FINAL REPORT
on the Program Evaluation and Audit of
Peace Corps/South Africa
No. IG 07-02-EA

October 2006

Peace Corps
Office of Inspector General

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INTRODUCTION

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted an audit and program evaluation of Peace Corps/South Africa February 27 – March 17, 2006. Assistant Inspector General for Audit Marshall Henderson and Auditor Waheed Nasser conducted the audit; Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Alice Bunker and Evaluator Mike Jerald conducted the program evaluation. In preparation for this visit, we distributed the OIG Volunteer Questionnaire to all 136 Peace Corps Volunteers who were in South Africa at that time. Eighty-three (61%) were completed and returned to us.[1] During our visit, we interviewed 45 (33%) of the Volunteers in their homes or at their assignments and 24 (96%) staff.[2]

Our most recent previous audit of Peace Corps/South Africa was in 1999 (IG-99-10-1) and we conducted a follow-up audit (IG-00-14-1F) and follow-up program evaluation in 2000 (IG-00-14-FE).

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

Leadership and Management

A number of issues we found in the program evaluation and audit in 1999 remain or have re-emerged. Among these are poor planning for the pre-service training, poor programming, disparity between the project plan and the skill of recruited Volunteers, and deficiencies in the cross-cultural training, site preparation, and safety and security.

The assessments by this office of Peace Corps/South Africa from 1999 to the present document a post with a troubled history, a post that was touted as the agency's premier program when it was opened, a program for which special recruiting was launched to send our best and our most ethnically representative, but a post that did not receive commensurate attention to program development. Regardless of skill and experience, a country director cannot successfully manage a post of significant size at which Volunteers are not engaged in good programs; are not well trained for their assignments; are not sent to well-developed sites; and are not back-stopped with quality technical, medical, and moral support.

What we found in this program evaluation and audit was that this post's chronic condition was exacerbated by recent budget cuts and by turnover and cuts in local staff positions affecting experience and competence levels (almost half of the local staff have less than one year's experience). In addition, there had been multiple changes in the leadership positions of country director and administrative officer, and the post was scrambling to respond to the new President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) initiative. This post also has special demands on the staff, because it is the destination of first choice for medically evacuated Volunteers from other posts in Africa.

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[1] This response rate yields a margin of error ± 6.74%% at a 95% confidence level.
[2] This total of staff interviewed does not include the country director.

The nature of the Peace Corps requires an efficient operation to avoid crisis. The PC/South Africa office has the feel of being in a state of chronic crisis. At least some of this appeared attributable to the current country director's management style, which the staff feel hampers more than helps them to accomplish their work effectively and efficiently. According to many staff member, the country director intimidates them and verbally abuses them. In addition, one incident they related to us was a potential ethics violation which we have reported to the agency's Designated Agency Ethics Official. The country director has focused her energies on controlling the staff and has focused the staff's energy on mitigating the negative effect of her management style. In this environment, the Volunteers' issues, which should be the staff's focus, have received inadequate consideration. The project plans are out-of-date, pre-service training is poor, in-service training events have been cancelled or abbreviated, Volunteer support is weak, and safety and security issues for Volunteers living and working in urban areas have received inadequate attention. This post needs a program-focused country director who has a vision and a style that leads staff in partnership to serve the host country, the Volunteers, and the mission.

Programming

Both project plans are out-dated; the project plan for the education project is the original plan proposed by the South Africa entry assessment team. As we determined in 1999, the project does not provide a realistic role for the Volunteers with no teaching experience. Site preparation in the education project does not prepare the schools to use the Volunteers appropriately. The further expansion of the NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration project[3] is limited, because most of the sponsoring agencies are not working directly with HIV/AIDS.

Training

A major concern of the Volunteers was the quality of the most recent pre-service training (PST), which was poorly staffed, poorly planned, and poorly managed. More broadly for all pre-service trainings, language training has not been a priority. The Schools and Community Resources[4] technical training does not prepare the Volunteers for their role. The cross-cultural training does not address the Afrikaner and Indian cultures. Volunteers who work with these ethnic groups feel unprepared.

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[3] In the Volunteer Assignment Description, the job title for Volunteers working in the NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration project is capacity builder. In this report we will call this project the NGO capacity building project.

[4] The Schools and Community Resources project is in the education sector. This project will be called the education project.

Safety and Security

The safety and security needs of urban-placed NGO capacity building Volunteers are not sufficiently addressed, leaving some of these Volunteers vulnerable. Because of the timing of the PST, newly sworn-in education Volunteers arrive at site during the school and national holiday season which encourages them to violate the out-of-site policy. The post's incident follow-up procedure is not responsive to the Volunteers' concerns and may result in Volunteers' reluctance to report incidents. The annual leave and out-of-site policies are not clear to some Volunteers. Twenty-nine percent of the Volunteers expressed concern about alcohol abuse, especially when Volunteers congregate for holidays and weekends.

Volunteer Support

Most Volunteers want further assistance in continued language learning. Technical support for the Volunteers in the education project is not satisfactory; the capacity building Volunteers need on-going assistance with housing. The Volunteers in the NGO capacity building project also described difficulties dealing with the cross-cultural issues arising from their interactions with their Afrikaner colleagues. However, the post has improved Volunteer satisfaction with the quality of medical care from 2004 to 2006.

Audit Findings

Peace Corps/South Africa's current internal control environment poses a high risk of loss of agency resources and difficulties in ensuring the safety of the Volunteers and meeting the goals and expectations of the host government. Additionally, the financial and administrative operations did not fully comply with Peace Corps policies and federal regulations. For example, the post did not:

- Comply with the Peace Corps billing and collection and property management policies.
- Follow Peace Corps policy in maintaining Volunteer property held for safekeeping.
- Value, record, or collect an estimated $28,000 in host country cash contributions.
- Maintain documents supporting its decision to change the post's vehicle mix.

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BACKGROUND

Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has made progress in the educational, health, and governmental systems. However, gaps in the opportunities remain for the historically disadvantaged population. The official unemployment rate is 31%. Sources estimate that over 50% of the population lives below the poverty line. Poverty and the

lack of education are particularly high in the rural areas of South Africa where the government of South Africa is working to transform the educational system.

The first group of Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in South Africa in February 1997. Currently, PC/South Africa has two projects: education and NGO capacity building. Seven Volunteers in the NGO capacity building project are funded by PEPFAR. At the time of this review, 136 Volunteers were serving in four of South Africa's nine provinces: North-West, Nimpopo (formerly Northern Transvaal), Mpumalunga (formerly Eastern Transvaal), and Kwa Zulu Natal.

As seen in Table 1, approximately two-thirds of the Volunteers are assigned to the education project, most Volunteers are female, and the majority (72%) of Volunteers are 29 years or younger.

Table 1: Volunteer Demographic Characteristics

Project	Number and Percent (%) of Volunteers
Schools and Community Resources	87 (64%)
NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration	49 (36%)
Gender	**Number and Percent (%) of Volunteers**
Male	49 (36%)
Female	87 (64%)
Age	**Number and Percent (%) of Volunteers**
20-29	98 (72%)
30-39	14 (10%)
40 and over	24 (18%)

Source: Office of Planning, Policy, and Analysis, January 2006.

The second project, the capacity building project, began in 2001 in response to the growing challenges that HIV/AIDS poses for South Africa. This project puts Volunteers at the forefront of the country's response to the epidemic. At the time of our visit, 49 Volunteers were placed with NGOs or municipalities in four provinces. The project's goal is to help these organizations become more effective and sustainable while increasing the provision of HIV/AIDS services to communities in need. Volunteers provide advice to NGOs on how to improve the quality and effectiveness of their programs and services, mentor NGO staff, and introduce or strengthen approaches to resource identification and mobilization.

The continued spread of HIV/AIDS is the major challenge for South Africa and threatens to sabotage the government's efforts to improve services to those historically disadvantaged. South Africa has more people living with HIV/AIDS than any other country in the world. Approximately one-fourth of the South African population is

infected with HIV. Estimates place the number of orphans due to HIV/AIDS at over 600,000.[5]

PROGRAM EVALUATION SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Our protocol for reviews of any aspect of an overseas post is as follows: We review documents available at headquarters that relate to the review. This includes, but is not limited to, the post's Integrated Planning and Budget System (IPBS) submission, the Emergency Action Plan, project plans, project status reports, Volunteer assignment descriptions, the Office of Planning, Policy, and Analysis (PPA) surveys of the Peace Corps Volunteer, PPA's Health and Safety of the Volunteer reports, various reports obtained from the agency's financial management system, and general reference materials. We meet with the regional director and other staff in the regional office. We consult with other headquarters offices that have information about the post, such as the Office of Special Services, the Office of Medical Services, the Office of Safety and Security, the Office of Volunteer Support, the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research, and other headquarters staff.

While at the post, we interview the country director and other staff responsible for the areas under review. We also meet with the ambassador, or the deputy chief of mission and the embassy security officer. In our interviews and discussions, we seek to balance the perspectives of the staff with those of Volunteers. Regardless of the specific discussions with staff and Volunteers on the aspect of the post being reviewed, we make ourselves available for Volunteers and staff to present information on all aspects of the post.

Our assessment criteria are derived from the following sources: the Peace Corps Manual, the Country Director Handbook, the Overseas Financial Management Handbook, guidance from the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research, the Peace Corps Volunteer Survey, and "Technical Guidelines" and "Health and Safety of the Volunteer" from the Office of Medical Services. We also review compliance against other federal regulations and against agency policies and initiatives.

At the end of our review, we brief the country director and other post staff. At headquarters, we conduct a general briefing for the regional staff. We also brief the Office of Medical Services, the Office of Special Services, the Office of Safety and Security, the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research, and other headquarters offices on findings pertaining to their respective areas of responsibility.

Our objective in evaluation of overseas programs is to assess the extent to which Volunteers are productively engaged in satisfying work, are able to have an in-depth experience of another culture, and are safe in their communities. To make this assessment, we review all aspects of the country program, project development; work site

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[5] http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/countries/southafrica/

selection; Volunteer training and housing; and Volunteer technical, medical, and administrative support. We base our recommendations on information gathered from four sources, (1) interviews, (2) document analysis, (3) questionnaires, and (4) direct observation.

In advance of our visit, we distribute the OIG Volunteer Questionnaire to all Volunteers in country covering their training; technical, medical, and administrative support; safety and security; and overall experience. The tabulation and analysis of the answers provide a quantitative supplement to qualitative interviews and observations. At site, we interview a stratified sample of Volunteers to represent project assignments, geographic distribution, and Volunteers' time in country and demographic characteristics. As time allows and local custom requires, we meet with Volunteers' counterparts and supervisors.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Programming

PC/South Africa programming focuses on two main areas of need in South Africa: (1) education and (2) NGO development with a special focus on integrating HIV/AIDS activities into the NGOs. Currently, Volunteers are working in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, and Kwa Zulu Natal provinces. Within the two project areas, Volunteer activities have changed depending on Volunteer experiences and on the needs of the provincial governments, organizations, and communities. Both projects are in the process of reviewing project plans in preparation for revisions.

The post engaged a local external consultant to assess the NGO capacity building project and provide recommendations for further project development.[6] The post also engaged the services of an independent consultant to facilitate a review of the Schools and Community Resources project with stakeholders in two of three provincial education departments.[7]

<u>The assignment description for Volunteers in the Schools and Community Resources project is not realistic for those without previous teaching experience.</u>

As currently structured, each of the 86 education Volunteers works with a cluster of two to three schools and about 40 teachers and administrators. The major Volunteer activities consist of teacher and classroom observations, feedback to the teachers, workshops, one-on-one advising, co-teaching, and demonstration lessons. To address the management of the schools, the most frequently cited activities include computerizing student records, promoting strategies for classroom management to counteract teachers' reliance on

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[6] "Mid-Term Evaluation U.S. Peace Corps South Africa HIV/AIDS NGO Capacity-Building Project," Sherry McLean, August 2004.
[7] U.S. PC/South Africa, Education Project Plan Review: Consolidated Report, Draft 1, Imelda Diou, February 2006.

corporal punishment, and helping the school principals introduce and implement Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS).

According to one of the two APCDs for the education project, education Volunteers are confronted with a number of disadvantages:

- Most of the local teachers in the villages are over the age of 30.
- Many local teachers who have remained in their teaching position are dissatisfied with their assignment in the rural communities and are not motivated.
- The local teachers perceive themselves to be "de-skilled" by the demands of the new curriculum.
- Most teachers perceive their pay to be low; a strong teachers union exacerbates their dissatisfaction.
- The supervisory structure for the schools consists of "circuit managers" who are over-burdened and not available to the Volunteers.

According to the education Volunteers, their age and lack of prior teaching experience hinder their effectiveness, because they do not have the trust and respect of teachers and school principals—many of whom have been teaching for years or have education degrees or teaching credentials. Of the Volunteers who responded to the OIG questionnaire, 60% are 25 years or younger, and of the most recent group (SA 14) of education Volunteers, 76% are 25 years or younger. Of the education Volunteers we interviewed, seven of 31 (23%) reported prior teaching experience or an education degree. The project status review notes the need to insist that the Volunteer Recruitment Services provide Trainees that meet minimum qualifications.[8] Even Volunteers with expertise and experience may not be welcomed. The presence of an outsider—especially a white person—is threatening to the local teachers and, according to Volunteers, inhibits communication and collaboration.

Volunteers told us that often only one of the three schools that they were expected to assist demonstrated an interest in working with them. Similarly, only a few teachers in that school might be interested in working with them.

We found that the Volunteers were diligent; 88% of those responding to the OIG questionnaire reported they worked 20 or more hours per week at their primary assignment—usually rotating from school to school as requested or on a pre-arranged schedule.[9] Volunteers reported they scheduled workshops but soon learned that workshops and lesson planning sessions are difficult for the teachers who do not want to remain after school. Some Volunteers also stated that implementing the curriculum is viewed by the local teachers as "paperwork," and there is little motivation to complete the lesson plans as specified in the project's goals and objectives. Furthermore, several Volunteers reported that their schools have purchased commercially available lesson

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[8] Project Status Review, Schools and Community Resources Project, PC/South Africa, October 2005, pp. 11 and 15.

[9] In the Peace Corps 2004 Volunteer Survey, 83% of the education Volunteers reported they worked 20 or more hours per week.

plans that meet the outcome-based curriculum requirements, effectively obviating the role of the Volunteer.

Some Volunteers complained that principals or teachers viewed the Volunteers' role as primarily secretarial and tended to take advantage of the Volunteers' computer skills to address administrative tasks. Many of the education Volunteers stated they spent a lot of time sitting in a staff room to be available to the teachers. Volunteers also worked with the principal of the school on assigned tasks, or spent time enhancing the school library facilities as a secondary project. Many Volunteers found other projects. The Volunteers' end-of-term reports we reviewed showed many were conducting activities to increase awareness and information about HIV/AIDS.

In contrast, we found that Volunteers who were experienced teachers or had succeeded a prior Volunteer reported that they were being fully utilized by the principals and teachers. Volunteers who were experienced teachers found that they had credibility and respect from the local teachers and that the local teachers sought their services. The Volunteers who had followed a previous Volunteer reported that the hosting schools and communities understood the role of the Volunteer and were proactive in directing the new Volunteer into appropriate activities.

A representative group of education project stakeholders in two provinces participated in a review of the project plan. The review included discussions of sustainability, working relationships, clarification of roles, communications, the role of the Department of Education, resources, and monitoring and evaluation. However, the project review report does not directly address the problems experienced by inexperienced Volunteers; the report only alludes (with no recommendation) to the need for better training of Volunteers: "There have been difficulties with PCVs who do not orientate [*sic*] themselves to the place, country, and school before they jump into projects; this lack of understanding of culture, protocol and school politics has led to confusion and mistrust."[10]

Site preparation for the education project is inadequate.

Twenty-seven percent of the education Volunteers responding to our survey stated their host colleagues were "not at all prepared" for their arrival at site and in the Peace Corps 2004 Volunteer Survey, 42% of the PC/South Africa Volunteers responded that host people were "not at all" or "poorly" prepared for the Volunteers' arrival. The APCDs acknowledged that staff limitations and an unexpected increase in the number of Trainees could account for a number of hurried and insufficient site preparations for the newest group of Volunteers.

We also found that almost all of the Volunteers we interviewed reported they were the first Volunteer at their site; concomitantly, the education APCDs told us they seldom placed successive Volunteers at sites, thereby, requiring new sites to be selected and prepared for each Trainee input. The education APCDs told us they were not only trying

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[10] U. S. Peace Corps South Africa Education Project Review—Consolidated Report, February 2006, p. 10.

to address a large number of requests from host schools, but also to avoid the invidious comparisons experienced by the succeeding Volunteers as host school members and communities compare the new Volunteer to the former Volunteer.

Site preparation was the subject of many recommendations written in the project review report. Among several proposals for better communication with many levels of school and community stakeholders, the report recommends that:

- The schools and communities need to be involved in a comprehensive plan for sustainability where "the exit plan should be discussed right from the start of the placement."
- The report also advocates "overlap between incoming and outgoing volunteers. A village or series of schools in a village might be assisted through a succession of volunteers who could complete the project work within a village."
- Roles clarified before the arrival of the Volunteer, "When a school makes an application, it should produce a statement of intent" making a commitment to support the Volunteer.
- Community leaders should properly introduce the Volunteers.[11]

The education APCDs reported a minimum of two visits to selected sites for:

- A community meeting inviting the participation of a wide range of stakeholders to introduce Peace Corps and the project.
- Gathering information on local resources.
- Orienting the host family and inspecting housing.

However, Volunteers feel that the community meetings may not have been well-attended by the community and by the teachers who are to collaborate with the Volunteers. Volunteers are also ill-informed and may make inappropriate decisions. As a result, the community often views the Volunteer with suspicion.

The site preparation process appears to focus the attention of the community on the social and cultural integration needs of the Volunteers. However, the goals and objectives of the school staff and the role they envision for the Volunteer(s) are not addressed. Furthermore, the youth and inexperience of the Volunteer and the Volunteer's lack of community entry skills exacerbate what the project review report identifies as "poor ownership of the education project [which] has led to confusion between all stakeholders regarding the objectives of the education project."[12]

The principals' conference conducted during PST addresses the Volunteers' role, but the local teachers' understanding of the role of the Volunteer depends heavily on the principals to inform, motivate, and prepare them for the arrival of the Volunteers. According to most of the Volunteers, an active principal may assist the Volunteer to

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[11] U. S. Peace Corps South Africa Education Project Review—Consolidated Report, February 2006, p. 12.
[12] Ibid., p. 10.

arrange the first workshop; but after that initial effort, most Volunteers state they are left to their own initiative to create their own role in the schools—a process that takes time.

As a result, the project review report states: "The end of a PCV placement sometimes leaves programmes incomplete or in need of additional assistance which is not followed up." The report continues, "There is confusion regarding the spirit of the programme with respect to sustainability; schools are often not able to sustain the lessons learned after a PCV leaves."[13] Volunteers, themselves, expressed pessimism about the long-term impact of their two years of work.

In summary, the education program is ill-designed for the skill levels of most of the Trainees. One option is to reduce its size to only the number of experienced teachers the agency can recruit for South Africa; i.e., accept no inexperienced Trainees. The other option is to significantly increase the quality and quantity of technical training, significantly increase the site preparation in terms of the expectations of the local schools so that new schools and their staffs have a realistic understanding about the Volunteers' abilities, and develop a successive site placement policy that builds on previous Volunteers' achievements.

The NGO capacity building project has limited potential.

According to the APCD for the NGO capacity building project, only a small number of NGOs have sufficient infrastructure and resources to productively use a Volunteer and work with Peace Corps effectively. The many start-up NGOs, although deserving and more directly focused on HIV/AIDS work, cannot provide housing for a Volunteer nor can they provide the on-going management support. Currently, the project is experimenting with the placement of a Volunteer within a cluster of several small NGOs or community-based organizations (CBOs).

The evaluation of the NGO capacity building project concluded:

> One of the main challenges at this mid-term review stage is whether the project should continue taking a specific organizational approach or should shift to (and perhaps include) a programmatic approach. This would link the project with other institutions and key stakeholders in the HIV/AIDS sector who are challenged by capacity building weaknesses.[14]

Key among these potential stakeholders is the South African Department of Social Development. According to the project review report: "The Department of Social Development indicated they wish to . . . explore possible ways in which PC/South Africa could be involved in supporting their framework for building capacity in government, NGOs and CBOs in the HIV/AIDS sector." As recommended in the project review, the post is testing the concept of placing Volunteers at municipal or district level HIV/AIDS

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[13] Ibid., p. 9.
[14] Mid-Term Evaluation, U.S. Peace Corps South Africa HIV/AIDS NGO Capacity-Building Project, August 2004, p. 3.

coordinating agencies to do outreach activities to NGOs and CBOs. The government-funded organizations may have more resources to support a Volunteer. However, as stated in the project status review, "The most significant challenge that we face with respect to the outcomes is our relationship with the government at national, provincial and local levels . . . . changes may be made to the Project Plan to reflect this."[15]

The NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration project lacks programmatic focus.

Most of the NGO capacity building Volunteers currently are serving in host agencies that are using the Volunteers effectively to address capacity building. Ninety-one percent of the Volunteers report working 30 or more hours per week, 82% feel they are effective Volunteers, and 77% rate their Volunteer experience as rewarding.

However, the goal of this project is supposed to be HIV/AIDS-related. At the current time, the NGO capacity building project does not have an official memorandum of understanding or agreement with a specific government agency that has a mission consistent with the HIV/AIDS goal of the project. The result of this lack of government involvement is that national goals and priorities are not adequately represented in the design of the project and the project plan remains incomplete. Such an agreement would provide Peace Corps with a more clearly defined project focus, but also would expand the opportunities for the Volunteers to have a clear and meaningful role. Of the Volunteers who responded to the OIG questionnaire, 55% reported they had no job description. The NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration project has promise; however, it needs programmatic vision and hard work to achieve its potential.

Volunteer Assignment Descriptions (VADs) were not useful to the Volunteers.

Fifty-three percent of the Volunteers indicated that the VADs were "not useful" to understand their assignment. The staff improved the VADs according to 2004 survey results; in 2004, 74% of the Volunteers in South Africa assessed the materials received about the primary assignment to be "not at all useful" or "minimally useful."[16] In the 2006 OIG questionnaire, 54% of the education Volunteers and 50% of the NGO capacity building Volunteers rated the VADs "not useful." Volunteers explained that the assignment areas recruited for the education project include primary education experience as well as subject matter expertise in math, English, and science; Volunteers stated that the assignment areas were misleading because the area of expertise such as math or science is minimally relevant to their work. Furthermore, Volunteers believed that their arrival would be expected and that host country teachers were prepared to work with them.

Many NGO capacity building Volunteers stated their expectations as a result of reading the VADs were focused on HIV/AIDS, and often they were surprised to learn their major responsibilities were to work on NGO office procedures, policies, and practices. The

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[15] Project Status Review, NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration Project, South Africa, October 2005, p. 20.

[16] The Peace Corps 2004 Volunteer Survey: South Africa, 2005, p. 10.

actual involvement with HIV/AIDS was more indirect than the Volunteers expected. NGO capacity building Volunteers (57%) also were less satisfied with the information provided about what to bring as compared to 32% of education Volunteers who also expressed dissatisfaction with the information provided about what to bring.

Finally, a number of Volunteers commented that conditions of safety and security in South Africa were not clearly communicated in the VAD or in any other information received prior to staging. Nineteen percent of the education Volunteers and 33% of the NGO capacity building Volunteers indicated that the information about safety and security was "not useful." The SA 14 Volunteers stated that they only became aware of safety and security concerns during the staging event conducted just prior to departure. The safety and security issue was also noted as a concern in the project review of the NGO capacity building project: ". . .they [PCVs] recommended the need for full pre-departure briefings about the security situation in the country and its implications, so that they are making a fully informed choice."[17]

Because VADs are a part of an applicant's invitation packet, they can have a dramatic effect on the potential Volunteer's first impression of Peace Corps and the project. Trainee/Volunteer attrition is often linked to unrealistic expectations about the scope of the assignment, its potential impact, and the type of support that a Volunteer can expect. The burden of addressing the deficiencies of the VAD becomes an obstacle to the success of the pre-service training and possibly to a Volunteer's entire term of service.

We recommend:

1. **That the post limit the education project Trainee input to experienced teachers or revise the project plans.**

2. **That the post complete the revision of the NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration project plan and develop a strategy for implementing the plan.**

3. **That the post establish formal relationships with the appropriate levels of national and provincial government to support the revised NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration project.**

4. **That the post revise Volunteer Assignment Descriptions for both projects to reflect more accurately the actual work of the Volunteers.**

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[17] Mid-term Evaluation, U.S. Peace Corps South Africa, NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration Project, August 2004, p. 11.

Training

The pre-service training (PST) in South Africa is eight weeks. The training status report describes the training as a mix of center-based and community-based training. Volunteers are housed with homestay families and have language instruction in a nearby neighborhood location (often in a home). The group sessions are conducted in a central location large enough to house all the Trainees. There were 87 Trainees in the most recent PST.

The PST rotates among the four provinces where Volunteers are assigned. For PST, the post prefers rural villages, because most Volunteers live and work in similar indigenous communities. These rural villages are ancient settlements of individual tribes with their own language or dialect and customs. Each Trainee is placed with an individual host family to facilitate language and cultural immersion. In the past, the Volunteers were assigned to the same province that hosted the PST—thereby assuring that the languages learned in PST would be the same or similar to the language of the community where the Volunteer would be assigned.

<u>The most recently scheduled pre-service training was poorly staffed, poorly planned, and poorly managed</u>.

During interviews, staff and Volunteers expressed their overall dissatisfaction with training, and Volunteers rated the most recent pre-service training (PST) as particularly unsatisfactory. The majority of Volunteers responding to the OIG questionnaire rated language training as "not effective." See Table 2.

Volunteers also expressed dissatisfaction with PST in our previous evaluation and follow-up of this post. In addition, the PC/South Africa Volunteer respondents to the 2004 worldwide Volunteer survey[18] rated eight of 11 indicators of PST effectiveness lower than the global average (see table 3). In 2002, PC/South Africa Volunteers also gave poor ratings to language learning and technical training.[19] Over the past five years, Trainee satisfaction with language and technical training has deteriorated when compared to earlier data from PC/South Africa.

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[18] The Peace Corps 2004 Volunteer Survey: South Africa, Office of Policy, Planning, and Analysis, Peace Corps, 2005.
[19] The Peace Corps 2002 Volunteer Survey: South Africa, Office of Policy, Planning, and Analysis, Peace Corps, 2003.

Table 2: Volunteers' Assessment of PST Overall Effectiveness, 2006.

Please evaluate your PST in helping you to:	Not Effective %	Effective %	Very Effective %	N. A %
adjust to cultural differences.	23	68	8	1
adjust to your physical living conditions.	16	67	16	1
use the language of your community.	61	33	4	2
perform the technical aspects of your work.	48	48	1	2
continue language training on your own.	78	17	1	4
problem-solve independently.	26	53	5	16
maintain your health.	7	67	21	5
maintain your personal safety.	13	69	17	1
deal with emotional issues, e.g., loneliness, frustration, isolation, etc.	38	53	1	9

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, 2006
*Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

According to the staff and Volunteers, there are multiple reasons for the poor pre-service training. Among these are:

- The insufficiency of eight weeks of PST to prepare Trainees for the complex technical, linguistic, and cultural challenges of working in South Africa. One Volunteer stated: "They always did the shorter version of everything."
- The lack of continuity among the training staff. There is no full-time training manager, and the post has not been able to develop a cadre of dependable part-time language and technical trainers.[20]
- The post's IPBS also noted the need to improve training: "There has been a lack of stability in training leadership" and "the content of the training program has not met the needs of the PCVs nor adequately prepared them for life at their sites."[21]

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[20] Training Status Report, PC/South Africa, October 2005, p. 3.
[21] Integrated Planning and Budget Submission FY2006-2008, Peace Corps/South Africa, April 2005, p. 7.

Table 3: Evaluation of PST Topics*

PST Training Topics	South Africa Ratings 2004	Global Ratings 2004
manage cultural differences	3.09	3.53
deal with adjustment issues	2.82	3.20
adjust to your physical living conditions	3.35	3.49
work with counterparts	2.41	2.53
use the language needed	2.29	3.37
perform technical aspects of work	2.60	2.79
work with project goals and objectives	2.33	2.83
use PACA principles	1.70	2.46
maintain your physical health	3.35	3.66
maintain your mental/emotional health	3.11	3.31
maintain your personal safety and security	3.28	3.67

Source: 2004 Peace Corps Volunteer Survey: South Africa, PPA, Peace Corps, 2005.
* 1-5 scale, 1=Not Effective and 5=Very Effective

For the most recent PST, Volunteers and staff identified additional difficulties such as:

- The Trainee input increased from 55 Trainees in two inputs in FY 2004 to one input of 87 Trainees in FY 2005 (the IPBS calculated an increase to 80 Trainees for FY2005).[22] According to Volunteers, the training events were "crowd control" rather than learning opportunities.
- The post hired a training manager just prior to the beginning of PST who had no previous experience with the Peace Corps or with conducting Peace Corps training events. The training manager was responsible for 87 Trainees in addition to supervising (and training) approximately 20 temporary and inexperienced trainers who were also unfamiliar with the Peace Corps.
- Lack of adequate monitoring and supervision of the training by the post's staff. According to Volunteers, "PC/South Africa staff arrived at the training center in time for their presentation and left promptly after." Volunteers indicated that the post staff was "unavailable" and therefore was not aware of the extent of the problems with the PST.
- Insufficient resources to conduct PST. As stated in a draft report of the PST review: "Peace Corps seems to have allocated the same amount of support resources as the last time when 30% [fewer] of the 2005 group was trained."[23]

The part-time nature of the training staff and the inadequate preparation resulted in predictable staff attrition. The draft report noted: "... the 2005 PST was run without reserves and ran a risk of being seriously thrown into disarray." Additionally,

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[22] Integrated Planning and Budget Submission FY2006-2008, Peace Corps/South Africa, April 2005, p.21.
[23] Draft Report, PST for SA XIV, 18th August 2005 to 13th October, 2005. PC/South Africa, 2005.

agreements with training staff had not been completed by the time the Trainees arrived: "This year's training was marred by contracts that were postponed until too late."[24]

The Volunteers described the PST as chaotic and frustrating with the staff at all levels unresponsive to the questions and concerns expressed by the Trainees. Volunteers reported long periods of time spent waiting for events. Scheduled events frequently did not occur—either on schedule or not at all. There did not appear to be a contingency plan for the inevitable delays or cancellations. Volunteers reported that neither the training staff nor the permanent staff followed up with the Trainees to effect a resolution to the situation.

The disorderly schedules and lack of transportation support for the PST endangered many Trainees, whose homestay families were located at some distance from the training center and resulted in travel after dark. The draft report also notes that: ". . . two mini-buses with a combined capacity of 32 seats, served over a hundred people." The report states that PST supplies were brought in from the capital city that was 3.5 hours away from the PST site and required many trips totaling several days' use of a vehicle. Additionally, supporting the medical needs of Volunteers often occupied the second vehicle at the nearest clinic 30 minutes away. This left no emergency transportation support for the training staff and the Trainees for extended periods of time.

<u>Language learning is not a training priority; the language staff is not adequately prepared</u>.

The goal of PST language training was to prepare the Trainees to function in the language relevant to their living and working environment, to facilitate the acquisition of technical and safety and security language competencies, to attain the minimum language level of intermediate-low in the target language, and to equip Trainees with the capacity to continue language learning after PST.

There are 11 official languages in South Africa, and nine of these languages are indigenous. It is difficult to find one province to host the PST where all nine indigenous languages are spoken. For 2005, the staff expected to place Volunteers in four provinces where seven indigenous languages are spoken, and the post chose PST communities that offered Trainees the opportunity to learn six indigenous languages.

Table 4: Effectiveness of Language Learning in PST

How effective was the PST in preparing you to use the language of your community?	Not Effective %	Effective %	Very Effective %	NA %
SA 14	70	26	2	2
SA 13	50	17	17	17
SA 12	33	61	6	--
Average	61	33	4	3

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, 2006
*Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

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[24] Ibid.

As indicated in Table 4, 61% of the Volunteers rated the language training "not effective." Specifically, 70% of the SA 14 training class rated language training as "not effective." Responding to another question: "How effective was the PST in preparing you to continue language learning on your own?" 78% of the Volunteers rated the training as "not effective;" 81% of the SA 14 class also rated the training to continue language learning as "not effective." Volunteers expressed confusion about contradictions presented by Peace Corps about language learning; Volunteers expressed their belief that staff pays "lip-service" to learning the language and provided poor quality language training.

While most of the Volunteers spoke positively about the language and cross-cultural facilitators, many indicated that the instructors were not sufficiently prepared, lacked supporting materials, and did not have a standardized curriculum. The post had not arranged for back-up teachers to be available, so that when the language and cross-cultural coordinator resigned, another language instructor doubled as coordinator while additionally maintaining responsibility for a class. Volunteers reported that language instruction was frequently cancelled. For a two-week period, there were no language classes at all because of site visits and other activities. Additionally, Volunteers reported that language sessions scheduled for Saturdays frequently were canceled.

An additional problem was that the communities in which Trainees were placed did not have homestay families from the language and culture of the prospective communities where the Trainees were to serve as Volunteers. For one language learning group, the Trainees developed their own learning aids with language achievement that surpassed the expectations of the staff.[25] During the visits to their new sites, some Trainees discovered they were learning the wrong language. Trainees also learned that most everyone in their host village wants to speak English. Furthermore, Trainees learned that the teachers in the primary schools must use English in the latter years of the primary school curriculum.

Consequently, 46% of the Volunteers reported they spoke the language used by most of the people in their neighborhoods "not at all" or "poorly" although only 14% of the Volunteers reported they were "not at all" or "poorly" integrated into their communities.[26]

Volunteers expressed the need for assistance in continuing language learning after PST, because the site preparation process does not always verify the predominant languages of a community and some Volunteers' work requires they interact with multiple language groups. While the post supports continued language learning for the Volunteers by reimbursing the cost of a language tutor for 18 months of service,[27] Volunteers state that it is difficult to find a language tutor to teach the indigenous languages, and the lack of

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[25] Draft Report, PST for SA XIV, 18th August 2005 to 13th October, 2005. PC/South Africa, 2005.

[26] In the Peace Corps 2004 Volunteer Survey, 9.6% of the Volunteers reported they were "not at all" or "poorly" integrated into their communities and 65% reported the spoke the language "not at all" or "poorly."

[27] Peace Corps South Africa Volunteer Handbook, October 2005, p. 42.

language instruction materials hampers the effectiveness of tutoring as a method of continuing language learning. A review of the most recent in-service (IST) and mid-service training (MST) schedules reveals that no language learning opportunities are provided during these training events.

The technical training for the education project does not prepare Volunteers for their role.

As demonstrated in Table 5, education Volunteers are not satisfied with their technical training. The SA 14 education Volunteers point to the poor organization of their training and considered their technical training to be exceptionally disorganized. Overall, 57% of the education Volunteers consider technical training "not effective."

Table 5: Effectiveness of PST Technical Training

How effective was the PST in preparing you to perform the technical aspects of your work?	Not Effective %	Effective %	Very Effective %	NA %
Schools and Community Resources	57	41	--	2
NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration	23	68	5	5
Average	48	48	1	2

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, 2006
*Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

Volunteers and staff cite a number of reasons for this deficiency. Most importantly, staff acknowledged that a technical training coordinator is necessary to manage the education technical training.[28] According to the PST technical training agenda, the Trainees attend lecture sessions, observe classes at local primary schools, visit education Volunteers close to the training site, conduct demonstration lessons in the local primary schools, visit and observe classes at a demonstration school, and conduct workshops for the teachers in the local primary schools—all activities that require significant coordination.

The most recent group of education Volunteers (SA 14) were more dissatisfied than previous years' Volunteers in the same project. Seventy-two percent of SA 14 education Volunteers indicated technical training was "not effective;" in comparison, 28% of the SA 12 education Volunteers rated their technical training as "not effective," and 33% of the SA 13 Volunteers also rated the technical training as " not effective." The SA 14 education Trainees reported they circulated petitions, sent letters to staff, proposed alternative plans or solutions, and submitted offers of assistance to the training manager with no response or support from the country director.

Volunteers stated that although APCDs did try to address training deficiencies when they became aware of the difficulties in the technical training, staff was not sufficiently involved in PST to compensate for the overall lack of substance and poor coordination. Some training sessions delivered by current Volunteers were poorly prepared and not coordinated with the training curriculum. While the Volunteer trainers were helpful and

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[28] Draft Report, PST for SA XIV, 18th August 2005 to 13th October, 2005. PC/South Africa, 2005.

gave information regarding adjustment and cross-cultural issues, the Trainees complained that Volunteer trainers often repeated information and were not a good substitute for experienced South African presenters.

As a result, SA 14 Volunteers began their Peace Corps service preoccupied with the failure of PST to prepare them for their role at site. One APCD observed, "The SA 14 Volunteers are angry and resentful." In anticipation of the next in-service training, the SA 14 education Volunteers reported they were ready to "walk" if the IST was as disorganized and unproductive as the PST had been.

According to Volunteers, the APCDs did make the effort to identify what the Volunteers needed to feel more competent in their role, and the APCDs addressed those technical issues in the planning and implementation of the IST. All of the SA 14 education Volunteers who responded to the OIG questionnaire rated the subsequent in-service training (IST) as "effective" or "very effective." Volunteers told us that the education APCDs who coordinated the IST ensured that the training events began and ended on schedule, provided qualified and prepared facilitators, sought feedback from the Volunteers daily, and adjusted the training schedule to accommodate the needs of the Volunteers.

<u>Pre-service training did not address the Afrikaner and Indian cultures or languages.</u>

The PST model uses a rural setting that is representative of the predominant population; however, the NGOs, the municipal bureaucracies, and the educational staff often represent other ethnic groups of South African society. While the PST setting introduces the Trainees to several different ethnic languages and cultures, PST does not address other major language and cultural entities of South Africa. Chief among these are the Afrikaners who have a distinct cultural heritage and history as well as a different language. Volunteers also report that they interact and live with other racial and cultural groups, such as ethnic Indians.

According to the Volunteers, the training staff showed a video about the history of South Africa. There was only one presentation about the "culture of oppression," but Volunteers described an attitude of tacit disregard by the training and program staff that the Afrikaner language and culture have value. Trainees were led to believe that either the Afrikaner culture is not that different as compared to American culture or that it does not merit being addressed. According to the APCD for the NGO capacity building project, there is no staff currently available that is qualified to address the Afrikaner culture adequately.

All Volunteers reported that they are confused and embarrassed by the openly racist statements that they often encounter. For NGO capacity building Volunteers, the need to understand and interact with Afrikaner supervisors and colleagues is problematic. Volunteers who interact with the Afrikaners report feeling uncomfortable; as one Volunteer summarized: "my integrity is forfeited in the interest of showing some cultural sensitivity to Afrikaner culture and at the same time maintaining a productive working

relationship." Education Volunteers report their own integration in the rural and predominantly black communities raises skepticism and criticism from Afrikaner and Indian shopkeepers, colleagues, or neighbors which they find difficult to counteract in a culturally sensitive way.

As a result, not only did Volunteers feel unprepared to deal with the Afrikaner culture and the urban environment but also that PC/South Africa risks the good will of a critical population segment in the capacity building project. The consultant retained by PC/South Africa to conduct a review of the NGO capacity building project stated in her report: "Some project partners perceived the PCV as being outspoken, blunt, rude, and arrogant ..."[29]

Table 6: Effectiveness of PST Cross-cultural Training

How effective was the PST in preparing you to adjust to cultural differences?	Not Effective %	Effective %	Very Effective %	NA %
Schools and Community Resources	18	72	10	--
NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration	36	55	5	5
Average	23	68	8	2

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, 2006
*Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

As demonstrated in Table 6, twice the proportion of NGO capacity building Volunteers as compared to education Volunteers found the cross-cultural training to be "not effective." According to NGO capacity building Volunteers, the first disadvantage was the setting in a rural village—which is not the typical setting for the NGO capacity building Volunteers—as they work and live in urban areas.

Due to weak PST, Volunteers begin their service seriously disadvantaged and are unable to effectively address the mission of Peace Corps. They are not sufficiently prepared to begin their assignment. They are not adequately equipped to integrate into the community with appropriate cross-cultural understanding and language skills.

At the time of our review, the post took the first important step to address the training deficiencies by appointing a permanent training manager who had Peace Corps experience and background in Peace Corps training events.

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[29] Mid-term Evaluation, U.S. Peace Corps South Africa, HIV/AIDS NGO Capacity Building Project, August 2004, p. 10.

We recommend:

5. **That the region assist the post to address the pre-service training deficiencies by providing budget resources to appropriately staff training events, to support a comprehensive training of trainers (TOT), and to support a longer PST.**

6. **That the post immediately provide training for the training manager.**

7. **That the post provide on-going language learning skills and resources in pre-service training and in subsequent training programs.**

8. **That the post improve the Schools and Community Resources project's technical training.**

9. **That the APCDs' job description/performance plan include responsibilities for PST curriculum design, regular attendance at PST sessions to monitor content and quality of technical training, and final assessment of Trainees' technical competencies.**

10. **That the post include instruction on Afrikaner and Indian languages and cultures in the PST curriculum.**

Safety and Security

Crime in South Africa is violent with the highest rate of rape in the world, South Africa was ranked first for murder by firearm (both absolute and per capita) and rape per capita and robberies committed with a knife or gun.[30] Not only is theft a commonly reported incident by Volunteers, but Volunteers witness domestic violence against women and corporal punishment in the schools on a daily basis.

According to the country director, some of the female Volunteers have difficulty modifying their behavior to keep themselves safe in an environment in which sexual assault is common. To help improve Volunteer safety and the post's ability to respond to incidents, the post requires Volunteers to have cell phones. According to the country director, incident reports indicate that Volunteers who have been in South Africa over a year take more risks.

Volunteer responses to the OIG questionnaire concerning feelings of safety confirm that most feel safe except when traveling and in the city where the Peace Corps office is located. Eleven percent of the Volunteers report they feel "not at all safe" or "often unsafe" in the communities where they live. More Volunteers report they feel "very safe" where they work. However, slightly fewer Volunteers report they are feeling safe

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[30] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa

where they live and where they work in 2006 compared to the same questions asked of the Volunteers in 2004.[31] See Table 7.

Table 7: Volunteers' Assessment of Safety 2004 and 2006

How safe do you feel …?	Not at All Safe %		Often Unsafe %		Adequately Safe %		Usually Safe %		Very Safe %	
	2004	2006	2004	2006	2004	2006	2004	2006	2004	2006
In your home?	**	--	**	4	**	24	**	32	**	39
In the community where you live?	--	3	10	9	20	27	35	52	35	10
Where you work?	--	--	2	--	15	24	31	27	52	50
When you travel?	4	1	18	16	50	54	26	28	2	--
In the city where the Peace Corps office is located?	7	4	24	29	43	57	23	10	2	--

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, 2006
*Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.
** 2004 data not available

The safety and security needs of urban-placed NGO capacity building Volunteers are not sufficiently addressed.

Assignment locations of the NGO capacity building Volunteers are predominantly in urban or peri-urban areas. The NGO capacity building Volunteers stated to us that the lack of adequate safety and security support for them begins during PST which is set in a rural village. While the Volunteers appreciate the cultural experience, they feel the situation does not prepare them adequately for the realities of the urban environment. See Table 8.

Table 8: Effectiveness of PST to Maintain Safety and Security

How effective was the PST in preparing you to maintain your personal safety and security?	Not Effective %	Effective %	Very Effective %	NA %
Schools and Community Resources	5	72	21	2
NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration	36	59	5	--
Average	13	69	17	1

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, 2006
*Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

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[31] The Peace Corps 2004 Volunteer Survey: South Africa, 2005, p. 34.

During interviews, the NGO capacity building Volunteers also indicated that the poor management of the PST compelled Trainees to violate safety and security advice given to them; they reported that Trainees were forced to travel to homestay locations after dark due to poor scheduling; Trainees were not provided with adequate and safe transportation, or were not instructed how to manage the public transportation system. As one Volunteer stated: "It [PST] . . . put people in more danger than even the dumbest of us would have put themselves in."

The NGO capacity building project site preparation process does not assure housing is available for the Volunteers when they arrive at site.

Housing for the Volunteer is provided by the host agency for both the NGO capacity building and education projects. For the education Volunteers, housing is found by the school and community representatives and is provided by a local host family in the village. For the NGO capacity building Volunteers, who are often placed in urban settings, housing is found and funded by the sponsoring NGO agency. The APCD for the NGO capacity building project stated that supervisors often offer to provide housing but that having Volunteers live with supervisors is undesirable. Some NGOs with more resources pay rent for the Volunteers' housing, which, according to the APCD, amounts to less than the cost of an employee. The APCD explained that providing housing is a proxy for a commitment from the NGO and is a selection criterion. Depending on the resources of the NGO, housing conditions for the Volunteers vary.

Eighty-six percent of the education Volunteers indicated that housing was available immediately; however, 50% of the NGO Volunteers stated that arrangements for housing were not completed for three months or more after they arrived at site.[32] Of the Volunteers responding to the OIG questionnaire, 53% (56% of the education Volunteers and 46% of the NGO capacity building Volunteers) indicated they were satisfied with the procedure for finding housing, and 58% of the Volunteers stated that a Peace Corps staff member had inspected their housing before they arrived. Twenty-seven percent of the NGO capacity building Volunteers reported they found their own housing, compared to only 5% of the education Volunteers indicating they found their own housing. In response to the OIG question, "Did you receive a checklist to assure that your house met certain standards?" 61% of education Volunteers responded "Yes," compared to 32% of the NGO capacity building Volunteers.

Volunteers reported that when they returned from the PST site visit, some of the NGO capacity building Volunteers did not have housing. After the Volunteers moved permanently to site, many did not have housing for several weeks. As new Volunteers in unfamiliar surroundings, many Volunteers felt that the unresolved housing situation placed them unnecessarily at risk. Unlike the education Volunteers in the village setting where they are known by the entire community, the NGO capacity building Volunteers state they are not recognized nor protected by their neighbors. In response to the question "During your first month at site, were you introduced to the village or town leaders or the

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[32] In the Peace Corps 2004 Volunteer Survey, 71.1% of the Volunteers reported their housing was available immediately compared to 76.6% of the Volunteers answering the 2006 OIG questionnaire.

local police?" 68% of the education Volunteers, as compared to 35% of the capacity building Volunteers, reported they had been introduced to the local police, and 78% of the education Volunteers, compared to 27% of the NGO capacity building Volunteers, stated they had been introduced to the village or town leaders.

We found that housing for some of the NGO capacity building Volunteers in urban settings located on NGO sponsoring agency facilities was isolated from the surrounding area, inadequately cleared of growth, insufficiently lighted at night, or with defective fencing. Of particular concern were single female Volunteers who remained in an isolated urban environment at night and during the weekend when host country colleagues went home.

<u>The scheduling of the PST that places Volunteers at site during the school and national holiday season encourages violations of the out-of-site policy</u>.

Fifty-two percent of the education Volunteers, compared to 18% of the NGO capacity building Volunteers who responded to the OIG questionnaire, reported that they could not begin work immediately upon arrival at site; they reported that three months or more passed before they began work on their primary assignment. The scheduling of PST creates a long delay before Volunteers can begin work. The schedule for the SA 14 Trainees included the following key events:

- August 18, 2005: SA 14 Trainees arrive in South Africa
- October 13, 2005: SA 14 group swearing in ceremony
- November 2005: year-end examinations in South African schools
- December 16, 2005 - January 16, 2006: Christmas and New Year's holidays

Because school is either not in session or in the process of conducting pre-scheduled examinations, Volunteers have little to occupy their time and are only beginning to develop friendships in their host villages. While Volunteers acknowledge that their host families tried their best, it is difficult and often uncomfortable to incorporate a new person into family holiday activities and traditions. Volunteers reported this was an especially difficult and uncomfortable period of time for those who were spending their first Thanksgiving and Christmas season away from home. The office staff also took advantage of the holiday, and the Volunteers assumed that staff was not available to them.

As a result, Volunteers we interviewed stated that many SA 14 Volunteers flouted the out-of-site policy that requires them to remain at site for the first 90 days of service and, instead, gathered for holiday celebrations with Volunteer friends without informing the PC/South Africa office.[33]

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[33] Peace Corps South Africa Volunteer Handbook, October 2005, p. 52.

The post's incident follow-up procedure is not responsive to the Volunteer's concerns.

Volunteers who responded to the OIG questionnaire reported incidents they experienced within the past year. Forty-one Volunteers or 49% of those who responded reported multiple incidents of harassment, and only six Volunteers indicated they reported these incidents to the Peace Corps office. Of the 32 incidents of theft reported to us, 10 Volunteers indicated they did not report the thefts to Peace Corps; eight Volunteers reported being assaulted and two stated they did not report the assaults to Peace Corps.

Table 9: Safety and Security Incident Reporting

Incident Category	Number of Incidents	Reported to Peace Corps	Not Reported to Peace Corps
Harassment	41 Volunteers (multiple incidents)	6 Volunteers	34 Volunteers
Theft	32	22	10
Assaults	8	6	2

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, 2006

Of the Volunteers who did not report incidents to the Peace Corps office, most stated the incidents were resolved with the perpetrator within the family or school setting where the incident occurred. The Volunteers who reported incidents indicated that they completed the appropriate reports to Peace Corps, but felt there was no further follow-up by the Peace Corps staff; others described the response from Peace Corps as delayed, indifferent, or even accusing the Volunteer of being inappropriately out of site or otherwise responsible for the incident. While all Volunteers responding to the OIG questionnaire reported knowing the procedure for reporting crimes and also knowing to whom to report crimes, many indicated a reluctance to report crimes in the future.

During interviews, some of the older volunteers expressed concern about alcohol abuse among the younger Volunteers. Twenty-nine percent of the Volunteers responding to the OIG questionnaire also expressed this concern. These Volunteers believe that while most of their colleagues do not drink while at their site, they are concerned that the Peace Corps staff has little understanding of the extent of the alcohol abuse when Volunteers congregate. Among the staff, we learned that the PCMOs acknowledged the need to address alcohol abuse more directly and planned to modify the PST presentation significantly in the future.

The leave and out-of-site policies are a source of contention.

Twenty-two percent of the Volunteers who responded to the OIG questionnaire reported they did not understand the out-of-site policy, and 17% indicated they did not understand the annual leave policy. The official out-of-site policy presented in the Volunteer handbook includes a two-day weekend without annual leave penalty if the Volunteer informs site supervisor or APCD. The policy states:

PCVs may take up to two (2) days on the weekend away from their site, once per month without having those days counted as Annual Leave days. A weekend begins after work on Friday and ends at sunset on Sunday.[34]

However, the country director indicated this stated policy is incomplete. At the time of our visit, Volunteers discussed rumors of further policy changes that would forbid weekend travel to begin before 5:00 p.m. on Friday. The new rule would limit weekend travel to one night away from site. This rule, they opined, if implemented, benefited the education Volunteers for whom the work day ended at 2:00 p.m. allowing them to complete travel within daylight hours. On the other hand, the work hours of the capacity building Volunteers prevents leaving the work site before 5:00 p.m.

Education Volunteers who wanted to collaborate with other Volunteers to plan or implement joint projects expressed confusion about the parameters of work-related travel opportunities. The policy, as the Volunteer handbook states, requires "approval from the APCD." However, Volunteers complained that the staff limited work-related travel to visiting other Volunteer(s) within an undefined radius of the traveling Volunteer's site. Rumors, speculation, and dissatisfaction fueled further confusion. Volunteers indicated that, as a result, they were less inclined to be truthful about asking permission to travel in order to collaborate with their Volunteer peers.

<u>Volunteers and staff knew the timing of the "unannounced" emergency action plan test in advance</u>.

Ninety-eight percent of the Volunteers responding to the OIG questionnaire stated they had not experienced a test of the emergency action plan. During the OIG visit, the post scheduled and initiated a test of the emergency action plan to verify the effectiveness of consolidation procedures. During our interviews, Volunteers told us that they had learned when the "unannounced" test would be conducted. According to the Volunteers, the staff hinted for some time that the test was imminent. Knowing the hotels selected as their consolidation points, a Volunteer posed as a Peace Corps staff member, called a hotel, and confirmed the date for which the reservations had been made. A relay of cell phone messages informed Volunteers of the test date well in advance.

Staff members knew the date and time of the proposed test. They reported there was careful planning and training of the staff members prior to the test. The planning assured that staff was prepared for their role. There was no element of surprise or emergency for the staff.

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[34] Peace Corps South Africa Volunteer Handbook, October 2005, pp. 50-56.

> **We recommend:**
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> **11. That the post revise the safety and security pre-service training curriculum to encompass the needs of Volunteers placed in urban assignments.**
>
> **12. That the post follow up with host agencies to assure that housing is available when the Volunteers arrive at site.**
>
> **13. That the post provide the Volunteers with a checklist to verify that the housing is safe.**
>
> **14. That the post adjust the pre-service training schedule to reduce the extended period of Volunteer inactivity.**
>
> **15. That the post implement a consistent follow-up procedure to incident reports that provides emotional support for Volunteers.**
>
> **16. That the post clarify its out-of-site and leave policy guidelines.**
>
> **17. That the post conduct tests of the emergency action plan without advanced warning to the Volunteers.**

Volunteer Support

Issues not sufficiently addressed prior to the Volunteer's arrival at site complicate the role of the staff providing Volunteer support. The deficiencies described in this report such as inappropriate Volunteer selection, poorly executed pre-service training, inadequate language and cross-cultural preparation, weak technical training, insufficient site preparation—all place an unreasonable burden on the Volunteers for the success of their experience; the staff's responsibilities for support are commensurately increased to assist the Volunteers having difficulties.

With some exceptions, Volunteers report in the OIG questionnaire they are basically "satisfied" with Volunteer support. (See Table 10.) As stated earlier in this report, Volunteers are most dissatisfied with the lack of support from staff for continued language learning, but about one-fourth of the Volunteers also are "not satisfied" with financial support and technical support.

Table 10. Volunteers' Assessment of Staff Support

Are you satisfied with the support provided by Peace Corps staff in your country for	Not Satisfied %	Satisfied %	Very Satisfied %	N. A %
1. finding and keeping a viable job that matches your Volunteer assignment?	12	56	22	10
2. adapting to cultural situations	19	47	12	22
3. continuing your language learning?.	57	29	--	13
3. financial and logistical matters?	27	61	6	6
4. medical care?	11	56	29	4
5. emotional support?	18	55	9	18
6. safety and security measures?	15	54	20	12
7. technical advice or feedback about your work?	24	48	15	13

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, 2006
*Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

However, these results may be misleading. The Volunteers responding "not applicable" explained during interviews that support from the staff is not "expected;" these Volunteers who responded with "not applicable" do not expect or require the staff to respond to their needs and requests -- they are more likely to address problems themselves or to seek help from fellow Volunteers. One Volunteer stated. "There is not much support asked for and not much received." Another stated: "I don't think Peace Corps knows what we do here. It is as though the Volunteers are invisible to the staff." Applying this interpretation to the data in Table 10, one-third or more of the Volunteers may be either "not satisfied" or would not seek assistance from the staff in most support categories. When Volunteers were asked if the office is "Volunteer friendly," 60% responded "yes;" but there was a variation of responses between projects: 70% of education Volunteers responded affirmatively whereas only 33% of the capacity building Volunteers responded positively.

<u>Volunteers in the education project are not satisfied with technical feedback and support</u>.

Of the Volunteers responding to the OIG questionnaire, 32% of the education Volunteers report they are "not satisfied" with technical advice and feedback compared to one (5%) of the NGO capacity building Volunteers. However, 13% of the NGO capacity building Volunteers and 14% of the education Volunteers responded "not applicable" to the same question. The combined proportion of education Volunteers "not satisfied" or declining to seek assistance is almost one-half (46%). See Table 11.

Table 11. Volunteers' Assessment of Technical Support

Are you satisfied with the support provided by Peace Corps staff in your country for technical advice or feedback about your work?	Not Satisfied %	Satisfied %	Very Satisfied %	N. A %
Schools and Community Resources	32	43	12	13
NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration	5	59	23	14
Average	24	48	15	13

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, 2006
*Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

Both staff and Volunteers identified the lack of adequate resources and lack of sufficient staff for the education project as the major cause of deficiencies in technical support. The SA 12 Volunteers reported their PST was reduced to six weeks from eight weeks, and their IST was cancelled entirely. For an extended period of time, there was only one APCD during a time that the education Trainee input increased from approximately 17 Volunteers in January 2005 to 40 education Volunteers a year later.

During that period, the APCD for the NGO capacity building project assisted in the support of the education Volunteers while also supporting the capacity building Volunteers. The country director reported that when she arrived in October 2004, she found two APCDs managing 120 Volunteers and 33 Trainees. A third APCD position to support education Volunteers had been eliminated. She reported that the APCDs were stressed and overwhelmed. The country director emphasized that an "informal survey" comparing the staff to Volunteer ratio at other posts, shows the ratio to be one staff for every 3.5 Volunteers, whereas in South Africa, the ratio is one staff for every 6.5 Volunteers.

Eighty-six percent of the Volunteers reported that the APCDs had made site visits. The education Volunteers thought that the objectives for the site visits were sometimes unclear; the contents of the site visit were vague and the results of the visit were inconclusive. Unless specifically initiated by the Volunteer, there was little discussion about their work or assignment. However, the Volunteers who had difficulties with their work or site and told us they asked for assistance, also told us that the APCDs were responsive and often made multiple visits until the problems were resolved.

<u>The NGO capacity building Volunteers need more support for cultural adaptation and safety and security</u>.

More NGO capacity building Volunteers expressed a need for support "adapting to cultural situations" and for "safety and security measures" than education Volunteers. More NGO capacity building Volunteers expressed dissatisfaction with staff support as compared to education Volunteers. Thirty-six percent of the NGO capacity building Volunteers responding to the OIG questionnaire, as compared to 12% of the education Volunteers, were dissatisfied with assistance for cultural issues. However, combining the 35% of dissatisfied NGO capacity building Volunteers with the 23% who responded "not applicable," a total of 59% of NGO capacity building Volunteers were "not satisfied" or

did not seek or require staff assistance, as compared to a total of 34% of the education Volunteers. See Table 12.

Table 12. Volunteers' Assessment of Cultural Support

Are you satisfied with the support provided by Peace Corps staff in your country for adapting to cultural situations?	Not Satisfied %	Satisfied %	Very Satisfied %	N. A %
Schools and Community Resources	12	53	14	22
NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration	36	32	9	23
Average	19	47	12	22

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, 2006
*Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

Compared to the education Volunteers, a greater proportion of NGO capacity building Volunteers reported that they are "not satisfied" with the staff support for safety and security measures. Thirty-two percent of the NGO capacity building Volunteers were "not satisfied," as compared to 8% of the education Volunteers. In contrast, only 9% of the NGO capacity building Volunteers, as compared to 22% of the education Volunteers, reported that they were "not satisfied" with the staff for emotional support. Thirty-six percent of the NGO capacity building Volunteers, as compared to 12% of the education Volunteers, expressed dissatisfaction with the staff support in helping them to adapt to cultural differences. The dissatisfaction of NGO capacity building Volunteers concerning staff assistance with cross-cultural issues appears to be a persistent and consistent concern. See Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13. Volunteers' Assessment of Support for Safety and Security

Are you satisfied with the support provided by Peace Corps staff in your country for safety and security measures?	Not Satisfied %	Satisfied %	Very Satisfied %	N. A %
Schools and Community Resources	8	53	25	13
NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration	32	55	5	9
Average	15	54	20	12

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, 2006
*Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

Table 14. Volunteers' Assessment of Emotional Support by Staff

Are you satisfied with the support provided by Peace Corps staff in your country for emotional support?. . . .	Not Satisfied %	Satisfied %	Very Satisfied %	N. A %
Schools and Community Resources	22	48	10	20
NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration	9	73	5	12
All PC/South Africa Volunteers	18	55	9	18

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, 2006
* Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

<u>The NGO capacity building Volunteers reported their living allowance to be insufficient</u>.

Volunteers who responded to the OIG questionnaire have two opportunities to express their level of satisfaction with the living allowance. In both instances, about one-half of the NGO capacity building Volunteers indicated that they are not satisfied with the living allowance. Seventeen percent of the education Volunteers stated they were "not satisfied" with the support received in financial and logistical matters compared to 55% of the NGO capacity building Volunteers. When asked "Does your living allowance meet your basic needs?" 55% of the NGO capacity building Volunteers answered negatively, as compared to 39% of the education Volunteers.

All Volunteers receive the same amount of living allowance. There is a variation in the amount of money allocated for travel, depending on the distance of the Volunteer from the capital city.[35] All the Volunteers, as well as many staff members, confirmed that costs of transportation have increased over the past year, although most education Volunteers stated that, if they seldom travel, their living allowance is sufficient.

The NGO capacity building Volunteers believe that the cost of living is significantly greater in the urban areas; capacity building Volunteers state their basic food expenses are greater in the urban areas as compared to the education Volunteers who usually live with families and often share meals with their host families. Depending on the distance the NGO capacity building Volunteers live from their sponsoring agency's office, some have additional travel expenses getting to and from work.

The country director agreed that transportation costs have increased and that the urban Volunteers may qualify for an increase in their living allowance. The country director asked the Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC) to assist in the distribution and promotion of the survey.

<u>Medically accommodated Volunteers affect the staff's ability to deliver quality Volunteer support</u>.

Because of the high quality of medical services available in South Africa, PC/South Africa has received a large proportion of medical accommodation Volunteers. A review of the number of medically accommodated Volunteers sent to South Africa shows that the number and proportion of medically accommodated Volunteers varied from year to year. In 2003, 37 (46%) of PC/South Africa's Trainees were medically accommodated, in 2004 the number was 32 (45%), and in 2005 it was 32 (36%).[36]

Medical accommodations are a special concern of the program staff in PC/South Africa. The post identified the need to support Volunteers as the highest priority in the FY 2006 - 2008 IPBS primarily to respond to the needs of the medically accommodated Volunteers.[37] The IPBS notes the need to increase services available at the post; to

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[35] Peace Corps South Africa Volunteer Handbook, PC/South Africa, October 2005, p. 33.
[36] Data provided of Medical Screening Unit, Office of Medical Services, Peace Corps, April 2006.
[37] IPBS South Africa, FY2006-2008, April 2005, p. 7.

improve the training of staff, counterparts, and host organizations; to take more time and staff effort to seek and prepare appropriate sponsoring agencies; and to provide on-going support for special needs of the medically accommodated Volunteers. The NGO capacity building project status report noted the difficulties of supporting medically accommodated Volunteers:

> These Volunteers have a significant impact on the efficacy of the Project, require a great deal of attention from the APCD and other members of staff, and create a unsatisfactory impression of Peace Corps with partners and host organizations. . . . .This year, three partner organizations asked that their Volunteers be removed. . .[38]

According to the APCD for the NGO capacity building project, while the behavior of these Volunteers may not be severe enough to warrant an administrative separation, the overall impact of supporting the medically accommodated Volunteers on the staff is adverse. Consultations with the PCMOs indicated that the medically accommodated Volunteers, while requiring attention to maintain medication regimens, do not pose a particular problem for medical support.

The combination of inexperienced program staff, increased numbers of Volunteers, the post's decision to accept only one Trainee input annually, and managing both projects in stages of change is a complex staff challenge. The program staff understands that Peace Corps is obligated to provide "reasonable accommodation" to deserving Volunteers, but are concerned that the post is not prepared to *reasonably* support them.[39]

<u>Volunteer satisfaction with the quality of medical care improved from 2004 to 2006</u>.

The post's medical unit is administered by two PCMOs -- both physicians. One of the PCMOs is a trained psychiatrist. Both have worked for the post for a few months. There are two opportunities for the Volunteers to assess the quality of medical care. In Table 10, only 11% indicate they are "not satisfied" with medical care. A similar question in the Peace Corps 2004 Volunteer Survey and the OIG questionnaire shows that only 4% of the Volunteers responding to the OIG questionnaire in 2006 rated the medical care from their PCMOs as "very poor" or "poor," as compared to the 16% of Volunteers

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[38] Project Status Report, NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration Project, October 2005, p. 22.

[39] Peace Corps Manual section 305.2c states: "<u>Medical Status</u> The applicant must, with reasonable accommodation, have the physical and mental capacity required of a Volunteer to perform the essential functions of the Peace Corps Volunteer assignment for which he or she is otherwise eligible, and be able to complete an agreed upon tour of service, ordinarily two years, without unreasonable disruption due to health problems.
In determining what is a reasonable accommodation, the Peace Corps may take into account the adequacy of local medical facilities. In determining whether an accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the Peace Corps, factors to be considered include:
1. the overall size of the Peace Corps program with respect to the number of employees and/or Volunteers, size of budget, and size and composition of staff at post of assignment,
2. the nature and cost of the accommodation, and
3. the capacity of the host country agency to which the applicant would be assigned to provide any special accommodation necessary for the applicant to carry out the assignment."

responding to Peace Corps 2004 Volunteer Survey who rated medical care "poor" or "very poor." See Table 15.

PC/South Africa has one of the highest percentages of older Volunteers in the Peace Corps.[40] At the time of our review, 10% of the Volunteers were 50 years of age or older. South Africa's excellent medical care facilities and English-speaking environment make it a likely assignment for older or medically accommodated Volunteers.

Table 15: 2004 and 2006 Volunteer Assessment of Quality of Medical Care

How would you rate the quality of medical care you receive from Peace Corps medical staff?	Very Poor %	Poor %	Satisfactory %	Good %	Excellent %	NA %
2004 Peace Corps Volunteer Survey	1	15	34	27	23	--
2006 OIG Questionnaire	--	4	26	38	27	6

Source: The Peace Corps 2004 Volunteer Survey: South Africa, 2005
OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, 2006

We recommend:

18. That the post modify the policy and procedures for the conduct of site visits to include:
- **Substantive technical content.**
- **Sufficient time to communicate with supervisors and host families.**
- **Volunteer feedback on the usefulness of the site visit.**

19. That the region and the post monitor the number and type of medical accommodation Volunteers sent to PC/South Africa.

Leadership and Management

Complex organizational needs and resource reductions put the post and agency resources at risk.

We found the post to be a complex and busy management and administrative operation. The country director appears to have a comprehensive grasp of the major management issues at the post. Along with the normal operations of a Peace Corps post, PC/South Africa has the following additional management and financial burdens:

- In FY 2005, the post accepted a TI of 87 with a concomitant increase of Volunteers from 100 to 136 in country at the time of our review.

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[40] Peace Corps 2004 Volunteer Survey, Office of Planning, Policy, and Analysis, April 2005.

- The post supports staff with regional responsibilities including the APCMO, the medivac center PCMO, a Sub-Regional Programming and Training Coordinator (SRPTC), and soon a Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer.
- Recently, the country director and the APCD for the capacity building project assumed extensive participatory work with the embassy to implement the post's PEPFAR initiative.
- Historically, the post has been called on to frequently host Peace Corps conferences. Recently, the regional director has advised that he will not call on them for this in the near future.

Reductions in staff and insufficient training opportunities for staff reduced services to Volunteers and threatened the staff's ability to support Volunteers.

Throughout FY 2004 and FY 2005, the staff experienced reduced budget resources and a concomitant reduction in staff, influencing the efficiency and effectiveness of post operations.[41] The reduction in staff -- especially in the education project and in the medical unit -- compromised the support of the Volunteers. The quality of the pre-service training suffered. For example, the post reduced PST from eight weeks to six weeks and canceled Volunteer events such as an in-service training and a close of service conference. In addition, the prospect of a 30% increase in the number of Trainees entering training in one input as compared to two inputs annually meant that a smaller staff (one APCD in the education project) was responsible for selecting and preparing a greater number of sites. The poor performance of the most recent PST has jeopardized the experience of an entire class of Volunteers.

As resources became available, the post recruited and hired staff but without sufficient time and resources to train and support new staff members adequately. The new staff members feel at a distinct disadvantage, because there has been little training and the job descriptions do not clarify respective roles. New staff members reported they received little introduction or orientation to their positions. They said that their job responsibilities were unclear and appeared to change or were redefined without staff's understanding the rationale or objective. For example, APCDs reported lack of clarity about such issues as interpreting travel policies for the Volunteers they support, or for managing the content and presentation of technical training in the PST or in the IST.

The management style of the country director interferes with the staff's ability to work effectively.

According to many staff members, the country director does not provide important leadership attributes such as encouragement, delegation, staff mentoring, or coaching, and staff do not function effectively as a team in supporting the Volunteers. While the country director understands the management issues, her style of management is described as controlling, threatening, abrasive, and caustic. Staff members told us that all decisions seem to reside with the country director, and they are unsure of their own

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[41] Integrated Planning and Budget Submission FY2006-2008, Peace Corps/South Africa, April 2005.

authority or responsibility. The staff we interviewed told us they did not understand the budget process, what resources were available, or how to manage the limited resources that are available.

In addition, the staff reported episodes of the country director openly denigrating other staff. During interviews with 24 of the available 25 staff members (96%), over half (58%) reported that they felt threatened or fearful of harmful actions by the country director. The staff reported a range of complaints that included:

- Disrespectful and unfair treatment.
- Unprofessional behavior.
- Spreading of allegations and rumors to other staff.
- Threats to terminate contracts.
- Threats of being placed on leave without pay for not contributing money to a Christmas party .
- Preventing staff from obtaining new jobs.
- Calling a former staff a racist and firing/forcing the person out.
- Bias in favor of a few staff members and contempt for others.
- Yelling/throwing of papers.
- Dismissing temporary staff for personal reasons.

Many of the staff felt that these actions negatively affected their performance and caused undo stress and related mental and physical complaints. Staff morale is low. We believe that this situation undermines the post's ability to:

- Operate efficiently and effectively in the support of the Volunteers.
- Ensure reliability of its financial reporting.
- Comply with applicable laws and regulations.

There also is the perception of favoritism for the capacity building Volunteers compared to the education Volunteers. It appears to the staff that the activities financed by PEPFAR have the money to procure training resources, and other projects' activities are allowed to stagnate for lack of funds. The program and administrative staff is aware that there have been no regional meetings for their participation for some time; however, the safety and security staff, IT staff, and staff working on PEPFAR-funded activities have more frequent opportunities for training and peer consultation.

While the situation in the office is difficult for the staff, only a few Volunteers reported that they observed negative behavior by the country director. On the OIG questionnaire, only 21% replied that the effectiveness of the country director was "poor" or "very poor." Many of the SA 12 Volunteers told us that post operations are better – especially noting improvements in the medical support they experienced. Overall, we found that Volunteers expect little support from PC/South Africa office, are not inclined to consider consulting PC/South Africa staff for assistance or support, and make few demands of the staff. The SA 14 group expressed anger about their pre-service training and appears to have unified in their support of one another and in their resistance to management.

<u>The country director was reported to have intimidated the staff, violated ethical guidelines, and perpetrated false and damaging information about a dismissed employee</u>.

One incident, reported by staff, may contradict the agency's ethics guidelines; staff alleges that staff was threatened with being placed on leave without pay unless they contributed approximately R100 ($17) to the December 2005 Christmas party. The allegation was made by four staff members who stated they contributed the R100 because of the threat. This allegation was reported to the agency's Designated Agency Ethics Official on April 7, 2006.

In addition, members of the staff alleged that the country director instructed them not to cooperate with the OIG. This allegation was made by five staff members.

Finally, we observed the dismissal of a temporary staff member; the country director told us and told the staff that the embassy's assistant RSO had concerns about the employee's security clearance. We asked the assistant RSO for verification, and he said that he had not voiced any concern with the employee's security clearance.

We reported the management issues outlined in this report to the regional director. After our briefing, the regional director traveled to the post. The regional director informed the OIG of the steps he directed the PC/South Africa management and staff to take to attempt to resolve the problems.[42]

The post needs a country director who is focused on programming and Volunteer support. South Africa deserves the best program-focused country director the agency has. One existing resource that is not being used adequately is the Sub-Regional Programming and Training Coordinator (SRPTC).

We recommend:

20. That the region and the post identify a specific training plan for each staff member.

21. That the region stipulate corrective actions to address the problems with the country director.

22. That the country director submit quarterly reports to the regional director on the corrective actions.

23. That the region assign the SRPTC full-time to PC/South Africa for six months with a mandate to develop programs that can engage all the Volunteers invited to serve there in meaningful assignments for which they can be trained and supported, as needed.

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[42] Report on the South Africa Post, May 5, 2006.

Post Progress Since 1999

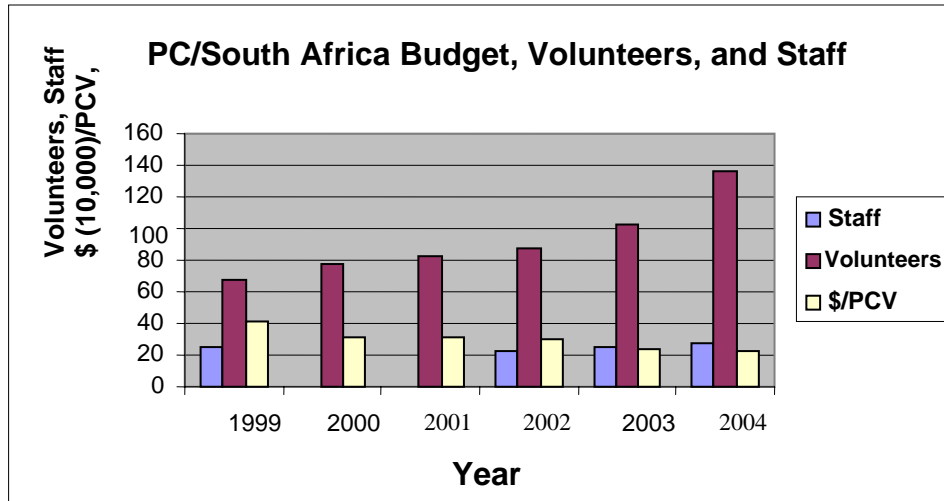Many findings described in the 1999 OIG report remain unresolved in 2006.

A review of the 1999 post audit and evaluation (IG-99-10-1) and the 2000 follow-up audit ((IG-00-14-1F) and program evaluation (IG-00-14-FE) demonstrates that PC/South Africa has made progress in some areas of concern; however, other deficiencies remain in 2006.

Since 1999, PC/South Africa has made improvements in areas of safety and security; the Volunteers reported feeling safer in their homes, traveling, and in the city where the Peace Corps office is located compared to their responses in 1999. The post's drivers are more knowledgeable about Volunteer sites and have taken responsibility for the correction of site locator forms when they travel.

In this report, there are some common concerns identified by the OIG that were problematic in 1999 and remain during this review. In both cases, we found a post in disarray with poor leadership, inadequate and poorly trained staff, and poor PST planning. Technical training, language training, and cross-cultural training continue to be inadequate, the recruiting process continues to deliver young and inexperienced Trainees, host agencies are not adequately prepared to receive the Volunteers, the APCDs do not help host agencies plan for continuity and sustainability, and technical support of Volunteers is not adequate.

Although the 2000 follow-up review confirmed the implementation or progress in implementation of many recommendations, areas of concern remain or have re-emerged. These include:

- Inadequate preparation and support of the pre-service training.
- Lack of presentation of cross-cultural sessions about the Afrikaner culture and language.
- Deficiencies in the process of identifying and preparing appropriate language training.
- Poor technical training to include community entry techniques and practical teaching skills.
- Recruitment of inappropriate skill levels of Volunteers for the education project.
- Excessive numbers of medically accommodated Volunteers.
- Inadequate site preparation focusing on the preparation of host agencies to utilize Volunteers effectively.
- Lack of planning for Volunteer continuity within sites.
- Inadequate site visits and poor response to Volunteer reports.

PC/South Africa Budget, Volunteers, and Staff

Sources: Peace Corps Congressional Budget Justification, OIG IG-99-10-1, PC/South Africa IPBS submissions. Staff numbers for 2000 and 2001 are not available.

Resources and staff to support PC/South Africa programs and Volunteers have declined as the number of Volunteers increased. As demonstrated in the chart, resources available to the post's leadership to implement and sustain recommendations made by the Office of Inspector General became more limited even as the number of Volunteers increased. According to data available, expenditures per Volunteer dropped from $41,500 per year in 1999 to $21,900 per year in 2004—a decrease of 47%. Staff complements remained essentially the same (25 in 1999 to 27 in 2004) even while the number of Volunteers increased from 67 in 1999 to 136 in 2004 — a 100% increase. From 2005 to 2006, the number of Volunteers increased by 22%, although the budget increased by only 4%. Volunteer services such as pre-service training, technical training and support, site selection and preparation, and on-going Volunteer support such as site visits are directly impacted by funding.

When the agency begins a Peace Corps program, certain start-up expenditures are initially high and begin to decrease as efficiencies and economies develop. Our review suggests that the expected efficiencies in the management of programs, training, and Volunteer support did not occur. For example, PST was twelve weeks in 1999, eight weeks in 2005, and six weeks in 2003; Volunteer competence in technical, cross-cultural, language skills, and safety and security was compromised by decreasing the time allotted to PST. The post changed the vehicle mix to save $42,000 and $13,000 in annual maintenance cost; but these savings appear to have negative consequences to the quality of Volunteer support (see Vehicle Management section of this report). The post did not collect an estimated $28,000 in host country contributions for FY 2005 and FY 2006 (see Billings and Collections section of this report). Indeed, this report suggests that maximum benefit has not been realized from the available resources to the detriment of Volunteers, and possibly, the reputation and integrity of the Peace Corps in South Africa.

AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Our objective in auditing overseas posts is to determine whether the financial and administrative operations comply with Peace Corps policies and federal regulations. Our audit conclusions are based on information from three sources: (1) document and data analysis, (2) interviews, and (3) direct observation. Our audit was conducted in accordance with the government auditing standards prescribed by the Comptroller General of the United States. The audit covered fiscal years 2004, 2005, and 2006 through January 2006.

While at the post, we interviewed key staff: the country director, the administrative officer, staff responsible for administrative support, and the medical officer. We visited two Volunteers working on PEPFAR-funded activities. At the end of our review, we briefed the country director and the administrative officer. At headquarters, we conducted a general briefing for regional staff.

Our audit criteria were derived from the following sources: the Peace Corps Manual, the Overseas Financial Management Handbook (OFMH), current Peace Corps initiatives and policies, and other federal regulations.

AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Conclusion

The administrative officer arrived at post in October 2005 and found the administrative unit weakened by recent staff dismissals that were made to conserve budget resources and three voluntary staff departures. The administrative unit had lost a total of five staff, including two drivers. We found that the current administrative unit functioned well under the supervision of the current administrative officer but that staff could also benefit from formal training. We also found that prior to October 2005, the post's record keeping system was not in good order. Staff had difficulties in providing documents to support FY 2004 transactions. The administrative officer is scheduled to leave post in July 2006.

Additionally, we found that PC/South Africa's financial and administrative operations required improvements in the following areas.

Billings and Collections

The post did not comply with Peace Corps billing and collection policies.

The post did not comply with the billing and collection policies enumerated in OFMH sections 5.1, 5.2.1, and 5.3.1.

- Several FY 2004 and FY 2005 bills of collection were missing and had no evidence of collections having been made.
- Some bills of collection were marked as "written off" but had no supporting documentation.
- Bills of collection were not issued for Value Added Tax (VAT) payments before collections were made.
- Bills of collection for VAT collections were not processed in FOR Post.

> **We recommend:**
>
> **24. That the post comply with Peace Corps billing and collection policies in OFMH sections 5.1, 5.2.1, and 5.3.1.**
>
> **25. That the post identify and collect outstanding bills of collection.**

Property Management

<u>The post did not comply with Peace Corps property management policies in Peace Corps Manual (PCM) section 511</u>.

The post's control over property and equipment was inadequate and not in compliance with policies as follows:

- The post did not keep an accurate and complete inventory listing; the inventory listing had not been updated since September 2004. Also, property purchased during FY 2005 had not been recorded, and inventory items auctioned in FY 2005 had not been removed from the system. Consequently, we were unable to verify many items. The general services officer had been at post for approximately two months and needed training on the use of excel spreadsheet; he had difficulty recording and updating property data. (PCM section 511.5.6)

- The post did not conduct a physical inventory at least annually. (PCM section 511.5.2)

- The post did not perform a reconciliation of the change in inventory using acquisition and disposal documents before conducting the physical inventory. (PCM section 511.5.5)

- The post did not issue custody receipts when releasing Peace Corps property to direct hire staff for use in their residences. (PCM section 511.6.2.2)

- The post did not have someone in addition to the property officer check the property listing against the physical inventory to confirm the existence of property listed. (PCM section 511.5.6)

> **We recommend:**
>
> **26. That the post comply with PCM section 511 by:**
> - **Conducting a physical inventory at least annually.**
> - **Reconciling change in inventory with acquisition and disposal documents before conducting the physical inventory.**
> - **Issuing custody receipts to direct hire staff for Peace Corps property used in their residences.**
> - **Requiring someone other than the property officer to check the property listing against the physical inventory.**

Volunteer Allowances

The post did not conduct settling-in and living allowance surveys.

Volunteers should complete a settling-in allowance survey within three months of swearing in. PCM section 221.3.2 requires the country director to review the settling-in allowance at least annually and utilize the results of an independent survey of the prices of major items. The purpose of the Volunteer survey is to determine the current cost of items commonly purchased with the settling in allowance.

Further, PCM section 221.4.3.3.1 requires a living allowance survey at least annually. The purpose of the living allowance survey is to assist the country director in determining the most appropriate level of goods and services needed by Volunteers to ensure their health and capacity to serve effectively. The post was unable to provide evidence that settling-in and living allowance surveys had been conducted for FY 2004 and FY 2005.

The post did not have on file memoranda of agreements with the banks handling Volunteer allowances.

The post did not have on file memoranda of agreements with the banks as required by PCM section 221.5.1.1. The form in Attachment H of PCM section 221 specifies the requirements and responsibilities of the banks in their relationship with the Peace Corps and helps the post make certain it is obtaining all the services agreed upon.

The post did not always send notification e-mails for departing Volunteers within 24 hours.

The post's notification e-mails for Volunteers upon their close of service or early termination were not always sent in a timely fashion. Thirty-three percent (9 of 27) of e-mails we reviewed were sent beyond the 24-hour requirement in OFMH section 11.7. Timely notification permits headquarters to promptly handle Volunteer processing and collect amounts due the Peace Corps.

> **We recommend:**
>
> **27. That the post conduct a settling-in allowance survey within three months of swearing in Volunteers and a living allowance survey at least annually.**
>
> **28. That the country director execute memoranda of agreements with the banks that process Volunteer living allowances.**
>
> **29. That the post send e-mails notifying headquarters of Volunteers who complete or terminate their service within 24 hours.**

Personal Management

The administrative officer did not review form PC-57 for accuracy.

The post maintained an excel spreadsheet for leave records (PC-57s). However, the administrative officer did not, as required per PCM section 742.6.1, review the leave records for accuracy as of June 15th and December 15th of each leave year.

The post did not properly close-out the departed PSC contract files.

PSC contract files did not contain required information for departed staff. The file of departed staff did not contain a signed statement by both the PSC and the contracting officer, that the contract has been completed and that both parties have fulfilled all of their contract obligations, including payments. (PCM section 743.24)

> **We recommend:**
>
> **30. That the administrative officer review the leave records (PC-57s) as of June 15 and December 15 of each leave year.**
>
> **31. That the post close out the departed PSC contract files in accordance with PCM section 743.24.**

Safekeeping of Volunteer Property

The post did not follow Peace Corps policy in maintaining Volunteer property held for safekeeping.

Volunteers completed forms listing property to be held for safekeeping and placed the forms on the outsides of sealed envelopes holding the property. Contrary to PCM section 235.4.0, the post did not maintain copies of the listings or an updated log in a location

separate from the property, did not issue receipts to Volunteers, or keep track of property withdrawals or deposits. The post had no independent source for verifying the actual property on hand and the liability of the Peace Corps. Also, the post maintained Volunteer property in a safe located in the cashier's cage. (OFMH section 8.5.1)

> **We recommend:**
>
> **32. That the post maintain a log of Volunteer property held for safekeeping in a separate location from the property.**
>
> **33. That the post issue receipts to Volunteers for their property and track withdrawals and deposits.**
>
> **34. That the post keep Volunteer property in a location other than the cashier's cage.**

Host Country Contributions

The post did not assign value, record, and collect host country contributions.

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the South African Department of Education (DOE), and Peace Corps provides that the DOE will contribute:

1. R60 (approximately $10) monthly per Volunteer to cover job related items for the Volunteers, such as supplies for school and community workshops.
2. Working space and the use of office equipment.
3. One full-time driver and vehicle to be based at the training site to provide transportion as needed for the PST team and trainees.
4. Transportation to their project site for the newly sworn-in Volunteers.
5. Housing for PST staff members during PST.
6. Reasonable accommodations for Volunteers.

However, the post did not record in FOR Post or collect an estimated $28,000 in host country cash contributions for FY 2004 and FY 2005. The country director stated that she had started billing the DOE for the outstanding cash contributions and will review the host country contribution status regularly. We also found:

- The post prepared an estimate of the anticipated host country contribution and detailed the amount and basis of all cash and in-kind contributions. However, the post did not reconcile with actual host contributions received. (PCM section 722.6.1.1)

- The post did not maintain an annual log of in-kind contributions received in the form of housing for Volunteers. (PCM section 722.7.2)

> **We recommend:**
>
> **35. That the post assign value and record in-kind host country contributions.**
>
> **36. That the post issue bills of collection for outstanding cash contributions.**
>
> **37. That the post reconcile anticipated host country contributions with the actual contributions.**

Purchase Cards

The purchase card holder did not maintain a purchase card log.

The post's purchase card holder, the administrative officer, did not maintain a purchase card log and therefore was unable to reconcile the purchase card statement against the purchase card log. OFMH section 34.4 requires that the card holder record purchase information in a purchase card log. A purchase card log facilitates the post's control over expenditures made with the purchase card.

Purchases made with the credit card were not pre-approved by the approving official.

We found no evidence that the approving official had pre-approved credit card purchases. OFMH section 34.4.5 requires that purchases be pre-approved by the approving official before purchases are made.

> **We recommend:**
>
> **38. That the administrative officer establish and maintain a purchase card log and conduct reconciliations as required by OFMH section 34.4.5.**
>
> **39. That the administrative officer document approval before making purchases with the post's purchase card.**

Vehicle Management

The post needs to re-assess its vehicle fleet mix.

In April 2004, the post requested authority to change its vehicle fleet mix to save budget resources. The regional director granted the authority based on annual cost savings estimated at $13,000, the return to PC/Washington of $42,000, and an estimated 40%

reduction in maintenance and operational cost.[43] The justification used in the request cited the cost savings and that the roads in South Africa were at an equivalent standard to those in Europe and North America. The post traded in three 4-wheel drive Toyota Landcruisers for three smaller mini-van type 2-wheel drive Toyota Condors. The justification also stated that post drivers and the general services officer could not remember any situation where the four-wheel drive capacity was required in a driving situation.

During our review, the program evaluators visited a third of the 130 Volunteer sites and found that the majority of them were off main roads and were best reached with the 4-wheel drive vehicles. Very few of the Volunteers (those in the NGO project) were assigned to urban areas where the road conditions would allow the use of the smaller and lighter 2-wheel drive vehicles. We also received complaints from the drivers and program managers about the decision to use the smaller vehicles. They complained that the smaller vehicles were top-heavy and could not have roof-racks, had lower ground clearance, and were only suited to short trips within the capital area. There also were complaints about how the vehicles were assigned. One APCD stated that the country director used favoritism in assigning the 4-wheel drive vehicles. Another complained of having to change plans because of being assigned a 2-wheel drive vehicle and electing to visit only Volunteers in urban areas. Finally, the PCMOs told us that they expect to be more involved in the site selection process and would need vehicles appropriate to allow them to travel to proposed Volunteer sites.

We applaud the post's efforts to save resources but caution against such savings when there may be a negative effect on Volunteer support and safety. We noted that the three vehicles had over 50,000 kilometers and may be eligible for disposal soon.

The post did not review the vehicle logs and did not maintain appropriate vehicle maintenance logs.

The post kept vehicle logs but did not review them on a weekly basis. PCM section 522.4.1.7, states: "Logs shall be reviewed by the administrative officer on a weekly basis and maintained for review by the country director on a monthly basis."

Also, the post did not use the appropriate vehicle maintenance record for tracking and analyzing operating and repair costs. The form the post was using was missing essential information and was not in compliance with PCM section 527, attachment C.

The post did not comply with its authorized vehicle ceiling.

Contrary to PCM section 527.2, the country director maintained a vehicle fleet with one vehicle in excess of the vehicle ceiling for the post. The post had nine vehicles on hand while the authorized ceiling was eight vehicles.

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[43] We obtained documents approving the change from PC/Headquarters. The post could not locate any supporting documents during our visit.

> **We recommend:**
>
> **40. That the post reevaluate its vehicle fleet mix.**
>
> **41. That the administrative officer review, monitor, initial, and date vehicle use logs on a weekly basis.**
>
> **42. That the post comply with PCM section 527, using attachment C as vehicle accumulated maintenance log.**
>
> **43. That the country director comply with the authorized ceiling by obtaining approval for an additional vehicle or dispose of one vehicle.**

Medical Supplies

The PCMO did not properly maintain records of controlled substances.

The PCMO did not count or record controlled substance drugs. Also, we found no detailed records of controlled substance reflecting expired drugs and whether they had been destroyed appropriately. PCM sections 511.8.8 and 734.2.1.6 require that medical supplies be properly destroyed and documented and that the PCMO maintain accurate medical supplies records.

The PCMO did not maintain an accurate medical supplies inventory.

We found that the inventory did not reflect the actual quantities of drugs stored in the medical office. The listing was out of date and we were unable to fully verify the medical supplies. PCM section 734.2.1.6 requires that the PCMO establish the accuracy of inventories.

Also, the post did not conduct an inventory, as required per PCM section 734.2.1.6, of all pharmaceuticals, controlled substances and expendable supplies once a month.

> **We recommend:**
>
> **44. That the country director check the medical supplies inventory listing at least semi-annually.**
>
> **45. That the PCMO document and destroy expired controlled substances following Peace Corps guidelines.**
>
> **46. That the PCMO conduct a complete physical inventory of controlled substances and medical supplies and update the inventory records.**

Imprest Fund

The alternate cashier had not taken the cashier's examination.

The alternate cashier (the administrative officer), who had not taken the cashier's examination, performed cashiering functions when the cashier was absent. Principal and alternate cashiers are required, per OFMH section 9.1, to pass a U.S. Disbursing Officer cashier examination within 180 days after designations.

> **We recommend:**
>
> **47. That the administrative officer cease acting as an alternate cashier if she does not take and pass the cashier examination within the 180-day authorized period.**

Information Technology Security

The IT specialist did not maintain documentation that new employees had received computer awareness training and that all employees had received annual IT security training.

New employees are required to receive computer awareness training before being allowed computer access, and all employees are required to receive annual IT security training. These trainings are mandated by Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations (5 CFR) part 930.301 and PCM section 542.76.1. The IT specialist stated that she had provided computer awareness training on an individual basis to new employees and had provided all employees with a copy of the "IT Users' Security Brochure" and a security handout. There was no documentation on file, such as attendance sheets, to substantiate that the employees had received the required training. Without proper IT training, staff may inadvertently misuse their computer privileges.

> **We recommend:**
>
> **48. That the IT specialist conduct and document annual IT security training for all staff and computer awareness training for new staff.**

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

Peace Corps/South Africa had budget authority for PEPFAR of $110,000 for the 2005 PEPFAR funding fiscal year, which was established as April 1, 2005 – March 31, 2006. Against their budget authority, the post had obligated $95,125 at the time of our visit. The funds were obligated for broad categories of expenditure for which they also receive

funds in their post budget from appropriated funds: overseas program support, direct Volunteer support, and pre- and in-service training. The post failed to develop and put in the records a plan for how the allocations would be made between PEPFAR funds and appropriated funds when liquidated for the same purposes. One consequence was that the post had only liquidated $49,616 of the $95,125 of PEPFAR money obligated at the time of our visit in March, 2006 and had only two months left in which to liquidate the remainder of the obligated funds as well as the $14,875 that remained unobligated.

Other problems we found included:

(a) The post had reprogrammed $36,700 within the PEPFAR budget without required advance approval. The guidelines require prior approval for reprogramming funds in excess of $25,000 (in aggregate).
(b) The post did not identify PEPFAR obligations as required with the OGAC initials.
(c) The post did not de-obligate $5,900 for which the obligating expenditure had been cancelled to make this money available to be spent.

We recommend:

49. That the post de-obligate cancelled obligations to make the funds available for other PEPFAR-related costs.

50. That the post develop a spending plan against which to allocate shared costs between PEPFAR and appropriated funds.

51. That the post start each obligation description with the first four initials of OGAC's budget coding category.

52. That the post obtain the region's approval prior to reprogramming PEPFAR funds among line items in excess of the $10,000 specified in the PEPFAR Guidelines.

POST STAFFING

At the time of our review, the post had 28 staff: four U.S direct hires, three foreign service nationals (FSNs), and 21 personal services contractors (PSCs) including one vacant position.

PC/South Africa Positions

Positions	Status
Country Director	USDH
APCD/Generalist	USDH
Sub-Regional Programming and Training Coordinator	USDH
APCD/Administrative Officer	USDH
APCD/Education	FSN
Cashier	FSN
APCD/Education	FSN
PCMO	PSC
PCMO	PSC
Regional Medical Assistant, Mgr.	PSC
Receptionist	PSC
Program Assistant	PSC
Training Manager	PSC
Safety and Security Coordinator *	PSC
Administrative Assistant	PSC
Regional PCMC (Assist APCMO)	PSC
Executive Secretary	PSC
Driver	PSC
Driver	PSC
Program Assistant	PSC
Driver	PSC
Driver	PSC
GSO	PSC
Driver	PSC
Receptionist/Secretary/CRP	PSC
IT Specialist	PSC
Health Unit Receptionist /Secretary	PSC
APCMO	PSC

* Vacant

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the post limit the education project trainee input to experienced teachers or revise the project plans.

2. That the post complete the revision of the NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration project plan and develop a strategy for implementing the plan.

3. That the post establish formal relationships with the appropriate levels of national and provincial government to support the revised NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration project.

4. That the post revise Volunteer Assignment Descriptions for both projects to reflect more accurately the actual work of the Volunteers.

5. That the region assist the post to address the pre-service training deficiencies by providing budget resources to appropriately staff training events, to support a comprehensive training of trainers (TOT), and to support a longer PST.

6. That the post immediately provide training for the training manager.

7. That the post provide on-going language learning skills and resources in pre-service training and in subsequent training programs.

8. That the post improve the Schools and Community Resources project's technical training.

9. That the APCDs' job description/performance plan include responsibilities for PST curriculum design, regular attendance at PST sessions to monitor content and quality of technical training, and final assessment of Trainees' technical competencies.

10. That the post include instruction on Afrikaner and Indian languages and cultures in the PST curriculum.

11. That the post revise the safety and security pre-service training curriculum to encompass the needs of Volunteers placed in urban assignments.

12. That the post follow up with host agencies to assure that housing is available when the Volunteers arrive at site.

13. That the post provide the Volunteers with a checklist to verify that the housing is safe.

14. That the post adjust the pre-service training schedule to reduce the extended period of Volunteer inactivity.

15. That the post implement a consistent follow-up procedure to incident reports that provides emotional support for Volunteers.

16. That the post clarify its out-of-site and leave policy guidelines.

17. That the post conduct tests of the emergency action plan without advanced warning to the Volunteers.

18. That the post modify the policy and procedures for the conduct of site visits to include:
    - Substantive technical content.
    - Sufficient time to communicate with supervisors and host families.
    - Volunteer feedback on the usefulness of the site visit.

19. That the region and the post monitor the number and type of medical accommodation Volunteers sent to PC/South Africa.

20. That the region and the post identify a specific training plan for each staff member that addresses their needs.

21. That the region stipulate corrective actions to address the problems with the country director.

22. That the country director submit quarterly reports to the regional director on the corrective actions.

23. That the region assign the SRPTC full-time to PC/South Africa for six months with a mandate to develop programs that can engage all the Volunteers invited to serve there in meaningful assignments for which they can be trained and supported, as needed.

24. That the post comply with Peace Corps billing and collection policies in OFMH sections 5.1, 5.2.1, and 5.3.1.

25. That the post identify and collect outstanding bills of collection.

26. That the post comply with PCM section 511 by:
    - Conducting a physical inventory at least annually.
    - Reconciling change in inventory with acquisition and disposal documents before conducting the physical inventory.
    - Issuing custody receipts to direct hire staff for Peace Corps property used in their residences.
    - Requiring someone other than the property officer to check the property listing against the physical inventory.

27. That the post conduct a settling-in allowance survey within three months of swearing in Volunteers and a living allowance survey at least annually.

28. That the country director execute memoranda of agreements with the banks that process Volunteer living allowances.

29. That the post send e-mails notifying headquarters of Volunteers who complete or terminate within 24 hours.

30. That the administrative office review the leave records (PC-57s) as of June 15 and December 15 of each leave year.

31. That the post close out the departed PSC contract files in accordance with PCM section 743.24.

32. That the post maintain a log of Volunteer property held for safekeeping in a separate location from the property.

33. That the post issue receipts to Volunteers for their property and track withdrawals and deposits.

34. That the post keep Volunteer property in a location other than the cashier's cage.

35. That the post assign value and record in-kind host country contributions.

36. That the post issue bills of collection for outstanding cash contributions.

37. That the post reconcile anticipated host country contributions with the actual contributions.

38. That the administrative officer establish and maintain a purchase card log and conduct reconciliations as required by OFMH section 34.4.5.

39. That the administrative officer document approval before making purchases with the post's purchase card.

40. That the post reevaluate its vehicle fleet mix.

41. That the administrative officer review, monitor, initial, and date vehicle use logs on a weekly basis.

42. That the post comply with PCM section 527, using attachment C as vehicle accumulated maintenance log.

43. That the country director comply with the authorized ceiling by obtaining approval for an additional vehicle or dispose of one vehicle.

44. That the country director check the medical supplies inventory at least semi-annually.

45. That the PCMO document and destroy expired controlled substances following Peace Corps guidelines.

46. That the PCMO conduct a complete physical inventory of controlled substances and medical supplies and update the inventory records.

47. That the administrative officer cease acting as an alternate cashier if she does not take and pass the cashier examination within the 180-day authorized period.

48. That the IT specialist conduct and document annual IT security training for all staff and computer awareness training for new staff.

49. That the post de-obligate cancelled obligations to make the funds available for other PEPFAR-related costs.

50. That the post develop a spending plan against which to allocate shared costs between PEPFAR and appropriated funds.

51. That the post start each obligation description with the first four initials of OGAC's budget coding category.

52. That the post obtain the region's approval prior to reprogramming PEPFAR funds among line items in excess of the $10,000 specified in the PEPFAR Guidelines.

Appendix A

Region's Response to the Preliminary Report

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Kotz, Inspector General

FROM: Henry McKoy, Africa Regional Director

DATE: September 1, 2006

SUBJECT: Response to the Preliminary Audit Report for Peace Corps/South Africa

The Africa Region thanks the Office of the Inspector General for the Preliminary Report for Peace Corps/South Africa. Post is appreciative of the feedback presented through this evaluation.

Post's responses have been reviewed and integrated into this response. Region will continue to work with post to ensure full implementation of the OIG recommendations. The Region and post concur with 49 of the 52 recommendations. The Region and post partially concur with one of the recommendations, and the Region and post do not concur with two of the recommendations.

Attached, please find our responses to the report on Peace Corps/South Africa. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments on any of our responses. Region will greatly appreciate your guidance and support as actions taken to respond to the recommendations are fully implemented.

cc: David Liner, Acting Chief of Staff/Operations
       Lisa Ellis, Country Director
       A. Courtney Santonicola, Chief Compliance Officer
       George Schutter, Chief Financial Officer
       Carey Fountain, Chief Acquisition Officer

Recommendation 1. That the post limit the education project trainee input to experienced teachers or revise the project plan.

Concur.

For many years now post has requested that PCTs have a minimum of two years teaching experience in a school environment. Post is mindful, though, of the difficulty of recruiting experienced teachers, and post is open to accepting a limited number of Trainees who may not meet this requirement.

In addition, post met with the Department of Education in May to discuss the revised project plan. APCDs for Education will be meeting with the Center Specialist in August 2006 to revise the plan which will then be presented to the Department of Education for approval.

For the inexperienced PCTs who arrived at the end of July 2006, post plans to do the following:

- the technical training program designed for the incoming Trainees is such that it will address many of the needs of inexperienced trainees as it incorporates
    - practical research in schools
    - development of lesson plans
    - delivery of lessons to each other and to select groups of students

Attachment A.
- the programming staff and the PST Technical Trainer will develop additional training sessions which will address the needs of the inexperienced Trainees.

Recommendation 2. That the post complete the revision of the NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration project plan and develop a strategy for implementing the plan.

Concur.

Post will complete by July 2007 (see, also, recommendation 3, below)

The post began the process of project plan revision through the project review in 2004 and on-going consultations with Volunteers, partner organizations and other stakeholders at training events and site visits. There is general agreement that the project framework is sound, but that the number of objectives is cumbersome for reporting purposes. In addition to structured meetings with Volunteers and partner organizations during the project review process (2004), the post has engaged other stakeholders, including USG and SAG, in an on-going consultative process since the completion of the project review in August 2004, resulting in stronger and more collaborative site identification processes.

Stakeholders have all expressed agreement on the need to focus on the development of sustainable organizational capacity as a cornerstone to the successful implementation of a wide range of programs aimed at addressing both the causes and effects of the HIV pandemic in South Africa.

South Africa's generalized epidemic has a number of distinctive features that drive it, including multiple concurrent sexual relationships, transgenerational sexual relationships, high degrees of gender-based violence and child abuse. In FY06, 90% of the Volunteer placements were in NGOs that either directly focused on HIV/AIDS prevention, care (including care for Orphans and Vulnerable Children) and treatment or on the drivers of the pandemic (especially gender-based violence and child abuse). In a meeting this month with senior members of the national Department of Social Development, Peace Corps was praised for working with community development agencies (e.g. not only AIDS service organizations) to assist them in understanding how the pandemic affects other development sectors, reinforcing the government's position that HIV/AIDS is not simply a health issue.

In order to build on the work already undertaken and to consolidate Peace Corps' project plan revision process, the following milestones are suggested:

- By January 2007, a draft of the revised project plan will be available for presentation to: PC/W, SAG (including the Department of Social Development and the Department of Local and Provincial Government) and USG stakeholders (USG stakeholders include PEPFAR USG who are working in the same or similar organizations ~ USAID, CDC, and HHS). Consultations at this stage will seek endorsement of approach and strategy.

- By July 2007, a Project Advisory Committee will be established to guide the implementation of the project plan.

Recommendation 3. That the post establish formal relationships with the appropriate levels of national and provincial government to support the revised NGO Capacity Building HIV/AIDS Integration project.

Concur.
Post will complete by July 2007 (see, also, recommendation 2, above)

The post has already begun establishing formal relationships at the national, provincial and local level, building on the informal relationships that already exist and creating new contacts where appropriate.

In mid-June 2006 the post had its first formal meeting with the Director for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in the national Department of Social Development. The Director is enthusiastic about developing a more formal and substantive relationship with Peace Corps, and has agreed to call a meeting of the Department's senior management to be addressed by Peace Corps. She has suggested that a formal MoU can be signed within a year.

In addition to the relationship with the Department of Social Development, Peace Corps staff has engaged Department of Health officials in several districts, and are in the process of developing a more formal relationship with the Department of Local and

Provincial Government. Peace Corps' work with the Capricorn District Municipality is regarded as a possibly replicable model, which warrants further exploration.

In order to build on the work already undertaken and to consolidate Peace Corps' project plan revision process, the following milestones are suggested:

- By January 2007, a draft of the revised project plan will be available for presentation to: PC/W, SAG (including the Department of Social Development and the Department of Local and Provincial Government) and USG stakeholders (USG stakeholders include PEPFAR USG who are working in the same or similar organizations ~ USAID, CDC, and HHS). Consultations at this stage will seek endorsement of approach and strategy.
- By July 2007, a Project Advisory Committee will be established to guide the implementation of the project plan.

Recommendation 4. That the post revise the Volunteer Assignment Descriptions for both projects to reflect more accurately the actual work of the Volunteers.

Concur.
Both project VADs were revised in December 2005 for the Trainees who arrived at the end of July 2006. **Attachments B & C**. The revisions were made with feedback and input from the then serving Volunteers. Another revision will occur in December 2006 for next year's class.

More specifically, the NGO project VAD was revised for the FY06 Trainee Intake and includes specific information about the capacity building nature of the NGO project. Prospective Trainees are given examples of the breadth of organizations and work in the field that they may encounter in South Africa (this was also the case for the FY05 TI, although some of the language for SA 15 has been strengthened):

NGO Capacity Building/HIV-AIDS Volunteers will work directly with either an NGO or municipality in the KwaZulu/Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga or NorthWest Province of South Africa. Each year, new organizations request Volunteers as the Project becomes better known, and specific placements are constantly evolving. Host agencies are at various levels in terms of organizational development, ranging from the nascent to the well established. Partner agencies may have programs that are directly focused on working with infected and affected community members, or may work on averting new infections. Other organizations focus on broad community development initiatives that mitigate the affects of the pandemic. Therefore, Peace Corps Volunteers have worked in organizations that campaign against gender based violence; safeguard childrens rights; focus on ensuring a sustainable livelihood for poor, rural communities; provide home-based care and other health interventions to affected households; work with rural municipalities and community-based organizations to develop and implement HIV/AIDS strategies; develop programs for orphans and other vulnerable children; and support the development and delivery of

a comprehensive HIV/AIDS strategy. You may work with an NGO active in one of these fields, or become involved in a different field of activity.

The NGO Project is an over-all institution strengthening program, and our South African partner organizations have requested Volunteers to focus their efforts in the following key areas:

1) Working to increase the organizational capacity, as well as the quality and effectiveness of NGO programs and services, increasingly focusing on the development and use of ICT and appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems; 2) Mentoring NGO staff and NGO Volunteers, facilitating the transfer of administrative, management, and programming skills; 3) Introducing or strengthening creative approaches to resource identification and mobilization (with an emphasis on locally available resources); 4) Building, strengthening, or revitalizing the links between government, organizations, and the private sector, as well as the development of sustainable Volunteer programs.

The development of NGO skills, capacities, and change strategies, as well as working to ensure that organizational programs are more responsive to the multiple impacts of the HIV/AIDS pandemic are the two main facets of Volunteer work.

Your specific capacity-building work will be largely dependent on the needs identified by your host organization, along with your skills and educational background. In order for this to be a successful placement, you must come able and prepared to find a niche in the organization and hammer out a final job description in consultation with others, after a period of observation and assessment (of both the community and organization). This means that a high degree of flexibility and acceptance of a slow start are required. Ultimately, your job is to help organisations articulate their desired future, and then assist to build the road to that future.

The VAD will be further revised for the FY 07 TI to make specific reference to the office-bound nature of some placements, and to highlight Volunteer safety and security concerns.

Recommendation 5. That the Region assist the post to address the pre-service training deficiencies by providing budget resources to appropriately staff training events, to support a comprehensive training of trainers (TOT), and to support a longer PST.

Concur.
The Region's SRPTC provided assistance and training to PC/South Africa specifically by planning and conducting the Language Training of Trainers (LTOT) from July 3-9, 2006 and the General Training of Trainers (GTOT) from July 17-23, 2006 in cooperation with PC/South Africa's new Training Manager. Region is working with post to address pre-service deficiencies and post has hired a new Training Manager. Given Region's budgetary considerations the standard budget policy for all posts not teaching French or

Portuguese is 10 weeks of PST. Region will continue to provide PC/SA with the resources to conduct 10 full weeks of PST. To maximize use of their PST funds, PC/SA has applied their resources as follows: Trainees have eight weeks of PST then they swear in. Volunteers spend the following three to four months at their site where they do community based activities and PST homework. The Volunteers gather for a one week IST where they report on their homework and post provides them with additional language and technical training. Volunteers return to their sites and meet approximately one year after swearing in for a two to five day mid-service training (MST). At the MST Volunteers learn additional technical skills to help them succeed at their assignments.

Africa posts normally have one full-time Training Manager and hire technical and language trainers on contract to conduct PST. Training costs are one of the cost factors associated with Trainee Input, and is thus a function of the number of trainees post receives. Cost factor information is provided by post to cover these needs. Region policy is one language trainer for not more than five trainees with the average regionally being one trainer for every 3-4 trainees. South Africa's trainer/trainee ratio has been within Region guidelines. **Attachment W.**

Recommendation 6. That the post immediately provide training for the training manager.

Concur.
PC/South Africa's new Training Manager attended the P&T sub-regional workshop for Training Managers in Pretoria from August 20-26, 2006. He also attended the General Training of Trainers at the beginning of PST in Botswana from April 14-28, 2006. The Training Manager from Lesotho, who was in Botswana to train Botswana's new TM, trained him. Post will look for additional opportunities in the sub-region and will work with PC/Headquarters to establish/determine the timeframe for the new TM to participate in OST. In addition the Region's SRPTC recently assisted and trained the new TM during and prior to post's recent LTOT and GTOT. **Attachment W**.

Recommendation 7. That the post provide on-going language learning skills and resources in pre-service training and in subsequent training programs.

Concur.
The language and cross-cultural coordinator has been employed since February 2006 to assist in updating the language materials and language training lessons. Post has lengthened the Language Training of Trainers this year to better prepare LCIs. The PST COTE currently has built in 160 hours of language training for PCVs. While this amount of time was also built into last year's schedule, the reality is that the LCIs did not always teach the required number of hours. Post feels that under a new TM and Language Coordinator, poor performance by LCIs will no longer be a problem. Additionally, post will be receiving a LPI Tester Training next year. Further, post is attempting to identify Language trainers for PCVs at their sites as part of the site development process. Post intends to hold a Language Tutor day at the end of PST (week of September 18, 2006) so PCTs can meet their tutors and tutors can get some feedback from the LCIs before the

PCTs swear-in and go to site. Finally, post plans to offer up to 5 days of additional language training at the end of IST in January 2007 to assist with ongoing language learning. The Region's SRPTC has provided supporting documents as examples. **Attachments W, X, Y, Z & AA.**

Recommendation 8. That the post improve the Schools and Community Resource Project's technical training.

Concur.
For the PST that started at the end of July 2006, post hired a full-time Technical Trainer to deliver and coordinate the technical training. In addition, at this training, the APCDs will spend more time at PST to assist in the implementation and facilitation of technical sessions and to provide individual attention to the Trainees. Further, the PCTs spend more time in schools to become familiar and comfortable with their prospective work environment and job description. Finally, the APCDs will develop assessment tools to measure the successful acquisition of technical competencies at the end of this year's PST. **Attachments D, E & F.**

Recommendation 9. That the APCDs' job description/performance plan include responsibilities for PST curriculum design, regular attendance at PST sessions to monitor content and quality of technical training, and final assessment of Trainees' technical competencies.

Concur.
These requirements are already in the APCDs' job descriptions and have been in these documents for years. Further, the APCD/NGO designed and delivered all technical training for the NGO in last year's training. While the APCD/Education designed the technical curriculum for training last year, implementation was poor due to not contacting technical facilitators in a timely fashion; working on improved site development process for a class twice as large as post was used to receiving; and due to being understaffed last year. This year programming and training staff began weekly meetings in May 2006 to improve coordination. The COTE was completed at the end of June 2006 with full and active participation by training, programming, and medical staff. Further, the education project has hired an experienced technical trainer who has worked for PC in other countries as well as has experience in South Africa to coordinate and deliver technical training as well as assess the PCVs technical competencies. **Attachments BB & CC**.

Recommendation 10. That the post include instruction on Afrikaner and Indian languages and cultures in PST curriculum.

Partially Concur.
Post will offer Afrikaans to PCTs whose organizations use Afrikaans in the office or for those who will be posted in Afrikaner towns during the second half of PST (August 28-September 21). Post will no longer place Volunteers in Indian language speaking communities (Durban), as it is too difficult to find language trainers with these skills who will live in a rural community for the duration of PST, among other issues. Post will

continue to offer diversity and cross-cultural training on all ethnic groups living in South Africa. PCTs will receive 8 hours of diversity training and 40 hours of cross-cultural training. In addition, cross-cultural issues have been integrated into some technical sessions like HIV/AIDS and into PCT language lessons as well as their community based homework assignments.

Recommendation 11. That the post revise the safety and security pre-service training curriculum to encompass the needs of Volunteers placed in urban assignments.

Concur.
Post has revised the S&S training for the PST group that arrived on July 28, 2006. Post has already invited urban-based Volunteers to talk to the PCTs about the safety and security issues as well as strategies for dealing with living in an urban area. Urban based PCTs will receive 15 hours of S&S training. PCVs, the Training Manager, the CD, the APCDs, and the PCMOs will be involved in their training. PCSSO John Allen helped design the S&S training for this PST and will participate in the PST during the first two weeks in August.

Recommendation 12. That the post follow up with host agencies to assure that housing is available when the Volunteers arrive at site.

Concur.
In the past year and a half, the education project has greatly improved site development including making sure there is proper housing available when the Volunteer arrives at site. Last year, during the mid-PST site visit, there were 6 out of 48 sites that did not have housing ready for the PCT. As the education project is fully staffed this year, housing at all sites will be inspected by either the APCDs or the PA before the PCT visits the site in the middle of PST.

The NGO project rarely had housing ready for the Volunteer when they arrived at site as many NGOs preferred to let the PCV help find the housing. The APCD received feedback on this problem at her performance review in February 2006 and will ensure that all PCTs will have housing when they do their mid-PST site visit in August 2006. The housing will be inspected by the APCD, the PA, or one of the PCMOs prior to this visit.

In addition, post has developed 10 extra education sites which all have housing and 3 extra NGO sites which have housing. **Attachments G & H.**

Recommendation 13. That the post provide the Volunteers with a checklist to verify that the housing is safe.

Concur.
Post has developed and will distribute to the incoming Volunteers with a checklist at the end of PST in September 2006. **Attachment H.**

Recommendation 14. That the post adjust the pre-service training schedule to reduce the extended period of Volunteer inactivity.

Concur.
Over the past two years post has been moving back its PST date so that new Volunteers can take vacation time in December rather than staying at site with nothing to do while school is closed. This year's incoming Volunteers will not be on the 90-day, no travel restriction in December 2006. Moreover, post is considering going back to PST in Q2 each year starting in 2008.

Recommendation 15. That the post implement a consistent follow-up procedure to incident reports that provides emotional support to the Volunteer.

Concur.
Post recognizes that in mid-2005 through the beginning of 2006, emotional support to Volunteers who had been victims of crime was inconsistent largely due to not being fully staffed and having a series of TDY PCMOs working in the medical unit. Since January 2006, post has adhered to the following procedure when a Volunteer reports an incident. When an incident is reported, staff must notify the CD, the SSC, and the duty PCMO of the incident. The SSC and PCMO will follow up immediately with the Volunteer to get details of the incident and to provide medical and counseling support. The PCMO will usually discuss the follow up medical care or counseling that is necessary with the CD and sometimes the APCD depending on the situation. At each step, the Volunteer is told who will be notified and what information will be shared with that person. They also have the option of asking for the information to be kept confidential.

Frequently, Volunteers either receive counseling from the PCMOs, who both have psychiatry experience, or are referred to one of the local counselors post uses. The PCMOs ensure that the Volunteer has the 24-hour duty phone number at hand should they feel that they need to discuss anything further with the PCMO. The PCMOs also offer the Volunteer face-to-face counseling either with the PCMO or with one of the psychotherapists that post uses in Pretoria. In situations where Volunteers must give a statement to the police or go to court, the CD and/or the SSC accompany them.

In June 2006, senior staff and the VAC discussed adding another safety net for Volunteers by starting a Peer Support Network. VAC and staff have agreed to begin such a support group in Q2 FY2007.

Recommendation 16. That the post clarify its out-of-site and leave policy guidelines.

Concur.
As post discussed with the IG team during their visit, the VAC committee had an opportunity to present PCV concerns and issues at the VAC meeting on March 27, 2006. The CD answered VAC's questions and the minutes were sent to all PCVs.

Attachments I & J. The Volunteer Handbook will be updated in September 2006 prior to meeting with the PCTs to explain the rules and regulations governing their service.

Recommendation 17. That the post conduct tests of the emergency action plan without advanced warning to Volunteers.

Concur.
While post only told Volunteers which quarter a consolidation test may occur, the Volunteers investigated with their consolidation points to figure out the day of the test. Only the CD and the SSC will know the date of the next EAP test. The test is scheduled for December 2006 or January 2007.

Recommendation 18. That the post modify the policy and procedures for the conduct of site visits to include:
- Substantive technical content.
- Sufficient time to communicate with host families.
- Volunteer feedback on the usefulness of the site visit.

Concur for the Education Project. Post is already operating under the policy and procedures as stated in recommendation 18 for the NGO Project.
Current post policy and practice for both projects since October 2005 requires regular site visits that last from 4 to 6 hours. In addition, post requires PCMOs to make site visits.

In June 2006, the PCMOs added a section in the site visit form, for the Volunteer to give feedback on their feelings about the site visit. Further, in the light of the feedback from the IG's recommendation, the PCMOs have added a few open-ended questions to the site visit form including more questions about the Volunteers' mental health. The purpose of the PCMO site visits is to ensure that the Volunteer is living in a safe, hygienic and pleasant environment and that they are physically and emotionally well.

For the education project, the current site visit program makes provision for:

- The APCD to spend 2 –3 hours in individual meetings with each Volunteer.
- The APCD to visit with principals, teachers, host families and circuit managers/regional coordinators during the visit.
- Joint meetings with the Volunteer, supervisor and APCD to discuss the progress of the Volunteer and to address any problems or issues.
- The APCD to attend Volunteer-led or facilitated workshops where such workshops are scheduled to coincide with the visit.

The Education APCDs do believe that they should design and implement a Volunteers' Site Visit feedback form to use in Q1 FY07.

The standard pattern/agenda for NGO site visits include:

- Introductory remarks, including the purpose and process of the meeting, in which both the Volunteer and supervisor (and counterpart, if appropriate) are present.
- A meeting with the Volunteer, lasting from 2 to 3 hours. The meeting includes a discussion about the Volunteer's current work – highlights and challenges, as well as feedback on Volunteer progress reports – and suggestions with respect to overcoming challenges. Volunteer technical support needs are noted and relayed to the PCV following the meeting. The meeting also focuses on the Volunteer's cross-cultural and emotional support needs. Issues for discussion with families, counterparts or supervisors are also raised, discussed and strategies for implementation are agreed.
- Following the meeting with the Volunteer, host agency staff (supervisor and/or counterparts) is met. This meeting generally lasts 1 – 1 ½ hours. During the course of the meeting, host organization staff is invited to discuss the progress of the Volunteer's work, her/his conduct within the organization or community, and highlights and challenges since the last site visit. The organization's technical support needs are also noted, either for further discussion with the PCV or for specific information to be sent to the Volunteer and/or counterpart. The meeting also focuses on the Volunteer's cross-cultural and emotional support needs. Issues for discussion with either families or the Volunteer are also raised, discussed and strategies for implementation are agreed.
- The third component of the site visit involves bringing the Volunteer and the supervisor/counterpart together to go over any issues arising and determine future implementation. Typically, this component lasts approximately 1 hour. Where necessary, the APCD will mediate a discussion between the Volunteer and host agency staff. When there are concerns about the relationship between the Volunteer and NGO staff, these meetings may last considerably longer, and may result in a fixed action- and performance plan agreed upon by all parties.
- In cases where the Volunteer stays with a host family, in a familial arrangement (atypical in the NGO project), host parents are met separately, following which discussions may be held with the Volunteer, supervisor or both and the host family.
- Volunteers frequently provide feedback on the site visit directly to the APCD at the time of the visit, and in subsequent progress reports.
- Site visit forms are completed for visits, with summaries circulated to appropriate staff. The site visit form includes information about the Volunteers work, health, mental health and adjustment process.
- Visits with new Volunteers frequently last longer than those to Volunteers who have been in the field for some time. With "older" Volunteers, site visits may include special events, and more "field work."

Recommendation 19. That the Region and the post monitor the number and type of medical accommodation Volunteers sent to PC South Africa.

Concur.
To adequately monitor the number of accommodations being sent to post, post and Region will need statistics about the incoming group of trainees prior to their arrival at

post. Currently, the new group's medical files arrive when they arrive. At the date of this report, we have 28 accommodated Volunteers (out of 103), mostly for psychotropic medication monitoring. Region will meet with OMS on August 31, 2006 to discuss this issue.

Recommendation 20. That the Region and the post identify a specific training plan for each staff member that addresses their needs.

Concur.
Post has already had several staff exchanges to help with the development needs of new staff members: TM exchange in Botswana April 14-28, 2006; GSO/Cashier/AA for HR exchange with Lesotho May 1-4, 2006. Post has secured funds from Region for a staff exchange for the PA/Education in late September for two weeks in Madagascar. Post will continue to request OST for the new APCD/Education and for the TM. Post has tentatively scheduled car hijacking training for all staff with the RSO's office for July or August 2006. Post is looking for 4-wheel drive training for the motor pool and hopes to have something in place before the end of Q2 FY07. Finally, post plans to start a Staff Development Committee in Q1 FY07 that will receive staff requests for training that have been approved by the line supervisor and identify local or sub-regional training opportunities for staff.

Recommendation 21. That the Region stipulate corrective actions to address the problems with the country director.

Concur.
The Region has taken affirmative steps to improve the working relationships between the CD and staff at post. The RD has met with the Country Director to outline steps to strengthen the management capability and to improve communication across all sections between the CD and section leaders as well as communications between the CD and all staff throughout the post. The RD went to post and met with all staff, with each section within the post, as well as with individuals who sought meetings with him to ascertain information regarding individual concerns regarding their experiences. After visiting post the RD met with the CD individually as well as with the AO individually and laid out a plan for strengthening the working relationship between the CD, AO and the admin section. As a part of the RD's plan, post will hire a consultant to assist the staff with communicating in South Africa's diverse staff.

Recommendation 22. That the country director submit quarterly reports to the Regional Director on the corrective actions.

Concur.
The Country Director will submit quarterly reports to the Regional Director (RD) on corrective actions.

Recommendation 23. That the Region assign the SRPTC full-time to PC/South Africa for six months with a mandate to develop programs that can engage all the Volunteers invited to serve there in meaningful assignments for which they can be trained and supported, as needed.

Do not concur.
Region uses SRPTCs to advise posts and provide technical assistance to address programmatic, training and management issues in each of their assigned countries. While SRPTCs are key in building staff capacity to perform their jobs, it is unlikely that a full-time six-month assignment to one post is feasible given the number of countries served and demands on SRPTC time. The SRPTC for the Southern Region is assigned to serve the needs of 7 posts and is in high demand.

Region will review several options for assisting post over a six-month period with developing meaningful assignments for which Volunteers can be trained and supported. They might include:

- Southern SRPTC will assist post to develop a staff development plan to build capacity in addressing specific programming and training weaknesses.
- Mentoring of post staff by an experienced APCD and/or Training Manager from another post
- Staff exchange with a model post to learn best practices in program development, site preparation and training design
- Post's request for a PTO will be reviewed and considered as it relates to Region criteria and priorities

Recommendation 24. That the post comply with PC billing and collection policies in OFMH sections 5.1, 5.2.1, and 5.3.1.

Concur.
As of March 2006, post has started issuing BOCs in the manner that the OFMH describes in 5.1, 5.2.1 and 5.3.1. The billing officer is the AO with help from AA/HR. The cashier acts as the collection officer. With respect to BOCs to the host country government, the system has changed and post now issues BOCs "as is" and if they attempt to pay a different amount, post voids the BOC, puts clear documentation in the file, and re-issues another BOC matching the amount received. This complies with the above-mentioned OFMH sections.

Recommendation 25. That the post identify and collect outstanding bills of collection.

Concur.
Post is working on this issue with headquarters and has been since March 2006 for outstanding BOCs. For current BOCs (those issued in this fiscal year), all collections are collected in a timely manner in compliance with the OFMH. The AO and cashier check the outstanding collections report weekly.

Recommendation 26. That the post comply with PCM section 511 by: conducting a physical inventory at least annually; Reconciling change in inventory with acquisition and disposal documents before conduction the physical inventory; Issuing custody receipts to direct hire staff for PC property used in their residences; and Requiring someone other than the property officer to check the property listing against the physical inventory.

Concur.
The physical inventory list was not completed as post did not have a GSO from August 2005 to February 2006. The new GSO has completed the inventory check to ensure the accuracy of PC physical property in May 2006. The GSO, after having the USDH verify the inventory in each respective residence, has issued inventory custody sheets to all USDH living in PC houses. **Attachment K.**

Recommendation 27. That the post conduct a settling-in allowance survey within three months of swearing in Volunteers and a living allowance survey at least annually.

Concur.
Post currently conducts a settling-in allowance survey at the end of PST. It is distributed with the PCV Handbook just before PCTs swear-in as Volunteers. In the past two years, since the current CD has been at post, a living allowance survey has been conducted. As a result of this year's survey, Volunteers will receive between 10-25% increase in their living allowance depending on whether they are rural-based or urban-based, effective July 1, 2006.

Recommendation 28. That the CD execute memoranda of agreements with the banks that process Volunteer living allowances.

Concur.
The cashier, CD and AO will execute an agreement with the bank the end of this fiscal year. **Attachment L.**

Recommendation 29. That the post send e-mails notifying HQ of Volunteers who complete or terminate their service within 4 hours.

Concur.
This recommendation was implemented in March 2006 immediately after the IG left post. Termination cables are sent within 24 hours after the Volunteer leaves post and follow up cables are sent with additional information, if necessary.

Recommendation 30. That the administrative officer review the leave records (PC-57s) as of June 15 and December 15 of each leave year.

Concur.
This recommendation has been completed as of June 2006. **Attachment M.**

Recommendation 31. That the post close out the departed PSC contract files in accordance with PCM section 743.24.

Concur.
As of March 2006, the release form is signed by the staff member associated with that contract, per MS 743.24.

Recommendation 32. That the post maintain a log of Volunteer property held for safekeeping in a separate location from the property.

Concur.
See Recommendation 34.

Recommendation 33. That the post issue receipts to Volunteers for their property and track withdrawals and deposits.

Concur.
See Recommendation 34.

Recommendation 34. That the post keep Volunteer property in a location other than the cashier's cage.

Concur.
Since the IG visit in March 2006, the cashier has transferred all PCV personal property envelopes to the Admin Assistant/HR, who keeps the envelopes in a locked file cabinet in her office. Whenever a PCV requests something from or adds to their personal envelope, the PCV must sign the cover sheet of the envelope. The PCV then gets a copy stating what exactly is being held by PC, and a copy of that signed sheet replaces their old cover sheet. The old cover sheet is then kept by the AO in the AO's safe.

Recommendation 35. That the post assign value and record in-kind host country contributions.

Concur.
See Recommendation 37.

Recommendation 36. That the post issue bills of collection for outstanding cash contributions.

Concur.
See Recommendation 37.

Recommendation 37. That the post reconcile anticipated host country contributions with the actual contributions.

Concur.
Post has no record of receiving or issuing HCC BOC for FY04 cash contributions. Post did compile a BOC for FY05 in February 2006, and the BOC currently sits with the government of South Africa (SAG) for the cash contribution portion of FY05 HCC. We have been following up and will continue to follow up on this with the SAG. The administrative team will continue to improve in this area. FY06 BOC for cash contributions will be prepared as soon as possible after the new calendar year in January 2007, as collections are issued (calendar year basis). In kind contribution values have been recorded in quarterly reports required by HQ in June 2006 as well as in the annual Operating Plan. Related to recommendation 37, post will reconcile BOCs as per recommendation 24.

Recommendation 38. That the administrative officer establish and maintain a purchase card log and conduct reconciliations as required by OFMH section 34.4.5.

Concur.
Post will put a purchase card log in place by the end of July 2006. Currently, though, Post does reconcile on line as per OFMH section 34.4.5 in a timely fashion every month since January 2005.

Recommendation 39. That the administrative officer document approval before making purchases with the post's purchase card.

Concur.
Since March 2006, post has made purchases with neither the purchase card nor travel card. In the future, if the purchase/travel cards are used, the AO will document approval before making purchases.

Recommendation 40. That the post reevaluate it's vehicle fleet mix.

Concur.
See Recommendation 43.

Recommendation 41. That the administrative officer review, monitor, initial, and date vehicle use logs on a weekly basis.

Concur.
This recommendation was implemented in June 2006. The signed copies are kept in the GSO's vehicle files. **Attachment N**.

Recommendation 42. That the post comply with PCM section 527, using attachment C as vehicle accumulated maintenance log.

Concur.
As of February 2006, maintenance logs are found in each vehicle file the GSO maintains. **Attachments O & P**.

Recommendation 43. That the country director comply with the authorized ceiling by obtaining approval for an additional vehicle or dispose of one vehicle.

Concur.
The Country Director will discuss options and post requirements with the new Admin Officer and headquarters. The CD will either request approval for the additional vehicle or begin the process to dispose of one vehicle by the end of Q4 FY06. **Attachments R & S**.

Recommendation 44. That the country director check the medical supplies inventory at least semi-annually.

Concur.
The Country Director has already signed the controlled substances register for June 2006 and will continue to do so on a monthly basis. **Attachment Q**.

Recommendation 45. That the PCMO document and destroy expired controlled substances following Peace Corps guidelines.

Concur.
Since September 2005, post implemented a protocol in place that requires the PCMOs to go through the medication on the shelves every quarter, weeding out the expired medications. The PCMOs have been checking for expired medications on a monthly basis, though, since September of last year. Post is currently up to date on this protocol.

Recommendation 46. That the PCMO conduct a complete physical inventory of controlled substances and medical supplies and update the inventory records.

Concur.
Post has a separate inventory for the controlled substances (which are kept under lock and key and this inventory is signed off by the CD and the PCMO every month) and the ordinary medications, which are inventoried separately. Both of these inventories are up to date. The controlled substances are inventoried every month (in the presence of the Country Director) while the ordinary medication is inventoried twice per year by the PCMOs. In addition, post keeps the stock on the shelf to a minimum, which is possible in South Africa as we have easy access to wholesalers. Post is able to order medication on an as needed basis.

Recommendation 47. That the administrative officer cease acting as an alternate cashier if she does not take and pass the cashier examination within the 180-day authorized period.

Concur.
The previous AO left post July 12, 2006. The new AO has already passed the Disbursing Officer's exam as per OFMH 9.1 and is, therefore, able to act as an alternate cashier.

Recommendation 48. That the IT specialist conduct and document annual IT security training for all staff and computer awareness training for new staff.

Concur.
Beginning in March 2006, the IT Specialist has complied with Title 5 of the CRF part 930.301 and MS 542.76.1.and has given computer awareness training to all staff. The documentation is in the files. **Attachment T**.

Recommendation 49. That the post de-obligate cancelled obligation to make the funds available for other PEPFAR-related costs.

Concur.
In October 2005, post retroactively allocated relevant PST expenses to the PEPFAR budget. This reallocation was all done by journal vouchering requests from post to HQ and vice versa. Post did not consistently de-obligate as needed at post. This problem has now been rectified. All journal vouchers were completed in April 2006.

Recommendation 50. That the post develop a spending plan against which to allocate shared costs between PEPFAR and appropriated funds.

Concur.
Post will work on implementing a spending plan for appropriate shared costs by October 2006.

Recommendation 51. That the post start each obligation description with the first four initials of OGACs budget coding category.

Do not concur.
This 4-digit coding is no longer required as HQ has given posts' separate sponsor codes for each pillar. This change occurred at the new fiscal year for PEPFAR in April 2006.

Recommendation 52. That the post obtain the Region's approval prior to reprogramming PEPFAR funds among line items in excess of the $10,000 specified in the PEPFAR guidelines.

Concur.
Post submitted a request for reprogramming funds as well as an early funding request to both OGAC and headquarters in November 2005. **Attachments U & V**.

Appendix B

OIG Comments

OIG Comments

The region concurred with 49 of 52 recommendations, partially concurred with one recommendation, and did not concur with two recommendations. We closed recommendation nos. 4 – 9, 12, 13, 15, 18, 21, 27, 29 - 31, 33 – 37, 39, 41, 42, 44 – 48, 51, and 52. Recommendation nos. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22 - 26, 28, 32, 38, 40, 43, 49, and 50 remain open pending confirmation from the chief compliance officer that the following has been received:

- For recommendation no. 1, until either a revised project plan has been furnished that addresses the inexperience of teaching Volunteers or evidence that the two year minimum has become a requirement.

  We note that the response refers to a revised project plan, but it was not attached. In addition, although the response references the necessity of having a minimum of two years' teaching experience, there is no indication in the response that the region will make this a requirement.

- For recommendation no. 2, a copy of the revised project plan, which we note the response indicates that it will not be completed until July 2007.

- For recommendation no. 3, copy of agreements or memoranda of understanding between PC/South Africa and appropriate national and provincial government levels, which we note, the response does not indicate a proposed date at which it will be completed.

- For recommendation no. 10, a copy of evidence that Afrikaner language training has been offered to Trainees, including trainee assessments In addition, a copy of evidence that newly developed Afrikaner cultural training is being offered to Trainees, whose organizations use Afrikaans in the office or for those who will be posted in Afrikaner towns, including training assessments. It should be noted that it is unclear from the response whether the Afrikaner cultural training referenced is newly developed.

- For recommendation no. 11, a copy of the pre-service training lesson plan for Volunteers assigned to in urban areas.

- For recommendation no. 14, a copy of evidence that PST will be conducted in Q2. We note that while the response concurred with the recommendation, the response merely states that it "is considering" going back to PST in Q2, and only beginning in 2008. We also note that at least in the short term (prior to 2008), this response does not address the consequences to Volunteer safety resulting from new Volunteers traveling throughout the country.

- For recommendation no. 16, a copy of the updated Volunteer handbook.

- For recommendation no. 17, a copy of the Emergency Action Plan test results.

- For recommendation no. 19, a copy of the minutes of the meeting with the Office of Medical Services, which the response indicated had occurred on August 31, 2006, and other action items implemented by the post or region to address the concerns expressed in this recommendation. We note that having one simple meeting with OMS is insufficient to constitute adequate monitoring of this critical situation.

- For recommendation no. 20, confirmation of the following: staff exchange for the PA/Education referenced to have occurred in late September, 2006; OST for the new APCD/Education and for the training manager; prevention of car hijacking training for all staff with the RSO's office referenced to have occurred in July or August 2006; and 4-wheel drive training for the motor pool referenced to be in place by end of Q2 of FY07, together with a list of attendees. In addition, confirmation that the post started a Staff Development Committee in Q1 of FY07.

- For recommendation no. 22, copies of quarterly reports.

- For recommendation no. 23, evidence that the SRPTC assisted the post with a staff development plan. In addition, copies of a list of staff and mentors provided by the post, reports of staff exchanges conducted with model posts, and copy of region's response to request for PTO position.

- For recommendation no. 24, evidence of full compliance with OFMH, including closure of recommendation no. 25.

- For recommendation no. 25, evidence showing collection of all outstanding bills of collection.

- For recommendation no. 26, copies of signed custody receipts for property obtained from inventory.

- For recommendation no. 28, a copy of the bank agreement.

- For recommendation no. 32, a copy of the Volunteer property log.

- For recommendation no. 38, a copy of the purchase card log.

- For recommendation no. 40, a copy of the post's evaluation of its vehicle fleet mix.

- For recommendation no. 43, a copy of the post's authorized vehicle ceiling limit and a copy of its vehicle inventory list.

- For recommendation no. 49, documentation showing that unliquidated PEPFAR obligations have been cleared.

- For recommendation no. 50, a copy of the spending plan that allocates shared costs between PEPFAR and appropriated funds.

In their response, the region described actions they are taking or intend 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 they have taken these actions nor 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 audit the impact.