Peace Corps
Office of Inspector General

Togo, West Africa

Flag of Togo

Final Country Program Evaluation Report:
Peace Corps/Togo

September 2010

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Jim O'Keefe
Assistant Inspector General for Evaluation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over 2,500 Peace Corps Volunteers have served the people of Togo since 1962. There are currently four project sectors in Togo: Health, Environment, Education, and Small Business Development. Peace Corps/Togo programs are well-established and managed by experienced and motivated staff members. Peace Corps headquarters program support staff is satisfied with the framework and status of the projects.

Peace Corps/Togo is successfully meeting the first goal of the Peace Corps mission – to help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women. Volunteers are satisfied with their assignments and feel positive about accomplishing their project goals and objectives. They frequently conduct secondary activities and team-up for cross-sector projects. Volunteers report some challenges in identifying the most appropriate counterpart to undertake their project activities, but they ultimately develop good working relationships with counterparts who provide solid support to their work activities and help facilitate community integration.

While the post does not face major obstacles or constraints in its program operations, our evaluation identified several areas that could be improved to increase effectiveness. We identified some limitations in how Volunteer sites are developed - particularly in regard to counterpart selection; and we found that many communities do not provide housing for Volunteers as required by project agreements. The post is not engaging in regular, substantive communication with national ministry officials and its Project Advisory Council activities are infrequent and not well-organized.

Training is a strong point of PC/Togo. Volunteers are satisfied with the effectiveness of pre-service training and expressed high regard for the host family experience as good preparation for service. We identified two areas where training could be improved: local-language training and cross-cultural training sessions. Volunteers report that they are generally well-supported by PC/Togo staff, but they flagged communication from program staff as an area that needs improvement. They expressed satisfaction with the quality of medical care and with safety and security support. However, we found that Volunteers are not in compliance with PC/Togo's out of site policy and Volunteer site locator forms frequently contained inaccuracies, which would make them less useful during an emergency situation.

PC/Togo's fiscal year (FY) 2011-2013 Integrated Planning and Budget System (IPBS), identifies strategies that address many of the issues that are identified in our evaluation, and it provides post with a roadmap of practical improvements to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations. Our report contains 23 recommendations, which, if implemented, should strengthen programming operations and correct the deficiencies discussed in the accompanying report.

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HOST COUNTRY BACKGROUND

The nation of Togo, which is smaller than the state of West Virginia, is located in West Africa along the Gulf of Guinea and borders Benin to the East, Ghana to the West, and Burkina Faso to the North. Togo gained its independence from France in 1960, and in 1963 its president was killed in Africa's first post-colonial coup d'état. Subsequently, Togo was ruled by one president from 1967 until his death in 2005. His son became president of Togo in April 2005 and remains in power. Democratic gains allowed Togo to hold its first relatively free and fair legislative elections in 2007 and presidential elections in March 2010.

Togo's development needs are considerable. Togo was ranked 159 out of 182 countries in the United Nations' 2009 "Human Development Report." Togo has a population of 6.5 million. Subsistence agriculture provides employment for 65 percent of the labor force but traditional farming practices cannot meet the needs of Togo's growing population and are a cause of environmental degradation, poor soil fertility, and decreasing forest resources. Additional food security issues were caused by rainy season flooding in 2008 and 2009 and surges in global food and fuel prices.

The World Bank lists Togo's average per capita income at about $360 and estimates that 62 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Togo's economy is growing at a low rate and suffers from high unemployment and under-employment. HIV/AIDS cases continue to increase, with an adult prevalence rate estimated at 3.3 percent in 2007, despite efforts by the government of Togo to combat the disease. Other health problems include high infant and maternal morbidity rates, infectious diseases, and poor health care infrastructure.

According to the World Bank, Togo's literacy rate in 2008 was 65 percent. The secondary school enrollment rate in 2007 was 41 percent, with 44,000 school-age boys and almost 100,000 school-age girls not enrolled in school. Rural areas of Togo are further impacted by an exodus of literate and qualified Togolese and a poor quality transportation system.

PEACE CORPS PROGRAM BACKGROUND

In 1962 the Peace Corps arrived in Togo as part of a second wave of countries where the Peace Corps began service. Since then, more than 2,500 Volunteers have served the people of Togo for over 48 years of uninterrupted service. At the onset of this evaluation there were 94 Volunteers serving in Togo. The Community Health and AIDS Prevention (CHAP) and Small Enterprise Development (SED) training class of 30 trainees arrived in June, 2010, after the conclusion of our visit, and a Girls' Education and Empowerment

(GEE) and Natural Resources Management (NRM) training class of 30 trainees is scheduled to arrive in September 2010.

A more detailed explanation of the four project areas are discussed below:

- **Community Health and AIDS Prevention**
Volunteers in this project assist local health personnel and regional offices to promote community health and AIDS prevention activities. The project's most important components are child growth monitoring and nutrition education, family planning education, education for sexually transmitted infections (STIs)/AIDS prevention, and improved dispensary management. The CHAP Project Advisory Council (PAC) met in January 2010 and developed a new CHAP Project framework, focusing on reproductive health and family planning education. The proposed framework is being piloted until a formal review which post expects to occur in February 2011. The project was last reviewed by the Office of Program and Training Support (OPATS) in 2004.

- **Natural Resource Management**
In early 2005, the NRM project framework was drafted to focus Volunteer assignments on agroforestry and forestry techniques aimed at managing natural resources for current and future generations. The NRM project works with individuals, organizations, and communities on agroforestry techniques, stategic planning, and environmental education. The project collaborates with the ministries of agriculture and environment in meeting the targets for agroforesty and forestry set out in the work plan. More recently, agricultural productivity and food security have become a focus for the program. The NRM and SED projects collaborate to produce *Farm to Market*, a quarterly bilingual newsletter, targeted to the Volunteers and their counterparts, and circulated to other Peace Corps posts. The project was last reviewed by OPATS in 2005.

- **Small Enterprise Development**
Since 1991, Volunteers working in the SED sector have offered business training and consulting to members of credit unions, women's informal savings groups, and youth and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The goal of this project is to improve basic business and entrepreneurial skills and foster opportunities for growth and job creation in Togo's small business sector. Workshops covering accounting, finance, marketing, and feasibility studies are offered to groups of tailors, retailers, merchants, market women, and other entrepreneurs. Information and communication technology (ICT) was added to this program in 2006. Volunteers advise and help entrepreneurs, trade associations, and NGOs (including credit unions) take advantage of ICT to improve management and extend outreach. The project was last reviewed by OPATS in 2007.

- **Girls' Education and Empowerment**
In 1999, the post began implementation of the GEE program to respond to the need for education and improving opportunities for girls and women identified by former

Volunteers, their counterparts, and Togo government authorities. Volunteers work with local schools, institutions, and workplaces in rural and urban areas, to promote education among girls. Emphasis is given to encouraging girls to attend and stay in school and to make good choices about their future. The project plans to add the "Men as Partners" approach to the project plan to promote the involvement of boys and men in the transformation of gender roles. The project was last reviewed by OPATS in 2004.

EVALUATION RESULTS

PROGRAMMING

The evaluation assessed to what extent the post has developed and implemented programs to increase host country communities' capacity. To determine this level of capacity, we analyzed the following:

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

In our review of PC/Togo's project goals and Volunteer productivity, we found no significant areas of concern that would warrant action by the post. Eighty percent of the Volunteers interviewed (16 of 20 Volunteers) report they are familiar with their project goals and that they are successfully accomplishing project objectives.[1] The Volunteers we interviewed report there is enough work for them in their sites and in their assigned sectors. The post promotes cross-sector collaboration and most Volunteers report their communities have many development needs across a range of program sectors. As a result, many of the Volunteers perform a mix of primary and secondary activities and collaborate with other Volunteers. Volunteers develop good working relationships with counterparts, who support their work activities and facilitate community integration.

Staff members and Volunteers report site development weaknesses

Our evaluation identified concerns from staff and Volunteers regarding Volunteer work site development that is conducted by programming staff members, particularly

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[1] We interviewed a stratified judgmental sample of 21 percent of currently serving Volunteers (20 Volunteers) based on their length of service, site location, project focus, gender, age, and ethnicity. Volunteers were asked to rate many items on a five-point scale (ex. 1 = not familiar, 5 = very familiar). For the purposes of the data analysis, Volunteer ratings of "3" and above are considered favorable.

identifying appropriate counterparts. The country director (CD) and associate Peace Corps directors (APCDs) identified selecting and preparing Volunteer work sites as one of the biggest challenges for Peace Corps projects in Togo and an area where programming staff need assistance.

All but one Volunteer in our sample of 20 Volunteers reported overall satisfaction with their work site. However, many Volunteers reported that the counterparts selected for them during the site development phase were too busy to work with or lacked the appropriate motivation and interest in the project. Seven Volunteers (35 percent) reported other issues with site development such as poor community awareness of the Peace Corps mission or the absence of site reports from the previous Volunteer, a valuable tool for community entry. In our review of the 2009 Peace Corps All Volunteer Survey (AVS) we noted a number of suggestions from Volunteers for improving the site development process, including:

> "Place volunteers with organizations that are actually working (yes, they do exist if staff took the time to look). Actually do site development and preparation."

> "Slim down the number of Volunteers and focus more resources on developing sites and resources for Volunteers to use in developing their communities. Focus on quality of sites and not quantity of sites."

> "I also feel that site development needs to be better for more posts, and that APCD's should be required to visit communities twice a year to help have a better idea of the problems PCV's are facing at the village level."

> "Place Volunteers in communities that are motivated and can benefit from a Volunteer, better site development."

Site development is a critical component to effective Volunteer service. The importance of conducting thorough site development is explained in the 2004 PC/Togo "Site Development Policy and Guidelines," which state in part:

> It is crucial that the Volunteer's environment allows for the positive exchange of skills and abilities . . . It is therefore Peace Corps/Togo's responsibility to assure an effective site development process that places Volunteers in environments where their integration and output is maximized.

Discussions with APCDs highlighted one chief cause affecting the quality of site development. APCDs reported that housing issues such as finding a contractor, shopping for materials, and overseeing the quality of repair work take up an excessive amount of time and significantly impact the quality of their site development. The CD acknowledged that APCDs spend considerable time managing housing issues, which is not a good use of their time. APCDs reported that more of their time should be focused on meeting with project partners and program-related preparations. Their comments included:

> "I need more time to develop a work plan that goes in the site description, a plan for the first three months for the Volunteer."

"If I [take] less time to . . . upgrade the houses then I can focus time on discussing details of the project with partners."

"I will supervise the [housing repairman] but I can better use my time to work on programming aspect of the site, meeting with the counterparts and community members."

Because all the required site development preparations have not been carried out by programming staff members in advance of their arrival, Volunteers arrive at sites that have not been fully vetted and prepared. This lack of preparedness created significant project and integration challenges for some of the Volunteers we interviewed.

The post has developed several strategies to address site development weaknesses. According to PC/Togo's 2011-2013 IPBS, the post plans to establish a "Volunteer Leader" program. Volunteer leaders are generally third year Volunteers authorized to perform supervisory or other special duties and responsibilities in addition to their involvement in Volunteer programs or activities. The CD is planning for Volunteer leaders to assist programming staff by taking on some of the site development responsibilities. Some Volunteers are currently utilized for site development but the CD has found that effective Volunteer participation in future site development will require more planning and consistency. Additionally, site development has been identified as a main focus of the newly hired program assistant (PA), who was conducting site development near the northern city of Dapaong, during our trip to the region. APCDs report they are encouraged by the hiring of a PA but believe that additional PAs are needed in order to support all four projects. An additional tool suggested by the CD during our discussions is the use of a tracking sheet to detail all the follow-up for a new site.

> **We recommend:**
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> 1. **That the country director identify additional staff members and Volunteer leader resources or develop new positions to assist programming staff with site development.**
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> 2. **That the programming staff develop a tracking sheet to monitor site development procedures and that staff complete one for each prospective site in advance of the arrival of the Volunteer.**

Host communities are not contributing to support the cost of Volunteer housing

The quality of Volunteer housing is generally good, but the post faces constant problems regarding the furnishing and upgrading of housing. APCDs report that host communities frequently do not provide housing as stipulated in the project agreements signed with the Ministry partners, or they provide housing that does not meet the posts' expressed standards. We found that APCDs do not have a consistent approach for verifying that

communities and project partners have followed through with their commitments regarding housing and upkeep.

The post has developed Volunteer housing standards that are applied to both urban and rural housing. In the communities that cannot support Volunteer housing, PC/Togo either pays rent or pays for repairs and upgrades to bring the housing up to standards. According to the CD, the post spent over $10,000 for housing repairs and upgrades during the 2009 calendar year. The FY 2011-2013 IPBS reports that "Community contribution to PCVs' sites is limited, and PC/Togo ends up paying for most of the housing upgrades."

Responsibilities for housing are defined in the post's memoranda of understanding (MOU) with host government agencies and in the Volunteer Request form used by the staff members during site development. PC/Togo's agreement with the Ministry of Public Health states that it is the: "Obligation of Ministry of Public Health… to support Volunteer housing."

The agreement between PC/Togo & the Ministry of National Education states, "The community will take charge of housing for Peace Corps Volunteers. The Ministry of National Education and Peace Corps will collaborate in order to ensure that Volunteer housing is appropriate."

Before staff members conduct site development the community is expected to submit a Volunteer Request Form, which establishes housing support expectations by asking the community, "Are you ready to provide free housing to the Volunteer?" If a Volunteer's host community does not provide adequate housing, PC/Togo pays for housing and for any needed repairs and upgrades. The administrative officer (AO) reported that in some cases the repair and upgrade costs end up being higher in the long run than paying rent for housing that meets the post's standards. As mentioned previously, a compounding effect is that APCDs spend a considerable amount of time addressing housing issues, which results in less time spent at work sites educating communities about the Peace Corps' mission or meeting with potential counterparts and project partners. A further ramification is that the requirement to furnish housing helps to create a sense of local community responsibility for and investment in Volunteers and their work, which is key to Volunteer community integration and to the spirit and goals of the Peace Corps program. The CD and AO both acknowledged that post could do better at ensuring the host government contributes to Volunteer housing.

It is the responsibility of the program APCD's to ensure that communities provide Volunteer housing. In urban areas, APCDs report that housing provided by the project partner is not always available, which is why the agency often must pay rent for housing. APCDs also report that communities frequently provide sub-standard housing, and when asked to complete repairs and upgrades, the response is that they do not have the means to do so.

Despite the limitations of host communities, two of the APCDs we interviewed agreed that communities need to be pressed more to provide housing that meets the Peace Corps' standards. They commented that communities should provide housing as their community contribution, and if they are unwilling or unable to provide housing, then Volunteers should be placed elsewhere.

The FY 2011-2013 IPBS acknowledged the difficulty of some host communities to contribute and came up with a management priority to solve these housing issues:

> Objective 2.4: Improve site development to ensure local community buy-in and PCV productivity….Standardize housing criteria and require partners to contribute more to housing.

As we previously noted, PC/Togo Volunteer housing standards are the same for rural and urban placements, and some rural communities do not have housing that would meet post standards. For example, traditional houses are constructed from earth and do not meet the requirement that walls are plastered and in good repair. The AO reported that the post is considering the development of separate housing standards for rural and urban communities. The development of more appropriate criteria for rural housing should improve the ability of rural communities to meet housing standards

We recommend:

3. **That the post: 1) develop housing criteria that reflects the appropriate differences in rural and urban building standards, and; 2) ensure consistent implementation of housing criteria by program managers.**

4. **That the country director and program managers develop and implement a site development plan that explores new community entries and increases community and host-country support to Volunteer housing.**

Volunteers frequently replace ineffective counterparts, slowing the initial pace and progress of their assignments

Program managers select Volunteer counterparts during the site selection process. More than half the Volunteers in our sample told us they were not working with the counterparts who were originally selected for them. Seven Volunteers reported that their assigned counterpart was too busy with their primary job to devote sufficient time to the Volunteer's project. Five other Volunteers reported that their assigned counterparts lack the appropriate motivation or interest to work with them. One Volunteer reported that their assigned counterpart, who was caught stealing from the Volunteer, had been identified by a previous Volunteer as a poor choice for a counterpart.

The selection of more than one community member to assist the Volunteer during site development is a best practice we have discussed in prior Office of Inspector General (OIG) reports. Some posts employ an approach during site development where a community contact is identified for an initial period when Volunteers arrive at their sites, and then after a period of living in the community, Volunteers select their own primary project partner. According to the 2004 PC/Togo Site Development Policy and Guidelines, counterparts should be selected from partnering organizations and the community should identify both a "primary contact person" and "the proposed counterpart." This information should be included on the Volunteer Request form. The post's guidance further states:

> Each identified site will ensure the existance of . . . An organization with which to establish and maintain the PCV/counterpart relationship. This organization... has a minimum of three workers involved. The organization understands and expresses a desire to put in place a PCV/counterpart to work with the Volunteer. Active/motivated personnel are attached to the organization.

Program staff members spend an inordinate amount of time on housing issues during site development visits, and not enough time meeting with potential counterparts and partners. This issue is compounded by the scarcity of viable counterparts in many communities. According to the FY 2011-2013 IPBS, suitable Volunteer counterparts are hard to identify due to the exodus of literate and qualified Togolese from rural areas. Additionally, an APCD described his difficulty selecting counterparts in urban communities because counterparts are more likely to expect a salary. APCDs reported that in some communities it can be difficult to identify even one counterpart. These conditions have resulted in an ineffective counterpart selection process and a slower initial pace or progress by newly placed Volunteers. One APCD estimated that up to 25 percent of Volunteers will not have a counterpart available when they begin their assignments.

In spite of these challenging conditions, Volunteers report that effective and appropriate counterparts can ultimately be found in most communities, and they have been able to identify counterparts once they are settled in their sites. Almost all the 20 Volunteers interviewed reported they have found a primary counterpart to work with and Volunteers reported a 100 percent favorability rating for the working relationships with their primary counterparts, with an average response of 4.4 on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all, 5 = very well). [2]

In order to identify more appropriate counterparts during the site development stage, the post's guidelines for counterpart selection may need to be broadened and re-focused. Volunteers initially need a guide to introduce them to the community, and personnel attached to a partnering organization may not always be the best individual to guide the Volunteer through the community integration process. Only after a Volunteer settles into the community and develops project activities does the need for skilled partners and

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[2] One Volunteer reported not being interested in having a primary counterpart.

counterparts present itself. The FY 2011-2013 IPBS indicates that site development should be improved by "selecting multiple work partners." By using such a strategy – selecting a range of potential partners including community guides and skilled technicians – PC/Togo Volunteers should be better positioned and supported to engage in meaningful work in the community.

> **We recommend:**
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> 5. **That the post revise its Volunteer site development guidelines to ensure: 1) a suitable contact person for the Volunteer is identified at each site; and, 2) that multiple Volunteer work partners are identified as potential counterparts at each site.**

PC/Togo does not engage in regular and effective communication with ministry partners

PC/Togo program staff members reported in interviews that high-level ministry officials are usually invited to various Peace Corps events, but on-going substantive contact with them is not occurring with any regularity. The CD acknowledged a lack of consistency in communication with PC/Togo's ministry partners. In our interviews with them, with the exception of the Ministry of Education, ministry officials were unable to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the goals and activities of Volunteers.[3]

The importance of regular, substantive communication with ministry partners is underscored in Peace Corps' *Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post: Post Management Resource Guide*, Part 6.4, "Communication with Host-Country Government and Partner Agencies":

> . . . There is much value to setting up a regular communications network with the counterpart agency (ministry, NGO, or community organization), so that consultation, exchange, and understanding take place on a steady basis, outside of the realm of special problems and crises. . . It is also both a protection and a support for Volunteers in the field who, if their supervising organizations are meeting and communicating on a regular basis, will receive much more coherent and consistent direction concerning the project's objectives and activities.

MOUs are an additional tool for establishing and maintaining a dialogue and on-going cooperation and involvement of host government partners. Peace Corps' *Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post: Post Management Resource Guide*, Part 6.2, "Memoranda of Understanding" points to the benefit of formal project agreements with partner ministries:

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[3] Ministry of Health officials were unfamiliar with the Peace Corps mission and development objectives and repeatedly raised the topic of how the agency might furnish direct financial support during our interview.

As a matter of both guidance and protection for the Volunteer, as well as for the Peace Corps and the partner agency, there needs to be a formal memorandum of understanding . …The MOU or agreement should clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the cooperating parties and serve as a basis and source of reference for the cooperative relationship established between the two (or more) parties.

Neither the NRM nor the SED projects have project agreements in place with their respective partnering ministries. MOUs exist between PC/Togo and its CHAP and GEE ministry partners, but they have not been revisited or updated since 2001. The project agreement established between PC/Togo and the ministry of public health in 2001 signaled the importance of the ministry's involvement in the program and states that it is the "obligation" of the ministry, ". . . to ensure the supervision and the follow-up of the activities of the project in collaboration with the management of the Peace Corps."

Peace Corps has been operating in Togo for 48 years and staff members at the post report that the agency is well-liked and respected by host country partners and participants. The projects are well established and OPATS specialists reported few concerns regarding the status of PC/Togo's programming and training. These factors may have led to some laxity with high-level partner communications. APCDs reported that they have more contact with regional ministry representatives, rather than at the national level. The CD reports that improvements in PC/Togo's dialogue with host government partners is a management priority supported by programming staff members.

The FY 2011-2013 IPBS includes objectives that aim to increase the government of Togo, NGO, and host country national awareness of PC Togo's accomplishments and to form new partnerships and strengthen existing relationships. At present, the lack of both substantive engagement with high-level partners and active project agreements makes it difficult for post to ensure that programming is aligned with host country interests and that partners know their responsibilities and are fulfilling them. Without this, The Togolese ministries are also unable to adequately perform their supervisory and collaborative obligations.

We recommend:

6. That the post establish a strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of partner development goals.

7. That the post establish a strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of new or revised Memoranda of Understanding or project agreements.

Program Advisory Council activities are infrequent and inconsistent

As we have discussed, a number of the host ministry officials we met with were not well-informed about Volunteer activities. Project Advisory Councils (PACs) have been established for all projects. However, according to staff, beyond extending invitations to Volunteer swearing in ceremonies, PAC involvement with program staff and the Volunteers or ministry-level awareness of program activities, accomplishments and challenges is minimal. The CD reported that PAC activities are not organized on a calendar to ensure more regular meetings.

The GEE and CHAP PACs were organized in 2004 as a result of a recommendation made in an OPATS project review and they conduct meetings every other year following the in-service training program s for these sectors. The SED PAC was organized as a result of a recommendation made in a 2007 OPATS project review and, according to staff members, it last met in November 2008. A NRM PAC was involved with a project framework review in 2006, but staff members report that it became inactive until the recently appointed APCD organized a PAC meeting in March 2010.

According to Peace Corps' "Programming and Training Booklet 2: How to Design or Revise a Project," PACS should include the participation of ministry-level and local partners and Volunteers. In its description of PAC responsibilities and activities, the booklet states:

> This committee would share responsibility (with the APCD and program managers) for research, design, assessment, and revision of the project. In the ideal situation, the advisory committee would provide support throughout the life of the project.

Program staff members cited budget constraints as one issue impacting the frequency of PAC meetings. Additionally, they said that ministry officials and managers transition frequently to different ministries, and there is no assurance that the ministries remain informed of PC programs.

> **We recommend:**
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> 8. **That the post develop an annual calendar of Project Advisory Council activities, engage with ministry personnel in regular project updates, and undertake activities such as visits to Volunteer projects on a regular basis.**

The post did not advise Volunteers of the availability of Small Project Assistance funds for water and sanitation projects

Expanding access to clean water and sanitation was identified in the FY 2011-2013 IPBS as a development need in Togo that is not currently being addressed by Peace Corps. The IPBS reported the availability of $23,000 in U.S. Agency of International Development (USAID) Small Project Assistance (SPA) funding as a resource to meet this need. The

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funding for water and sanitation projects became available in November 2009. We found that Volunteers were not notified of the availability of this grant funding until April 2010.

In interviews, Volunteers reported that they were either unaware of this funding opportunity or had only learned about it in recent weeks. The *Volunteer Information Newsletters* for October-December 2009 and January-March 2010 and the section titled "SPA News" failed to provide information to Volunteers regarding the water and sanitation funding. The post's SPA coordinator reported he was not aware the funds were available until March 2010. Volunteers were officially notified in the "SPA News" section of the April-June 2010 newsletter and by a letter sent from the CD to all Volunteers via post and email.

Peace Corps' *SPA Program Handbook* states that:

> Posts must ensure that SPA guidelines, deadlines, and review procedures are effectively
> communicated to Volunteers. Effective means of communicating SPA information
> include distribution of informational pamphlets, inclusion of SPA updates and reminders
> in Volunteer newsletters, and scheduling SPA orientation sessions at PST or IST.

We determined that several factors led to confusion over the availability of the water and sanitation SPA funds. The Partnership Development Unit (PDU) at headquarters, which manages the SPA program, reported that SPA funding for water and sanitation projects came from a different USAID office than usual, and the funds were allocated after the post had already received its first quarter SPA allotment. The yearly SPA funding is typically distributed quarterly in equal amounts, but the post's FY10 SPA funding was distributed quarterly in the amounts of $15,000, $10,000, and $20,000 through the third quarter. The FY10 fourth quarter allotment is $23,500. This discrepancy caused confusion at the post and delayed notification of the fund's availability to Volunteers. As a result, Volunteers were unable to develop strategies or conduct planning activities for projects in the key development area of access to safe water and sanitation.

> **We recommend:**
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> 9. **That the post review with headquarters'
>   Partnership Development Unit how Small Project
>   Assistance funding notifications are issued and
>   received, and institute any necessary changes to
>   ensure that Volunteers are informed of the
>   availability of funds.**

Volunteers were advised not to return unused grant money

In interviews, two Volunteers reported that the SPA Coordinator advised them to distribute grant funds that they had determined should be returned to post. In one instance, a Volunteer revised a SPA project to become more efficient, and wanted to send

the excess money back to be better used elsewhere. *The Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program Handbook* states:

> In most instances, funds remaining at the end of the project should be returned to post. Volunteers or community organizations cannot use remaining funds to start new projects or to significantly expand the scope of the original project.

In another instance, a Volunteer had intended to cancel a Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) project and return the grant funding because the community failed to follow through on their required contribution of at least 25 percent of the project cost. The *Peace Corps Partnership Volunteer Handbook* states that a 25 percent minimum community contribution is required and, if a project is cancelled, all unused funds must be returned. Nonetheless, both Volunteers reported that the SPA Coordinator advised them to use the funds in some other way rather than return them to the source.

Appropriate training and oversight of the grant process is particularly important in a development environment such as Togo's that has historically relied heavily on donor aid, and where moving funding out to the community is considered a sign of success. The CD and many Volunteers reported that a major cultural challenge is the perception that Volunteers are expected to 'hand out money.' Volunteers' comments included:

> "I think people feel that if they go along with me for long enough I'll eventually just give them a pile of money."
>
> "We are above all . . . supposed to have money. They do like Americans here but they really lose interest in you if you don't have money . . . Any time I talk about a project all I hear is talk of money and the gifts. I don't know how to fix it."
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> "A major challenge I face is getting people to see that I am not a bank."

As previously mentioned, Togo is ranked 159 out of 182 in the 2009 "Human Development Report" by the UN and many Volunteer counterparts and partners are low-wage earners. The FY 2011-2013 IPBS reports that, "In many cases, communities are unable to make the required minimal contributions to support funded activities. Thus, Volunteers are pressured to provide financial resources."

The Peace Corps is one of the few development organizations in Togo that does not distribute grant funds as its primary mechanism of support. As a result, a principal obstacle for Volunteers is the perception that they are a source of financial support for individual or community needs. Peace Corps grants are intended as a supplement to sustainable community-initiated projects and one outcome to be avoided is a community's expectation for handouts. We commend the Volunteers cited in this finding for their efforts to return unused funding and adhere to the goals of the grant programs they were managing.

We recommend:

10. That the post ensure all Small Project Assistance and Peace Corps Partnership Program funds are distributed and accounted for in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

11. That the post provide training to all staff responsible for management or oversight of the Small Project Assistance program.

Funding received from the "Friends of Togo" organization does not conform to the agency's financial management requirements

Several Volunteers reported that grants for small projects are available through Friends of Togo. In discussions regarding the management of Friends of Togo grants, the CD reported that, in the past, small sums (under $400) received from Friends of Togo had not conformed to administrative requirements.

Country directors are authorized to accept donations under certain circumstances, which are elaborated in Peace Corps' *Overseas Financial Management Handbook*, Section 21.1, "Authority to Accept Donations," which states:

> Country Directors are authorized to accept:
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> 1. Unconditional gifts of money or intangible personal property in local currency, not in excess of $5,000 (USDE) in value;
> 2. Conditional (if the only restriction by donor is use in the country) or unconditional gifts of tangible personal property with a market value not in excess of $5,000 (USDE); and
> 3. Conditional (if the only restriction by donor is use in the country) gifts of money or intangible personal property, not in excess of $5,000 (USDE).
>
> Donors who want to donate more than $5,000 in local currency (USDE), wish to make donations in USD or want to make donations for restricted purposes must be referred to the Office of Private Sector Initiatives.

The CD reported that the Friends of Togo organization is unable to deliver funds in the local currency, a requirement for small donations delivered directly to the post. Thus far the post has not accepted Friend of Togo funds under the Peace Corps Partnership Program because the funding amounts are small. The CD reported she plans to contact the Friends of Togo organization to develop a new system for funding projects.

We recommend:

12. That the country director ensures funding for Volunteer projects adheres to all agency financial management and Peace Corps Partnership Program requirements.

TRAINING

Another objective of the OIG country program evaluation is to answer the question, "Does training prepare Volunteers for Peace Corps service?" To answer this question we considered such factors as:

- Training adequacy
- Planning & development of the training life cycle
- Staffing and related budget

In reviewing PC/Togo's Training Design and Evaluation (TDE) elements, we found that the post has planned and implemented training according to the training criteria set forth in the Director's TDE Memorandum of November 2, 2006. In reviewing post's training adequacy, training life cycle, and training staffing, we found no significant areas of concern that would warrant a recommendation for action by the post.

Nineteen out of 20 Volunteers in our sample rated the level of support from the training manager above average or very supportive. Eleven Volunteers in the sample gave the highest rating to their Pre-service Training (PST) host family experience, which had an average rating of 4.4 on a 5-point scale (1 = poor, 5 = outstanding). Volunteers were satisfied with the effectiveness of PST including the technical training element, which in other OIG country program evaluations is frequently a common area of Volunteer dissatisfaction. Language training was rated favorably by all the Volunteers in our sample however comments from staff members and Volunteers indicate local-language training is an area that could be improved.

Pre-service local language training does not equip Volunteers with basic conversational language ability

While French language is used routinely in government offices and in larger urban settings, it is spoken much less in the smaller, more rural Togolese communities where the bulk of the Volunteers serve. Some local language training is provided to Trainees during PST, but French is primary focus of the language training. As an added challenge, there are over 40 local languages and dialects spoken in Togo, which makes it hard to find qualified language trainers. As a result, most Volunteers arrive at their sites with inadequate local language skills and are left to develop their own strategy to learn the local language.

The CD and programming staff members identified local language training as an area that needs improvement. The CD stated that, "Local language is key, it's magic, [Volunteers] have so much pull with people." Several Volunteers also reported that knowledge of their local language is essential to access their communities. Most Volunteers we interviewed reported that there was not enough time devoted to local language training during PST, and four Volunteers reported they received instruction in a language that is not used at their site. We also noted that Volunteer comments about PST in the 2009 AVS included the following:

> "[Sic] ineffective local language instruction."

> "Language training in Ewe was weak."

> "Local language training only focused on the speech I had to give at swear-in."

> "Again, more time [is needed] learning local languages."

A proficiency in the language spoken in the host community has been a cornerstone of successful Volunteer experiences. In fact, legislation establishing the Peace Corps states that:

> No person shall be assigned to duty as a volunteer under this chapter in any foreign country or area unless at the time of such assignment he possesses such reasonable proficiency as his assignment requires in speaking the language of the country or area to which he is assigned.[4]

Peace Corps' *Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post: Post Management Resource Guide* Part 1.1 on Philosophy and Vision states:

> Country directors themselves should have a clear idea of what the 'Peace Corps philosophy' is. The philosophy may be seen as consisting of a number of basic components, including . . . Learning the local languages.

Trainees are required to reach the intermediate-mid level proficiency in French, the official language of Togo, before they swear in. Therefore, most Trainees are not able to transition to local language instruction until the end of their pre-service training program. The CD and staff members have considered several strategies to address this problem. A longer training would be useful, but would add additional cost. Post has decided to transition to a three-phase training model that will reduce the length and costs of PST. The three phases include a shorter PST, continued learning at the Volunteer work site for several months with a focus on needs assessments, and then a follow-up during the In Service-Training (IST) program, with a focus on technical skills based on the needs identified during the community assessment.

The post underwrites the cost of language lessons for Volunteers during service. However, few of the Volunteers we interviewed were working with a tutor to develop local language skills. To promote the development of local language skills the post could

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[4] US Code, Title 22, Chapter 34 Peace Corps Act, Section 2521.

encourage Volunteers to select a local language tutor soon after arrival at their site and develop tools to aid Volunteers with the selection of effective tutors.

> **We recommend:**
>
> **13. That the post provide more local language training in pre-service training programs.**
>
> **14. That the post develops a 'best practices' tool to guide the Volunteers through the process of identifying tutors and engaging in local language instruction at their sites.**

Pre-service cross-cultural training does not prepare the Volunteers for many typical challenges they face during service

Volunteers favorably rated their PST cross-cultural training. However, they find the host family experience much more useful than the formal training sessions led by the Peace Corps trainers. Volunteers reported that Togolese cross-cultural trainers did not seem to understand the challenges Americans face in cross-cultural integration very well. As a result, training sessions focused more on gaining knowledge and awareness of Togolese culture, rather than teaching trainees how to resolve some of the typical cross-cultural conflicts that Americans living in Togo may encounter. Volunteers' comments included:

> "They relied on the Togolese too much to explain the differences . . . The Togolese trainers don't understand American culture very well."
>
> "… Training should focus more on how to react to cultural realities and not just on what to expect. What should our reactions be - what are appropriate cultural reactions to these cultural differences?"
>
> "Togolese trainers can't see the forest for the trees, the PCV trainers know what the Americans are thinking more. There was no conflict management – they would not teach us how to resolve situations."

Some conflict is an unavoidable effect of cultural adjustment. Successful management of conflicts is essential to community integration. According to the Peace Corps cross-cultural workbook *Culture Matters*:

> The Peace Corps experience has a number of built-in dilemmas, but none more significant than the question of how one adjusts to a different culture and still maintains one's own values, identity and self-respect.

Without more grounding in American attitudes and cultural norms, the host national trainers will remain poorly equipped to offer coping or response strategies to the everyday integration challenges that PC/Togo Volunteers frequently encounter.

We recommend:

15. That the training manager increase the use of experienced second year Volunteers to conduct cross-cultural training sessions;

16. That the Training of Trainers program include skill-building on cross-cultural conflict management.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Our country program evaluation attempts to answer the question "To what extent has the post provided adequate oversight and support to Volunteers?" To answer this question, the evaluation assesses numerous factors, including: staff and Volunteer communications; Medical Unit management; emergency preparedness; safety incident responses; site visits; administrative support; and diversity support. In reviewing administrative support, Medical Unit management and responses to safety incidents, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would warrant OIG recommendations for action by the post.

The post is addressing Volunteer concerns about public transportation

Eight (40 percent) of the 20 Volunteers in our sample reported that the only time they feel unsafe in Togo is while traveling in public transportation. This included five of six Volunteers in the sample from the northernmost Savannah region. In addition to Volunteer comments, the FY 2011-2013 IPBS stated concerns about the poor quality of the transportation system which the evaluator confirmed through first-hand observations. PC/Togo is providing options to reduce the use of public transportation or "bush taxis." The post operates a van - the "Lome Limo" - that travels roundtrip twice a month from Lome to the northernmost region. Volunteers, their friends, and counterparts can make reservations for a ride. Volunteers report the "Lome Limo" significantly increases their sense of safety while traveling in Togo. Based on actions taken we are not making a recommendation, but we encourage staff to monitor progress made addressing this issue.

Staff - Volunteer communications are being targeted for improvement by program staff

In interviews, more than half the sampled Volunteers from each of the four projects reported dissatisfaction with communications from their APCDs. Volunteer comments included:

> "It's not that [APCD name] is not supportive - [APCD] is doing everything that is
> expected . . . but it's very passive support. [APCD] is responsive to my support needs,
> but not proactive. I think [APCD] would be more proactive if [APCD] had more time."

> "You have to call and call to get [APCD'S] support. It's just a lack of time and attention
> and availability."

> "[APCD] won't seek you out . . . [APCD] will help me if I ask for help but [APCD] won't be proactive."

> "[APCD] really cares about Togo and [this project] - but I go months without talking to [APCD]. [APCD] never asks."

We found that proactive Volunteers are successful in gaining the attention of their APCD and receiving the assistance they are seeking. However, less proactive Volunteers turn elsewhere for support, typically other Volunteers or staff members. As a result, some Volunteers do not experience regular, meaningful contact with their program APCDs and feel unsupported; and conversely, APCDs are less aware of Volunteer conditions and less capable of providing Volunteer support or effective project planning, monitoring, and development.

Asked to rate staff support on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all, 5 = very well), the average response for APCD support was 3.63, indicating a favorability rating of 77 percent. The average response for other staff members in PC/Togo was 4.01, which is a favorability rating of 90 percent (see table below).

Table 1: Volunteer Responses on Perception of Support

Area of Support	% Favorable (3,4,5)	Response Average
Country Director	67%	3.38
APCD – NRM	100%	4.8
APCD – CHAP	67%	3.17
APCD – GEE	75%	3.8
APCD – SED	67%	2.75
Training Manager	95%	4.45
Safety & Security Coordinator	92%	3.83
Medical Unit	100%	4.5
Administrative Officer	94%	3.93

The 2009 AVS indicates that 69 percent of Togo Volunteers were satisfied with their job assignment support, somewhat lower than the global average of 78 percent. The 2009 AVS survey also demonstrated scores that were lower than global averages in four questions rating Volunteer interactions with their APCDs: "Responsiveness to My Issues"; "Informative Content", "My Comfort Level Discussing Issues", "Adequacy of Visits."   Additionally, in comments included in the AVS, Volunteers reported their APCDs failed to establish expectations of support. Volunteer comments included:

> "[APCD] has not done a good job of letting us know how we could use [APCD] support. I really don't know what APCDs do."

> "We don't know what [APCD] does. [APCD] seems to be busy all the time."

> "I know there are capacities I can tap into but I don't feel supported."

The importance of APCD-Volunteer communications is clarified in Peace Corps' *Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post: Post Management Resource*

Guide, Part 6.10, "APCD/PMs' Communication with Other Sections and with Volunteers" includes the following guidance regarding staff member-Volunteer communication:

> [APCDs] must maintain solid and effective communications systems with the Volunteers in the field, in order to know the conditions, needs, performance, problems, and desires of the Volunteer population they are supposed to be guiding, supporting, and overseeing.

In our discussions on this subject, APCDs attribute the problem to a frequently unmanageable volume of emails, text messages, phone calls, and walk-in appointments. The CD acknowledged that the quality of communication from APCDs could be improved and that APCD communications with Volunteers by email and text message are not always substantive.

The post is responding to this problem. The CD reports that an initiative is underway for program staff members to talk with each of their Volunteers at least once a month. This initiative was identified as a management priority in the FY 2011-2013 IPBS. The CD communicated this policy to Volunteers in the January-March 2010 Volunteer Information Newsletter, which stated: "APCDs will also be making monthly calls to you if they have not seen you at site, during an IST, or in the office." The APCDs report that they support this expectation and they are satisfied with this level of communication. One APCD stated, "The Volunteers are so happy to hear from me – they are waiting for me to call I can tell." Programming staff report they track their communications both in an Excel spreadsheet and in the Volunteer Information Database Application (VIDA) database. The CD and most staff members report they favor the VIDA tracking system for consistency. Based on actions taken we are not making a recommendation, but we encourage staff to monitor progress made addressing these issues.

Staff feedback to Volunteer biannual reports has been brief and inconsistent

Volunteers in PC/Togo are required twice each year to submit performance reports detailing their work activities. Peace Corps' Programming and Training Booklet 5: "How to Implement a Project" encourages programming staff to respond to each of these periodic reports.

Five of the ten second-year[5] Volunteers in our interview sample reported that they had submitted the required biannual report, but received no feedback at all from their APCD. Programming staff members acknowledged that in recent reporting periods the feedback they provide to Volunteers has been brief and inconsistent. Our review of the feedback from the most recent reporting period (September 2009) revealed that most Volunteers received an email confirming that their report had been received, but that responses lacked substantive comments or suggestions regarding the Volunteer's reported work activities.

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[5] First-year Volunteers had not yet submitted biannual reports for the reporting period of September 2009.

The CD agreed that the lack of report feedback left Volunteers with the impression that the biannual reporting was not important. In order to change this attitude and improve the quality of reporting, the CD has implemented an initiative to improve report feedback and this has been included in the FY 2011-2013 IPBS as a management priority. The CD is asking the APCDs to provide 'timely feedback' to each Volunteer and to compile a sector summary report of the Volunteers' activities. To establish this expectation among all concerned, the CD wrote in the October-December 2009 "Volunteer Information" newsletter, "It is also my expectation that APCDs will provide you with meaningful feedback, which will enhance your performance and help you grow professionally."

Implementation of this system will allow APCDs to develop a more proactive strategy for each Volunteer's support needs, which should help address other support issues raised in our earlier finding. APCDs are supportive of this initiative and report they should be able to provide individualized feedback responses to Volunteers within a time frame of several weeks.

> **We recommend:**
>
> **17. That the country director monitor biannual Volunteer reporting to ensure: 1) that all Volunteers meet reporting requirements; 2) that program staff provide timely, substantive feedback to Volunteers.**

Volunteers are not compliant with PC/Togo's out of site policy

All Peace Corps posts are required to implement an effective "whereabouts policy" to maximize the safety and security of Volunteers and Trainees. We asked the Volunteers in our sample how often they reported being out of site. Only three of 18 Volunteers reported their travel activities were in full compliance with PC/Togo's out of site policy. [6]

As shown in the table below, only 7 percent of Volunteers leaving their sites always follow out of site reporting requirements, which is a significant safety and security concern.

Table 2: Volunteer Compliance with PC/Togo's Out of Site Policy

Compliance with out of site policy	PCV reporting percentage
Never	0%
Rarely	21%
Sometimes	21%
Most of the time	50%
Always	7%

PC/Togo's whereabouts policy is clearly stated. According to the *Volunteer Handbook*:

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[6] Of 20 Volunteer responses, two Volunteers reported that they have not traveled away from their sites except when required by training and other official business.

All Volunteers must inform Peace Corps Togo beforehand of any overnight away from their site. This can now be done by sending text messages . . . if you plan to spend time out of your region or more than two days out of your site, excluding necessary travel time, get prior approval for work days or vacation time from your APCD.

We asked Volunteers why they did not report being away from their site. Six Volunteers reported that they simply forgot to follow the out of site reporting guidelines when they left their sites. However, five other Volunteers reported that they did not want staff members to know how often they were out of site or where they were going. They expressed concerns that their out of site text messages are screened by staff to monitor their vacation days or assess the quality of their work performance. Their comments include:

"I guess it's just a feeling, we're expected to be at post . . . to get a better percentage of reporting they should tell us that they don't expect us to be at post all the time."

"I'm not leaving my village to get away but if I texted all the time they might think I'm trying to get away from my village."

"I just feel that they will think I'm not working, I feel guilty."

The CD recently made an effort to allay concerns and convince Volunteers to comply with the policy to improve their safety and security. In the January-March 2009 "Volunteer Information" newsletter the CD wrote:

We are not the vacation police. Our only intention is to know where all 100 PCVs are in case we need to mobilize you after a natural disaster, during civil unrest, or in the event of a personal emergency, etc. The bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 combined with the 2001 disappearance of a PCV in Bolivia (he is still missing.), September 11th, and the tsunami in Asia are events, which have changed the way Peace Corps operates. The elections are right around the corner and we want you to be safe and make sure that we operate as smoothly as possible.

In order to more directly address this issue and improve "whereabouts" reporting, the post may need to send Volunteers additional bulletins and memos clarifying the purpose and uses of the policy and engage in regular discussions of the rationale for the policy during pre- and in-service trainings and conferences.

We recommend:

18. That the post issue additional supplementary information and guidance to Volunteers (via Volunteer newsletter, email, etc.) regarding the purpose and importance of accurate out of site reporting.

Volunteer site locator forms were inaccurate and missing key information

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

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

PC/Togo's EAP requires Volunteers to complete locator forms and update them whenever changes occur to the contained information. As part of our evaluation, we reviewed 17[7] SLFs for the 20 Volunteers in our interview sample. Six (35 percent) of the 17 SLFs we reviewed did not have accurate maps, and the evaluator was unable to locate the Volunteers' houses using the form alone. Another key component in the agency guidance local police, contact information, was not included in the SLF template and was missing from all of SLFs reviewed by the evaluator.

Our review of site visit reports for the 20 Volunteers in our sample showed no record of staff reviewing SLFs for accuracy and completeness during their site visits. According to PC/Togo's site visit procedures, a review of SLFs should be conducted by staff members during site visits to verify the accuracy of SLF information. The post's EAP also requires APCDs and the safety and security coordinator to review SLFs on a quarterly basis. The accuracy and completeness of SLFs is vital to ensure Volunteers can be located without undue delay in an emergency.

> **We recommend:**
>
> 19. **That the staff members thoroughly review site locator forms for accuracy and completeness during site visits and verify by signature that this action has been accomplished.**
>
> 20. **That the site locator form template is revised to include information on the police posts at each Volunteer site.**

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[7] For scheduling reasons, the evaluator was unable to travel to three of the Volunteers' houses.

PC/Togo is not meeting the diversity support needs of some Volunteers

In interviews, several Volunteers reported that Volunteer diversity issues have not been adequately addressed and supported by staff or fellow PC/Togo Volunteers. Comments from Volunteers included:

> "I really don't think the Volunteers relate to me, some of the white Volunteers on the [Volunteer Diversity Committee] even told me that they experience the same racism as me, which they don't."

> "The Volunteer Diversity Committee . . . they don't really know what to do, don't know how to react to diversity. They want to just say 'we are all the same' but we are not all the same."

Staff members and Volunteers reported a diversity-related conflict that flared up among several Volunteers in the Northern Savannah region during a joint Volunteer-counterpart work project. In response to the incident, the CD met with Volunteers in the region to seek information and resolve the situation. During our interviews with Volunteers, we asked six Volunteers in the region about the incident and, while they expressed appreciation for the CDs involvement, they reported on-going tensions among some Volunteers, as well as tensions with staff members and the CD. Their comments included:

> "There is a divisive dynamic now that was not there before."

> "The CD has to operate along how things work in DC, but how things work here is different. It's contributed to feeling that you should be careful what you share with PC/Lome. We lean on each other . . . You rest on your group here and the group was fragmented as a result of [the incident.]"

> "I haven't been satisfied with the action [the CD] is taking with these issues."

Volunteer diversity is a key component of the agency's Strategic Plan for FY 2009-2014, which aims to build a more diverse corps of Volunteers. Guidance related to supporting diversity at posts is included in Peace Corps' *Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post: Post Management Resource Guide*, Part 4.19 on "Diversity," which states:

> The post carries out specific activities to include, prepare, support, and properly represent various groups and help make them all—American and host country—full participants and positive contributors to the Peace Corps program and experience.

In our discussions with staff members, we learned that post aims to support Volunteer diversity in a number of ways, including the Volunteer Diversity Committee and PST sessions. An expectation of diversity support is established in the *PC/Togo Welcome Book*, which states:

> The Peace Corps staff as well as the Volunteer Diversity Committee will lead diversity and sensitivity discussions during pre-service training and will be on call to provide support, but the challenge ultimately will be your own.

While the Volunteer Diversity Committee may have been able to play a role in supporting the CD to resolve the recent conflict situation in the Northern Savanna region, staff members and Volunteers report that the Volunteer diversity committee stopped functioning when the committee's president was medically separated. The CD recognized the need for additional diversity support and submitted a Field Assistance Activity Request form (FAAR) for diversity training from OPATS' cross-cultural and diversity training specialist. Funding was not approved by the region and the post was advised to resubmit the training proposal over the summer,[8] for a future training to take place during FY 2011. However, this date may be too late to benefit those Volunteers who feel most affected by this issue.

> **We recommend:**
>
> **21. That the country director seek Volunteer and staff support to re-establish the Volunteer Diversity Committee.**
>
> **22. That the Africa Region take steps in the near term to support diversity training in PC/Togo delivered by a qualified trainer.**

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

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

In reviewing staffing, office work environment and post's strategic planning and budgeting the OIG found no significant areas of concern that would warrant action by the post.

Peace Corps/Togo's early termination data for 2009 contains inaccuracies

At the end of the fiscal year the Peace Corps Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning (OSIRP) collects early termination (ET) data in compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) annual reporting requirements. The data can be useful in providing agency managers with an indirect measure of the quality

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[8] The CD submitted another request to OPATS in June that is pending.

of recruitment and placement and the management of country programs. A review of PC/Togo's ET data for FY 2009 revealed there were 16 medical separations, which, if accurate, represents the highest rate globally. We asked the post's Medical Unit to review its medical separation data. The review determined there were only 10 medical separations during FY 2009, indicating that six Volunteer resignations had been reported inaccurately as medical separations.

The Office of Volunteer and Personal Services Contract Financial Services (CFO/VPS), which is responsible for recording all Peace Corps Trainee/Volunteer personnel actions such as terminations, was asked by OIG to review their records for FY 2009. Their review identified two resignation cables received from PC/Togo that were recorded incorrectly as medical separations. They also found one medical separation cable, which PC/Togo should have filed as a resignation. The review was unable to account for three of the six anomalies in the FY 2009 ET data. The Director of CFO/VPS reported there could have been three additional resignation cables received from the post that were recorded incorrectly as medical separations and later corrected but not before OSIRP collected its data for the annual ET report. ET data is not corrected or revised following OSIRP's data collection and reporting. Therefore, the office of CFO/VPS should determine how these five recording errors occurred and implement any necessary corrective actions or training programs as warranted to improve the quality of the agency's ET data.

> **We recommend:**
>
> **23. That Office of Volunteer and Personal Services Contract Financial Services: 1) determine the cause of PC/Togo reporting errors in the FY 2009 Early Termination data; and, 2) implement corrective actions or additional training as warranted.**

Volunteers report issues with the qualitative reporting capacity of the Volunteer Reporting Tool

As part of the annual Project Status Reporting (PSR) process, twice a year PC/Togo Volunteers are required to submit performance reports using the electronic Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT). The performance data is reported to Peace Corps headquarters and included in the agency's Performance and Accountability Report (PAR), which reflects Volunteers' work to Congress and the American public. Fourteen Volunteers in our sample reported a number of issues using the Volunteer Reporting Form (VRF), including a lack of training. [9]

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[9] Seventeen Volunteers in our sample, both first-year and second-year, reported they have completed at least one performance report and three first-year Volunteers reported they had not yet completed the report at the time they were interviewed.

Eleven (55 percent) Volunteers reported confusion about where to place certain activities in the reporting form, including secondary activities. Volunteer comments included:

> "You have to pick a goal that each activity works towards and I don't think it's clear, a lot of the goals are really specific and my activities are rarely that specific. I don't know where my work fits into the goals sometimes and we are only supposed to pick goals from our sector."

> "I am organizing a computer camp, if it hasn't happened yet where do I put it in the VRF? Do I count the students yet or not? There are so many gray areas and I don't know where to put stuff."

> "There are confusions with secondary projects, where do I put the information?"

> "There need to be more places to describe the project in the VRF when it doesn't fit in the categories."

Five (25 percent) Volunteers were dissatisfied with the VRF's perceived orientation towards quantitative over qualitative data. Volunteer comments included:

> "It's discouragingly little that I have to fit into the quantitative sections - I know I shouldn't feel bad for not having a lot of numbers to put in - but I know that HQ is judging my performance on my numbers and not the qualitative aspect of my work."

> "The VRF is capturing my activities but it doesn't really document the cultural exchange. It would be nice to have a section that asked us to document these activities to validate their importance."

Second-year Volunteers reported more issues with performance reporting than first-year Volunteers, indicating improvements have been made. Additional improvements are warranted due to the importance of ensuring that Volunteers' activities are aligned with post and agency goals.

Post is responding to problems with performance reporting. The IT specialist reports he is now providing Volunteers with two VRT trainings one during PST and another during IST. APCDs reported space has been added to the VRF template to report secondary activities. The CD issued a memo to Volunteers encouraging them to include qualitative data in their reporting. The CD wrote:

> While the VRF asks for numbers, do not be consumed by them . . . We just want to hear your story. If you get a handful of people to adopt new behaviors, you are doing great! Document why that one woman started serving moringa to her kids at every meal. Analyze your failures. Those are where you will find the biggest lessons learned.

Based on actions taken we are not making a recommendation, but we encourage staff members to monitor progress made addressing these performance reporting issues.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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

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

The Evaluation Unit announced its intent to conduct an evaluation of PC/Togo on January 29, 2010. For post evaluations, we use the following researchable questions to guide our work:

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

The evaluation team conducted the preliminary research phase of the evaluation from February 1-March 19, 2010. This phase included a review of agency documents provided by headquarters and post staff members, interviews with management staff members representing the region and OPATS, and inquiries to the offices of Safety and Security, OMS, OPSI, and VRS. In-country fieldwork occurred March 22-April 9, 2010, and was comprised of interviews with post senior staff members in charge of programming, training, and support; U.S. Embassy officials and host country government ministry officials. In addition, we interviewed a stratified judgmental sample of 21 percent of currently serving Volunteers based on their length of service, site location, project focus, gender, age, and ethnicity.

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

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

As part of this post evaluation, interviews were conducted with 20 Volunteers, 12 in-country staff members, and 23 representatives from Peace Corps headquarters in Washington D.C., the U.S. Embassy in Togo, and key ministry officials.

Nineteen Volunteers were initially identified as part of the interview sample[10]. Volunteer interviews were conducted using a standardized interview questionnaire, and Volunteers were asked to rate many items on a five-point scale (1 = not effective, 5 = very effective). The analysis of these ratings provided a quantitative supplement to Volunteers' comments, which were also analyzed. For the purposes of the data analysis, Volunteer ratings of "3" and above are considered favorable. In addition, 17 of 20 Volunteer interviews occurred at the Volunteers' homes, and we inspected these homes using post-defined site selection criteria. The period of review for a post evaluation is one full Volunteer cycle (typically 27 months).

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

Table 3: Volunteer Demographic Data
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Project	Percentage of Volunteers
Health	24%
Education	29%
Small Enterprise Development	22%
Natural Resource Management	24%
Gender	**Percentage of Volunteers**
Female	64%
Male	36%
Age	**Percentage of Volunteers**
25 or younger	70%
26-30	22%
31-54	06%
55 and over	01%

Source: PC/Togo Volunteer roster, February 2010.

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[10] There were 20 total Volunteers in the final sample: three selected Volunteers were unavailable for an interview and replaced, two additional Volunteers requested an interview, and one Volunteer was not at site on the scheduled interview date.

At the time of our field visit, PC/Togo had 25 staff positions, one of which was vacant. The positions included 2 U.S. direct-hire employees (USDH), 4 foreign-service nationals (FSN), and 19 personal services contractors (PSC). The post also employs temporary staff/contractors to assist with PST. Given the time of our visit, these positions were not staffed. We interviewed 12 staff members.

Table 4: Interviews Conducted with PC/Togo Staff Members

Position	Status	Interviewed
Country Director	USDH	X
APCD/NRM	PSC	X
APCD/HE	FSN	X
APCD/ED	FSN	X
APCD/SED	PSC	X
Administrative Officer	USDH	X
Program Assistant	PSC	X
Training Manager	PSC	X
Training Secretary (vacant)	PSC	
PCMO	USPSC	X
PCMO	PSC	
Medical Secretary	PSC	
Safety & Security Coordinator	PSC	X
IT Specialist	PSC	X
Volunteer Liaison	FSN	X
Program Secretary/IRC Coordinator	PSC	
Executive Assistant	PSC	
Secretary/Receptionist	PSC	
Administrative Assistant	PSC	
Cashier	FSN	
General Services Manager	PSC	
General Services Assistant/Motor Pool (4 drivers)	PSC	
General Services Assistant/Maintenance	PSC	
General Services Assistant/Logistics	PSC	
Guard Force Commander (36 Local PSC Guards)	PSC	

Data as of March 2010.

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

Table 5: Interviews Conducted with PC Headquarter Staff Members and Embassy and Key Ministry Officials

Position	Organization
Acting Regional Director	PC/Headquarters
Acting CHOPS	PC/Headquarters
Chief Administrative Officer	PC/Headquarters
Regional Program & Training Specialist	PC/Headquarters
Country Desk Officer	PC/Headquarters
Regional Safety & Security Desk Officer	PC/Headquarters
Program & Training Specialist (Health)	PC/Headquarters
Program & Training Specialist (Env/Ag)	PC/Headquarters
Program & Training Specialist (SED)	PC/Headquarters
Program & Training Specialist (Education)	PC/Headquarters
Partnership Development Program Specialist	PC/Headquarters
Director of Volunteer & PSC Services	PC/Headquarters
Peace Corps Safety & Security Officer	PC/Headquarters
Deputy Chief of Mission	U.S. Embassy in Togo
Regional Security Officer	U.S. Embassy in Togo
Assistant Regional Security Officer	U.S. Embassy in Togo
Cabinet Director	Ministry of Environment & Forestry Resources
Coordinator, Savings & Loan Regulatory Dept.	Ministry of Finance
Managing Director of Health	Ministry of Health
Division Chief of Community Health	Ministry of Health
Cabinet Director, Primary & Secondary School Education & Literacy	Ministry of Education
Director, Education in Matters of Environment, Population, & Health	Ministry of Education
Preschool Inspector, Primary & Secondary School Education & Literacy	Ministry of Education

Data as of March 2010.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

WE RECOMMEND:

1. That the country director identify additional staff members and Volunteer leader resources or develop new positions to assist programming staff with site development.

2. That the programming staff develop a tracking sheet to monitor site development procedures and that staff complete one for each prospective site in advance of the arrival of the Volunteer.

3. That the post: 1) develop housing criteria that reflects the appropriate differences in rural and urban building standards, and; 2) ensure consistent implementation of housing criteria by program managers.

4. That the country director and program managers develop and implement a site development plan that explores new community entries and increases community and host-country support to Volunteer housing.

5. That the post revise its Volunteer site development guidelines to ensure: 1) a suitable contact person for the Volunteer is identified at each site; and, 2) that multiple Volunteer work partners are identified as potential counterparts at each site.

6. That the post establish a strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of partner development goals.

7. That the post establish a strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of new or revised Memoranda of Understanding or project agreements.

8. That the post develop an annual calendar of Project Advisory Council activities, engage with ministry personnel in regular project updates, and undertake activities such as visits to Volunteer projects on a regular basis.

9. That the post review with headquarters' Partnership Development Unit how Small Project Assistance funding notifications are issued and received, and institute any necessary changes to ensure that Volunteers are informed of the availability of funds.

10. That the post ensure all Small Project Assistance and Peace Corps Partnership Program funds are distributed and accounted for in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

11. That the post provide training to all staff responsible for management or oversight of the Small Project Assistance program.

12. That the country director ensures funding for Volunteer projects adheres to all agency financial management and Peace Corps Partnership Program requirements.

13. That the post provide more local language training in pre-service training programs.

14. That the post develops a 'best practices' tool to guide the Volunteers through the process of identifying tutors and engaging in local language instruction at their sites.

15. That the training manager increase the use of experienced second year Volunteers to conduct cross-cultural training sessions;

16. That the Training of Trainers program include skill-building on cross-cultural conflict management.

17. That the country director monitor biannual Volunteer reporting to ensure: 1) that all Volunteers meet reporting requirements; 2) that program staff provide timely, substantive feedback to Volunteers.

18. That the post issue additional supplementary information and guidance to Volunteers (via Volunteer newsletter, email, etc.) regarding the purpose and importance of accurate out of site reporting.

19. That the staff members thoroughly review site locator forms for accuracy and completeness during site visits and verify by signature that this action has been accomplished.

20. That the site locator form template is revised to include information on the police posts at each Volunteer site.

21. That the country director seek Volunteer and staff support to re-establish the Volunteer Diversity Committee.

22. That the Africa Region take steps in the near term to support diversity training in PC/Togo delivered by a qualified trainer.

23. That Office of Volunteer and Personal Services Contract Financial Services: 1) determine the cause of PC/Togo reporting errors in the FY 2009 Early Termination data; and, 2) implement corrective actions or additional training as warranted.

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE TO
THE PRELIMINARY REPORT

Since 1961.

Memorandum

To: Kathy Buller, Inspector General

Through: Daljit K. Bains, Chief Compliance Officer

From: Dick Day, Africa Regional Director

Date: September 20, 2010

CC: Carolina Cardona, Peace Corps Togo Country Director
            Stacy Rhodes, Chief of Staff
            Joaquin Ferrao, Deputy Inspector General
            Esther Benjamin, Director of Global Operations
            Lynn Foden, Africa Region CHOPS
            Joe Hepp, Chief Financial Officer
            Thomas Bellamy, Deputy Chief Financial Officer
            Kari Abood, Director of Volunteer and PSC Services

Subject: Response to the Preliminary Country Program Evaluation Report: Peace
            Corps/Togo – August 2010

Enclosed please find the Region's response to the recommendations made by the
Inspector General for Peace Corps/Togo.

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 22 recommendations and the Office of Volunteer and
PSC Financial Services concurs with the one recommendation assigned to the CFO's
office.

APPENDIX A

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

Response to the August 2010 Preliminary Report of the Office of Inspector General Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Togo

1: That the country director identifies additional staff members and Volunteer leader resources or develop new positions to assist programming staff with site development.

> **Concur:** Post has started a Peace Corps Volunteer Leader (PCVL) program and two PCVLs have been selected. The training of PCVLs will begin Oct 2010 and they will assist staff with site development. The Africa Region has also approved the hiring of two regional coordinators via the FY2011 Operations Plan for Peace Corps Togo to assist with site development.

> **Documents included:** Post will submit the PCVL Approval email from the RD and the FY11 Togo Operations Plan indicating that the Regional Coordinator positions have been funded.

> **Date of Completion:** September 2011

2: That the programming staff develop a tracking sheet to monitor site development procedures and that staff complete one for each prospective site in advance of the arrival of the Volunteer.

> **Concur:** Community Health and AIDS Prevention (CHAP) APCD will develop a tracking sheet. Natural Resources Management (NRM) and Girls Education and Empowerment (GEE) APCDs who are currently in PST will start to implement it. Small Enterprise Development (SED) and CHAP APCDs will use this tracking sheet in 2011.

> **Documents to be submitted:** Post will submit the site development tracking sheet.

> **Date for Completion:** November 2010

3: That the post: 1) develop housing criteria that reflects the appropriate differences in rural and urban building standards, and; 2) ensure consistent implementation of housing criteria by program managers.

> **Concur:** Post will hold a meeting with key parties to develop criteria and the PTO, who will provide over-site and management of program managers, will

ensure consistent implementation of housing criteria. Post was recently given approval to hire a HCN Programming and Training Officer (PTO).

Documents to be submitted: Post will submit the housing criteria and report on the meeting with the APCDs.

Date for Completion: December 2010

4: That the country director and program managers develop and implement a site development plan that explores new community entries and increases community and host-country support to Volunteer housing.

Concur: CD and APCDs have discussed housing strategy and ways to have more community support. GEE and NRM APCDs have begun efforts. APCDs recognize the need to start site development early. A formal plan will be drafted by December 2010.

Documents to be submitted: Post will submit the copy of the site development plan.

Date for Completion: December 2010.

5: That the post revise its Volunteer site development guidelines to ensure: 1) a suitable contact person for the Volunteer is identified at each site; and, 2) that multiple Volunteer work partners are identified as potential counterparts at each site.

Concur: The PTO, in conjunction with the APCDs, will create a site development template. APCDs will identify at least two counterparts. The PTO will review the description of each site and the number of counterparts identified for each new PCV.

Documents to be submitted: Post will submit the site development template which identifies suitable contact people for each Volunteer as well as multiple partners and potential counterparts.

Date for Completion: November 2010

6: That the post establish a strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of partner development goals.

Concur: Post plans to hire a HCN PTO in Oct 2010. This individual will work with CD and APCDs to develop a strategy for enhancing its relationship with ministries and NGOs. CD and appropriate APCD will go visit ministries and NGOs to market PC/Togo.

Documents to be submitted: Post will submit a strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of partner development goals.

Date for Completion: December 2010

7: That the post establish a strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of new or revised Memoranda of Understanding or project agreements.

> **Concur:** PTO and APCDs will develop strategy for completing and revising MOUs.

> **Documents to be submitted:** Post will submit a strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of new or revised MOUs or project agreements.

> **Date for Completion:** December 2010

8: That the post develop an annual calendar of Project Advisory Council activities, engage with ministry personnel in regular project updates, and undertake activities such as visits to Volunteer projects on a regular basis.

> **Concur:** PTO will coordinate an annual partner meeting and will work with APCDs and develop an annual report, which will be distributed to partners. As part of Post's strategy (Recommendation #6) for enhancing its relationship with ministries and NGOs, the CD/PTO and appropriate APCD will visit and/or call key ministry contacts quarterly.

> **Documents to be submitted:** Post will submit an annual calendar of PAC activities.

> **Date for Completion:** December 2010

9: That the post review with headquarters' Partnership Development Unit how Small Project Assistance funding notifications are issued and received, and institute any necessary changes to ensure that Volunteers are informed of the availability of funds.

> **Concur:** Post has moved to a monthly newsletter and the Togo's SPA Coordinator provides PCVs with monthly updates as to the amounts and types of funds available.

> **Documents included:** August and September Volunteer Newsletter, email to PCVs.

> **Date of Completion:** August 2010

10: That the post ensure all Small Project Assistance and Peace Corps Partnership Program funds are distributed and accounted for in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

> **Concur**: In May and June 2010 the CD and OPSI's PCPP Program Specialist (Africa) discussed the Manual Sections (MS720.3.3 & MS 204.3.8) that provide the guidance on gift acceptance for PCVs. Post will host OPSI's PCPP Program

Specialist, September 23-27, 2010, and she will conduct a training with staff who work with SPA and PCPP funds.

Documents to be submitted: A report of the training conducted by OPSI PCPP Program Specialist.

Date for Completion: September 2010

11: That the post provide training to all staff responsible for management or oversight of the Small Project Assistance program.

Concur: This information will be provided during the OPSI visit and training during September 23-27, 2010

Documents to be submitted: A report of the SPA training.

Date for Completion: September 2010

12: That the country director ensures funding for Volunteer projects adheres to all agency financial management and Peace Corps Partnership Program requirements.

Concur: Post has closed its Friends of Togo (FOT) bank account. Post will not accept funds until it can identify a way to adhere to agency requirements. In May and June 2010 the CD and OPSI's PCPP Program Specialist (Africa) discussed the Manual Sections (MS720.3.3 & MS 204.3.8) that provide the guidance on gift acceptance for PCVs. Post will host OPSI's PCPP Program Specialist and she will conduct a training with staff who work with SPA and PCPP funds, September 23-27, 2010.

Documents included: A copy of email that documents Friends of Togo bank account has been closed.

Date of Completion: September 2010.

13: That the post provide more local language training in pre-service training programs.

Concur: Post agrees that PCVs need to have more local language training. Post believes the best path forward for training volunteers in local languages is for volunteers to first have a solid understanding of French. Given that Togo is a multilingual country, most PCVs cannot learn French and a local language at the same time. Togo will be part of a new 4 week French immersion training pilot in FY11. This training will allow PCVs to engage longer in PST with basic French, enabling them to begin local language training at site. Post plans to conduct additional local language training during ISTs and APCDs will encourage PCVs to use funds to find local language tutors.

Documents to be submitted: Post will submit a Copy of the IST schedule and a newsletter article, encouraging local language tutoring.

Date for Completion: December 2010

14: That the post develops a 'best practices' tool to guide the Volunteers through the process of identifying tutors and engaging in local language instruction at their sites.

Concur: TM will contact other training managers and HQ's Language & Cross Cultural Specialist for best practices on tutoring. This info will be shared with PCVs during IST and PCTs during PST.

Documents to be submitted: Post will submit a copy of the best practices tool.

Date for Completion: November 2010

15: That the training manager increase the use of experienced second year Volunteers to conduct cross-cultural training sessions.

Concur: TM has met with NRM and GEE PCV trainers and set up a schedule for integrating cross cultural training into the Sept-Nov 2010 PST.

Document included: schedule of cross-cultural training sessions.

Date for Completion: September 2010

16: That the Training of Trainers program include skill-building on cross-cultural conflict management.

Concur: TM will meet with Regional Advisor Kris Hoffer who has a background in conflict resolution and will request session designs, which will be included in the next TOT.

Documents to be submitted: Post will submit a copy of the cross-cultural conflict training design.

Date for Completion: January 2011

17: That the country director monitor biannual Volunteer reporting to ensure: 1) that all Volunteers meet reporting requirements; 2) that program staff provide timely, substantive feedback to Volunteers.

Concur: PC Togo has a biannual reporting system. Since her arrival in August of 2009, CD has made biannual reporting a priority and has noticed a shift in on time reporting from the PCVs and feedback time from the APCDs. In October 2009, 99%, of PCVs submitted their work reports, although many of them were late. In April 2010, 99% of PCVs submitted their reports in a timely manner.
On both occasions, APCDs provided PCVs with individual feedback and group feedback. For the first response in October 2009, the APCDs were late in providing feedback. In April 2010, APCDs provided their PCVs with feedback

within approximately 5 weeks of receiving their reports. With a renewed focus on biannual Volunteer reporting and staff feedback, the CD is confident that reporting requirements will continue to be met.

Documents to be submitted: 1) Post will give a list of Volunteers verifying that PCVs have completed reporting requirements. 2) Post will provide copies of sample feedback.

Date for Completion: September 2010

18: That the post issue additional supplementary information and guidance to Volunteers (via Volunteer newsletter, email, etc.) regarding the purpose and importance of accurate out of site reporting.

Concur: The CD put another article in the September newsletter and she also spoke to PCVs about the issue at the mid-service conference and surveyed the PCVs about the policy. Most common reason for not reporting was, "We forget." "Keep reminding us" was their suggestion.

Documents included: September Volunteer Newsletter, Mid Service Conference Evaluation Form.

Date of Completion: August 2010

19: That the staff members thoroughly review site locator forms for accuracy and completeness during site visits and verify by signature that this action has been accomplished.

Concur: SED and CHAP Volunteers went to their sites in August and the staff will be making visits within the next few months. Whenever a staff member goes to a Volunteer site, he or she will take the site locator form and will follow its directions. If it is inaccurate or hard to follow, the form will have to be redone by the PCV and if the form is accurate, the staff member will sign-off on it.

Documents to close recommendation: Signature page on site locator forms.

Date for Completion: November 2010

20: That the site locator form template is revised to include information on the police posts at each Volunteer site.

Concur: Post will update the site locator form and ensure that each PCV puts info about the police posts at post.

Documents to be submitted: Post will submit the site locator template.

Date for Completion: October 2010

21: That the country director seek Volunteer and staff support to re-establish the Volunteer Diversity Committee.

> **Concur:** The CD advertised for diversity committee members in the August newsletter, and recruited PCVs at mid-service. Post will conduct a Training of Trainers, TOT, with 6 PCVs and 5 staff. PCVs and staff will conduct sessions at PST and IST related to diversity and staff will participate in diversity sessions as well.
>
> **Documents included:** August Volunteer newsletter
>
> **Date for Completion:** September 2010

22: That the Africa Region take steps in the near term to support diversity training in PC/Togo delivered by a qualified trainer.

> **Concur:** The CD had requested that one of Africa's Regional Advisor, Kris Hoffer, come to post and conduct the training, which was held Sept. 13-14.
>
> **Documents included:** Diversity Training TOT Outline and Diversity Workshop Facilitators Summary.
>
> **Date for Completion:** September 2010

23: That Office of Volunteer and Personal Services Contract Financial Services: 1) determine the cause of PC/Togo reporting errors in the FY 2009 Early Termination data; and, 2) implement corrective actions or additional training as warranted.

> **Concur:** CFO/VPS concurs with the recommendation.
>
> Regarding part 1 of the recommendation, at the time of the investigation follow-up in April 2010, CFO/VPS did all possible research; there is no new information to be gained.
>
> OSIRP reported 16 Medical Separations on September 30, 2009. During the program evaluation, PC/Togo reported 10 Medical Separations for FY 2009. When CFO/VPS was asked for the same number, the result from HRMS was 13 Medical Separations. At this time in April 2010, the Director of VPS received the names of the 10 Volunteers who Post reported had medically separated. She cross-referenced the list from Post with the HRMS listing of Medical Separations and came to the following conclusion, which was reported back to the IG:
>
> - H Moser - Documentation sent from Post indicated it was a SEP-ET, which is a resignation. It was a data entry error by a VPS staff member.
> - K Smith - Documentation sent from Post indicated it was a SEP-ET, which is a resignation. It was a data entry error by a VPS staff member.

APPENDIX A

- C Bradt – Documentation sent from Post clearly states it is a Med Sep, which the system reflects.

For the three additional med seps that OSIRP lists on 9/30/09 which are correctly not listed in HRMS, that is likely due to a correction made after 9/30/09. If Post or CFO/VPS caught these errors (likely during the V-Year chart reconciliation the first few weeks of October), the system is dynamically updated. OSIPR data in the ET report is static, point-in-time. Additionally, OSIPR was unable to provide the Director of VPS with the 3 additional names in order to investigate. This is due to their data from PCVDBMS being overwritten when HRMS makes changes. The rationale for the discrepancy remains the same as was listed in the IG report. The report states that "The review was unable to account for three of the six anomalies in the FY 2009 ET data. The Director of CFO/VPS reported there could have been three additional resignation cables received from the post that were recorded incorrectly as medical separations and later corrected but not before OSIRP collected its data for the annual ET report". CFO/VPS has certified all the data in HRMS is correct as of the follow-up in April 2010 and officially lists 10 Medical Separations for FY09. The report also states, "ET data is not corrected or revised following OSIRP's data collection and reporting. Therefore, the office of CFO/VPS should determine how these five recording errors occurred". Odyssey HRMS is the official repository of the termination data and is the most accurate data at any point in time that the Agency possesses as it is dynamic and not static, like the OSIRP report. It is unreasonable, due to with human error by either Post or CFO/VPS, to assume that a static report and dynamically updated system will always return the same result.

Regarding part 2 of the recommendation: The incorrect data entry of the two Volunteers listed above (and possibly 0-3 of the "other anomalies") was due to a careless employee, not lack of training. The staff person responsible for Togo had been placed on a Performance Improvement Plan, was not given a second tour, and has now left the Agency. This is not a pervasive issue within the department; it was limited to a specific individual who is no longer employed with Peace Corps. In response to this evaluation report, VPS will use the next weekly staff meeting to stress the importance of accurate data entry to all the staff.

Additionally, any issue of this sort is likely to be fully resolved as the next phase of the VICA (Volunteer In Country Allowance) system will include a termination screen, where Post will be able to terminate Volunteers directly. The status of the termination will be determined by Post's answers to a series of questions, which will eliminate or significantly reduce the likelihood that the wrong termination status is selected. The updates make through VICA to terminate a Volunteer will automatically update Odyssey HRMS, PCVDBMS, and VIDA. This phase is scheduled to be rolled out to all posts by the end of December 2010

Documents included: The roll out of the VICA system will be the relevant documentation for this recommendation

Date for Completion: December 2010

OIG COMMENTS

Management concurred with all 23 recommendations. Based on the documentation provided, we closed 9 recommendations: numbers 1, 9, 12, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the region or post has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities. However, when we feel it is warranted, we may conduct a follow-up review to confirm that action has been taken and to evaluate the impact.

Fourteen recommendations, numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 23, remain open pending confirmation from the chief compliance officer that the documentation reflected in OIG Analysis is received.

2: That the programming staff develop a tracking sheet to monitor site development procedures and that staff complete one for each prospective site in advance of the arrival of the Volunteer.

> **Concur:** Community Health and AIDS Prevention (CHAP) APCD will develop a tracking sheet. Natural Resources Management (NRM) and Girls Education and Empowerment (GEE) APCDs who are currently in PST will start to implement it. Small Enterprise Development (SED) and CHAP APCDs will use this tracking sheet in 2011.

> **Documents to be submitted:** Post will submit the site development tracking sheet.

> **Date for Completion:** November 2010

> **OIG Analysis:** Please submit a copy of the site development tracking sheet.

3: That the post: 1) develop housing criteria that reflects the appropriate differences in rural and urban building standards, and; 2) ensure consistent implementation of housing criteria by program managers.

> **Concur:** Post will hold a meeting with key parties to develop criteria and the PTO, who will provide over-site and management of program managers, will ensure consistent implementation of housing criteria. Post was recently given approval to hire a HCN programming and training officer (PTO).

> **Documents to be submitted:** Post will submit the housing criteria and report on the meeting with the APCDs.

> **Date for Completion:** December 2010

APPENDIX B

> **OIG Analysis:** Please submit the housing criteria and report on the meeting with the APCDs.

4: That the country director and program managers develop and implement a site development plan that explores new community entries and increases community and host-country support to Volunteer housing.

> **Concur:** CD and APCDs have discussed housing strategy and ways to have more community support. GEE and NRM APCDs have begun efforts. APCDs recognize the need to start site development early. A formal plan will be drafted by December 2010.
>
> **Documents to be submitted:** Post will submit the copy of the site development plan.
>
> **Date for Completion:** December 2010
>
> **OIG Analysis:** Please submit a copy of the site development plan.

5: That the post revise its Volunteer site development guidelines to ensure: 1) a suitable contact person for the Volunteer is identified at each site; and, 2) that multiple Volunteer work partners are identified as potential counterparts at each site.

> **Concur:** The PTO, in conjunction with the APCDs, will create a site development template. APCDs will identify at least two counterparts. The PTO will review the description of each site and the number of counterparts identified for each new PCV.
>
> **Documents to be submitted:** Post will submit the site development template which identifies suitable contact people for each Volunteer as well as multiple partners and potential counterparts.
>
> **Date for Completion:** November 2010
>
> **OIG Analysis:** Please submit a copy of the site development template.

6: That the post establish a strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of partner development goals.

> **Concur:** Post plans to hire a HCN PTO in Oct 2010. This individual will work with CD and APCDs to develop a strategy for enhancing its relationship with ministries and NGOs. CD and appropriate APCD will go visit ministries and NGOs to market PC/Togo.
>
> **Documents to be submitted:** Post will submit a strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of partner development goals.
>
> **Date for Completion:** December 2010

OIG Analysis: Please submit a copy of the strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of partner development goals.

7: That the post establish a strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of new or revised Memoranda of Understanding or project agreements.

Concur: PTO and APCDs will develop strategy for completing and revising MOUs.

Documents to be submitted: Post will submit a strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of new or revised MOUs or project agreements.

Date for Completion: December 2010

OIG Analysis: Please submit a copy of the strategy and timeframe with goals and milestones for completion of new or revised MOUs or project agreements. Please also report on activities undertaken to complete new or revised Memoranda of Understanding or project agreements.

8: That the post develop an annual calendar of Project Advisory Council activities, engage with ministry personnel in regular project updates, and undertake activities such as visits to Volunteer projects on a regular basis.

Concur: PTO will coordinate an annual partner meeting and will work with APCDs and develop an annual report, which will be distributed to partners. As part of Post's strategy (Recommendation #6) for enhancing its relationship with ministries and NGOs, the CD/PTO and appropriate APCD will visit and/or call key ministry contacts quarterly.

Documents to be submitted: Post will submit an annual calendar of PAC activities.

Date for Completion: December 2010

OIG Analysis: Please submit a copy of the annual calendar of PAC activities, a copy of report(s) on quarterly contacts with ministry personnel, and a copy of the annual report distributed to partners.

10: That the post ensure all Small Project Assistance and Peace Corps Partnership Program funds are distributed and accounted for in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

Concur: In May and June 2010 the CD and OPSI's PCPP Program Specialist (Africa) discussed the Manual Sections (MS720.3.3 & MS 204.3.8) that provide

the guidance on gift acceptance for PCVs. Post will host OPSI's PCPP Program Specialist, September 23-27, 2010, and she will conduct a training with staff who work with SPA and PCPP funds.

Documents to be submitted: A report of the training conducted by OPSI PCPP Program Specialist.

Date for Completion: September 2010

OIG Analysis: Please submit a report of the training conducted by OPSI PCPP Program Specialist.

11: That the post provide training to all staff responsible for management or oversight of the Small Project Assistance program.

Concur: This information will be provided during the OPSI visit and training during September 23-27, 2010

Documents to be submitted: A report of the SPA training.

Date for Completion: September 2010

OIG Analysis: Please submit a report of the SPA training provided during the OPSI visit and training during September 23-27, 2010.

13: That the post provide more local language training in pre-service training programs.

Concur: Post agrees that PCVs need to have more local language training. Post believes the best path forward for training volunteers in local languages is for volunteers to first have a solid understanding of French. Given that Togo is a multilingual country, most PCVs cannot learn French and a local language at the same time. Togo will be part of a new 4 week French immersion training pilot in FY11. This training will allow PCVs to engage longer in PST with basic French, enabling them to begin local language training at site. Post plans to conduct additional local language training during ISTs and APCDs will encourage PCVs to use funds to find local language tutors.

Documents to be submitted: Post will submit a Copy of the IST schedule and a newsletter article, encouraging local language tutoring.

Date for Completion: December 2010

OIG Analysis: Please submit copies of the IST schedule to conduct additional local language training and the newsletter article encouraging local language tutoring.

14: That the post develops a 'best practices' tool to guide the Volunteers through the process of identifying tutors and engaging in local language instruction at their sites.

Concur: TM will contact other training managers and HQ's Language & Cross Cultural Specialist for best practices on tutoring. This info will be shared with PCVs during IST and PCTs during PST.

Documents to be submitted: Post will submit a copy of the best practices tool.

Date for Completion: November 2010

OIG Analysis: Please submit a copy of the best practices tool and describe how this information was shared with PCVs during IST and PCTs during PST.

16: That the Training of Trainers program include skill-building on cross-cultural conflict management.

Concur: TM will meet with Regional Advisor Kris Hoffer who has a background in conflict resolution and will request session designs, which will be included in the next TOT.

Documents to be submitted: Post will submit a copy of the cross-cultural conflict training design.

Date for Completion: January 2011

OIG Analysis: Please submit a copy of the cross-cultural conflict training design.

17: That the country director monitor biannual Volunteer reporting to ensure: 1) that all Volunteers meet reporting requirements; 2) that program staff provide timely, substantive feedback to Volunteers.

Concur: PC Togo has a biannual reporting system. Since her arrival in August of 2009, CD has made biannual reporting a priority and has noticed a shift in on time reporting from the PCVs and feedback time from the APCDs. In October 2009, 99%, of PCVs submitted their work reports, although many of them were late. In April 2010, 99% of PCVs submitted their reports in a timely manner.
On both occasions, APCDs provided PCVs with individual feedback and group feedback. For the first response in October 2009, the APCDs were late in providing feedback. In April 2010, APCDs provided their PCVs with feedback within approximately 5 weeks of receiving their reports. With a renewed focus on biannual Volunteer reporting and staff feedback, the CD is confident that reporting requirements will continue to be met.

Documents to be submitted: 1) Post will give a list of Volunteers verifying that PCVs have completed reporting requirements. 2) Post will provide copies of sample feedback.

Date for Completion: September 2010

OIG Analysis: Please submit a list of Volunteers verifying that PCVs have completed reporting requirements and copies of sample feedback.

23: That Office of Volunteer and Personal Services Contract Financial Services: 1) determine the cause of PC/Togo reporting errors in the FY 2009 Early Termination data; and, 2) implement corrective actions or additional training as warranted.

Concur: CFO/VPS concurs with the recommendation.

Regarding part 1 of the recommendation, at the time of the investigation follow-up in April 2010, CFO/VPS did all possible research; there is no new information to be gained.

OSIRP reported 16 Medical Separations on September 30, 2009. During the program evaluation, PC/Togo reported 10 Medical Separations for FY 2009. When CFO/VPS was asked for the same number, the result from HRMS was 13 Medical Separations. At this time in April 2010, the Director of VPS received the names of the 10 Volunteers who Post reported had medically separated. She cross-referenced the list from Post with the HRMS listing of Medical Separations and came to the following conclusion, which was reported back to the IG:

- H Moser - Documentation sent from Post indicated it was a SEP-ET, which is a resignation. It was a data entry error by a VPS staff member.
- K Smith - Documentation sent from Post indicated it was a SEP-ET, which is a resignation. It was a data entry error by a VPS staff member.
- C Bradt – Documentation sent from Post clearly states it is a Med Sep, which the system reflects.

For the three additional medical separations that OSIRP lists on 9/30/09 which are correctly not listed in HRMS, that is likely due to a correction made after 9/30/09. If Post or CFO/VPS caught these errors (likely during the V-Year chart reconciliation the first few weeks of October), the system is dynamically updated. OSIPR data in the ET report is static, point-in-time. Additionally, OSIPR was unable to provide the Director of VPS with the 3 additional names in order to investigate. This is due to their data from PCVDBMS being overwritten when HRMS makes changes. The rationale for the discrepancy remains the same as was listed in the IG report. The report states that "The review was unable to account for three of the six anomalies in the FY 2009 ET data. The Director of CFO/VPS reported there could have been three additional resignation cables received from the post that were recorded incorrectly as medical separations and later corrected but not before OSIRP collected its data for the annual ET report". CFO/VPS has certified all the data in HRMS is correct as of the

APPENDIX B

follow-up in April 2010 and officially lists 10 Medical Separations for FY09. The report also states, "ET data is not corrected or revised following OSIRP's data collection and reporting. Therefore, the office of CFO/VPS should determine how these five recording errors occurred". Odyssey HRMS is the official repository of the termination data and is the most accurate data at any point in time that the Agency possesses as it is dynamic and not static, like the OSIRP report. It is unreasonable, due to with human error by either Post or CFO/VPS, to assume that a static report and dynamically updated system will always return the same result.

Regarding part 2 of the recommendation: The incorrect data entry of the two Volunteers listed above (and possibly 0-3 of the "other anomalies") was due to a careless employee, not lack of training. The staff person responsible for Togo had been placed on a Performance Improvement Plan, was not given a second tour, and has now left the Agency. This is not a pervasive issue within the department; it was limited to a specific individual who is no longer employed with Peace Corps. In response to this evaluation report, VPS will use the next weekly staff meeting to stress the importance of accurate data entry to all the staff.

Additionally, any issue of this sort is likely to be fully resolved as the next phase of the VICA (Volunteer in Country Allowance) system will include a termination screen, where Post will be able to terminate Volunteers directly. The status of the termination will be determined by Post's answers to a series of questions, which will eliminate or significantly reduce the likelihood that the wrong termination status is selected. The updates make through VICA to terminate a Volunteer will automatically update Odyssey HRMS, PCVDBMS, and VIDA. This phase is scheduled to be rolled out to all posts by the end of December 2010

Documents included: The roll out of the VICA system will be the relevant documentation for this recommendation

Date for Completion: December 2010

OIG Analysis: Please provide documentation that VICA has been rolled out and copies of screen shots that demonstrate the post's selection options for recording PCV terminations.

PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION
AND OIG CONTACT

OIG CONTACT

Following issuance of the final report, a stakeholder satisfaction survey will be distributed. If you wish to comment on the quality or usefulness of this report to help us improve our products, please e-mail Jim O'Keefe, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations, at jokeefe@peacecorps.gov, or call (202) 692-2904.

STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This program evaluation was conducted under the direction of Jim O'Keefe, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations, and by Senior Evaluator Reuben Marshall.

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE,
AND MISMANAGEMENT

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