute at their sites to the objectives of the education, CRM and CYF projects. Volunteers had established, with few exceptions, effective working relationships with their counterparts and host agencies. Staff was well aware of programmatic challenges some Volunteers were experiencing at their sites and had strategies and plans to address them. Because of the strength of the post's programming activities, we are not issuing any recommendations in this area.

In reviewing the official agreements and memoranda supporting Peace Corps' work in the Philippines, post's coordination with host country officials, project frameworks, site development policies and practices, the achievement of project objectives, and the small grants program at post, we found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post. A discussion of several aspects of strong program management, as well as areas the post should consider to further strengthen the program, follows.

Country Agreement and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). Host country officials we interviewed understood the goals of the three projects, how they supported the development priorities of the Philippines, and had positive views regarding the contributions Volunteers were making. The Peace Corps signed an agreement with the government of the Republic of the Philippines in October, 1961. For the education and CYF projects there are MOUs with the Department of Education, DSWD and the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA). The CRM project did not operate on the basis of a MOU with a national level department or agency of the Philippine government, but rather through site-specific agreements with LGUs where CRM Volunteers are placed. Coordination between the Peace Corps and the DSWD functioned particularly well. The DSWD representative we interviewed about the CYF project had long-standing involvement with and very in-depth understanding of the project:

Peace Corps is really important for the longer-term capacity building of our offices and local staff. Other short-term volunteer programs here in the country can't do that. And we don't have a lot of resources to put into some of the activities that your Volunteers can do. They help develop resources like manuals for working with orphanages, foster care, working with abused children, violence against women and other areas. So the focus is on capacity building in these areas and ensuring that whatever they do is sustainable in the long term. Most of the activities Peace Corps Volunteers do are things that we would like to do but just don't have the resources to do without some help.

Project Frameworks and Ability to Achieve Project Objectives. Each of the three project frameworks had been reviewed and endorsed by headquarters, and in our interviews 24 of 28⁴ Volunteers demonstrated a good understanding of their project objectives. Most Volunteers reported that they were able to accomplish those objectives or saw possibilities and room for improvement in the future. Just three out of 30 Volunteers reported they were only able to contribute "poorly" to their project objectives. Two Volunteers expressed that they did not have enough to do; though discouraged at the time of our interview, both were optimistic that their service could improve with time. Twenty-one of 30 Volunteers said they had enough work to do either "most of the time" or "always."

The longer Volunteers had been in service at the time of our fieldwork in March 2014, the higher they tended to rate their ability to achieve project goals. CRM and CYF Volunteers, who were in their sixth month of service at the time of our interviews, felt less able to achieve project objectives than did education Volunteers, or Volunteers who were in their eighteenth month of service. CRM Volunteers in their sixth month of service frequently reported that they could only

⁴ Not all 30 Volunteers answered our questions about the goals of their projects, or how well they had been able to contribute to those goals. One Volunteer had changed sites after Typhoon Yolanda and was still figuring out how she was going to contribute to the CYF project goals at her new site; a PCR Volunteer was unfamiliar with the written goals of the CYF or Education projects; an Education Volunteer did not want to give a numeric rating to her work; and an Education Volunteer could not recall having seen the latest version of the education project's goals.

contribute ‘poorly’ to the goals of the CRM project. In our discussions of this issue with post staff we learned that our fieldwork took place during a season when CRM Volunteers had less opportunity to directly engage with fisherfolk communities, but that the season was shifting to one in which CRM Volunteers would get out with their LGU counterpart agencies to work in fisherfolk communities. In addition, soon after our fieldwork ended the post’s new CRM sector manager conducted site visits to these Volunteers and their counterpart agencies.

Counterpart Relationships. The majority of Volunteers’ we interviewed had established positive working relationships with their counterparts, though some CRM Volunteers had difficulty engaging their counterpart agencies. Twenty out of 30 Volunteers reported that their relationship with their primary counterpart was either good or very good, and seventy percent of Volunteers said their counterparts supported their primary assignment goals either well or very well. Volunteers in the CYF project described positive counterpart engagement:

I have received very good feedback, assistance, and resources to get things done.

My counterpart is very supportive and willing to take risks. She wants my input on things and is good at answering my questions.

She is amazing--over the top. [The sector manager] does a great job of connecting us with our counterparts...She had me right away getting involved in her work.

Some CRM Volunteers and other Volunteers in their sixth month of service at the time of our fieldwork reported that their counterparts did not support their project goals or community integration efforts. Twelve Volunteers (six from the CRM project; and three from each the CYF and education projects) were experiencing challenges engaging their counterparts and host agencies, which had complicated their ability to achieve their primary assignment goals. The post lacked a CRM project manager from September 2013 to May of 2014, and CRM Volunteers in their sixth month of service rated their working relationships with their counterparts much lower (2.5 out of 5) than other Volunteers. Because Volunteers in their eighteenth month of service rated their ability to achieve project objectives and their counterpart relationships more positively than did Volunteers in their sixth month, and because a CRM project manager started work after our fieldwork ended, we determined that no finding is necessary to address counterpart support for Volunteers’ project goals.

Site Development. Staff explained the site development process consistently and understood their roles. In addition, Volunteers were generally satisfied with their sites. Twenty-four out of 30 Volunteers were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their sites (80 percent favorable).

The post had started a strategy of clustering Volunteers in certain geographic regions beginning with group 271. By taking a clustering approach to site identification and development, the post was trying to move toward a more efficient and impactful model of Volunteer placement. As the country director (CD) explained:

We are more connected at the region now with Volunteers closer together, so it does help to create a more organic presence for Volunteers as opposed to six hours this way and 12 hours that way. The most important reason for this is that if you want to have an impact and roll up data you have to cluster data. We are two groups into this strategy of clustering. We are trying to get all three sectors in each geographic region so we can promote cross-sectoral work among Volunteers.

Prior to placing a Volunteer, the post provides PNVSCA with a “site assessment checklist report” that summarizes the post’s steps to identify and prepare each site for a Volunteer and contains details as to why the post is recommending a Volunteer be placed there. This process required the post to have a document for each site that included relevant site history information.

Community Integration. As noted above, most Volunteers were satisfied with their sites (where they live and work) and with their counterpart relationships. Volunteers described a range of approaches they have taken to integrate into their communities, and few Volunteers reported serious hindrances to their efforts to integrate. However, some CRM Volunteers pointed out that because they lived in relatively well-off municipalities at a distance from the fisherfolk communities they sought to serve through their LGUs, their community integration was lagging and they felt unsure what to do.

There are other places on this island that really need our help. I feel like here the municipality is well off, has money to do things... To me it seems silly to work in a municipality like this that could just hire someone to do what we are doing. Other poorer communities are just at a loss.

My LGU hopes I can help them get a grant for a buoy and guardhouse repairs, but this is a class 1 region and it seems like they should just use their own money.

I feel very removed from the community I want to be in—the different fisherfolks. I don't live in a coastal barangay. I'm trying so hard to find a place that fits that but there is not much available here. My house is nicer than I ever expected—I feel like it is a castle compared to the fisherfolk. This is at a higher socio-economic level than my target community.

Figures 3 below illustrates a “class 1” municipality hosting a CRM Volunteer, and figure 4 illustrates a fisherfolk community.

Figure 3: Municipal Hall in Miag-ao



Source: OIG evaluator

Figure 4: Fisherfolk Community



Source: OIG evaluator

As mentioned above, we interviewed CRM Volunteers during a season of relatively low direct engagement by LGUs with fisherfolk communities. Because of the seasonal nature of CRM Volunteer engagement with fisherfolk communities, and because of the recent work by the CRM sector manager to visit and support CRM Volunteers at their sites, we are not issuing a finding related to site placement and community integration. We encourage the new CRM sector

manager to look for opportunities to place CRM Volunteers closer to or in fisherfolk communities in order to facilitate CRM Volunteers' achievement of project goals through closer community integration.

Although most elements of the post's site development process were working well, in the Volunteer Support section of this report we address deficiencies we found related to housing checks and the post's maintenance of sufficient safety and security related site history information that is important for site development.

Small Grants Activities. The CD, other staff, and Volunteers expressed confidence in the oversight provided by the small grants committee. During our fieldwork we observed the small grants working group deliberating over various proposals that Volunteers had recently submitted. Twenty of 30 Volunteers we interviewed were involved in small grant projects, though many projects were at the design and proposal stage. Eight Volunteers had SPA (Small Project Assistance) projects; eight had projects through a partnership between the Peace Corps and World Connect, an international organization based in the U.S. that helps fund small projects in developing countries. Four Volunteers used the local charitable group as BKP to source books and materials for libraries or classrooms. Among the 11 small projects that Volunteers could rate in terms of their effectiveness, eight were rated positively (at least 4 out of 5).

Figure 5: Small Grants Committee Meeting



Source: OIG evaluator

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

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

The quality of Volunteer support in the Philippines was high with the exception of the management controls related to its safety and security program. Volunteers gave all staff high marks for the quality of support, and reported that staff had been responsive to issues and problems they raised. The post had made changes to the medical unit that resulted in higher levels of Volunteer satisfaction with medical support. The DPT was working with program staff to improve communication with Volunteers on their work reports.

In reviewing staff support to Volunteers, site visits, medical support, Volunteer report feedback, the Volunteer advisory committee, and settling-in and living allowances we found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post.

Overall Staff Support. Volunteers rated the quality of support from staff very favorably; it was very rare for a Volunteer to have a negative viewpoint or provide a negative rating (1 or 2 on a 5 point scale) of any staff person. Volunteers described the CD as being thoughtful and proactive, sensitive and caring, and knowing how to encourage Volunteers to have a successful service.

He is absolutely incredible. Not only a great CD who oversees everything and takes care of policy but he is also very personable. He was the second staff person I saw when I got off the military airplane in Manila after our evacuation from Tacloban, and I could tell that he was crying out of concern for all of us.

Similarly, Volunteers expressed a lot of appreciation for other staff as well. The comments below represent a selection of positive remarks Volunteers made about staff.

She is really caring about your welfare--and at a deeper emotional level wants to know how you are doing. It's not a surface thing; she is sincere in her interest. I'm really impressed with her style.

He's the best person to have doing this job. He is so enthused. He can go into incredible detail...[and is] a font of information. He encouraged me to go slow and get integrated into the organization, which was great advice, since I tried to go too quick.

He's a rock star. Everything that he has planned has really been well done and well thought out and in the interests of the Volunteers. He runs everything well. And he goes over and beyond his job with us and is super friendly. When he was the regional manager he went out to save the Volunteers [after typhoon Yolanda] in his blue Nikes.

Twenty-six out of 30 Volunteers said that the responsiveness of staff to any issue or question the Volunteer had raised was either good or very good. No Volunteer we interviewed gave a negative rating (1 or 2 out of 5) for staff responsiveness to issues the Volunteers had raised.

Site Visits. Despite the very high marks Volunteers gave staff for the quality of support provided, almost a quarter of Volunteers said they had not received an adequate number of site visits from staff. Among those who said the number of site visits was inadequate, four were CRM Volunteers who had not had a sector manager for seven months prior to our fieldwork. Other site visits had been cancelled or delayed due to Typhoon Yolanda. The post was in the process of filling the CRM sector manager position during our fieldwork. After our fieldwork ended, the new sector manager started work and had already visited most CRM Volunteers at their sites.

Medical Support. Recent staff changes in the post's health unit appear to have contributed to improvements in medical and health support for Volunteers. The post had recently hired a new Peace Corps medical officer (PCMO) to assist the medical unit. Volunteers we interviewed gave positive ratings for the quality of medical support; 71 percent reported that the PCMOs had been either "supportive" or "very supportive" of their health needs.

They really took care of me after the typhoon. I had some strange coping things going on and felt very supported by the doctors. They brought in a trauma counselor for some of us. I advocated for myself and told them what I needed and they were very responsive.

As a whole they've been good; I had a car accident and I called the duty officer. The PCMO called right away and the next morning flew me into Manila for tests. Anything I've needed for meds or consultation I've had. They have been very supportive, very helpful.

The medical evacuation plan was in place and complete.

Responding to Volunteer Work Reports. Staff was not responding to work reports from Volunteers in a timely manner, though efforts were underway to improve the review and feedback process. For interviewed Volunteers who had submitted a report on their project activities, more than half said that they rarely or never got a response from staff. Among those who had received feedback, only half rated it favorably. Staff explained that their delays in responding to Volunteer reports were due to time constraints as well as technical problems they had experienced with the latest version of the Volunteer reporting tool. The DPT had worked recently with staff to set expectations concerning the timing and substance of their responses to Volunteer reports. A clearer process and division of labor had been established to facilitate responses to the next round of work reports. On the basis of efforts already underway at the post to improve the timeliness of staff responses to Volunteer reports, we are not issuing a finding or recommendation in this area.

Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC). The VAC was in a period of transition, and most Volunteers we interviewed were not familiar enough with the VAC to discuss its effectiveness. Elections had recently been held and the new VAC had not yet met at the time of fieldwork. The CD explained that discussions with the previous VAC had been antagonistic and not very useful. Staff hoped the new VAC would be a more effective conduit for addressing issues among the Volunteers, as well as a group that could help build a positive 'esprit de corps' among the Volunteers.

Settling-In and Living Allowances. Eighty-seven percent of Volunteers reported that their monthly living allowance was sufficient. Volunteers who moved out from their in-site host family into their own place reported that their settling-in allowance was insufficient. Common complaints concerned the inability to purchase refrigerators. The post offered a one-time supplemental allowance that Volunteers could use to purchase items their settling-in allowance did not cover "like a bicycle and helmet, a refrigerator, laundry device, etc." The CD believed that increasing the settling-in allowance would create an incentive for more Volunteers to move out of their in-site host family arrangement, and he wanted to encourage Volunteers to stay with their host families in order to develop better language skills and cultural understanding.

While many areas of Volunteer support functioned at a high level, the evaluation uncovered some areas that require management attention, particularly the documentation and management controls in the post's safety and security program, including emergency preparedness. The remainder of this section provides more information about what our evaluation found concerning the post's safety and security program.

Volunteers did not consistently adhere to the post's whereabouts reporting policy.

According to the *Volunteer Handbook*, Volunteers in the Philippines must inform Peace Corps:

...any time they will not be spending the night in their communities. This can be done by phone call, e-mail, or text message to the Regional Manager (RM) or a designated back-up RM. You must state where you will be, how you can be reached, and the dates you will be out.

Most Volunteers maintained that they followed the post's whereabouts reporting policy either most of the time or always when they left their sites. Volunteers who admitted that they did not always adhere to the post's whereabouts policy expressed different reasons for this. Some reported their whereabouts if they were going to be far away from their site for the night, like on another island, but not every time they left their site for an overnight stay somewhere else. Some Volunteers did not always follow the whereabouts reporting policy because they did not want to get permission from their counterparts and supervisors to be away from their sites. Volunteers' inconsistent adherence to the post's whereabouts policy made it more likely that in an emergency staff would be unable to communicate efficiently with them.

We recommend:

- 1. That the country director reinforce the importance of the whereabouts policy with Volunteers, including under what circumstances Volunteers need to seek approval from their supervisor to leave their site.**

Volunteer houses did not have sliding bolt locks as required.

One of the safety and security features that the post has required for all Volunteer housing in the Philippines is that entrance doors can be secured with a sliding bolt lock. Of the 28 houses we inspected, eight (almost 30 percent) did not have sliding bolts. The lack of such locks increases the risk that Volunteers' houses can be broken into. Volunteer houses lacked sliding bolt locks because there was insufficient review of completed housing checks and a lack of follow-up by safety and security staff to ensure that missing dead bolts were in place.

We recommend:

- 2. That the safety and security manager⁵ ensure that all completed housing checks are reviewed and that each mandatory safety and security criterion, including sliding dead bolts, are in place at all Volunteer residences.**

Volunteer site locator forms were inaccurate and missing key information.

Site locator forms (SLFs), also called emergency locator forms, are an important component of every Peace Corps post's Emergency Action Plan (EAP). The key information to include on an SLF is detailed in Peace Corps' *Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post: Post Management Resource Guide*, Part 11.8, "The Post Emergency Action Plan," which states in part:

... maps to the Volunteer's site and house, emergency communications means and contacts, possible modes of transportation, the nearest clinic, airfield, and police post, and various other site-related information.

The post's EAP stresses the importance of having accurate and complete directions to each Volunteer's house:

In the event that contact cannot be established using designated communications means, or if the nature of the emergency otherwise dictates, PC/Philippines will attempt contact through any other means available, including dispatching a staff. For this reason, it is essential that Volunteers ensure that their Site Locator Form (SLF) is accurate and up-to-date at all times.

Furthermore, the Office of Safety and Security established a Standard Operating Procedure outlining the safety and security manager's (SSM's) responsibilities regarding SLFs:

The SSM will coordinate with appropriate staff to ensure that site locator information is reviewed during all site visits, including GPS [global positioning system] data, where permissible... The SSM will ensure a system is in place for the review and improvement of maps to Volunteer residences.

During fieldwork we tested the accuracy of each Volunteer's SLF in our sample. Experience has shown that a major storm and significant cloud cover disables technology-based communication systems like cell phones, satellite phones and global positioning systems (GPS). Given the prevalence of serious natural disasters in the Philippines, we believe accurate SLFs for each Volunteer must be maintained in paper copy. Our test was designed to determine whether or not a Volunteer could be located during an emergency using a paper copy of the Volunteer's SLF.

Twenty of the 28 SLFs we tested did not contain accurate maps or written directions to Volunteer houses, and we were unable to find the Volunteers in our sample using these SLFs (a

⁵ The agency changed the title for this staff position from safety and security coordinator to safety and security manager after our fieldwork.

71 percent fail rate). SLFs had cell phone numbers, GPS coordinates, and email addresses for the Volunteers, so we were able to use our cell phones to text Volunteers and have them guide us to them over the phone. No SLFs contained information on local police or medical facilities at the Volunteer's site.

We learned from more than one Volunteer we interviewed that due to incomplete or poorly done SLFs staff had difficulty locating the Volunteer in a recent emergency. We learned that in a similar natural disaster that struck in late 2006, the Peace Corps also could not find at least one Volunteer for some time.

The reasons SLFs did not contain accurate and reliable information were multiple. Most Volunteers did not provide clear maps and instructions to their homes on their SLFs. Some Volunteers indicated their work site, but not their residence. Some Volunteers were not submitting their SLFs to the office in a timely manner after arriving at their sites, or after moving from a host family stay to their own lodging somewhere else. Staff was not consistently reviewing information on SLFs and following up with Volunteers to make corrections. And staff was not testing SLFs during site visits. In order to have a solid management control which ensures that staff has reliable information to find all Volunteers in the country, especially during an emergency, each of these weaknesses will need to be strengthened.

We recommend:

- 3. That the safety and security manager provide training and instructions to Volunteers on properly completing their site locator forms and ensure that each site locator form contains a sufficiently detailed map and written directions to the Volunteer's residence.**
- 4. That the country director ensure that post has a process for testing and verifying information on site locator forms.**

Volunteer wardens did not receive training early enough in their service, and some were not provided accurate information about which Volunteers they were responsible for contacting in an emergency.

According to the post's EAP, it relies upon some of its Volunteers to act as "wardens" for other Volunteers in their area. In the event of an actual emergency or during emergency drills, wardens alert Volunteers directly, providing instructions about what to do, including whether or not to gather in a hotel that has been designated as a consolidation point:

PC/Philippines uses a PC [Peace Corps] warden system. Numerous Volunteers throughout the country have been designated as PC wardens (and alternates) and act as the liaison for passing messages and confirming receipt of those messages between PC/Philippines and the PCVs [Peace Corps Volunteers]. All Volunteers must know whom their PC warden (and alternate are), and make sure that their warden has the most up-to-date contact information for them.

The post did not provide warden training to group 272 Volunteers until April 2014, seven months after the end of their PST. During this period of time the safety and security program relied on trained wardens from groups 270 and 271 to communicate with Volunteers from group 272 who had been placed in the warden's region. Yet not all wardens had accurate and timely information about the Volunteers they were responsible for contacting, and not all Volunteers knew who their warden was. One Volunteer from group 272 did not know for a few months that she had been designated as a warden. One Volunteer stated

There should have been warden training during PST. When the typhoon did come and we had to consolidate no one knew what was going on.

When Volunteers changed sites and moved to an area with a different warden, there was not a process to ensure that wardens were promptly notified of the change in Volunteers in their area. This raises the risk that some Volunteers may not be contacted by their warden in an emergency.

We recommend:

- 5. That the safety and security manager train Volunteers wardens closer to the end of PST, before they are expected to fulfill any warden duties.**
- 6. That the safety and security manager ensure that Volunteers have information on who their wardens are and that wardens have accurate and up-to-date lists of the Volunteers they are responsible for contacting in an emergency.**

Volunteers were unfamiliar with the EAP.

MS 270 section 8.2 states that "The CD will assure that post staff and [Volunteers/trainees] are trained in the EAP and in individual EAP responsibilities..." Fourteen out of thirty Volunteers we interviewed either did not have or were unsure if they had a copy of their EAP. Some Volunteers did not seem to understand what the EAP was or in what format it had been provided to them during training. Volunteers' lack of awareness of their EAP stemmed from inadequate EAP training during PST. Eight Volunteers commented that the EAP and disaster preparedness training during PST was not sufficiently covered.

I did not feel it imparted any specific skills to be safer.

There was not much information on what to do in an emergency or disaster. Not much about what to do if it's flooding or a typhoon hits. I mean, it was kind of obvious advice to seek higher ground.

We had an introduction to emergency preparedness during PST. It was broad and not very focused. They skimmed the surface and then two weeks later we were evacuated for the flood. We got the EAP but we didn't understand it.

The safety and security training could definitely be improved on. More information on the natural disasters is needed. We did not really cover that very much in PST. It was limited. I can understand that but I think natural disasters and emergency action plans should be covered more thoroughly during PST.

Deficiencies in EAP training at the post trace back several years and have been noted in previous agency evaluation reports. Following a super typhoon that struck the Philippines in late 2006, an internal management assessment team from the agency was sent to the Philippines and concluded that disaster preparation training of Volunteers had been insufficient, and recommended that the post improve it. The report recommended that the SSM “should provide disaster preparedness training during PST for PCVs [Peace Corps Volunteers] including clear guidelines for consolidation of PCVs following disasters.”

Experience has shown that EAPs are important in the Philippines. One Volunteer had her EAP in a plastic re-sealable bag along with other essential documents and credited it with having helped her stay alive during recent typhoon Yolanda. Volunteers who lack a good understanding of their EAP are at risk of not being prepared to respond appropriately during the next emergency or natural disaster in the Philippines.

We recommend:

- 7. That the country director ensure that staff and Volunteers/trainees receive sufficient emergency preparation training that is specific to the natural disasters and other emergencies in the Philippines.**

Some Volunteers lacked confidence in their consolidation point as a safe and appropriate place to meet in an emergency.

There are a variety of things the post needs to take into consideration when selecting an emergency consolidation point. The agency’s standard operating procedures related to the selection of consolidation points provides that the SSM:

...will develop a list of minimum standards to be used when evaluating consolidation points. The standards must consider among other things:

- Geographical hazards
- Transportation options
- Communication options
- Structural integrity of the facility
- Results from post’s Annual Risk Assessment.
- How many PCVs [Peace Corps Volunteers] the location can reasonably accommodate with regard to sleeping arrangements, food and water, excreta disposal, and other factors.

The SSM will inspect and evaluate all current or proposed consolidation points utilizing the minimum standards. Results of the inspection will be recorded and filed appropriately.

During typhoon Yolanda some Volunteers lacked confidence in their consolidation point as a safe location to shelter. One Volunteer we interviewed said:

Our original consolidation point was horrible--in a flood zone, volcano path, etc. the worst place to be. We told them that in the first like practice session. Our wardens told [the SSM] this. So we stressed that we needed to change the consolidation point.

Volunteers reported to us that the emergency training they received during PST did not sufficiently stress what steps they should take in an emergency. Because of insufficient emergency training and lack of trust in their consolidation points, some Volunteers refused to go to their consolidation points when instructed during the most recent natural disaster and chose to stay in their homes instead. This complicated and slowed the agency's efforts to account for the security of each Volunteer. Staff was required to make extraordinary efforts to gather all the Volunteers and remove them from a disaster-affected area.

We recommend:

- 8. That the safety and security manager establish and use standards for the selection of consolidation points.**
- 9. That the safety and security manager and training manager ensure through training and communication that all Volunteers understand why they must go to their consolidation point when instructed in an emergency.**

The post did not maintain sufficient safety and security related documentation in site history files.

The Office of Safety and Security's "Standard Operating Procedure: Site History Files" specifies that certain procedures need to be followed in order "to ensure that relevant, site specific, safety and security information is being collected, stored and made readily available to programming staff with an active role in the site development and site selection process". These procedures include identifying what kind of information needs to be centrally maintained in an electronic format, periodically reviewing site history files to ensure that the right information is being collected on each site, and reviewing each potential site for any security concerns. The procedure also specifies the sort of information that should be included in site history files: site development reports, notes of any security concerns or incidents that have occurred at the site, and other relevant reports from the media or other sources.

The post did not maintain sufficient site history files in accordance with the standards set out by the Office of Safety and Security. The safety and security site history documentation provided to us was a list of crimes against Volunteers that had been recorded in the agency's Consolidated Incident Reporting System (CIRS). Volunteer files did not contain written reports of security assessments the SSM had done as part of the site identification and approval process. Safety and security assessments of each site were not maintained electronically or in hard copy. As a result, staff did not have access to reliable and complete site-specific safety and security information. Other than the list of crimes that had been reported in CIRS the post lacked written information on the security conditions at any past, present or potential Volunteer site.

We have some of this information in VIDA [Volunteer Information Database Application]. A lot of the information is in people's memories.

All we have is in the VIDA. The name of the agency, the address and the name of the person... But not harassment issues—it's not in VIDA. That is with SSM. When we are looking for sites for transfer PCVs, there are some that we know we can't place a PCV there but it's not in the database.

The lack of site-specific safety and security documentation means that staff who play an active role in identifying and developing new sites are operating without important information, and may inadvertently recommend sites that are inappropriate for safety and security reasons.

We recommend:

- 10. That the safety and security manager establish and implement a system for the collection and maintenance of site history files that includes written reports of security assessments of Volunteer sites.**

Peace Corps safety and security officer (PCSSO) support did not benefit the post's safety and security program.

The PCSSO for the Philippines was based in Fiji in the South Pacific, making it difficult for the PCSSO to visit the post. Travel between Fiji and the Philippines can take over 13 hours, and there is a 4-hour time zone difference which limits the amount of time during the day for phone-based support. In the past the PCSSO supporting the Philippines had been based in Thailand, which is about a 3 hour flight and one hour of time zone difference. Staff questioned whether it made sense for their PCSSO to be based in Fiji. With the exception of the lack of safety and security information in the post's site history files, which we've also noted in our report, the PCSSO reports we reviewed from 2012 and 2013 did not address deficiencies in the management controls of the post's safety and security program.

The PCSSO's previous two trips to the post appeared to be for purposes other than conducting a full *Peace Corps Manual* section (MS) "MS 270 review," which the agency requires every three years. Full MS 270 reviews are designed to generate a detailed status report on all aspects of the post's safety and security program, including management controls over important documentation like Volunteer site locator forms.

Based on our fieldwork and the list of weaknesses we found in the management controls of the safety and security program, it is important for the post to receive a complete MS 270 review as early as can be arranged in 2014.

We recommend:

- 11. That the Peace Corps safety and security officer conduct a full *Peace Corps Manual* section 270 review of Peace Corps/Philippines according to the agency's guidance, "Manual section 270 and Other Policy Review 2014."**
- 12. That the associate director of safety and security assess options for positioning the Peace Corps safety and security officer for the Philippines in a location that allows for more effective support.**

TRAINING

Another objective of the post evaluation is to answer the question, "Does training prepare Volunteers for Peace Corps service?" To answer this question we considered such factors as training adequacy and planning and development of the training life cycle.

The training program in the Philippines was working well to prepare Volunteers for most aspects of their Peace Corps service. The post had established learning objectives that applied to all Volunteers as well as sector-specific learning objectives. Language testing scores showed that all but five of the 63 trainees from group 272 had met the post's local language requirement of "intermediate mid" in Tagalog, and all but one Volunteer had achieved at least "intermediate low". Staff evaluated and adjusted trainings based on their observations of trainee performance, weekly reviews of trainee progress toward learning objectives, and feedback from Volunteers.

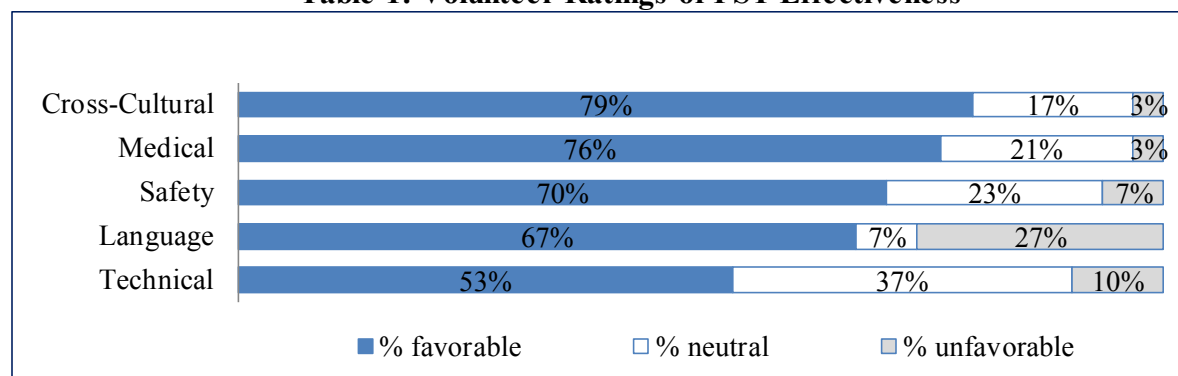
In reviewing training objectives, how trainees are assessed, and how the staff evaluate and adjust training each year, we found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post.

Training Objectives and Trainee Assessment. The post had established learning objectives for all trainees as well as specific learning objectives for trainees in each sector (education, CRM, CYF). During PST the training staff observed trainees and held weekly meetings with trainees to provide feedback on their progress. Trainee assessment reports provided staff with information on trainees' community entry skills, language, and cross-cultural skills. Language testing scores were maintained and demonstrated that Volunteers who had not passed the local language requirement at the end of PST were retested four months later.

Staff Evaluation of Training. Staff had made a number of adjustments to PST based on evaluations and feedback Volunteers. These included adding site-specific local language training at the end of PST for Volunteers who wanted an orientation to a language other than the national language. Programming and training staff used the evaluation comments from Volunteers to revise trainings in a collaborative manner.

Volunteer Views of Training. Volunteers had positive views about the effectiveness of cross-cultural training, as well as health and medical training. With the exception of disaster preparedness training, Volunteers reported that safety and security training sessions were also effective.

Table 1: Volunteer Ratings of PST Effectiveness⁶



Source: Volunteer interviews conducted by OIG evaluators.

Volunteers reported PST language training to be mixed in terms of its effectiveness, though language testing scores showed that all but a handful of Volunteers had achieved the local language requirement by the end of PST. While 20 of 30 rated their language training as either effective or very effective, eight Volunteers rated the training as ineffective or very ineffective. Some Volunteers argued that they were not learning the right dialect for their site; others admitted that it was simply difficult for them to learn a foreign language. Taking into consideration these concerns raised by Volunteers, we found the post's approach to language training to be reasonable: all trainees received instruction in the national language, Tagalog, for most of PST. Some local dialect training was available later in PST after Volunteers had been matched to specific sites. Post made tutors available to Volunteers who wanted to improve their local language skills. Given the balanced approach at the post to local language training, and the generally positive results and viewpoints of Volunteers, we determined the post had provided Volunteers with sufficient opportunity and resources for their local language acquisition.

Technical training received the lowest average rating from the Volunteers we interviewed, nevertheless most Volunteers in the CRM and CYF projects rated their technical training as above average in effectiveness (4.0 out of 5 for CRM and CYF). Education Volunteers who were already experienced in their fields tended to rate their technical training less favorably, pointing out that it seemed geared for the generalist Volunteer with limited professional experience. We found the training program to be generally sound other than the adequacy of the disaster preparedness training during PST, which is addressed in the Volunteer Support section of this report.

⁶ In calculating the percentage of favorable ratings for this table, we used a five-point scale, with five being most favorable and one being least favorable. A rating of three was considered neither favorable nor unfavorable. The percent of Volunteers who rated training favorably includes those who rated training as either a four or a five.

Another key objective of our country program evaluation is to assess the extent to which the post's resources and management practices are adequate for effective post operations. To address this question, we assess a number of factors, including staffing; staff development; office work environment; collecting and reporting performance data; and the post's strategic planning and budgeting.

We found the post's resources and management practices were adequate for effective post operations. The USDH leadership team was well respected and had created a positive work environment. Management had coached out and replaced under-performing staff. Planning and budgeting processes had resulted in sufficient financial and staff resources to support operations. In reviewing strategic planning and budgeting, the post's staffing structure and staff development, the office's working environment and morale among staff, the post's process for collecting and reporting performance data, and the post's relationship with headquarters, we found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post.

Strategic Planning and Budgeting. After a period in 2013 and early 2014 during which some key staff positions were vacant, the post put in place the financial and human resources required for effective post operations. At the time of the evaluation, plans were in place for additional programmatic staff support. The CD and others expressed confidence that the post was operating with the human and financial resources it needed. We had no concerns about the planning and budgeting documentation we reviewed.

Staffing Structure and Staff Development. The post was in the process of hiring additional programmatic staff to provide more support for Volunteers in each project (education, CRM and CYF). The post was also hoping to get regional approval for a full-time monitoring, reporting, and evaluation staff member to improve how Volunteers measure and report their accomplishments and how staff manage and use performance data from Volunteers. The USDH management team was supportive and encouraging of staff professional development and training opportunities.

Office Working Environment and Morale. The management team and staff had created a very positive office environment. Staff expressed great appreciation for the management style of the USDH team and the USDH management team expressed high satisfaction with the quality of staff working for the post.

It's good; it's a small family, the camaraderie is good. You can be frank, get into a more negative issue and not be turned away or turned off.

I'm enjoying the challenges. [The CD and DPT] are easy to work with; they treat you with respect. My colleagues get along and support each other.

This is the best team I've been on since being a Peace Corps employee... The leadership can share hats and do different roles when necessary. No hesitations of sharing responsibilities and we communicate very well together.

The current management team and staff in the Philippines created a participatory and empowering environment for staff. Staff appreciated the leadership of the CD who was seen as transparent in his decision making. The fact that the CD had committed to staying for a full five years was also appreciated by staff. Staff morale and motivation was high.

Processes for Collecting and Reporting Performance Data. The post was using performance data from Volunteers to inform its strategic planning and budgeting submissions, and to generate annual reports for stakeholders in the Philippines. We did not have any concerns about the post's process for collecting or reporting performance data.

Relationship with Headquarters. We found positive levels of mutual understanding, respect, communication, and support existed between post and headquarters. Representatives we spoke to at headquarters expressed high regard for the jobs being done by staff and management in the Philippines, and staff we interviewed at the post also reported that their interactions with headquarters personnel had been positive.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

WE RECOMMEND:

1. That the country director reinforce the importance of the whereabouts policy with Volunteers, including under what circumstances Volunteers need to seek approval from their supervisor to leave their site.
2. That the safety and security manager ensure that all completed housing checks are reviewed and that each mandatory safety and security criterion, including sliding dead bolts, are in place at all Volunteer residences.
3. That the safety and security manager provide training and instructions to Volunteers on properly completing their site locator forms and ensure that each site locator form contains a sufficiently detailed map and written directions to the Volunteer's residence.
4. That the country director ensure that post has a process for testing and verifying information on site locator forms.
5. That the safety and security manager train Volunteers wardens closer to the end of PST, before they are expected to fulfill any warden duties.
6. That the safety and security manager ensure that Volunteers have information on who their wardens are and that wardens have accurate and up-to-date lists of the Volunteers they are responsible for contacting in an emergency.
7. That the country director ensure that staff and Volunteers/trainees receive sufficient emergency preparation training that is specific to the natural disasters and other emergencies in the Philippines.
8. That the safety and security manager establish and use standards for the selection of consolidation points.
9. That the safety and security manager and training manager ensure through training and communication that all Volunteers understand why they must go to their consolidation point when instructed in an emergency.
10. That the safety and security manager establish and implement a system for the collection and maintenance of site history files that includes written reports of security assessments of Volunteer sites.
11. That the Peace Corps safety and security officer conduct a full *Peace Corps Manual* section 270 review of the Peace Corps/Philippines according to the agency's guidance, "Manual section 270 and Other Policy Review 2014."

12. That the associate director of safety and security assess options for positioning the Peace Corps safety and security officer for the Philippines in a location that allows for more effective support.

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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

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

The Evaluation Unit announced its intent to conduct an evaluation of the post on January 28, 2014. For post evaluations, we use the following researchable questions to guide our work:

- To what extent has post developed and implemented programs to increase host country communities' capacity?
- Does training prepare Volunteers for Peace Corps service?
- Has the post provided adequate support and oversight to Volunteers?
- Are post resources and management practices adequate for effective post operations?

The evaluation team conducted the preliminary research portion of the evaluation January 28 to March 14, 2014. This research included review of agency documents provided by headquarters and post staff, and interviews with management staff representing Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Operations; Overseas Programming and Training Support; the Office of Global Health and HIV; the Office of Medical Services and Counseling and Outreach Unit; Peace Corps Response; the Office of Safety and Security; the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection; the Office of Victim Advocacy; and the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Global Partnerships.

In-country fieldwork occurred from March 17 to April 4, 2014, and included interviews with post senior staff in charge of programming, training, and support; the U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines; the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy; the embassy regional security officer and assistant regional security officer; the chief of mission for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in the Philippines; an education specialist and a health specialist at USAID; the director of the Millennium Challenge Corporation in the Philippines; and twelve host country government ministry officials. In addition, we interviewed a stratified judgmental sample of 30 Volunteers (23 percent of Volunteers serving at the time of our visit) based on their length of service, site location, project focus, gender, age, and ethnicity.

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

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

As part of this post evaluation, we interviewed 30 Volunteers; 18 staff in-country; and 38 representatives from Peace Corps headquarters in Washington D.C., the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines, and key ministry officials. Volunteer interviews were conducted using a standardized interview questionnaire, and Volunteers were asked to rate many items on a five-point scale (1 = not effective, 3 = neutral, 5 = very effective). The analysis of these ratings provided a quantitative supplement to Volunteers' comments, which were also analyzed. For the purposes of the data analysis, Volunteer ratings of "4" and above are considered favorable. In addition, 28 out of 30 Volunteer interviews occurred at the Volunteers' homes, and we inspected 28 of these homes using post-defined site selection criteria. The period of review for a post evaluation is one full Volunteer cycle (typically 27 months).

The following table provides demographic information that represents the entire Volunteer population in the Philippines; the Volunteer sample was selected to reflect these demographics.

Table 2: Volunteer Demographic Data

Project	Percentage of Volunteers
Education	33%
Children, Youth and Family Services	37%
Environment	26%
Peace Corps Response Volunteers	4%
Gender	Percentage of Volunteers
Female	69%
Male	31%
Age	Percentage of Volunteers
25 or younger	47%
26-29	26%
30-49	12%
50 and over	15%

Source: Volunteer Information Database Application for PC/Philippines (2/4/2014)

At the time of our field visit, the post had 36 staff. Three positions were vacant.⁷ The post also employed temporary staff to assist with PST, though given the time of our visit, these positions were not staffed. We interviewed 18 staff members and a Peace Corps Volunteer leader.⁸

⁷ Vacant positions during our fieldwork included: the CRM project manager, a program assistant and a specialist for the "Padayon" project.

⁸ A Peace Corps Volunteer Leader is typically a Volunteer who has extended service for a 3rd year in order to perform special duties, e.g. offering guidance to other Volunteers and handling administrative tasks to support Volunteer projects.

Table 3: Interviews Conducted with PC/Philippines Staff Members

Position	Status	Interviewed
Country Director	USDH	X
Director of Programming and Training	USDH	X
Director of Management and Operations	USDH	X
Children Youth and Family Sector Manager	PSC*	X
Education Sector Manager	PSC	X
Coastal Resources Management Technical Assistant	PSC	X
Training Manager	PSC	X
Regional Managers (3)	PSC	X
Safety and Security Coordinator	PSC	X
Safety and Security Assistant	PSC	X
PCMO (2)	PSC	X
Medical Technologist	PSC	
Peace Corps Response Coordinator	PSC	X
Resource Coordinator	PSC	
Program Assistant/Monitoring and Evaluation Champion	PSC	X
Peace Corps Volunteer Leader	Volunteer	X
Program Assistant	PSC	
Executive Assistant	PSC	
Language Coordinator	PSC	X
Training Assistant	PSC	
Program Management Specialist	PSC	X
Volunteer Support Assistant	PSC	
General Services Officer	PSC	
General Services Assistant	PSC	
IT Specialist	PSC	
Administrative Assistants and Clerks (4)	PSC	
Cashier	FSN*	
Drivers (3)	PSC	
Custodian	PSC	

Data as of March 2014. *PSC is personal services contractor; FSN is foreign service national.

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

Table 4: Interviews Conducted with PC/Headquarters Staff, Embassy Officials and Key Ministry Officials

Position	Organization
Regional Director	PC headquarters/Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Operations
Country Desk Officer	PC headquarters/Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Operations
Regional Security Advisor	PC headquarters/Europe,

	Mediterranean and Asia Operations
Chief of Programming and Training	PC headquarters/Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Operations
Chief of Operations	PC headquarters/Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Operations
Director	PC headquarters/ Overseas Programming and Training Support
Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	PC headquarters/Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Operations
Director	PC headquarters/Office of Global Health and HIV
Director	PC headquarters/Office of Health Services
Psychologist	PC headquarters/Office of Health Services
Chief of Operations	PC headquarters/Peace Corps Response
Recruitment and Placement Specialist	PC headquarters/Peace Corps Response
Director	PC headquarters/Peace Corps Response
Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer	PC headquarters
Technical Training Specialist and RPCV/Philippines	PC headquarters/Overseas Programming and Training Support
Regional Recruiter and RPCV/Philippines	PC headquarters/Volunteer Recruitment and Selection
Director	PC headquarters/Office of Victim Advocacy
Program Specialist	PC headquarters/ Intergovernmental Affairs and Global Partnerships
U.S. Ambassador	U.S. Embassy/Philippines
Deputy Chief of Mission	U.S. Embassy/Philippines
Regional Security Officer	U.S. Embassy/Philippines
Assistant Regional Security Officer	U.S. Embassy/Philippines
Chief of Mission	USAID/Philippines
Education Specialist	USAID/Philippines
Health Specialist	USAID/Philippines
Executive Director	Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency
Director	Millennium Challenge Corporation
Program Coordinator	Philippine National Volunteer

	Service Coordinating Agency
Program Specialist	Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency
Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency
Program Coordinator	Department of Social Welfare and Development
Representatives (3)	Department of Education, Bureau of Alternative Learning Systems
Representatives (4)	Local Government Unit, Miag-ao, Philippines

Data as of April, 2014.

APPENDIX C: LIST OF ACRONYMS

CD	Country Director
CIRS	Consolidated Incident Reporting System
COU	Counseling and Outreach Unit
CRM	Coastal Resource Management
CYF	Children, Youth, and Family Services
DMO	Director of Management and Operations
DPT	Director of Programming and Training
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
EMA	Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Operations
GPS	Global Positioning System
IGAP	Intergovernmental Affairs and Global Partnerships
LGU	Local Government Unit
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Manual Section
OGHH	Office of Global Health and HIV
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OMS	Office of Medical Services
OPATS	Overseas Programming and Training Support
OVA	Office of Victim Advocacy
PC	Peace Corps
PCMO	Peace Corps Medical Officer
PCR	Peace Corps Response
PCSSO	Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
PNVSCA	Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency
PSC	Personal Services Contractor
PST	Pre-Service Training
SLF	Site Locator Form
SPA	Small Project Assistance
SSM	Safety and Security Manager
TU	Training Unit
USDH	United States Direct Hire
VAC	Volunteer Advisory Committee
VIDA	Volunteer Information Database Application
VRS	Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

APPENDIX D: AGENCY'S RESPONSE TO THE PRELIMINARY REPORT



Since 1961

MEMORANDUM

To: Kathy Buller, Inspector General

Through: Daljit K. Bains, Chief Compliance Officer *Daljit KB*

From: Kris Besch, Acting EMA Regional Director *KB Besch*
Denny Robertson, PC Philippines

Date: August 25, 2014

CC: Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Director
Laura Chambers, Chief of Staff
Joaquin Ferrao, Deputy Inspector General
Jim O'Keefe, AIG/Evaluations
Carlos Torres, Associate Director, Global Operations
Keri Lowry, EMA Regional Director
Hill Denham, EMA Chief of Operations
Betsy Vegso, EMA Chief of Programming and Training
Nancy Gehron, EMA Chief Administrative Officer
Jessica Hillsley, CDO Southeast Asia
Patricia Barkle, Deputy Chief Compliance Officer

Subject: Agency Response to the Preliminary Report on the Country Program Evaluation of the Peace Corps/Philippines (Project No. 14-EVAL-02) July 2014

Enclosed please find the agency's response to the recommendations made by the Inspector General for Peace Corps/Philippines, outlined in the Preliminary Report sent to the Agency on July 11, 2014.

EMA Region concurs with the 11 recommendations directed to PC/Philippines staff in the Preliminary Evaluation Report: Peace Corps/Philippines. Post has addressed and provided supporting documentation for six of the 11 recommendations and will work to address the remaining recommendations by the set target dates. The Office of Safety and Security has responded to Recommendation #12.

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

We appreciate the work of the Evaluation team and their positive remarks about our program, which indeed highlighted the professional work of our dedicated staff. As we explained to the evaluators during their field work, following Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) in November 2013, our staff conducted a thorough review of actions and developed an action plan with lessons learned - many of which were put into place prior to the arrival of the evaluation team (see attachment number one) to tighten our safety and security procedures. Relevant actions are described under each specific recommendation below.

We welcome the constructive input provided by the evaluation team and the additional focus on emergency action planning in a disaster-prone country.

Recommendation 1

That the Country Director reinforce the importance of the whereabouts policy with Volunteers, including under what circumstances Volunteers need to seek approval from their supervisor to leave their site.

Concur

Response: PC/Philippines current practice regarding training Volunteers on “whereabouts” includes a review of Peace Corps Policy Manual during PST, led by the Country Director (CD) and Regional Managers (RM). Following this, Volunteers meet with their individual Regional Managers following site announcement to review the protocol for notifying whereabouts upon arrival at site. Our whereabouts policy is typically managed through Regional Managers rather than Duty Phone. PC/Philippines also provides a policy briefing separately to Supervisors during the Supervisors’ Conference to stress the importance of PCVs notifying their whereabouts to supervisors. Finally, during host family orientation held on a regional basis following arrival at site, Peace Corps staff discuss the whereabouts policy with families to be sure they understand the importance of Volunteer notification to supervisor, family and PC staff.

The topic of whereabouts has been on the VAC agenda regularly with encouragement of VAC members to encourage compliance and to help distinguish between whereabouts and annual leave (a periodic conflict for some Volunteers who exhaust their leave prior to completion of service). Volunteers who are found in violation of whereabouts receive written warning from the CD, which includes a review of the policy and its importance in protecting PCVs’ safety.

PC/Philippines agrees that additional refresher on whereabouts is useful. Accordingly, we have added a summary of our whereabouts policy to our Weekly Update to all PCVs (attachment two). Our whereabouts report is compiled on Friday for CD and Duty Officer – the addition of the policy to lead our Weekly Report should remind Volunteers to report unexpected absences from Post to the Duty Officer or Regional Manager. Further, we will begin requiring PCTs to sign an acknowledgment of all PC policies during PST following the policy session which will be an annual occurrence. Finally, we propose to include a refresher during PC training events (IST and MST) as part of updated EAP training - delivered by the SSM and CD together followed by signed acknowledgment of PCVs.

Documents Submitted:

- Sample Weekly Update including whereabouts reminder (attachment two)
- Updated EAP Presentation (attachment three)
- PCT Signatures Acknowledging EAP Presentation Attendance (attachment four)

Status and Timeline for Completion:

- 30 September 2014 at end of PST
- 31 October 2014 for Group 272 and all subsequent PC-sponsored training events

Recommendation 2

That the Safety and Security Manager (SSM) ensure that all completed housing checks are reviewed and that each mandatory safety and security criterion, including sliding dead bolts, are in place at all Volunteer residences.

Concur

Response: Current practice for housing checklists includes SSM review and, where possible, photographic images accompany the housing to confirm major safety/security requirements have been addressed. Occasionally, minor requirements are scheduled for a later date but are not deemed of sufficient importance to delay approval of housing arrangements. PC/Philippines range of suitable housing includes both concrete structures (rural/urban) and typical Filipino 'nipa hut' structures (rural/urban), with differing criteria.

To provide more coherent guidance on housing, PC/Philippines proposes to schedule a full review of our current housing checklist in coordination with our PCSSO during his site visit in September. We have identified a number of criteria that are inconsistent with the range of housing Volunteers typically occupy as well as missing items that will assure a full and complete review of the proposed housing. We have noted, for example, that the checklist does not include a signature/clearance space for the SSM although current practice includes this review. In short, a thorough re-look at the housing checklist to make it more realistic and in compliance with PC safety/security standards is in order.

We will rely on our PCSSO to share other post best practices for the housing checklist and update in the immediate future with attention to suitable checks and balances that assure a full review has taken place.

Specific steps include, review current housing checklist with PCSSO in September 2014 during September TDY and complete by 31 October 2013 in time to share with newly-assigned PCVs as they begin to contemplate independent housing options. In the interim, SSM/SSA will review existing checklists and request photographic confirmation of the mandatory safety and security criteria.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Revised Housing Checklist

Status and Timeline for Completion:

- 30 November, 2014

Recommendation 3

That the Safety and Security Manager provide training and instructions to Volunteers on properly completing their site locator forms and ensure that each site locator form contains a sufficiently detailed map and written directions to the Volunteer's residence.

Concur

Response: PC/Philippines has depended upon Volunteers to provide Site Locator Forms as part of their PACA during the first weeks at site – once they have familiarized themselves with their communities and important landmarks. As most Volunteers are ‘millennials’, they typically depend on the most-sophisticated technologies for this otherwise simple task and Google Earth maps are frequently provided to SSM. Without under-emphasizing the importance of reliable and verifiable Site Locator Forms, PC staff know that virtually any Volunteer's residence can be easily found by making simple inquiries in the neighborhood, e.g. “Where does the American live?” In a major disaster however, we appreciate that this technique may not always be possible so we agree that more standard and explicit guidance to Volunteers is appropriate – in addition to local knowledge of the community. In addition, PC/Philippines created a comprehensive map using Google Earth plotting the GPS coordinates for all Volunteers as a ‘best practice’ from other international organizations.

PC/Philippines reviewed all Site Locator Forms following the Program Evaluation and requested revised forms from those Volunteers whose original submissions were inadequate. Moreover, we have updated our Emergency Action Planning (EAP) Session to include detailed guidance on the Volunteer Site Locator Form, including samples of acceptable hand-drawn maps with identifiable landmarks, street names, etc. (attachment number three).

Documents Submitted:

- Updated EAP Presentation (attachment three)
- PCT Signatures Acknowledging EAP Presentation Attendance (attachment four)

Status and Timeline for Completion:

- Completed – All SLF forms reviewed and updated (June 2014). Updated EAP presentation delivered (July 21, 2014) during PST and PCTs signed acknowledgement form at presentation (attachments three and four).

Recommendation 4

That the Country Director ensures post has a process for testing and verifying information on site locator forms.

Concur

Response: Current practice in PC/Philippines has been to review Site Locator Forms and share with Regional Managers. However, we have not systematically tested or verified the information except to be sure that the Volunteer has complied with the requirement. Because Regional Managers and drivers (both on staff and short-term hired vehicles) have visited all PCV housing in their regions, we have relied more on in-country knowledge rather

than the Site Locator Form. This was best demonstrated during Typhoon Yolanda when Regional Manager, Bonifacio Bucol, personally went to the houses of stranded Volunteers in Leyte. Mr. Bucol was able to direct a driver to the exact location of the Volunteers based on his earlier work in placing the Volunteers – even during a massive storm where most of the landmarks that would have ordinarily described the site had been destroyed.

PC/Philippines recently held Warden Training in April 2014 (attachment five – agenda and minutes) rescheduled from last November after the typhoon and provided all wardens with updated and SSM-reviewed Volunteer Locator Forms. Wardens were instructed to verify the accuracy of the forms of Volunteers in their areas and report back to SSM. Regional Managers will verify the accuracy of SLF during visits to Volunteers.

Documents Submitted:

- Updated EAP Presentation (attachment three)

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed

Recommendation 5

That the Safety and Security Manager train Volunteers wardens closer to the end of PST, before they are expected to fulfill any warden duties.

Concur

Response: As has been the custom in PC/Philippines, warden training in 2013 was scheduled for November, shortly after new Volunteers reached their sites. The training was postponed due to Typhoon Yolanda. Swearing-in for Philippine PCVs occurs in late September and is followed by an intense ‘community integration’ phase. The Warden concept is presented during EAP sessions during PST but warden training takes place during the first three months at site. PC/Philippines designates new wardens shortly after swearing-in after reviewing the qualifications of Volunteers once site assignments are made. PC/Philippines believes that Volunteers who are designated as wardens must have a basic knowledge of their community before assuming responsibilities as wardens, much of this occurring during the PACA phase of community integration. In the short interim period between late September and early November before warden training, previously trained wardens are alerted to the arrival of new Volunteers.

We agree that warden training should occur near the end of PST although not during PST. 2013 was an irregular example due to the super-typhoon. We will continue the training in early November following swearing-in as presented in the attached Annual Training Plan (attachment six).

Documents Submitted:

- PC/Philippines Training Calendar Highlighting November Warden Training (attachment six)

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed

Recommendation 6

That the Safety and Security Manager ensure that Volunteers have information on who their wardens are and that wardens have accurate and up-to-date lists of the Volunteers they are responsible for contacting in an emergency.

Concur

Response: PST sessions during wrap-up week (mid-September) after site assignments have been made include notification to Volunteers of their regional warden with e-mail and cellphone numbers.

New warden designations were made in March 2014 and presented at warden training in April 2014; wardens returned to site and personally contacted all Volunteers to confirm contact numbers.

Prior to new PCVs going to site, they will be given the name/cell/e-mail of their currently-assigned warden. Currently serving wardens will also be provided with contact information for newly-arriving Volunteers in their areas with instructions to contact them shortly after arrival at site (attachment seven).

SSM and CD propose to update Warden list on a quarterly basis, to adjust for arriving/departing Volunteers and new Site Locator Forms and distribute updated lists to wardens and Volunteers.

Documents Submitted:

- Sample Warden Matrix (PII) (attachment seven)

Status and Timeline for Completion:

- 30 September 2014 (last week of PST) for current Volunteers.

Recommendation 7

That the Country Director ensures staff and Volunteers/trainees receive sufficient emergency preparation training that is specific to the natural disasters and other emergencies in the Philippines.

Concur

Response: SSM currently provides annual EAP training to PC/Philippines staff as well as PST staff in addition to EAP training during PST and refresher EAP sessions during IST. Following Typhoon Yolanda, PC/Philippines staff held a day-long 'post-mortem' and developed an action plan which fulfilled the review of EAP for staff. PC/Philippines staff also shared results of review with VAC and held feedback session at IST along with EAP refresher where many of the evacuees were in attendance.

Some Volunteers fail to remember many of the elements of the EAP although many are diligent about practicing the guidance provided during PST. Our challenge has been to inculcate among Volunteers the critical importance of EAP training while so much other information is being presented. Nonetheless, our experience in past years has been that PC

and PST staffs have performed heroically when called upon to implement EAP procedures (PST 2011 - Dinalupihan, PST 2013 - Balanga 2012, and Leyte 2013 -Yolanda 2013).

Our Q4 intake of Trainees coincides with the onset of the typhoon season. With the high probability of natural disasters in the Philippines during this period, unfortunately Trainees may gain their first experience with these events during PST – as occurred recently with Group 273 during ‘Glenda’ in July 2014.

PC/Philippines will continue to stress the critical importance of EAP procedures during PST with signed acknowledgements. In addition, SSM and CD will add ‘refresher’ EAP sessions during IST and MST with signed acknowledgments.

Documents Submitted:

- PC/Philippines Yolanda post-mortem notes (attachment one)
- Updated EAP Presentation (attachment three)
- PCT Signatures Acknowledging EAP Presentation Attendance (attachment four)

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed based upon updated EAP presentation (attachment three).

Recommendation 8

That the Safety and Security Manager establish and use standards for the selection of consolidation points.

Concur

Response: PC/Philippines traditionally selects consolidation points in coordination with wardens. Typhoon Yolanda highlighted that our list of consolidation points was not ideal for the nature of disasters frequently experienced in the Philippines, e.g. tsunami and typhoons. This was reinforced in feedback discussions with Volunteers following the typhoon during our debrief and our own ‘lessons learned’ internal discussions. We concur that the criteria for consolidation points need to be developed and new consolidation points identified to strengthen our level of support to Volunteers during emergency situations.

Accordingly, the SSM, in coordination with the Country Director, redesigned the agenda for warden training to incorporate PCV input into criteria. Following warden training in April, the list of consolidation points was updated based on criteria to offer safe haven in most likely natural disasters (see attachment number eight). Finally, letters from the Country Director to all consolidation points provided (attachment nine).

Documents Submitted:

- Updated Consolidation Points (attachment eight)
- Letter to Consolidation Lodging Facilitates (attachment nine)
- Warden Training Agenda and Minutes April 2014 (attachment five)
- Criteria for Establishing Consolidation Points (attachment ten)

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed – update annually during Warden Training (November)

Recommendation 9

That the Safety and Security Manager and training manager ensure through training and communication that all Volunteers understand why they must go to their consolidation point when instructed in an emergency.

Concur

Response: Peace Corps Philippines typically conducts a regional or annual consolidation exercise in the first quarter of the fiscal year. In 2013 Typhoon Yolanda disrupted this plan. Promoting resilience and integration among Volunteers occasionally works against the objectives of our program safety/security policy. Volunteers sometimes feel guilty about our instructions to proceed to consolidation points when faced with potential threats because of the implied abandonment of their host families and communities. We also believe that in the past Volunteers sometimes made their own assessment of the relative safety of the designated consolidation point and their own site. This is addressed in recommendation number eight above. Accordingly, we agree that it is important to reinforce the importance of compliance with consolidation exercises - whether drills or real.

PC/Philippines' updated EAP presentation includes a discussion on the importance of compliance when consolidation is called for by SSM. Included in this briefing is a discussion regarding potential penalties, e.g. failure to comply may result in administrative separation from Peace Corps (attachment three).

Documents Submitted:

- Updated EAP Presentation (attachment three)

Status and Timeline for Completion:

- Completed

Recommendation 10

That the Safety and Security Manager establish and implement a system for the collection and maintenance of site history files that includes written reports of security assessments of Volunteer sites.

Concur

Response: Currently we maintain most of the information required in a site-history file. However, the information is dispersed among Program, Safety & Security, Medical and Admin. In addition, several PC staff have extensive tenure in the office which provides an additional, valuable archive of 'institutional knowledge'.

Further to the OIG report, Post is consulting PC/Thailand to model their system – recommended by PCSSO. Their system, in short, provides for information to be filed by geographical location (region, province, town, city) and contains the following records:

- Volunteer Request/Site Applications
- Site Assessment data collected by Program, Medical and Safety Security

- Volunteer Placement Log
- Home stay or host family information and options
- Site Visits reports done by Program and Training, CD, SSM or other staff
- Volunteer incident log
- PCV feedback and recommendation regarding the site

The Thailand system also includes prior PCV placements, limited details on CIRS report and other information. We will review the Thailand model to determine how best to implement the system in the Philippines. As evidence, we propose to provide a narrative description of the adaptation of the system and examples of newly consolidated files.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Narrative description of the adaptation of the PC/Thailand system
- Sample newly consolidated files

Status and Timeline for Completion:

- 31 December 2014

Recommendation 11

That the Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer conduct a full Peace Corps Manual section 270 review of the Peace Corps/Philippines according to the agency's guidance, "Manual section 270 and Other Policy Review 2014."

Concur

Response: The last MS 270 review was conducted in the Philippines in 2011 by then PCSSO Maria Cadet. Our current PCSSO (David Buchannan) will be in Philippines in September – the training for all staff is planned during that time. PCSSO will also meet with Trainees prior to their swearing-in to answer any additional questions. The PCSSO will work with the SSM, SSA and other key staff to formulate a plan to address any deficiencies. All OIG recommendations will be covered in the review. As evidence, we will submit a copy of the PCSSO trip report.

Documents to be Submitted:

- PCSSO Trip Report

Status and Timeline for Completion:

- 30 September 2014

Recommendation 12

That the Associate Director of Safety and Security assess options for positioning the Peace Corps Safety and Security officer for the Philippines in a location that allows for more effective support.

Do Not Concur

Response:

The Office of Safety and Security regularly evaluates coverage and workload of PCSSOs and bases decisions on factors such as logistics, ease of communications, workload of the PCSSO and similarity of issues across the PCSSOs coverage region. Currently there is no possible positioning that will enable all posts worldwide to have PCSSOs in the same timezone or able to be available 24/7. While the issues identified in the Philippines report highlight some possible communication inconveniences, this is a situation that exists for many posts, and is often dependent on the travel status of the PCSSO and cell phone coverage area where they are located. In the previous Audit of Safety and Security (FY 2010) the OIG recommended, "That the associate director for safety and security work with the associate director of global operations to analyze whether the posting of each Peace Corps safety and security officer enhances safety and security and is the most efficient, effective, and cost effective placement. If needed, relocate Peace Corps safety and security officers accordingly." (number 17). At the time the Office of safety and Security concurred with this recommendation and did an evaluation of the placement of PCSSOs. The Office of Safety and Security continually evaluates the coverage needs and as needed makes adjustments to the placement of PCSSOs. In the past three years we have changed the coverage areas in Central and South America, Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific based on new country entries or post closures, and PCSSO rotations. This is an ongoing process as new posts are identified, workloads change and PCSSO positions shift and we do not do this on a post-by-post basis. The Office of Safety and Security, however, does not concur with the OIG recommendation that this be done for individual posts.

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed

APPENDIX E: OIG COMMENTS

Management concurred with 11 of 12 recommendations. All recommendations remain open. OIG will review and consider closing recommendations 1 to 11 when it receives the documentation reflected in the agency's response that demonstrates actions the agency has taken to address the recommendation. We wish to note that in closing recommendations we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities. However, when we feel it is warranted, we may conduct a follow-up review to confirm that action has been taken and to evaluate the impact. In order for OIG to consider closing recommendation 12, additional documentation is required.

12: That the associate director of safety and security assess options for positioning the Peace Corps safety and security officer for the Philippines in a location that allows for more effective support.

Do Not Concur

The Office of Safety and Security regularly evaluates coverage and workload of PCSSOs and bases decisions on factors such as logistics ease of communications, workload of the PCSSO and similarity of issues across the PCSSOs coverage region. Currently there is no possible positioning that will enable all posts worldwide to have PCSSOs in the same time zone or able to be available 24/7. While the issues identified in the Philippines report highlight some possible communication inconveniences, this is a situation that exists for many posts, and is often dependent on the travel status of the PCSSO and cell phone coverage area where they are located. In the previous Audit of Safety and Security (FY 2010) the OIG recommended, "That the associate director for safety and security work with the associate director of global operations to analyze whether the posting of each Peace Corps safety and security officer enhances safety and security and is the most efficient, effective and cost effective placement. If needed, relocate Peace Corps safety and security officers accordingly." (number 17). At the time the Office of Safety and Security concurred with this recommendation and did an evaluation of the placement of PCSSOs. The Office of Safety and Security continually evaluates the coverage needs and as needed makes adjustments to the placement of PCSSOs. In the past three years we have changed the coverage areas in Central and South America, Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific based on new country entries or post closures, and PCSSO rotations. This is an ongoing process as new posts are identified, workloads change and PCSSO positions shift and we do not do this on a post-by-post basis. The Office of Safety and Security, however, does not concur with the OIG recommendation that this be done for individual posts.

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed

OIG Analysis: The Office of Safety and Security, to support its non-concurrence, argues that it has changed PCSSO coverage areas in recent years based on a range of factors, but

not “on a post-by-post basis,” and as a result it does not agree with OIG’s recommendation to assess PCSSO coverage options for the Philippines.

In order for us to consider closing recommendation 12 we ask the Office of Safety and Security to provide documentation that shows why the agency shifted coverage of Philippines from the PCSSO based in Thailand to the PCSSO based in Fiji, and how it determined that the current PCSSO coverage of post is sufficient to meet post’s needs.

APPENDIX F: PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION AND OIG CONTACT

PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION

This program evaluation was conducted by Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Jim O’Keefe and Senior Evaluator Jerry Black.



Jim O’Keefe
Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations

OIG CONTACT

Following issuance of the final report, a stakeholder satisfaction survey will be distributed to agency stakeholders. If you wish to comment on the quality or usefulness of this report to help us improve our products, please contact Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Jim O’Keefe at jokeefe@peacecorps.gov or 202.692.2904.

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