OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

To: Aaron Williams, Director
Helen Lowman, Regional Director, EMA
Daljit Bains, Chief Compliance Officer

From: Kathy A. Buller, Inspector General

Date: June 30, 2011

Subject: Final Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Romania
(IG-11-05-E)

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

Management concurred with all 11 recommendations. Based on the documentation provided, we closed 9 recommendations: numbers 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the region or post 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.

Two recommendations, numbers 4 and 5, remain open pending confirmation from the chief compliance officer that the documentation reflected in OIG Analysis is received. Our comments, which are in the report as Appendix B, address these matters. Please respond with documentation to close the remaining open recommendations within 90 days of receipt of this memorandum. You may address questions regarding follow-up or documentation to Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Jim O'Keefe, or to Senior Evaluator Susan Gasper.

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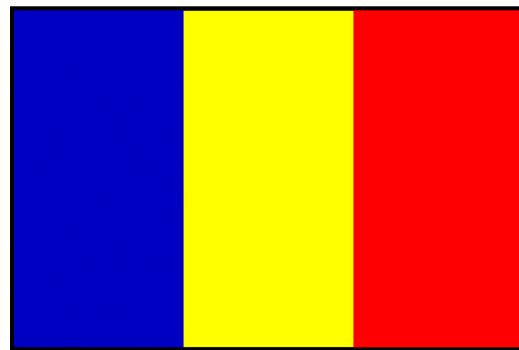
Attachments

cc: Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Deputy Director
Stacy Rhodes, Chief of Staff/Chief of Operations
Elisa Montoya, White House Liaison/Senior Advisor to the Director
Bill Rubin, General Counsel
David Burgess, Chief of Operations, EMA

Maura Fulton, Chief of Program and Training, EMA
Edward Hobson, Associate Director, Safety and Security
Esther Benjamin, Associate Director, Global Operations
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Sarah Kellogg, Country Desk Officer, Romania

Peace Corps
Office of Inspector General

Final Program Evaluation Report:
Peace Corps/Romania
IG-11-05-E

June 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over 1,100 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in Romania since the program was first launched in 1991. There are currently three project sectors in Romania: Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL); Environmental Education and Outreach (ENV); and Youth Development (YD). At the onset of this evaluation, 99 Volunteers were serving in Romania.

PC/Romania has undertaken a significant strategic shift to better align the post to further Peace Corps and host country goals. As a result, the Community Economic Development (CED) project sector closed in 2010, and the ENV and YD projects are scheduled to close in 2011. Based on input from stakeholders, the post is refocusing its programming on the TEFL project with an emphasis on serving rural and underserved communities.

Along with the decision to close three Volunteer project sectors, the country program has shifted from a projected "moderate" growth plan to "no growth." Recently, there have been gaps in filling key staff positions at the post. Consequently, the staff expressed concerns that the country program is not an agency priority. This perception and concern for the future of the PC/Romania program has negatively impacted staff morale and the workplace environment. Fiscal year 2010 staffing vacancies required post staff to assume additional responsibilities, which has also negatively impacted post operations. In addition, the post has experienced some inter-staff communication issues that post leadership is working to resolve.

We found that amid this uncertainty and significant staff and programmatic changes, PC/Romania continues to be a strong performing post. The post maintains positive and stable relationships with government ministry partners. All partners interviewed expressed appreciation for the work of the Volunteers and look forward to future collaboration with Peace Corps. The Volunteers feel well supported by staff, and believe the staff is responsive to the issues they raise. The post's comprehensive work site selection process, which results in multiple potential sites, positions Volunteers with both meaningful assignments and strong counterparts. However, given the new focus on rural underserved communities, project management and Volunteer support practices need to be reviewed to ensure that Volunteers in new sites continue to receive adequate support.

Overall, Volunteers feel safe in Romania. The number of reported crime incidents has been lower than regional averages for the past three years. However, emergency preparedness at post was not adequate, as most Volunteers we interviewed could not identify their emergency consolidation points or their security wardens. While Volunteer housing met most of the post-established criteria, many Volunteers did not have functioning carbon monoxide detectors.

The report contains 12 recommendations, which, if implemented, should strengthen programming operations and correct the deficiencies detailed in the accompanying report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOST COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Romania is located at the crossroads of Central and Southeastern Europe, north of the Balkan Peninsula and borders the Black Sea to the east. Romania shares a border with five countries: Hungary and Serbia to the west, Ukraine and Moldova to the northeast, and Bulgaria to the south. Slightly smaller than Oregon, Romania is the ninth largest country of the European Union (EU) by area, and has the seventh largest population of the EU with approximately 21.5 million people. Its capital and largest city is Bucharest, the sixth largest city in the EU with about two million people.

Romania was formed when the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia united in 1859. The country was autonomous but paid tribute to the Ottoman Empire. With support from Russia, Romania subsequently declared independence from the Ottoman Empire on May 9, 1877. By the end of World War I, Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia became part of Romania doubling the size of the country and population. Romania then emerged into an era of progression and prosperity that would continue until World War II. However, by the war's end, parts of northeastern Romania were occupied by the Soviet Union, and Romania became a People's Republic, joining seven other communist states in Eastern Europe as a member of the Warsaw Pact. Romania began to distance itself from the Soviets after the death of Stalin.

The Romanian Revolution of 1989 was a week-long series of increasingly violent riots and fighting in late December 1989 that overthrew the government of the totalitarian president Nicolae Ceauşescu who had ruled the country since 1965. Romania suffered post-revolution economic problems and began making a series of political economic reforms. Over a decade of reforms helped the country gain membership into NATO on March 29, 2004 and the European Union on January 1, 2007. Its government is a unitary parliamentary republic. Romania is now an upper-middle income country with "high human development" per the 2010 *United Nations Human Development Report*. However, Romania's income level remains one of the lowest within the European Union. Romania still faces significant development challenges in rural areas and underserved communities.

PEACE CORPS PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Peace Corps programming in Romania began in 1991, when 18 Volunteers arrived to initiate an orphanage project. Since then 1,100 Volunteers have served in Romania.

PC/Romania (hereafter referred to as "the post") has taken a strategic shift in its programmatic direction and is reducing its program sectors from four to one. In 2007, the post's leadership embarked in an effort to define the post's "niche" as a development agency in an EU member state. Additionally, the post discussed how to meet Peace Corps' goal to provide trained men and women while considering the generalist applicants that Peace Corps readily recruits. These strategic discussions included input from current and former Volunteers, post staff, non-governmental partners and government officials. The post's final decision was to focus on English education in primarily rural and underserved communities, which had not historically had access to Volunteers.

The post currently has Volunteers actively serving in three projects: TEFL, ENV and YD. The CED program officially closed on July 31, 2010. The ENV and YD sectors are targeted to close in 2011 and are no longer receiving trainee inputs. The remaining Volunteers in both these sectors are scheduled to close service in August of 2011, and the program managers for these sectors departed in December 2010. The post's programming has been restructured towards a focus on English education in rural and underserved communities while encouraging Volunteers to incorporate activities into their secondary projects from the sectors that are closing.

Detailed explanations of the three active project sectors are discussed below:

- **Teaching English as a Foreign Language**
  The TEFL project is the largest provider of native English speakers for Romanian schools and addresses Romania's expressed need for improved English language instruction. With English as a requirement for many jobs within Romania and internationally, the demand for native-speaking English teachers continues to be high. The project has been restructured to focus on English education in rural and underserved communities. Volunteers work in more than 80 communities with students and teachers and also organize and participate in a variety of community and summer activities, including writing and drama courses, and environmental, sports, and leadership camps.

- **Environmental Education and Outreach**
  Romania's environment suffered considerably during the rapid and unregulated industrialization of the Communist era with many of the negative impacts still remaining. A lack of environmental education and action has delayed progress in addressing environmental issues. Volunteers are assigned to work with environmental protection agencies, national park authorities, and environmental NGOs. Many Volunteers also collaborate with local schools. Volunteers exchange skills in the areas of communication, environmental awareness, and education. They support the staff of their organizations to address existing

environmental problems and prevent occurrence of future ones, while also working with community members to encourage them to take action and become environmental leaders.

- **Youth Development**
  In 2009 the Youth Development project was developed from the post's Institutional Development project. Volunteers are placed with non-governmental organizations that provide direct services to youth and work with vulnerable youth to build life and work skills. In Romania vulnerable youth populations include those with disabilities, HIV/AIDS, those who are trafficked, and those from ethnically Rroma, Hungarian, or rural populations. Additionally Volunteers in this project work with caregivers and parents to raise awareness of youth issues, provide a more supportive environment for youth, and demonstrate that youth can serve as leaders. Volunteers also work with general youth populations to build leadership skills, self-esteem, life skills, and a spirit of civic participation.

Additionally, the post is planning on developing a Peace Corps Response Volunteer (PCRV) program to continue supporting stakeholders in sectors where projects are closing. At the onset of this evaluation there were 99 Volunteers serving in Romania and no PCRVs. Volunteers are placed across ten regions of the country in rural communities, small towns, and urban areas.

EVALUATION RESULTS

PROGRAMMING

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

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

In reviewing host country coordination, post's ability to meet project objectives, counterpart relationships and the post's grant programs, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would warrant action by the post.

The post is still implementing a major change in programmatic direction. Even so, the post has active relationships with its partner ministries, meets with them on an as-needed basis, and produces a report for stakeholders that reports on annual accomplishments. We met with Romanian ministry partners representing the TEFL, ENV and YD project sectors. All Romanian partners we interviewed believe that there is a need for Peace Corps in Romania and they support continued operations. Partners from the ENV and YD sectors expressed that a need still exists in these areas as well as an interest in continuing to work with Peace Corps, even though these projects are closing.

In 2009, the Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning released a Host Country Impact Study on the post. The purpose of the study was to document the impact Volunteers in Romania had on agency Goals One[1]; and Two[2]. The study had generally positive findings about Volunteers' impact in the ENV, CED and ID which are being closed in an effort to reduce program sectors and refocus efforts.[3]

All Volunteers had at least one counterpart and 93 percent (26 of 28 respondents) rated their counterparts favorably in supporting them in meeting their project objectives[4]. In addition to counterparts, the post assigns a community mentor to help Volunteers integrate into their communities. The Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) is active at the post, however only three projects have been completed in the past year. The post has been using carry-over funds to

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[1] Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.
[2] Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
[3] Institutional Development (ID) was the predecessor of the Youth Development (YD) project.
[4] We interviewed 30 Volunteers during our visit, however some Volunteers did not respond to every interview question.

fund Small Project Assistance (SPA) projects; future SPA funding opportunities will not be available as USAID no longer has a presence in Romania.

The post has a strong Volunteer site development and matching process.

The post follows the agency standard Volunteer site selection criteria as defined in P&T Guidance: Project Design and Evaluation E.1.4. It has a strong site development and site matching process, but current business practices could be impacted by the post's shift to future sites in rural and underserved communities. Volunteers interviewed were satisfied with their sites (97 percent favorable or 29 of 30) and believed that they had enough work to do (93 percent favorable or 28 of 30). Volunteers thought Volunteer Assignment Descriptions (VADs) were accurate (97 percent favorable or 29 of 30) and expressed familiarity with their project goals (93 percent favorable or 28 of 30). Ninety-three percent (26 of 28) also believed that they were able to accomplish their project goals at their sites.

To accomplish the strategic objectives described in the 2011-2013 Integrated Programming and Budget System (IPBS), the post plans to expand to rural and underserved communities where Peace Corps has not previously had a presence. Post staff used media campaigns, such as television and radio interviews, to advertise the Peace Corps program, and subsequently received many applications from communities interested in hosting Volunteers. Post staff reported that for the 2010 site development cycle, the post received 100 applications for 44 Volunteer placements.

In sites where Volunteers have formerly been placed, community stakeholders are familiar with Peace Corps and what is required to host a Volunteer. As the post expands to more rural and underserved communities, stakeholders might need additional orientation information about Peace Corps, and extra support from Peace Corps staff to support Volunteers they are hosting. Additionally, project resources available to Volunteers, their housing situations, and communication infrastructure could be different from sites where Volunteers have been previously placed. While the post has been thus far successful in making these modifications, current business practices should be reviewed and updated as necessary.

> **We recommend:**
>
> 1. **That the post review and update, as necessary, site development and volunteer support management practices to accommodate Volunteer placements in rural and underserved communities.**

The post does not have Project Advisory Committees.

According to agency Programming and Training Guidance, "A Project Advisory Committee (PAC) is the ‚voice of key project stakeholders' that helps the Peace Corps ensure that it develops credible, realistic and responsive project plans and training programs." The guidance states:

PACs comprised of Peace Corps staff, national and local partners, and Volunteers, should be established for each new project and should remain active throughout the life of a project. This committee shares responsibility for the design, evaluation, and revision of the project. The committee should meet at least once during the design of a new project, and ideally at least annually thereafter. The input of PACs is critical to maximize the sustainability of Volunteer work, to confirm project support from the government, and to define and communicate an optimum role for Volunteers in collaboration with other organizations addressing the issue.

While the post previously had PACs, they have not been used for the past two years. However, an NGO forum discussion was held in June 2010 on leveraging resources in rural communities and to discuss the potential of using Volunteers as community connectors. According to post management, the post has considered developing a PAC for the revised TEFL project, which could also address the needs and incorporate the activities of the closing sectors. At the time of our visit, post was waiting until the director of programming and training (DPT) position was filled before initiating the committee.

> **We recommend:**

> 2. **That the post develop a Project Advisory Committee.**

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

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

In reviewing staff performance appraisals, the post's relationship with headquarters, PCVL roles, and performance reporting, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would warrant action by the post. Staff members are content with their level of participation in the IPBS process. The Peace Corps Volunteer Leader (PCVL) program started in 2008. Both Volunteers and staff have expressed appreciation for PCVLs' contributions to the post, especially their participation in training sessions. The post has used PEPFAR funds to fund a training session that was well received by Volunteers.

Staff morale is impacted by the uncertain future of post's operations.

The agency's FY 10 strategic planning process slated Romania for moderate Volunteer growth. Subsequently, in June 2010, growth for Romania was flat-lined. Some staff commented that long-standing position vacancies, such as the DPT position, implied that Romania was not a priority to the agency. Additionally, the eventual closing of three project sectors has necessitated eliminating programming staff positions. During interviews, some staff expressed concerns regarding the future of the post, as well as concerns about the decision to close the ENV and YD project sectors.

"Everyone is afraid for the future of PC/Romania… I think generally, a development agency that is only providing TEFL education doesn't have a future. Development means more than that…Closing three of four sectors is a clear indication that the post will be closed soon. "

"We've had some really low moments related to the future of the post. One was before the accession into the EU – there were rumors of closing the country. Then, the closing of the two sectors, but considering that prospects still exist the overall atmosphere is positive…At the same time closing 60 percent of your programming is a question mark that can be associated with a sign that are things are shrinking and fading away."

"I don't think people are content with the decision that has been taken to close the YD and ENV sectors. We are in contact with host counterparts and know there is a need."

In June 2010, the agency released "Peace Corps: A Comprehensive Agency Assessment." The assessment team made recommendations that the agency should annually undertake a portfolio review utilizing specific criteria to provide decision makers with a comprehensive analysis of possible options regarding potential new country entries, country closures and operations in existing countries. The assessment team's stated intent is that a comprehensive view of all possible options for the agency, including Romania, would lead to better resource allocations across the agency. At the time of this evaluation, the agency's first portfolio review was in progress.

When asked about staff morale, approximately half of the staff interviewed stated that staff morale was poor citing reasons such as friction between staff, the general economic conditions in Romania, and dissatisfaction with the decision to close the ENV and YD sectors while they perceive a need still exists in Romania for those programs. Other staff members commented that morale was "up and down" or "generally good," citing that many of the staff members were weary of change.

Staff interviews also revealed that communication between staff is a weakness at the post. Staff stated that they were generally satisfied with their work environment. They believe that communication with managers was good, but cited personal alliances, grudges, and miscommunication between staff that impact staff cohesion and the work environment. Concerns were raised during interviews about respect and trust between staff members. OIG recognizes that the CD has taken steps to build a better team environment. A staff retreat, focusing on communication and team building, was held in October 2010 after the fieldwork portion of this evaluation.

We found that post staff members continue to perform professionally and carry out their responsibilities in spite of the sense of uncertainty and inter-staff communication issues. Nonetheless, there is potential for these staff morale issues to hinder Volunteer support. A clear vision for the future of the program and headquarters support for staff managing difficult transitions will help the post successfully move its program forward.

We recommend:

> 3. **That the Europe, Mediterranean, Asia Region communicate a long-term vision for the PC/Romania program.**

> 4. **That the Europe, Mediterranean, Asia Region assist the post with strategies to support post managers in addressing cross-cultural human resource challenges and managing difficult transitions.**

Staffing vacancies have impacted post operations.

Peace Corps experiences frequent position turnover and vacancies both at headquarters and at posts. In FY 10, the post experienced the following position vacancies.

Table 1: Staff Vacancies in FY 10

Position	Months Vacant	Timeframe
Director of Programming and Training	6	April 2010 - September 2010[5]
Information Technology Specialist	7	October 2009 – April 2010
Volunteer Support Assistant Administrative	6	December 2009 - May 2010
TEFL Program Manager	9	January 2010 – September 2010[6]

The DPT position is one of three key officer[7] positions at post, and provides direct supervision and guidance to seven programming and training staff. The country director (CD), who arrived in country mid-February 2010, was the primary backfill for this position, though some DPT duties were absorbed by other positions or were not fulfilled.

In addition to the DPT vacancy, the TEFL program manager has been on maternity leave since January 2010. During this time, the TEFL junior program manager has managed the TEFL project and supervised 67 Volunteers. The post also had additional staff vacancies within the last year. The safety and security coordinator (SSC) also fulfilled the duties of the information technology specialist position for an eight month period. The volunteer support assistant position was vacant for six months and those responsibilities were distributed among various staff members.

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[5] The DPT position was filled in November 2010.

[6] The TEFL Program Manager was on maternity leave from January 2009 through the fieldwork phase of this evaluation. Peace Corps follows local labor laws of the country in which it operates.

[7] Posts typically have three U.S. Direct Hire positions at post that have additional specific authorities to carry out post operations, which personal services contractors or foreign service nationals do not have.

Concerns were also raised by some post staff that three full-time drivers cannot meet the needs of the post. When the post needs an additional driver they contract someone, as needed, as the need for drivers fluctuates throughout the year. Post management is content with this approach and continues to evaluate if they are adequately staffed with drivers.

While the post has done a good job of maintaining operations despite being understaffed, staff reported that they were constantly playing "catch-up" as they were covering many responsibilities. Since her arrival in February 2010, the CD was also responsible for implementing closure of three project sectors, and refocusing programming to the English Education project sector in rural and underserved communities. As a result, the post had to eliminate three program manager positions. Two strategic activities - developing a PAC with host country stakeholders and determining how to engage and use additional funding streams, like PEPFAR - were postponed until the DPT position was filled. Staff felt it was a "huge disservice to the program" to deprive it of a key officer for so long. As a result, during the absence of the DPT, the program was managed more at "maintenance" levels than moving forward with needed improvements and according to planned strategies.

The DPT vacancy in Romania was not been an isolated incident. The Office of Global Operations (OGO) reviewed the DPT and Director of Management and Operations (DMOs) recruitment and selection process during the summer of 2010, with input from various stakeholders including the EMA, Africa, and Inter-America & the Pacific regions. OGO determined that there were systemic problems and other issues that impacted the process. Agreement was reached to centralize the hiring process in the office of Overseas Recruitment, Selection and Support (ORSS). ORSS, which manages the CD hiring process, reported a goal to implement a DPT and DMO hiring process in time to impact the June 2011 Overseas Staff Training (OST). A more centralized effort could help alleviate staffing vacancies in U.S. Direct Hire positions. In light of the plans already established to implement centralized hiring procedures, OIG is not issuing a recommendation for this finding.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

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

In reviewing staff-Volunteer communications, site visits, Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC), Peace Corps Volunteer Leaders (PCVL), Volunteer allowances, Volunteer whereabouts policy, and crime reporting and response, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would warrant action by the post.

Romania's infrastructure is quite developed, including Internet and cell phone reception at most Volunteer sites. Staff is using technology in an effective and creative way to communicate with Volunteers, invitees, and the general public. The post has developed a comprehensive external

website, quarterly newsletters, and the staff posts on blogs and Facebook to communicate with Volunteers. However, given the post's strategic shift to more rural site placements, Internet connectivity and cell phone reception will not be as consistently reliable. The post will not be able to depend solely on electronic communication with the Volunteers assigned to these locations.

Volunteers reported they received an adequate number of site visits, and they all gave favorable ratings to the site visits meeting their support needs. The post encourages all staff to take part in official site visits so that all staff members travel at least once a year to see Volunteers in the field. All 30 Volunteers interviewed gave a favorable rating for the adequacy and timeliness of their settling-in and living allowances.

At the time of the evaluation fieldwork the VAC was in a period of transition since a new cohort of Volunteers was sworn-in on August 6, 2010. Most Volunteers chose not to rate the effectiveness of the VAC because they were not familiar with the work they were doing. The 12 Volunteers who provided a rating gave the VAC favorable responses for its effectiveness. Historically, the VAC has played an active role at post, which has included conducting an annual Romania-specific Volunteer survey and reporting the results to staff and Volunteers. The PCVL program started in 2008 and both the Volunteers and staff have expressed appreciation for their contributions, especially during trainings. Volunteers all gave favorable responses to the support they receive from the PCVLs.

Volunteers reported that they feel safe in Romania. Peace Corps and U.S. Embassy staff concur that the country is generally safe, with the greatest danger to Volunteers being opportunistic crimes like pick-pocketing and burglary. Eighty-seven percent (26 of 30) of Volunteers said that if a crime occurred in the future they would report it. Ten of the Volunteers interviewed said they had been the victim of a crime. Those that have reported a crime all gave a favorable rating for how Peace Corps handled the situation. For the past three years the number crime incidents in Romania has always been lower than the regional average.

Table 2: Number of Crime Incidents Reported in Romania

Fiscal Year	Romania Crime Incidents Reported	Average Crime Incidents Reported in EMA
2010	8	11.75
2009	11	15
2008	7	9.25

Volunteers were very satisfied with staff support and communication.

All 30 of the Volunteers interviewed rated post staff as "effective" or better at helping them adjust to life as a Volunteer, with an average rating of 4.37 out of 5. All 30 Volunteers gave a favorable rating on the responsiveness of staff to the issues they raise with an average rating of 4.47 out of 5. For support in specific areas the ratings were as follows:

Table 3: Responses on Perception of Volunteer Support[8]

Support Area	Percent of Volunteers Rating "Average Support" or Better	Average Rating for Support
Leadership	100%	4.63
Programming	97%	4.40
Training	100%	4.50
Safety and Security	96%	4.43
Medical	100%	4.77
Administrative	100%	4.91

Volunteers routinely receive programmatic support through the project status reports they submit three times a year with information on their Volunteer project activities. Half the Volunteers interviewed were in the early part of their service and had not yet submitted a report. Fifteen of the Volunteers interviewed had submitted reports and 73 percent (11 of 15) of these Volunteers gave favorable responses for receiving feedback on their reports. Additionally, 92 percent (12 of 13) of the Volunteers gave favorable ratings for the quality of the feedback.

Volunteers could not correctly identify their consolidation point or security wardens.

Volunteers are provided with a printed copy of the EAP and their warden information during training and receive update emails from the SSC during their service. The EAP states that "if the EAP is activated and consolidation is called, all PCVs are expected to be able to get themselves to their consolidation points." Additionally, the EAP states that some Volunteers are designated as security wardens and Volunteers must know who their warden is. However, in our review of the EAP we found that only 30 percent (9 of 30) of Volunteers interviewed could correctly identify their consolidation point and some Volunteers were also uncertain of their security warden. Some Volunteers correctly identified their consolidation city, but not the specific consolidation place within the city. Furthermore, in four of the eight regions where we conducted interviews, none of the Volunteers interviewed could correctly identify their consolidation point.

When Volunteers and security wardens are uncertain of their EAP consolidation point they could put themselves and others in danger when an emergency or other similar event occurs. At the time of the evaluation there had been recent changes to the Volunteer security wardens and alternates, however, only two out of the six wardens and alternates interviewed could correctly identify their consolidation points. Staff told us that the annual warden training had been

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[8] <u>Leadership</u> was derived from the country director score, which for some Volunteers was a combination of their experience with two country directors. <u>Programming</u> was derived by averaging the program manager and program assistant scores. <u>Training</u> was derived from the overall rating for their training unit which includes the training manager, technical trainer, and the cross-cultural trainer. <u>Safety and Security</u> was derived from the safety and security coordinator score. <u>Medical</u> was derived from the overall rating for the medical unit which includes the PCMOs and medical assistant. <u>Administrative</u> was derived from the director of management and operations score, which for some Volunteers was a combination of their experience with two directors of management and operations.

postponed because of limited staff availability and a new date was being planned at the time of our evaluation fieldwork.

We recommend:

5. **That the post confirm that all Volunteers know the location of consolidation points and the security wardens responsible for their region.**

6. **That the post conduct the annual warden training with all security wardens, including alternates.**

The U.S. Embassy regional security officer did not have an updated EAP or the current information regarding handling of violent crimes against Volunteers.

According to the *Peace Corps Manual* (MS) sections 270.7.2 and 350, the post EAP must be distributed to the U.S. Embassy for inclusion in the embassy's EAP. We found that the post's EAP was updated in August 2010 and was emailed to the regional security officer (RSO) in September. However, during an OIG interview the RSO was only able to locate a January 2010 version of the EAP.

The interview with the RSO revealed that he had outdated information and still believed that the Peace Corps OIG was responsible for responding to violent crimes against Volunteers. Responsibilities under the "Protocol: Violent Crimes against Volunteers" was transferred from OIG[9] to the Office of Safety and Security effective September 1, 2008. Additionally, a State Department cable from 2009 confirms that the Peace Corps Office of Safety and Security has the responsibility to respond to crimes against Peace Corps Volunteers "in coordination and consultation with the Department of State's RSO." When the transfer of responsibilities was made to the Office of Safety and Security appropriate measures were not taken to ensure that all parties were informed. Should an emergency or violent crime occur, coordination problems between the U.S. Embassy and Peace Corps may develop, putting Volunteers and/or staff at greater risk.

We recommend:

7. **That the post work with the U.S. Embassy's regional security officer to strengthen ongoing communications and ensure updated Emergency Action Plans and response protocols for crimes against Volunteers are in place.**

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[9] OIG responds to alleged wrongdoing or criminal activity when it involves Peace Corps staff, Volunteers, trainees, contractors, experts, consultants or funds, including Peace Corps' appropriations, host country contributions, Small Project Assistance, Participating Agency Service Agreement, Partnership monies, or any other agency funding sources.

Volunteers did not have functioning carbon monoxide detectors or understand the appropriate actions to take if the alarm was activated.

The U.S. Embassy's RSO raised concerns about carbon monoxide poisoning as a potential safety concern for Volunteers. In the course of his two year assignment in Romania, three American citizens have died as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning.

OIG evaluators tested carbon monoxide detectors in 23 Volunteer homes. Forty-three percent (10 of 23) of the Volunteers did not have fully functional detectors. Some Volunteers had never installed their detectors and still had them in the original packaging.

The post's housing criteria states that all Volunteers are provided a combined detector for carbon monoxide and smoke. The post's *Safety and Security Manual* states that Volunteers should regularly check their detector to ensure it is operating correctly and that, if the alarm sounds, to open the windows and leave their house/apartment. However, Volunteers gave varying responses when asked about the carbon monoxide detectors:

> "It would go off, every minute. I haven't told them about it. I dropped it so it doesn't work. I'm not concerned cause my cat's okay. He hasn't fallen over or anything. He is like my canary in the coal mine."

> "I gave it away to someone from my pre-service training family. It took up too much room in my suitcase, they didn't have one and were delighted to get it. I doubt there is one here. I haven't asked Peace Corps for another one."

> "Gas leaks a little, CO_2 goes off sometimes, I take the batteries out."

The risk of carbon monoxide poisoning is treated during some of the pre-service training safety and medical sessions, and Volunteers are tested during training about carbon monoxide poisoning and detectors. Volunteers are also provided with written materials during training and are emailed additional information during their service by the SSC. At the end of pre-service training all Volunteers are provided with a detector and batteries and told to install it in their house. The SSC said he checks the detectors during site visits. Nonetheless, some Volunteers are exposing themselves to greater danger by not having fully functioning carbon monoxide detectors and not understanding what to do if the alarm is activated.

We recommend:

8. **That the post determine that all Volunteers have installed working carbon monoxide detectors and know how to respond if the alarm is activated.**

Site Locator Forms did not include a map to the Volunteer's house.

An analysis of 38[10] Site Locator Forms (SLF) of currently serving Volunteers revealed that 87 percent (33 of 38) of the forms did not include maps. Thirty-five percent (8 of 23[11]) of the Volunteer houses visited in the evaluation could not be located using only the information included in the Volunteer's SLF.

The post's *Safety and Security Manual* states that "all Volunteers are responsible for completing a SLF after they have moved into their own housing…with a map showing directions to your house, and instructions for getting there." Additionally, Peace Corps' *Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post* and the standard operating procedures for EAP recommend that Volunteers include a map in their SLF.

There were two versions of the SLF that were currently being used by Volunteers. One version specifically asks the Volunteer to draw a map while the other version does not. Most Volunteers complete their site locator forms electronically and submit them via email making it harder to include a map, which are often hand-drawn. Most of the post's vehicles are equipped with a Global Positioning System (GPS) and use the Volunteer's street address to locate their homes.

However the use of a GPS may give staff a false sense of preparedness. Accurate SLF maps are required for emergency situations so that any available Peace Corps staff member or other authorized personnel may travel to the Volunteer site; the lack of accurate maps could put Volunteers at greater risk if they cannot be located using a GPS or when a GPS-equipped vehicle is not available.

> **We recommend:**
>
> 9. **That the post develop and implement a process to ensure that all Volunteers include a reliable map with their site locator forms.**

There is confusion among post staff about the duty driver system.

Staff members raised concerns regarding driver support for the duty system. When staff members were asked to explain the duty driver system OIG received conflicting responses about how the system currently operates.

The CD, SSC, and PCMOs are on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week to respond to emergencies. Drivers are not always needed as sometimes staff will drive themselves in Peace Corps vehicles to respond to a call. The post has three full-time drivers and when they cannot meet the needs of the post an additional driver is contracted part-time as needed. If a driver is

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[10] Thirty Volunteers were interviewed, but there were two married couples so only one SLFs was analyzed per couple. Thus, the SLF analysis included twenty-eight SLFs from Volunteers that were interviewed and ten SLFs from a file review of other Volunteers who were not interviewed.
[11] Only twenty-three of the thirty Volunteer interviews were conducted at the house of the Volunteer.

needed to respond during normal business hours the general services officer (GSO) assigns an available driver to respond. Outside of normal business hours the drivers have a rotating system where they are on call to respond. The GSO is the backup in case the drivers are not available to respond.

According to MS 270.6.1 "procedures should be established for reporting safety and security incidents [and] responding to such incidents. Such procedures are essential to post's ability to provide support to affected V/Ts."

Some of the confusion about the duty system might be a result of changes in post leadership. There have been recent changes in the post's staff with the assignment of a new CD, DMO, and SSC during the past year, and the duty system has not been revised since they came on board. Staff commented that in an emergency it might be unclear who should respond and some time might be lost sorting this out. This confusion among staff with response procedures could put Volunteers and/or staff at greater risk.

> **We recommend:**
>
> **10. That the post revise the duty system and adequately train staff to appropriately respond when the system is activated.**

Volunteer files were not well organized.

Volunteer program, site, and medical information are housed in many locations. Programming information is stored in one place, site locator forms and site history forms are stored elsewhere and the medical unit maintains their own files. Some Volunteer information is stored electronically while some information is stored in paper files. As part of the evaluation, we reviewed 10 Volunteer files for completeness. Only four included completed housing checklists, and none included site visit reports.

The post is in a process of transitioning from a primarily paper-based file system to a more computer-based file system. However, no clear policy or guidelines have been developed by the post to organize their Volunteer file systems. Maintaining electronic Volunteer files might be easier and more beneficial for day to day operations of the post. However, if the electronic Volunteer files become inaccessible in case of an emergency some important documentation should also be updated and maintained in a paper-based file system.

MS 270.6.6 requires that each post maintain a system for recording the history of a Volunteer site, including "… Volunteer concerns about a location, safety and security incidents that occur in the community, and other conditions that could otherwise affect a future decision to place a Volunteer in that location." The Office of Safety and Security has developed useful guidelines for developing site history files. Without a specific file organizational system for the entire post to follow there is the potential for important information or documentation to be lost or misplaced. Additionally, maintaining duplicate file systems can be an unnecessary burden on the staff and it might be unclear where to find the most updated documents.

We recommend:

11. That the post develop and implement guidelines for organizing electronic and paper Volunteer files.

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

In reviewing the post's process for planning and developing training, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would warrant action by the post. The post uses an inclusive process to plan its Volunteer training programs. Post staff from multiple units help plan and deliver Volunteer training. Post has defined competencies and learning objectives that are clearly outlined in its *Trainee Competency Handbook*. Counterparts are included in most training offerings.

Post staff also reported that it has adequate staffing resources to deliver Volunteer training. However, the vacancy of the DPT position required that the staff wear multiple hats and strive to maintain a consistent level, rather than grow and improve, the training program.

Volunteers participate in several training events throughout their service, including PST, In-Service Training (IST), and Mid-Service Training (MST). We asked Volunteers to rate the effectiveness of these trainings and found that training is generally effective as noted in the table below.

Table 4: Volunteer Perceptions of Training Effectiveness

Area	Ineffective (1) / Below average (2)	Moderate (3) / Above average (4) / Very effective (5)	Average Rating
PST:			
Language	7%	93%	4.3
Culture	10%	90%	4.0
Safety/Security	0%	100%	4.3
Medical/Health	0%	100%	4.7
Technical	10%	90%	3.3
IST	25%	75%	3.3
MST	18%	82%	3.5

Source: OIG Volunteer Interviews, 2010

The lowest effectiveness scores were registered for the IST and MST programs. Although Volunteer comments on IST and MST were mixed, Volunteers requested additional training on grant-writing, design for small projects and additional exposure to grant sources. Volunteers also expressed that they would like more comprehensive coverage of discrimination, particularly attitudes towards the different sexes and racism.

The post held a stand-alone Project Design and Management (PDM) workshop in September 2010. All Volunteers interviewed who participated in the workshop rated it favorably in terms of effectiveness. In addition, Volunteers rated workshops such as Behavior Modification, EU Funding and Project Design and Management very positively – all scoring favorable effectiveness ratings.

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

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

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

The OIG Evaluation Unit announced its intent to conduct an evaluation of the post on August 3, 2010. For country program evaluations, we use the following researchable questions to guide our work:

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

The evaluation team conducted the preliminary research portion of the evaluation from August 4 – September 17, 2010. This research included review of agency documents provided by headquarters and post staff; interviews with management and staff representing the EMA region, the office of Safety and Security, Peace Corps Response; and inquiries to Office of Programming and Training Support, the Office of Private Sector Initiatives, the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, the Office of AIDS Relief, and Volunteer Support.

In-country fieldwork occurred from September 20 – October 8, 2010, and included interviews with post senior staff in charge of programming, training, and support; the U.S. Ambassador; the embassy regional security officer; and host country government ministry officials. In addition, we interviewed a stratified judgmental sample of 30 Volunteers (32 percent of Volunteers serving at the time of our visit) based on their length of service, site location, project focus, gender, age, marital status 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 (CIGIE) (formerly the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency). The evidence, findings, and recommendations provided in this report have been reviewed by agency stakeholders affected by this review.

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

As part of this post evaluation, interviews were conducted with 30 Volunteers, 16 staff members in-country, and 13 representatives from Peace Corps headquarters in Washington D.C., the U.S. Embassy in Romania, 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 = average effective, 5 = very effective). The analysis of these ratings provided a quantitative supplement to Volunteers' comments, which were also analyzed. For the purposes of the data analysis, Volunteer ratings of "3" and above are considered favorable. In addition, 25 out of 30 Volunteer interviews occurred at the Volunteers' homes, and we inspected 23[12] of these homes using post-defined site selection criteria. The period of review for a country program evaluation is one full Volunteer cycle (typically 27 months).

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

Table 5: Volunteer Demographic Data

Project	Percentage of Volunteers
Teaching English as a Foreign Language	78%
Environment	9%
Youth Development	12%
Community and Economic Development	1%
Gender	**Percentage of Volunteers**
Female	66%
Male	34%
Age	**Percentage of Volunteers**
25 or younger	52%
26-29	25%
30-49	10%
50 or over	14%

Source: Volunteer roster provided by post on August 13, 2010.
Note: Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

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[12] For Volunteers who live with their spouses their house was only inspected once.

At the time of the field visit, the post had 26 staff positions. The post also employs temporary staff/contractors to assist with PST. During the evaluation fieldwork, the DPT position was vacant and the Program Manager for TEFL was on maternity leave. We interviewed 16 staff members.

Table 6: Interviews Conducted with Post Staff Members

Position	Status	Interviewed
Country Director	USDH	X
Director of Management and Operations	USDH	X
Director of Programming and Training (Vacant)	USDH	
Program Manager TEFL (On maternity leave)	PSC	
Program Manager Environment	PSC	X
Program Manager Youth Development	PSC	X
Junior Program Manager TEFL	PSC	X
Training Manager	PSC	X
Safety and Security Coordinator	PSC	X
Technical Training Coordinator	PSC	X
Language Specialist	PSC	X
PCMO (2)	PSC	X
Medical Unit Assistant	PSC	
Volunteer Support Assistant	PSC	X
Receptionist	PSC	X
Administrative Assistant (2)	PSC	
Financial Assistant	FSN	
Cashier	FSN	
Information Technology Specialist	PSC	
General Services Officer	PSC	X
Driver/Logistics Assistant (3)	PSC	X
Office Cleaner	PSC	

Data as of September 2010.

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

Position	Organization
Regional Director	PC/Headquarters/EMA Region
Chief of Operations	PC/Headquarters/EMA Region
Chief Administrative Officer	PC/Headquarters/EMA Region
Country Desk Officer	PC/Headquarters/EMA Region
Expert (Former Romania Country Director)	PC/Headquarters/D
Safety and Security Officer (PCSSO)	PC/Headquarters/Office of Safety and Security
Program and Operations Specialist	PC/Headquarters/PCR
U.S. Ambassador	U.S. Embassy in Romania
Regional Security Officer	U.S. Embassy in Romania
Safety and Security Desk Officer	PC/Headquarters/EMA Region
Director, National Authority for Sports and Youth	Ministry of Education Department of International Relations and Management of Non-Refundable Funds
General Director	Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports
Inspector General for English, Japanese and Chinese, General Department of Education and Life Long Learning	Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports
Director of Communications	National Environmental Protection Agency

Data as of September 2010.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

WE RECOMMEND:

1. That the post review and update, as necessary, site development and volunteer support management practices to accommodate Volunteer placements in rural and underserved communities.

2. That the post develop a Project Advisory Committee.

3. That the Europe, Mediterranean, Asia Region communicate a long-term vision for the PC/Romania program.

4. That the Europe, Mediterranean, Asia Region assist the post with strategies to support post managers in addressing cross-cultural human resource challenges and managing difficult transitions.

5. That the post confirm that all Volunteers know the location of consolidation points and the security wardens responsible for their region.

6. That the post conduct the annual warden training with all security wardens, including alternates.

7. That the post work with the U.S. Embassy's regional security officer to strengthen ongoing communications and ensure updated Emergency Action Plans and response protocols for crimes against Volunteers are in place.

8. That the post determine that all Volunteers have installed working carbon monoxide detectors and know how to respond if the alarm is activated.

9. That the post develop and implement a process to ensure that all Volunteers include a reliable map with their site locator forms.

10. That the post revise the duty system and adequately train staff to appropriately respond when the system is activated.

11. That the post develop and implement guidelines for organizing electronic and paper Volunteer file

AGENCY'S RESPONSE TO PRELIMINARY REPORT

MEMORANDUM

To: Kathy Buller, Inspector General

Through: Daljit K. Bains, Chief Compliance Officer

From: Helen Lowman, EMA Regional Director
Sheila Crowley, Country Director

Date: April 11, 2011

CC: Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Deputy Director
Stacy Rhodes, Chief of Staff
Joaquin Ferrao, Deputy Inspector General
Jim O'Keefe, Assistant Inspector General, Evaluations
Susan Gasper, Senior Evaluator
Esther Benjamin, Associate Director, Global Operations
David Burgess, Chief of Operations, EMA
Maura Fulton, Chief of Programming & Training, EMA
Sarah Kellogg, Country Desk Officer

Subject: Response to the Preliminary Report of Peace Corps/Romania, March 2011

Enclosed please find the EMA Region's response to the recommendations made by the Inspector General for Peace Corps/Romania, as outlined in the Preliminary Report of the Program Evaluation Report of the IG Audit sent to the Agency on February 2011.

The Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region concurs with all **11** recommendations provided by the OIG in its Preliminary Program Evaluation Report: Peace Corps/Romania. Post has addressed and provided supporting documentation for all recommendations and will work to address the remaining recommendations by the set target dates.

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

Agency Response to the Preliminary Report of Peace Corps/Romania, March 2011

1. That the post review and update, as necessary, site development and volunteer support management practices to accommodate Volunteer placements in rural and underserved communities.

<u>Concur</u>

As noted in the report, the shift to rural communities is central to Post's strategic plan. To address challenges resulting from rural, often new, sites, Post adjusted Site Development (a) and Volunteer Support procedures (b) as follows:

a. Expanded application to identify potential partner organizations and resources for the volunteer; new site criteria checklist with expanded evaluation of Counterpart and community mentor; schools create and submit a welcome package detailing the community provided to the volunteer during site announcements; Post created leaflets and brochures in Romanian describing Peace Corps Volunteer service for key community members; Community Entry Passport is emphasized during PST in context of rural sites; whenever possible, site development visits routinely involve the Mayor, city council, library and other essential community members; housing criteria and checklist have been updated and clearly explained to partner schools that include prompt and clear submission of utilities, appropriate conditions and privacy, and no students or housemates of similar age; Post to implement a Counterpart Mentor system to assist new and rural partner schools in adjusting to the life with a PCV.

b. PST moved a month earlier to allow more in-class applied learning opportunities; PST host-families will include a majority in rural communities; Integrated Field Visit is reevaluated to ensure appropriate rural locations are utilized; Current PCVs from rural locations will assist PST for PCT understanding of challenges and strategies; Post is providing resources and consultation for a community integration summer activity; Post is implementing a PCV contact system where various staff from all units contact PCVs on bi-monthly rotating schedule; peer support network and training includes strategies for productive service in rural communities; Post implemented creative Behavior Change, PDM, and Sustainability workshops aimed at assisting PCV productivity, especially in the rural context.

Documents Submitted[1]:
- Application for Volunteers form
- Site Development Visit Report
- School and Counterpart Handouts
- Housing Criteria
- Counterpart Surveys
- Site Criteria Checklist
- Community Resource Person Handout

Date for Completion:
June 2011 (last PC/RO site announcement)

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[1] Please note – all attached documents are in English but the Handouts, Surveys, and Resource Person information sheet are in Romanian.

Agency Response to the Preliminary Report of Peace Corps/Romania, March 2011

2. That the Post develops a Project Advisory Committee.

<u>Concur</u>

Post has designed a Project Advisory Committee consisting of one core committee and three topical sub-groups. The core group is comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Education, NGO partner, counterpart, school director, PCVs, and program staff. This group will provide input on Post's strategic direction, drive sub-group content, and assist with networking and dissemination. The three sub-groups will focus on updating the TEFL project plan and programming approach, expanding Peace Corps Response, and Graduation of Peace Corps Romania respectively. The first PAC Core Committee meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2011.

Documents Submitted:
- PAC Core and Sub-Committee invitation,
- PAC Meeting Schedule
- Declaration for meeting space at partner organization

Documents to be Submitted:
- PAC meeting minutes
- Development of sub-group agendas
- Revised schedule

Date for Completion:
April 30, 2011

3. That the Europe, Mediterranean, Asia Region communicates a long-term vision for the PC/Romania program.

<u>Concur</u>

Post was given additional FY12 IPBS guidelines to incorporate a graduation plan for Peace Corps Romania. A phase down timeline has been proposed; the last TI group will arrive in April 2011, COS in June 2013 and post will close Sept 2013.

Documents Submitted:
- FY12 additional guidance
- FY12 IPBS submission

Date for Completion:
April 2011

4. That the Europe, Mediterranean, Asia Region assist the post with strategies to support post managers in addressing cross-cultural human resource challenges and managing difficult transitions.

Concurs

Region is assisting Post with strategies, approaches, and resources to help Post leadership lead change. For example, Region's Chief of Program and Training has experience in staff and organizational development and change management and has shared with Post several resources on leading change and managing transitions. She will provide further guidance to Post from headquarters to help assure an adequate change management plan is in place and plans a visit to Post (likely in Fall 2011) to assist managers in addressing staff morale issues and to lead sessions for HCN staff. These sessions will help Post managers:

- Help staff determine where they are in the transition process
- Guide people through the transition, and utilize that in-between state creatively
- Develop strategies for making clear endings
- Create a plan for launching a new beginning for "Life After Peace Corps"

These sessions will also help Post to prepare for their planned short retreat with HCN staff on *Career Development and Life after the Peace Corps* (as stated in the FY2012-FY2014 IPBS).

Documents Submitted:
- Resources on Leading Change and Managing Transitions (various documents)

Date for Completion:
October 2011

5. That the post confirms that all Volunteers know the location of consolidation points and the security wardens responsible for their region.

Concur

PCVs are initially instructed on the regional warden system that Post operates at PST. They are given an EAP manual that details the name and contact information of their warden and consolidation point. Wardens attend training and are further instructed to periodically review and remind their fellow PCVs of both their roles in an emergency event, the consolidation points and how to be prepared for an emergency.

- A full consolidation exercise for PC Romania will take place as soon as possible (planned for Fall 2011).
- PST will include an additional Safety and Security session in order to make sure that trainees fully understand PC Romania's EAP. Scenarios and tabletop exercises will ensure that trainees will be aware of their future consolidation points.
- On March 13, 2011, PCSSO Jason Kane and the SSC conducted a warden training in Cluj-Napoca for all wardens and alternates. The CD, AO, and PTO participated as well.

Documents Submitted:
- EAP
- PST Agenda
- Warden Training Agenda

Documents to be Submitted:

Agency Response to the Preliminary Report of Peace Corps/Romania, March 2011

- Consolidation Session Plan Fall of 2011, after consolidation exercise is completed.

Date for Completion:
September 30, 2011

6. That the post conducts the annual warden training with all security wardens, including alternates.

<u>Concur</u>

A warden training took place in Cluj-Napoca on March 13th 2011. All wardens, including alternates, CD, PTO and AO participated. The warden training was conducted by the regional PCSSO and SSC.

Documents Submitted:
- Warden Training Agenda
- Warden Roster
- Training Powerpoint

Date for Completion:
March 2011

7. That the post work with the U.S. Embassy's regional security officer to strengthen ongoing communications and ensure updated Emergency Action Plans and response protocols for crimes against Volunteers are in place.

<u>Concur</u>

PC/Romania recognizes that a strong relationship with the US Embassy RSO is important to PCV safety and security. The CD and SSC provide the State Dept. Embassy RSO with all vital Safety and Security related information, including copies of the PC EAP, CIRS notifications, and all EAP related tests and updates.

SSC met Mr. Paul Disney (ARSO) in August 2009 and Mr. Troy Larson (RSO) in May 2010 (the regional PCSSO and CD also participated in that meeting). On both occasions and regularly since then, information exchanges took place, including discussion of topics related to the EAP and CIRS reporting. During that meeting, the RSO and PCSSO confirmed that the RSO receives Peace Corps CIRS notifications and EAP updates. Though the RSO was unable to locate Peace Corps/Romania's most recent EAP at the time of the evaluator's visit, the CD has since followed up with the RSO, and the RSO has provided a screen shot as confirmation that the he does have a copy of the Peace Corps EAP.

In order to fulfill the Legal Environment Survey for PC Romania, both the PCSSO and SSC met with the US Embassy's two FSNIs in May 2010. PC/Romania informed them about our security policies and procedures.

The CD regularly provides updates to the RSO and ARSOs, and in May 2010 formally requested RSO Troy Larson in May 2010 to include the SSC in the RSO's monthly security meetings. The CD also met with the RSO in August 2010 after a major crime incident and walked RSO through PC incident reporting processes.

The CD has also emailed the RSO a copy of cable 012291 regarding Diplomatic Security Response to Crimes Against Volunteers though the RSO has access to cables. A copy of the email from CD Crowley to the RSO is provided as documentation.

Documents Submitted:
- Zip file of e-mail communications between SSC and RSO confirming that PC/Romania provided RSO with the EAP and the results of EAP tests (Oct. 2009; May 2010; Sep. 2010; Mar. 2011)
- E-mail from RSO confirming receipt of the PC EAP
- Screen Shot from RSO containing EAP index on the Embassy's shared drive
- Email from CD to RSO regarding State Dept. cable (STATE 00012291, 102138Z Feb 2009) concerning PC-RSO information sharing, and reporting to RSO of crimes against PCVs
- Email from CD to RSO regarding OIG evaluation and Rec. 7 regarding strengthening cooperative relationships

Date For Completion:
April 2011

8. That the post determines that all Volunteers have installed working carbon monoxide detectors and know how to respond if the alarm is activated.

Concur

Throughout 2009 and 2010, post made a concerted effort to ensure that PCV's have and use a monoxide/smoke detector. Group 27 PCV's received brand new detectors and batteries during PST and also were instructed on how to use them. Group 25 and 26 PCV's were provided with detectors and replacements during PST/IST/MST and site visits.

All volunteers receive a site visit from the SSC, during which they are asked to confirm that they have a working carbon monoxide detector, receive a replacement if they don't, and are asked if they have any questions regarding its use. Post will replace any malfunctioning or broken detector of carbon monoxide, methane, smoke, etc. Reminders, warnings, instructions and examples of previous incidents were sent via email monthly during the cold season when volunteers are most at risk.

Forty gas detectors (methane/propane) were bought and provided to PCV's as an additional safety device.

Post will incorporate carbon monoxide detector test in regularly scheduled EAP exercises.

Documents Submitted:
- PCV signature list of received detectors
- Sample email communications from SSC to PCVs (multiple)

Agency Response to the Preliminary Report of Peace Corps/Romania, March 2011

- November & December 2010 PCV Update Emails from CD, including SSC reminders regarding Carbon Monoxide detectors
- Communication from CD to all PCVs regarding replacement of CO2 detectors that may be inoperative. (April 8, 2011).

Date Completed:
April 2011

9. That the post develops and implements a process to ensure that all Volunteers include a reliable map with their site locator forms.

<u>Concur</u>

The Site Locator form was reviewed by regional PCSSO and SSC. Any other copies will be replaced. Creating a reliable Site Locator form and map will be a mandatory assignment for PC Romania trainees during next PST after their first site visit. The Safety and Security sessions will include a brief tutorial on how to use Google Maps and how to save/export a map to an image file.

To verify the accuracy and reliability of the maps given by volunteers in their Site Locator forms, the SSC will use them during his site visits to the volunteers' sites.

Post has compiled GOOGLE maps for each PCV file.

Documents Submitted:
- Sample Site Locator form including site map

Date for Completion:
March 31, 2011

10. That the post revises the duty system and adequately train staff to appropriately respond when the system is activated.

<u>Concur</u>

- Post has reinstituted duty driver system
- EAP Table Top exercise was completed in May 2010.
- Post conducted Response to Sexual Assault Training on March 15th, 2011
- As outlined in the PCV handbook; PCVs are instructed to call PCMOs, SSC and CD in the event of medical, safety/security or non-emergency issues respectively. With the exception of the PCMOs who rotate as Medical Duty Officer, everyone is on call 24/7.
- Each office has a backup responder and PCVs are notified when the backup is on duty.
- The PCMOs serve as each other's backup.
- The SSC's backup is the Executive Support Assistant.

Agency Response to the Preliminary Report of Peace Corps/Romania, March 2011

- The CD utilizes either DPT or DMO as a backup.
- The system was instituted in 2009 after guard duties were transferred to an external contractor.
- The system has repeatedly proven effective and PCVs understand and seem to have no issue utilizing the system.

Documents Submitted:
- PCV Handbook
- Travel Duty Schedule 2011
- Sample Weekly Duty Driver email notice

Date for Completion:
March 2011

11. That the Post develops and implements guidelines for organizing electronic and paper Volunteer files.

<u>Concur</u>

Currently Post is reorganizing all digital files to a more useable and logical form. During this process, the volunteer files have been captured and organized in two formats: Volunteer-driven and document driven. The purpose of this arrangement is to make information readily available both for all documents specific to one person plus documents in aggregate as appropriate. This system was devised to accommodate the different user requirements. Program Managers have updated all paper and electronic volunteer files with copies of site visit forms. The Program Assistant is reviewing all site history files and updating or flagging for follow-up as appropriate. The Training Team is securing all PST, housing, and volunteer language materials in the new structure.

Documents Submitted: Views of Office Share new structure

Date for Completion:
March 2011

OIG COMMENTS

Management concurred with all 11 recommendations. Based on the documentation provided, we closed 9 recommendations: numbers 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the region or post 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.

Two recommendations, numbers 4 and 5, remain open pending confirmation from the chief compliance officer that the documentation reflected in OIG Analysis is received.

4: That the Europe, Mediterranean, Asia Region assist the post with strategies to support post managers in addressing cross-cultural human resource challenges and managing difficult transitions.

Concur: Region is assisting Post with strategies, approaches, and resources to help Post leadership lead change. For example, Region's Chief of Program and Training has experience in staff and organizational development and change management and has shared with Post several resources on leading change and managing transitions. She will provide further guidance to Post from headquarters to help assure an adequate change management plan is in place and plans a visit to Post (likely in Fall 2011) to assist managers in addressing staff morale issues and to lead sessions for HCN staff. These sessions will help Post managers:
- Help staff determine where they are in the transition process
- Guide people through the transition, and utilize that in-between state creatively
- Develop strategies for making clear endings
- Create a plan for launching a new beginning for "Life After Peace Corps"

These sessions will also help Post to prepare for their planned short retreat with HCN staff on Career Development and Life after the Peace Corps (as stated in the FY2012-FY2014 IPBS).

Status and timeline for completion: October 2011

OIG Analysis: We acknowledge the agency's efforts to address this recommendation and await documentation of the approved change management plan and trip report that describes the content of sessions delivered during the Region's Chief of Program and Training visit to post.

5: That the post confirms that all Volunteers know the location of consolidation points and the security wardens responsible for their region.

Concur: PCVs are initially instructed on the regional warden system that Post operates at PST. They are given an EAP manual that details the name and contact information of their warden and consolidation point. Wardens attend training and are further instructed to periodically review and remind their fellow PCVs of both their roles in an emergency event, the consolidation points and how to be prepared for an emergency.

- A full consolidation exercise for PC Romania will take place as soon as possible (planned for Fall 2011).
- PST will include an additional Safety and Security session in order to make sure that trainees fully understand PC Romania's EAP. Scenarios and tabletop exercises will ensure that trainees will be aware of their future consolidation points.
- On March 13, 2011, PCSSO Jason Kane and the SSC conducted a warden training in Cluj-Napoca for all wardens and alternates. The CD, AO, and PTO participated as well.

Documents to be submitted:
- Consolidation Session Plan Fall of 2011, after consolidation exercise is completed.

Status and timeline for completion: September 30, 2011

OIG Analysis: We acknowledge the agency's efforts to address this recommendation. Please submit a copy of the consolidation session plan and of the results of the consolidation exercise.

PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION AND OIG CONTACT

PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION	This program evaluation was conducted under the direction of Jim O'Keefe, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations, and by Senior Evaluator Susan Gasper and Program Analyst Danel Trisi. Additional contributions were made by Reuben Marshall.
OIG CONTACT	Following issuance of the final report, a stakeholder satisfaction survey will be distributed. If you wish to comment on the quality or usefulness of this report to help us improve our products, please e-mail Jim O'Keefe, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations and Inspections, at jokeefe@peacecorps.gov, or call (202) 692-2904.

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