

reviewing your volunteer experience | saying goodbye | leaving
peace corps | closure | presenting your experiences: identifying
and documenting | readjusting to life in the united states: issues
and strategies | third goal activities | c cos pr

Close of Service (COS) Trainer's Handbook



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Overview of the COS Conference

Purpose

“COS” usually means one thing to the Peace Corps: close of service. (For particular training sessions, it may also stand for “continuation of service.”) A COS conference is a training event for Volunteers, usually the last in a series that includes staging, pre-service training, and various in-service training events and conferences. The COS conference takes place approximately three months prior to a Volunteer’s end-of-service date. The purpose of the conference is to help Volunteers close their host country service and plan for transition to the next steps in their lives, including continued involvement with the Peace Corps as a returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV). The revised *COS Trainer’s Handbook* includes 10 detailed sessions, a sample schedule, and useful appendices to help trainers plan and conduct effective COS conferences. This current handbook is a revision of the handbook last published in January 1998.

Features of the revised *COS Trainer’s Handbook*

With this newly revised handbook, we hope to better address the reality of the COS conference: It is a milestone event for Volunteers when much administrative paperwork must be completed, many goodbyes are said, and travel and other post-service plans are made. It is simultaneously exciting, overwhelming, and sad. All of this can leave little practical or effective time to address the re-entry and readjustment that come with eventually returning home (or what Volunteers perceive as “home”). It is that readjustment that has the biggest implications for the returning Volunteer. Thus, we encourage trainers to focus less on the nuts and bolts of career development and job-searching strategies (such as résumé development and career planning) during the COS conference and, instead, on helping Volunteers understand the moving process, including the notion that re-entry is likely to be challenging and even onerous.

We realize and respect that many soon-to-be RPCVs are concerned with their upcoming job searches. To meet RPCV needs for career development and job-search support upon return to the United States, Peace Corps’ Returned Volunteer Services (RVS) offers free four-day career events in Washington, D.C., three times a year. These events are timed to align appropriately with the PCV return and readjustment calendar, and help RPCVs make sense of their Peace Corps experience in terms of both career and third goal considerations. At these events, RPCVs identify skills and accomplishments from the field to include in cover letters, résumés, and verbal résumés; they also practice an elevator pitch, an informational interview, and a job interview (inclusive of a panel interview). The events include a career fair and professional visits to different D.C.-based organizations and agencies. These four-day events serve, therefore, as a post-service COS conference. RVS also offers online career workshops for those RPCVs unable to attend the Washington, D.C.-based events. Between the online workshops

and the Washington, D.C., events, RPCVs can take advantage of career-related offerings every few months. For a current calendar of events, please refer your COSing Volunteers to www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/events.

We hope all of these U.S.-based offerings will facilitate RPCVs' self-directed job searches and allow you, the trainer at post, to focus on the myriad other issues associated with the successful closure of Peace Corps service. This revised version of the handbook offers several new features that will enrich the COS experience for staff, Volunteers, and communities:

- A model of the moving process that helps Volunteers relate their actions and feelings to places and times.
- Activity suggestions from the field, detailed within each session plan.
- Sample materials of tested best practices from the field.
- A session plan designed to help Volunteers leave in-country service with ideas and detailed plans for conducting third goal activities. Here, Volunteers examine their skills and interests and formulate a plan to gather specific items and information needed to participate in the Peace Corps' third goal.
- A session to evaluate project plans to help Volunteers assess their work, their progress, and possibly refine the project's goals and objectives for future Volunteers.
- Ideas for bringing closure with counterparts and the community and making smooth transitions for everyone.
- Sessions targeting critical administrative issues, considerations, and decisions.
- Re-entry awareness, understanding, and preparation.
- Translating experiences into accomplishments and skills.
- Options for next steps, including further volunteer activities, such as Peace Corps Response (formerly Crisis Corps).
- Activities designed to build awareness of safety and security issues particular to the last few months of service.
- Information about RPCV administrative and medical issues from the Office of Medical Services (OMS) and Office of Volunteer and PSC Services (VPS).
- Optional materials to teach storytelling and other useful skills to use after Peace Corps service.

Planning

It is highly recommended that planning for the COS conference include some COSing Volunteers, RPCVs who may be on the staff or in the community, and Peace Corps training and administrative staff, including the PCMO. This includes COS conference planning at posts where a training consultant is hired to deliver some of the content.

The basic topics are laid out in the session plans, but most sessions have various choices of how to present the content. Many choices can be made by Volunteers, and some activities can be conducted by Volunteers or PCVLs.

The duration of each session is an approximation, and individual segments may be longer or shorter depending on how many Volunteers are in the group and how the segments are conducted.

Some activities in a COS conference might be optional. For example, if you choose to include some job-search activities, not all Volunteers may want to or need to attend. Those who already have a job, those who won't be job-hunting for months or longer, or those who will be retired when returning home should not be required to attend.

Materials

Most materials you will need are in the handbook. However, be sure to read all sessions at least a month in advance to see if any updated material is needed from PC/Washington. For example, you will need the latest information on after-service insurance and Peace Corps Response.

There is a model *Close of Service Administrative Procedures Handbook for Volunteers* in Appendix 1. If you wish to use this model by adjusting it for your post, you can access it through the digital *COS Trainer's Handbook*, which will be posted on GURU, on the Intranet, and on a CD of ICE materials, *Sharing Promising Practices*, ICE No. RE014K.

COS kits are available for all COSing Volunteers from Post Logistic Support, PLS@peacecorps.gov. In addition to the *RPCV Handbook and Career Resource Manual*, the following items are included in the COS kit:

- **Hometower Privacy Act release form** — this allows an RPCV to share a bit of his or her Peace Corps story and grants Peace Corps permission to use that story.
- **PC Response fact sheet** — a one-page overview of the Peace Corps Response program.
- **RVS/Career Center flyer** — this is a brief overview of the Return Volunteer Service Office's offerings and the help RPCVs can receive at the RPCV Career Center.

- **Third Goal Flyer** — a flyer promoting third goal activities and the registration of those activities.
- **NPCA Flyer** — a flyer that explains what the National Peace Corps Association is, offers a free year of membership, and tells a little about the programs available.
- **RPCV Letter** — a letter from the RVS Office congratulating the attendees and encouraging them to stay in touch with the office.
- **Fellow/USA flyer** — a flyer explaining the Fellows program, listing schools that have participated in the program.
- **RPCV checklist** — a bookmark of colored card stock, which is a quick reminder of some of the things returning Volunteers should do.

When posts need COS kits they contact overseas support. In the case of an emergency, (i.e., the kits don't arrive on time or there is a sudden post closing), electronic copies of all items in the COS kit can be sent.

Model COS Conference Schedule

There are 10 basic sessions for the COS conference, three of which have two or three parts. The timing for each session depends on how posts want to present it. Most sessions have various options, some with more interaction than others. In the basic schedule presented on the next page, an approximation of time is included, and all sessions can be completed in a total of two full days.

Most posts will probably want to modify the schedule, spending more time on certain sessions and adding other post-specific activities. Many posts have Volunteers arrive on day one by noon, have afternoon sessions, a full day on day two, and another half day on day three.

Basic sequence of sessions with estimated times

Day 1		
Morning		
1–1.5 hours	Session 1	Welcome and Overview
1 hour	Session 2	Reviewing Your Volunteer Experience
1 hour	Session 3	Representing Your Experience: Identifying and Documenting Skills, Part 1
Afternoon		
1 hour	Session 3	Representing Your Experience: Identifying and Documenting Skills, continued
1.5–2 hours	Session 4 A & B	Closing Out Your In-country Experience
1 hour	Session 5	Providing Feedback to the Peace Corps, Part 1
Day 2		
Morning		
1 hour	Session 5	Providing Feedback to the Peace Corps, continued
1.5 hours	Session 6	Targeting Your Interest and Skills for Third Goal Activities
1 hour	Session 7	Anticipating Readjustment to Life in the U.S.: Issues and Strategies
Afternoon		
1.75 hours	Session 8 A, B, & C	Looking Ahead: Options for Next Steps
1.75	Session 9 A & B	Saying Goodbye: Bringing Effective Closure to Your Last Months In-Country and Safety and Security
1 hour	Session 10	Summary and Evaluation

SESSION 1

Welcome and Overview



Purpose

This session establishes a positive, effective working tone for the group and provides a framework for Volunteers to understand and take full advantage of the conference. The trainer introduces the goals and activities, the schedule of events, logistical concerns, and available resources. A moving process framework is introduced to anchor discussions and provide Volunteers with a way of understanding what they will be going through. Additionally, some interesting and motivating activity helps get Volunteers involved in sharing their experiences.



Rationale

This conference is a formal point in the Volunteers' service that helps them begin to put closure to their host country service, learn about and begin to take care of necessary administrative activities, and to look ahead at what comes next. It should be a meaningful point of transition.



Duration

1–1½ hours, depending on activity options chosen



Objectives

By the end of this session, Volunteers will

- Reconnect with members of their group
- Establish common expectations of the conference
- Begin a new phase of Volunteer service
- Identify the stages in the moving process
- Share experiences
- Receive thanks for their service and congratulations on its completion



Session Outline

- I. Welcome (20 minutes)
- II. Moving process framework (15 minutes)
- III. Sharing activity (duration depends on option)
- IV. Logistics (5–15 minutes)
- V. Transition (5 minutes)



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

This session can be run by a combination of Peace Corps staff and Volunteers. If Volunteers or PCVLs are helping with the conference, it would be ideal for them to run the sharing activity.



Materials and Equipment

Prepared flip charts:

- A. Conference schedule
- B. Objectives of the conference
- C. Objectives of this session
- D. The Moving Process

Handout: The Moving Process

Blank flip charts, markers

Stick figures or sticky notes (one for each person in workshop)

Any materials required by the activity option chosen for Part III



Trainer Preparation

1. Revise, as necessary, the overall conference goals and prepare a flip chart of those. Prepare a corresponding flip chart of the complete conference schedule (See sample on Page 5.)
2. Read the full session plan and determine what options you will use. Note any particular materials you will need for activities, and any special preparation needed.
3. Study Section 2 on the moving process. If available (check your IRC), read *Transitions* by William Bridges to give yourself more background. Think through some of your own moves to make the concepts real; add your own examples, if appropriate.



Methodology

I. Introduction and welcome (20 minutes)

Step 1: Welcome Volunteers and make sure everyone knows each other, as well as all staff and facilitators.

Step 2: Explain the meanings of COS

Example of what you might say: “COS means close of service. You have only three months left in-country and are probably thinking of what you need to do to complete service—or you should be! So part of the conference will focus on steps to complete service and to bring a feeling of closure. Also, you need to think of the future—so we’ll cover what the next steps might be, what resources are available, ideas about readjustment to the United States, to another country, or to whatever comes next!

“The Peace Corps is an experience so profound that one is forever changed by it—it will always be part of you. One aspect of PC service that tends to ‘stick’ is the desire to do service—that is, ‘Continuation of Service.’ So we’ll also look at some ways to do that, and how the Peace Corps can help.”

Step 3: Review the overall conference schedule and objectives (flip charts A and B). *(This is a sample.)*

- a. Review your PC experience.
- b. Identify the stages of moving and the necessary transitions.
- c. Assess skills and experience you have gained and how to document them for future use.
- d. Provide PC with feedback and recommendations.
- e. Explore options for life after the Peace Corps.
- f. Identify ways of working toward the Peace Corps’ third goal.
- g. Increase awareness of issues regarding re-entry into U.S. culture and develop relevant strategies.
- h. Plan the final months in-country in such a way as to bring closure to work, relationships, and host country activities.

Step 4: Review their expectations. (*Brainstorm and write on flip chart*).

Explain that the conference is probably too short to deal with everything, so it is just a start—to get the gears turning. They're not going to know everything they need to know by the end of the conference, but they will have gotten started, and will have ideas about how to continue and what resources are available.

Explain that there may be a parking lot full of questions and ideas the group can't get to during the conference, but those are things on which they will follow up.

Step 5: Review the specific objectives of this first session (flip chart C).

II. The Moving Process (15 minutes)

Step 1: Reveal flip chart D: The Moving Process

Step 2: Explain the chart and the concepts. (*Ask participants just to listen to this step—they will get a handout later. This is suggested language for the trainer.*)

- a. Every time we move, we go through a similar process. It is a three-stage process. We leave the place we have been for a length of time, physically travel, and get re-engaged in a new place.
- b. There are two aspects to moving: the changes one goes through and the feelings about these changes. Author/speaker William Bridges describes change as the situation and transition as the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the change. He says this three-step process happens every time there is a major change in one's life, not just when there's a physical move.
- c. **Disengagement** involves letting go of the things that will no longer be the same. It involves physical disengaging—ending all of the current activities: leaving a job, moving out of a house or apartment, doing necessary paperwork and tasks (finishing reports, returning books to the library, closing the bank account, getting an airline ticket, etc.). It also means saying goodbye to people, places, and things. Even a change that one is looking forward to—traveling, going back to school, moving back to a city you like—involves losses. Those losses may include a peer group, community members or host family, tasks one liked to perform, a feeling of competence, being “special.”
- d. **Limbo** is between the old and the new, a period when a sense of identity is lost and a new one has not yet been established; the old way is gone and the new is not yet established or comfortable. It is important to recognize this phase, because it may create confusion, even fear. But it can also be a period of creativity, renewal, and development.

- e. **Re-engagement** is getting re-established in a job, school, further volunteer work, and/or retirement. It also means feeling comfortable and confident in a new setting, a new role.
- f. You will notice the dotted lines on the chart. They indicate that the effects of these stages may begin before you get there and linger after you are physically in a different place.
 - For example, think back to when you left home to come into the Peace Corps. Are there things you left undone—people you did not say goodbye to, paperwork you didn't do—that you thought about after arriving in-country? Did any of these things impact how you were able to get started in your PC experience?
 - Do you remember when you heard you were accepted into the Peace Corps? Did that change how you thought about what you were doing? Were you already “going there” in your mind, and so things at home were not so important or done as well as they might have been? When did you enter limbo?
 - Now that you know you are leaving the Peace Corps, are you already thinking ahead—to foreign travel? To a vacation? To moving around in the States to visit family and friends? Are you looking forward to being in limbo for a while? Ready to start school again? Looking for a job? Or, are you already “engaged” again—sending applications for school or work, for example?
- g. William Bridges, who helps us deal with the transition part of moving, says that how we feel about a change (or a move) affects how we will deal with the stages of the change. Let's see if that is true.

Step 3: Distribute sticky notes or stick figures and have people put their names on them.

- a. Have the PCVs bring them up and stick them on the chart where they feel they are right now—in disengagement, limbo, or re-engagement.
- b. Once they have placed themselves, look at the chart together. There will probably be a wide range:
 - Some may be way to the left, maybe not even thinking about disengagement.
 - Many may place themselves in disengagement.
 - Some may already be in limbo, feeling they are “done” with their assignment.

- Some may be working on re-engagement (writing letters to graduate schools, job hunting, corresponding with people at home about returning).
 - Husbands and wives may be in different places on the chart.
- c. Ask a few in each location to explain why they put themselves there. (You may find a pattern. Those who don't want to leave may be in denial and not ready to be "ending" anything. Those who are ready to leave may already be disengaging or feel they are in limbo. Any who are happy to leave are probably thinking mostly about travel, or re-engagement. Those who have solid plans or are working on them—already job hunting, enrolled in graduate school, ready to live in their retirement home—may have placed themselves in re-engagement.)

Step 4: Tell the PCVs that to make a good transition, it is important to do the work of each phase—physically and psychologically. Emphasize that the group will be focusing on these stages of the moving process as they go through the COS conference.

III. Activity (time depends on activity chosen)

Select an activity option from the end of the sessions or create one of your own.

IV. Conference logistics and arrangements (5–15 minutes)

Go over any specific arrangements, such as housing, meals, rules of the conference (e.g., optional and mandatory sessions), evening activities, etc.

V. Transition to next session (5 minutes)

Step 1: Explain what the next session will be, and how it relates to looking at endings.

Step 2: Distribute Handout A, The Moving Process, for their reference.

References:

Going Overseas Workshops, Foreign Service Institute, State Department, Washington, DC.

Bridges, William. *Managing Transition: Making Sense of Life's Changes*. (2004), De Capo Press.

Activity options for Part III

These options come from the field. If you do not find one you like, build off of something or design your own. Be sure you have any necessary materials for whatever you choose. This is a good section for Volunteers or PCVLs assisting with the workshop to select and present.

Funny story (Honduras)

On a half sheet of paper, each PCV needs to write a short story about something funny that happened to him or her during Peace Corps service—or a meaningful story that the PCV would like to share. They don't have to put their names on them. Stories will be read to the group as an icebreaker before sessions, and the group will guess who wrote it. (Expect lots of moans and groans at the beginning, but Volunteers love this. The reader should review the stories silently beforehand, so there are no surprises while reading.)

Map of the United States

On a large map of the United States, Volunteers should write their names near the area to which they will return. Keep this map in a highly visible place throughout the conference for Volunteers to revisit. This map will be helpful in some of the later sessions on re-entry, job searching, and third-goal activities.

Two Truths and a Lie (Togo)

Each Volunteer thinks of two truths and a lie about his or her Peace Corps service. In turn, he or she gives the three statements and the rest of the group has to guess which is the lie. If the group is large, this might be done in smaller groups, with each group then choosing one person to represent their group by presenting their three statements to the whole group. This can also be done with teams. Teams (small groups) can guess the lie, write it down, and then all groups reveal their answers. Keep score and award prizes.

Write a Letter Home

Volunteers write letters home (or to someone they choose—it can be themselves) about their experience as a Volunteer. They are given envelopes to address. Staff take the letters and mail them a month (or two) after the Volunteers have left the country.

Your Part of the Peace Corps Puzzle (Costa Rica)

Create a puzzle starting with one large map of the country, a map of the United States, or the Peace Corps logo, etc. Cut it into the same number of pieces as there are Volunteers attending the workshop.

Each of the Volunteers gets a piece. As each brings their piece to build the puzzle, they have to tell the group what change (positive or negative) in expectations occurred for them between the time they got on the plane to come to their host country and now at the close of their service. (Instead of a change in expectations, other factors can serve as the focus of this activity: something they have learned, something they still don't understand, their favorite local food, their favorite local name, etc.)

After the puzzle has been completed, summarize the activity with some of these points:

- a. Each of you boarded the plane to come to _____ to join the Peace Corps. You came from all parts of the United States.
- b. You all had different expectations, but the one thing you all had in common when you boarded that plane was the dream of becoming Peace Corps Volunteers.

You came with the dream of living and working with ordinary people in _____, helping them at the grassroots level and, in the process, forming friendships and establishing mutual understanding.

And in realizing this dream, you became a part of a special family, "the Peace Corps family." You are a part of a special group of people of approximately 200,000 Volunteers who have served in 139 countries since the Peace Corps was founded. You are incredibly special people. You persevered through good times and bad times. You never gave up on yourself or your communities.

- c. And it was these difficult challenges and experiences that have forever changed you. You are not the individuals who arrived two years ago and as a group you have changed.

And now that adventurous trek you embarked upon nearly two years ago is almost at an end. Today you come here to begin the next phase of your journey in life.

- d. Welcome to your close of service conference! Over the next two days, we will help you prepare for closing your Peace Corps service and begin thinking and perhaps planning for the next step in your lives, be it traveling, returning home, graduate school, or a job.
- e. Photo opportunity!

Put Together a Book of Memories (Nepal)

In an attempt to personalize the COS conference, Peace Corps/Nepal developed a COS conference book of remembrances and a directory of U.S. addresses for the COSing group. The book had two objectives: 1) to give Volunteers an opportunity to contribute experiences, feelings, ideas, stories, pictures, drawings, etc. to a group remembrance; and 2) to provide Volunteers with a directory of U.S. addresses of their fellow Volunteers. All aspects of the book were agreed to, designed, and executed by the Volunteers during the COS conference and about two weeks later at the Peace Corps office.

Procedures for making the book:

1. In memos to Volunteers before the COS conference, present the idea. Ask them to begin thinking about what kinds of things they'd like to include in a book of remembrances, prepare some material in advance, and bring the contact address they would like to have included in the directory.
2. At the COS conference, during the introduction or overview session, bring up the book for discussion. The Volunteers offer ideas for sections or headings and agree on a list. Also, at this time Volunteers take responsibility for the production of the book. Sample sections:

- The early years
- The middle years
- Travel stories
- What we learned in Nepal
- Fashion in Nepal
- The foods we craved the most
- Our favorite *Rising Nepal* stories (daily newspaper)
- Our favorite medicines
- My favorite N/168 (the training group's # designation) PCV
- My worst night in Nepal
- Our best nights
- Our favorite books/tapes
- Stupid things we brought
- Stupid things we were sent
- The smells of Nepal
- Nepal statistics
- Most famous person I encountered in Nepal
- Things to take home
- Short stories and pictures

3. Once the headings are agreed upon, post them on a flip chart. Those that require only brief input are given their own newsprint, which is posted so the Volunteers can jot down ideas throughout the conference. At the same time, a sheet is passed around for the Volunteers to write down their addresses. During the conference the PCVs who have offered to take responsibility for the production of the book record what's written on the newsprint by their fellow Volunteers.
4. After the conference the Volunteers put together the finished product. Photos and other graphics can be added.
5. The final version is then copied and sent to all Volunteers in the COSing group.

To streamline the production process, take a computer to the COS conference so content can be taken from newsprint and entered from digital cameras and thumb drives.

Prepared flip charts

- A. Conference schedule
- B. Overall objectives of conference
- C. Objectives of this session
- D. The Moving Process

The Moving Process		
Current home	Travel	New home
Disengagement		
Saying Goodbye		
.....	Limbo	
.....		Re-engagement

HANDOUT

The Moving Process

Every time we move, we go through a similar process. It is a three-stage process. We leave the place we have been for a length of time, physically travel, and get re-engaged in a new place. On a chart it looks like this:

Current home	Travel	New home
Disengagement		
Saying Goodbye		
..... Limbo	
.....		Re-engagement

There are two aspects to moving: the changes one goes through and the transitions. William Bridges describes change as the situation and transition as the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the change.

Disengagement involves letting go of the things that will no longer be the same. It involves physical disengaging—ending all of the current activities: leaving a job, moving out of a house or apartment, doing necessary paperwork and tasks (finishing reports, returning books to the library, closing the bank account, getting an airline ticket, etc.). It also means saying goodbye to people, places, and things. Even a change that one is looking forward to—traveling, going back to school, moving back to a city you like—involves losses. Those losses may include a peer group, community members or host family, tasks one liked to perform, a feeling of competence, being “special.”

Limbo is between the old and the new, a period when a sense of identity is lost and a new one has not yet been established; the old way is gone and the new is not yet established or comfortable. It is important to recognize this phase, because it may create confusion, even fear. But it can also be a period of creativity, renewal, and development.

Re-engagement is getting re-established in a job, school, further volunteer work, and/or retirement. It also means feeling comfortable and confident in a new setting, a new role.

The dotted lines on the chart indicate that the effects of these stages may begin before you get there and linger after you are physically in a different place. To make a good transition, it is important to do the work of each phase—physically and psychologically.

References:

Going Overseas Workshops, Foreign Service Institute, State Department, Washington, DC.
Bridges, William. *Managing Transition*. (2004), De Capo Press.

SESSION 2

Reviewing Your Volunteer Experience



Purpose

In this session Volunteers begin reflecting on their accomplishments during service and identifying how they have contributed to the communities in which they lived and worked. The activities in this session prepare Volunteers to identify skills they have learned (to be addressed in Session 3), as well as to formulate accounts of their experience to assist in re-entry and re-engagement back home (which will be the focus in Sessions 6 and 7).



Rationale

Unless Volunteers are regularly reflective, they may not have a complete view of their service. While many Volunteers can readily admit frustrations, mistakes they've made, and times they felt they were just spinning their wheels, some will admit lessons learned but perhaps not claim successes or accomplishments. Some Volunteers aren't even able to recognize their accomplishments. It may feel like bragging, and many are perfectionists and focus on what was not done. It's important for the group to help each other recognize accomplishments, in order to begin to have some closure on their Peace Corps experience.



Duration

Varies, according to activity chosen and size of group. Approximately 1 hour.



Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will

- Reflect on their Peace Corps experiences and identify important accomplishments.
- Identify contributions to the development of the communities (and the country) in which they have lived and worked.



Session Outline

- I. Introduction (5 minutes)
- II. Individual or group activity (15–45 minutes)
- III. Whole group processing (15–30 minutes)



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

Facilitator should know how experiences can be developed into statements of skills and accomplishments to be used on résumés.



Materials and Equipment

Blank flip charts, markers

Tape or pins to post

Prepared flip chart: The Moving Process (from Session 1)

Prepared flip chart or handout with activity task



Trainer Preparation

1. Read Session 3 to see how the information from this session will lead to development of statements about skills and accomplishments.
2. Select activity for Part II and prepare any materials needed.



Methodology

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

Step 1: Introduce the session by describing the purpose and objectives.

Step 2: Refer to the Moving Process chart, introduced in Session 1. Explain that this session will focus on what the Volunteers have been doing and on the end that the group is approaching.

II. Activity (15–45 minutes)

Select an activity from choices at end of session or create one of your own.

III. Group processing (15–30 minutes)

Use the processing that accompanies the activity choice.

Activity Options

These activities have been used in the field. If none of them fits your particular needs, build on one or create one of your own that meets the objectives of the session.

Individual Reflection I: Stories

Volunteers reflect on their experiences as PCVs and write for about 15 minutes. You may want to play music softly in the background.

1. Write about your challenges and accomplishments (work, social, community, personal, recreational, etc.) as a PCV.
2. Identify the five that have the most meaning for you.
3. Choose one to share with the group.

Individual Reflection II: 300-Word Vignette (PC/Turkmenistan)

Write a short (300-word) essay or vignette that describes some aspect of your service, your accomplishments, what you are coming away with that you hadn't anticipated, insights you gained, humorous or telling incidents—whatever. This short piece might be used in a VAD (Volunteer Assignment Description) or *Welcome Book* that applicants receive before they depart for their host country. This may be used by Peace Corps/Washington for any number of purposes where a colorful, first-person report conveys what being a PCV is all about. Some of these stories may even be read in Congress. This effort to recap and summarize is also an important exercise in beginning your own debriefing as you finish up your service. (Please provide both a hard and soft copy to your PTO or program managers. We ask you to sign a release form permitting publication of your writings.)

Individual Reflection III: Chart

Provide each of the Volunteers with a sheet of flip chart paper and a marker. Ask them to turn their paper horizontal and draw a line across the middle of the page. On the left side of the line, they should write "arrival" and on the right side, "COS."

Tell them they have about 15 minutes to reflect on what has happened between those two points in time. Using pictures and words, above the line they should represent the high points of their Peace Corps experience and below the line, the difficulties, disappointments, and the lows.

After 15 minutes, ask them to post their charts on the walls around the room. Give them a chance to walk around and look at all of them.

Group debriefing

Ask the following questions, based on the PCVs' graphic representations:

In what ways have we seen personal growth? What do we seem to have in common?

What are some of our accomplishments?

In what ways have we made contributions to individuals, organizations, and communities?

Guided Visualization

Note: Guided visualizations can prompt powerful emotions, and the facilitator may well not be aware of the memories the prompts may evoke. This is an activity that might be conducted by an RPCV (or Volunteer leader) with the PCMO or other staff member comfortable dealing with emotions. The RPCV or PCVL can develop and read the prompts, since he or she will have ideas of what may have occurred at each point. Prompts can be humorous, poignant, serious, sad, or difficult. The staff member can help with the debriefing, including handling strong emotions. You may want to play music softly in the background.

The visualization and script

Explain that you are going to help the PCVs go back over their Volunteer experience through a guided visualization. Everyone should get comfortable and relax, close their eyes, and let the prompts take them on their Peace Corps journey. Use the following script for your prompts, or paraphrase as appropriate.

"Take yourself back to when you decided to apply to the Peace Corps. Where were you living? What were you doing? Why did you decide to apply to the Peace Corps?" (Pause for a minute or so to let them visualize.)

"Do you remember when you got your acceptance letter? Recall the thoughts and feelings that letter (or call) evoked." (Pause.)

"You leave for your staging soon. What are you doing? What are you feeling?" (Pause.)

"Staging starts and you meet the people you'll be serving with. Can you remember staging and what was going on for you? What were you excited about? Concerned about?" (Pause.)

"You arrive in-country. Do you remember getting off the plane? What was the weather like? The airport? Who met you? Where did you go from the airport?" (Pause.)

Continue by preparing a script that fits your post, your PST and sites, etc. Include some prompts about challenges the Volunteers faced and met or couldn't quite overcome, some people they befriended, some accomplishments, some ways they think their work has helped the people they lived and worked with. End with a prompt about the idea of coming to the COS conference. "What did that invitation say to you? What did it mean in terms of finishing your service?"

End visualization and debriefing

After the final prompt and pause for reflection, say something like, "This brings us to today. Bring yourself back to our conference when you are ready."

Give them a minute of quiet time to relax.

Tell them they do not need to share any information they don't wish to.

Start discussions with questions like these:

What memories surprise you in their vividness?

Were you able to bring back feelings of particular times? What were some of them?

What were some of your biggest challenges? How did you handle them?

Who are the memorable people? Talk about your relationships.

What accomplishments did you think about? Describe some.

Gallery Contributions

Post flip charts all around the room with these types of headings:

- What I liked best
- My funniest moment
- My biggest accomplishment
- Something I will never forget
- Something I'd like to forget
- Something I've learned
- Souvenir I'd like to take back
- Biggest challenge I overcame
- At work, I've ...
- People who have been special to me
- I'd like people in my community to remember me for ...

Give Volunteers markers and have them walk around and contribute to the charts and read what others have written.

Debriefing

Ask the group what they see

- As general trends, commonalities.
- As big differences.
- As something they would still like to do.

Accomplishment Charts by Projects

Show the group a sample accomplishment chart:

Secondary and Technical Education Project	
Goal 1: Students increase their knowledge and application of English and life sciences.	
Objective 1.1 Create student-centered environments.	
Objective 1.2 Provide coaching for test-taking and study skills.	
Objective 1.3 Incorporate community content into classroom.	
<u>Challenges</u>	<u>Accomplishments</u>

Ask them to work in groups to develop a list of challenges and accomplishments for their projects. Then have them develop statistics for their project over their two years of service.

Share the charts with the other project groups. Discuss the different types of accomplishments—some countable and some less tangible.

Secondary Projects

Ask participants to call out their secondary projects. Group the projects by similarity.

Ask the PCVs to form small groups around one type of project and discuss and record

1. Successes and failures.
2. Strategies for success.
3. Other possible projects that can be done with the community.

Have each small group report to the whole group. Others can add to their points.

Suggest that the results of this work will not only help them recall their accomplishments, but will help post with secondary project suggestions for new Volunteers.

Prepared flip charts

The Moving Process—see Session 1

Others—check activity options

Handouts

Check activity options

SESSION 3

Representing Your Experience: Identifying and Documenting Skills



Purpose

This session builds on Session 2 by assisting Volunteers in identifying obvious and not-so-obvious skills gained during service and using résumé language to express those skills. Skills that Volunteers may wish to gain or hone during their last months of service can be identified and planned for during this session. It introduces the Description of Service document, its purpose and value, and what the PCVs need to do to facilitate the reflections of their own accomplishments. Session 3 links to Sessions 6 and 7, and serves as a foundation for Session 8A, "Looking Ahead: Next Steps Options."



Rationale

It is easier to think about things one has done than to identify skills developed. This session introduces a model that helps Volunteers analyze their activities to identify the skills and accomplishments related to those activities.



Duration

Varies according to sections used; minimum 2 hours



Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will

- Identify personal and professional skills, knowledge, and abilities gained during Peace Corps service.
- Identify ways of documenting Volunteer experience for life planning and future reference.
- Work on their Description of Service (DOS) statement.



Session Outline

- I. Overview and instructions (45 minutes)
- II. Group breakouts and discussion (60 minutes)
- III. Group presentations (30 minutes)
- IV. DOS discussion (15 minutes)



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

This session needs a main facilitator, along with several others to work in the small groups—approximately one person for every eight Volunteers. Everyone involved with this session should have a good understanding of the STAR Model (Situation, Task, Action, Results—to be explained below) and how to help Volunteers describe activities in order to identify skills and knowledge gained from them. It is advisable to have everyone helping with this session meet prior to the session and work through a few examples.



Materials and Equipment

Blank flip chart paper and markers

Prepared flip charts:

STAR Model

Group Task

Challenges and Accomplishments (Optional)

Handouts

- A. STAR explanation and questions
- B. PACA & PCV Roles in Development With KSAs
- C. List of Skill Clusters and examples
- D. Career related skills



Trainer Preparation

1. This session requires participants to work through the STAR model with an activity at the end of Part I. The activity could be done in a group session. Or, Part I could be delivered before lunch, assigning the handout to be done over lunch, or Part I could be delivered one afternoon with Part II starting the following morning. Completing the STAR handout will ensure that participants are prepared to discuss their accomplishments, and that the discussion stays focused.

2. The trainer needs to determine how much time and how many activities to include. At a minimum, the STAR Model should be included, as should information on the DOS.
3. Find out how the DOS is finalized at post and when and how the Volunteers will receive their copy.



Methodology

I. Introduction and instructions (45 minutes)

Step 1: Lead facilitator provides session overview and objectives.

Step 2: Using the flip chart, present the STAR methodology for highlighting skills and accomplishments. Explain that the PCVs will use this method to define more specifically what they have learned and accomplished from their particular project or activities.

Step 3: Distribute the STAR handout (Handout A) for participants to complete (over lunch or in the next 15 minutes).

II. Group work (1 hour)

Step 1: Explain that the PCVs will be working in groups of eight. Each group will have a facilitator to help, if needed. However, it is expected that the group can do the task primarily on their own. Introduce the guest facilitators.

Step 2: Explain the process, using flip chart #2.

Participants can use their Peace Corps Description of Service and other service records (e.g., journals) to reflect aloud on their PC service.

- a. Each participant will tell the story of a particular project to the group, framing it in terms of accomplishments and results and following the STAR methodology.
- b. The group listens and identifies the skills developed and used by each storyteller.
- c. A volunteer scribe keeps a running summary list of that group's "qualifications" (skills) for presentation to all groups.

Facilitator's note: This exercise is for the group members to work among themselves to recall and examine both obvious and discreet experiences and related skills in order to translate the abstract PC experience into a list of clearly identified and marketable

skills. The facilitator's role is to guide, not lead, this process; to play devil's advocate; and to clarify what he or she is hearing during this translation. The facilitator uses handouts as facilitator's tools to encourage retrospection and discussion. Handouts B, C, and D are given to participants after group presentations.

III. Group presentations and wrap-up (30 minutes)

Step 1: Lead facilitator invites all groups to reassemble in a plenary session.

Step 2: Each group's scribe presents his or her group's skills.

Step 3: Ask a few summary questions:

- a. If you were an employer, what skills did you hear that would interest you?
- b. As you listened, what skills that you have are (perhaps) surprising to you?
- c. What skills do you have that you want to use in the future?
- d. Are there any skills that you'd prefer not emphasizing in the future because you are not enthusiastic about exercising them?

Step 4: Distribute Handouts B, C, and D, explaining that they will be useful as the PCVs begin to develop résumés.

IV. Description of Service

Step 1: Describe the DOS document as the only official document that Volunteers who complete their service will receive from the Peace Corps.

It contains statements about their training and their project, along with their activities and accomplishments.

It also contains an important statement that they have noncompetitive eligibility (NCE) for a year after close of service. This is useful if they will be applying for a government job, as it allows employers to hire them for a job they are qualified for without competing against other candidates.

Trainer note: You may wish to review the section in the Volunteers' COS Handbook about this to get the wording correct. Mention to Volunteers that they will learn more about non-competitive eligibility later (Session 8B).

Step 2: Explain how they will receive their DOS and how it will be available to future employers.

Trainer note: Refer to specific information from post.

Step 3: Present the format for the part of the DOS that they are to write. Review it.

Trainer note: If possible there should be a handout on this—either in their COS Handbook or on a separate sheet. If time permits, you may wish to give them time to work on this during the session, providing a means to get feedback.

Other activities

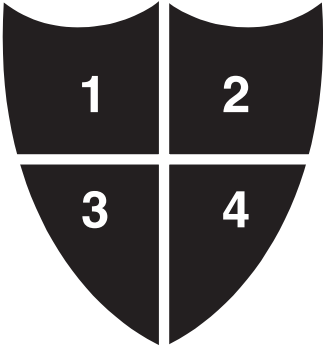
Coat-of-Arms Activity (15 minutes)

This activity serves as a warm-up/ice-breaker and leads into Challenges and Accomplishments. It encourages COSing Volunteers to consider their experiences in light of the transition they are about to make from PCV to RPCV, as well as to consider how their everyday experiences have imbued them with skills that will be useful in a variety of settings (friends and family, community/third goal, and interviewing and other job considerations).

Procedure:

Step 1: Each Volunteer designs (in words or pictures) a personalized coat-of-arms using the graphic below.

Flip chart for Coat-of-Arms activity

	<p>KEY</p> <p>1 = Things you'll miss (about Peace Corps, about your site or job, about the host country)</p> <p>2 = Things you won't miss</p> <p>3 = Challenges you faced in service</p> <p>4 = Your biggest accomplishment in the Peace Corps (something you're proud of)</p>
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An example:

1. I will miss walking with my friends down to the well in our village.
2. I won't miss people slaughtering chickens right outside of my window.
3. A major challenge I faced was overcoming my fear of public speaking in order to be accepted as a member of the teaching staff at my school.
4. I am so proud of how I brought girls together from three communities across the country and conducted an HIV/AIDS training for them.

Step 2: The PCVs show and discuss their coats-of-arms in small or large groups. When Volunteers are presenting their coats-of-arms, the facilitator should ask about/point out how each experience (#s 1 through 4) highlights different skills (technical or "soft").

In the example #1 above, "I will miss walking with my friends down to the well in our village," the facilitator could point out that the comfort level the Volunteer has developed with her friends, leading to the sense of camaraderie on the daily walks down to the well, is a result of her interpersonal or cross-cultural skills. Facility with the local language, knowledge of customs and social mores, and gaining acceptance in a host community are all soft skills in high demand with employers.

In example #2 above, "I won't miss people slaughtering chickens right outside of my window," the facilitator would want to ask *how* the Volunteer coped with the things she won't miss. How did the Volunteer not allow her frustration or discomfort with the animal slaughtering to interfere with being a productive member of her community? Perhaps the Volunteer was able to use diplomacy and superior language skills to request that the slaughtering be done elsewhere. Perhaps she simply accepted the lack of control she had over the situation and focused on other aspects of her village life. In either case, the facilitator should point out that these coping mechanisms are the result of certain soft skills noted above, and that challenges or difficulties, too, provide opportunities for professional growth and skills development.

In #s 3 and 4 above, the technical skills are more easily highlighted, but the facilitator and other Volunteers should still point out any that are evidenced. In the examples above, skills include public speaking and teaching/training.

The facilitator can also point out that each part of the coat-of-arms (#s 1-4 above) identifies a potential sound bite for telling a story highlighting relevant experience and qualifications to various audiences for various purposes (sharing stories with family and friends, community/third goal activities, networking and interviewing for job search, etc.).

Follow the coat-of-arms activity with this next one.

Challenges and accomplishments activity (15+ minutes)

Step 1: Explain that another way to look at accomplishments is to begin with challenges.

Step 2: Reveal flip chart 3 and review the prompts.

Challenges:	Accomplishments:
—What did you find difficult?	—What are you most proud of?
—What was most frustrating for you about your primary (or secondary) project?	—What did you find most rewarding about your primary (or secondary) project?
—What circumstances made things more difficult than you had anticipated?	—How did you overcome some of the challenges you listed on the left?
—Were there specific people who made your work more difficult?	—Were there people who were especially facilitative or supportive, allowing you to overcome the challenges you faced?

Step 3: Ask participants to form groups of two or three with those sitting next to them. Have them pick one of the challenge prompts and come up with an example, and then write an accomplishment statement to correspond.

Trainer note: This can be done quickly—in about 5 minutes—or with more time given. For example, participants can take flip chart sheets and write out their answers so they can be posted.

Step 4: Ask for some examples.

Step 5: Show how these types of examples can be used to make strong statements of accomplishment. For example, “Without access to outside funds or products, I was able to show my community how to provide a warm meal to all students each day.”

Other Resources

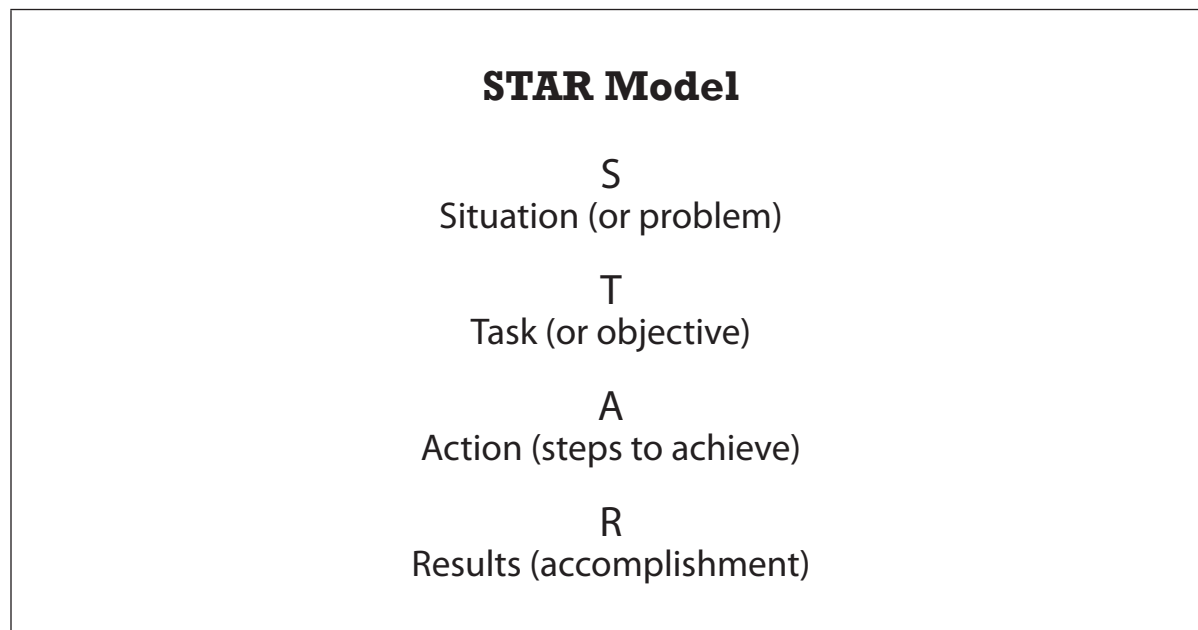
Note: In addition to the handouts provided here, there are a number of other post-developed resources available on Guru. These reference the knowledge, skills, and abilities PCVs gain in the field, and include:

PC Georgia Core & Sector Competencies & KSAs: <https://guru.peacecorps.gov/pe/ekm/ekm-view.jsp?actionName=view&id=10124517&type=7>

PC Thailand Sector Competencies, KSAs, Learning Objectives, Evaluation Methods: <https://guru.peacecorps.gov/pe/ekm/ekmview.jsp?actionName=view&id=10114846&type=7>

Your post may have its own tools for assessing Volunteer KSAs; please feel free to distribute these references during this session, as appropriate.

Prepared flip chart #1



Prepared flip chart #2

Group task

1. Each participant tells the story of a particular project to the group, following the STAR methodology.
2. The group listens for and identifies the skills developed and used by each storyteller.
3. A volunteer scribe keeps a running summary list of that group's "qualifications" (skills) for presentation to the whole group.

Prepared flip chart #3 (optional)

Challenges:	Accomplishments:
—What did you find difficult?	—What are you most proud of?
—What was most frustrating for you about your primary (or secondary) project?	—What did you find most rewarding about your primary (or secondary) project?
—What circumstances made things more difficult than you had anticipated?	—How did you overcome some of the challenges you listed on the left?
—Were there specific people who made your work more difficult?	—Were there people who were especially facilitative or supportive, allowing you to overcome the challenges you faced?

HANDOUT A

Citing Your Accomplishments: The STAR Model

The STAR Model is simply a structured format for identifying and organizing details related to your accomplishments on the job. It is a useful tool for developing concrete and factual statements of impressive accomplishments.

“STAR” stands for Situation, Task, Actions, and Results.

S

DEFINE THE PROBLEM or SITUATION

What was the situation?

What problems or challenges was I facing?

Where did this situation, problem, or issue occur?

(For example, provide a lunchtime feeding program for students at primary school.)

T

DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVE OR TASK

What needed to be done?

What were the objectives of the task?

How did I need to become involved?

(For example, identify and develop an income-generation activity to both provide food and generate money.)

A

DESCRIBE THE ACTION YOU TOOK TO ACHIEVE YOUR OBJECTIVE

What steps did I undertake?

What did I do, specifically?

When part of a team, what was my role?

What did I put my energy into?

(For example, consult with village councils, chiefs, and school staff; assess community resources; design and manage project; leadership and conflict resolution; raise funds; training.)

R

MEASURE YOUR EFFECTIVENESS AND RESULTS

What were the outcomes?

What were the unintended outcomes?

What did I learn?

What would I do differently next time?

(For example: egg-laying enterprise to provide protein and money for more cabbage and potatoes)

Follow each step as presented below:

Describe the work-related problem or situation or issue you encountered. What needed to be done and how you were involved (directly and indirectly)?

List all the specific actions that you took (initiated or directed) to deal with the problem or situation. Use action verbs.

List all the skills—technical, interpersonal, or other—deployed for those actions.

Specifically describe the positive results of your efforts. Quantify and be as concrete as possible. (This is your accomplishment statement.)

Evidence of Your Value:

In today's labor market, potential employers want evidence that the candidates they are considering can solve problems and produce effective outcomes in their work. In your search for work, be prepared to offer evidence of your value. Specifically:

- Focus on achievements, results, or accomplishments that directly relate to the position you are applying for.
- Quantify and specify. (How did you do it and what was your part?)
- Answer the question, "So what do you think you can add to our company/office?"

HANDOUT B

Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA)

Developed by the Peace Corps Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research, 2008

PACA Tools

1. Community Mapping
2. Seasonal Calendars
3. Daily Activity Schedules
4. Needs Assessment

The above PACA tools are implemented by

- Conducting sessions with separate groups that make up the community.
- Having groups present to each other.
- Ensuring that all groups together conduct analysis.

After conducting PACA, the field research is translated into a project:

Post-PACA analysis consists of	Critical skills needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project needs statement • Project needs response • Project design • Project management • Project monitoring and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Interviewing • Facilitation • Technical

Roles of the PCV in Development and Conducting PACA

The role of the PCV is to help people to help themselves. That role is manifested

- In daily life.
- Through work in community.
- In relationships with community partners and counterparts.
- Through actions that empower people to
 - Build their capacity (defined as commitment, resources, and skills) to help themselves and others.
 - Make decisions for themselves.

Development is a process, not a project. What were PCV roles within that process? At what junctures did that role shift or migrate to another? Why did it shift?

CAPACITY-BUILDING ROLES

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) You Need to Be Effective

	Knowledge	Skills	Abilities
Learner What the PCV learns for building his or her own capacity (especially first 6 months at site).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adult learning model, community systems, assets and deficits approaches to community development host country development plan Peace Corps programming understanding of Peace Corps Project/technical assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community entry and engagement skills, e.g., observation, interviewing, and listening information gathering, synthesis, and analysis introducing oneself to community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> respect for local knowledge curiosity about others willingness to consider others' opinions, values, methods
Trainer Someone who generates ideas, promotes new practices, models healthy behavior, draws attention to opportunities, and encourages networks to help people move toward their goals. Does not impose, but facilitates and helps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> technical content adult learning principles nonformal educational theory and methods training design process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> technical skills presentation skills facilitation skills (listening, questioning, encouraging, summarizing) leading participatory activities session planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> confidence to apply technical knowledge and skills enthusiasm for subject flexibility and adaptability in relation to learners' needs ability to receive and use feedback from learners
Co-Facilitator With Community, Group Along with counterpart, assess the needs of the learners, and then design participatory activities that help participants acquire the knowledge and skills they want. Co-trainer, in contrast to the co-facilitator, addresses specific requests—rather than general needs—assessing and capacity-building—for overall well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge of sector-specific groups and projects group dynamics theory leadership styles types of decisions participatory methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> listening, questioning, encouraging others team-building facilitating group tasks and decision-making, e.g., consensus problem-solving conflict resolution leading meetings modeling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> willingness to share leadership trust in group process patience and perseverance respect for diversity

	Knowledge	Skills	Abilities
Change Agent Assists the community in deciding what it wants to do and then partners with the community to get the work done. Provides stewardship and leadership, but ensures that decision-making rights and responsibilities remain with the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community participation/mobilization theories change models, including appreciative inquiry diffusion of innovation gender equity issues youth development best practices networking together for action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> selecting and using participatory activities with community/groups gender analysis inquiry skills strategic planning skills promotion skills networking and linking people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> flexibility, ability to deal with ambiguity enthusiasm confidence in change process appreciative outlook respect for local values, traditions, and ingenuity
Project Co-Planner Helps communities to identify, plan, implement, and evaluate projects that will enable them to address changes or improvements they want in their lives—projects focus on specific local priorities and are managed by community members with Volunteer support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project planning steps/cycle local resource identification resource development examples of successful small-scale projects in sector and region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> small project design and action planning skills drafting/managing budgets proposal writing resource identification/mobilization project monitoring and evaluation time management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerance for opposing views thoroughness diplomacy/tact realistic expectations flexibility
Mentor Acts as guide, role model, coach, sponsor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> examples of successful development models and mentoring models youth issues/practices related to working effectively with youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> modeling skills relation skills such as guiding with ship-building coaching questions interpersonal communication skills such as active listening and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> respect and trust in others consistency/reliability desire patience and perseverance to help self and others grow personally and professionally give/receive feedback self-esteem

Excerpted from the *Roles of the Volunteer in Development* [ICE No. T0005]

HANDOUT C

Skills “Clusters”

Compiled by Returned Volunteer Services, based on group lists developed by RPCV participants during this session (2006–2009)

Communication/People Helping

- Advocacy
- Confidence Building
- Conflict Resolution and Mediation
- Cross-Cultural Mediation
- Cultural Awareness & Sensitivity
- Diplomacy
- Establishing Trust
- Facilitating Discussions and Workshops
- Foreign Language Skills
- Listening
- Mentoring
- Negotiations
- Public Speaking
- Solicitation
- Team-building
- Writing Skills

Research/Analysis, Creative

- Curriculum Development
- Flexibility
- Initiative-Seeking Opportunities
- Lesson Planning
- Marketing
- Networking
- Manual Development
- Organizing Workshops
- Presentation Assembly
- Working With Limited Resources

Research/Analysis, Technical

- Budget Management
- Capacity Evaluation (PACA)
- Critical Thinking
- Foundation Researching
- Fundraising
- GIS/GPS
- Grant-Writing
- Interviewing
- Needs Assessment
- Proficiency
- Project Monitoring
- Survey Development/Reporting
- Translating/Interpreting
- Troubleshooting

Organization/Planning/Management

- Adaptability
- Backstopping (Project Support)
- Coalition Building
- Designing Budgets/Proposals
- Event Planning
- Inter-organizational Networking
- Logistics
- Planning/Executing Projects
- Planning/Leading Meetings
- Preparing Expense Reports
- Project Management
- Recruitment
- Resourcefulness
- Resource Identification
- Scheduling of Events
- Supervision
- System-Building and Sustainability
- Time Management
- Training/Capacity-Building
- Working Independently

HANDOUT D**Career-Related Skills Nurtured Through Peace Corps Service**

Compiled by Returned Volunteer Services based on group lists developed by RPCV participants during this session (2006–2009)

Technical Skills

Accounting
Adult Education
Allocation of Funds
Budget Management
Candidate/Applicant Assessment
Coalition-Building/ Partnership Development
Community Empowerment
Curriculum Design/Development
Donor Assessment
Event Planning
Facilitation and Training
Feasibility Analysis
Foreign Language Speaking/Interpreting
Grant-Writing and Fundraising
Human Resource Management
Lesson Planning
Logistics Management/Coordination
Marketing and Advertising
Mediation and Conflict Resolution
Needs Assessment
Project Management and Support
Public Speaking
Research and Analysis
Stakeholder Analysis
Strategic Planning
Technical/Specialized Knowledge
Translating Professional Materials
Tutoring and Mentoring
Writing

Soft Skills

Adaptability
Conscientiousness
Creative Problem-Solving
Creativity
Critical Thinking
Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity
Customer Service
Delegation of Responsibility
Enthusiasm
Entrepreneurship
Flexibility
Independent Work Ethic
Initiative
Informal Networking
Interviewing Skills
Inquisitiveness
Leadership—Assigned or Not
Negotiation
Patience
Perseverance
Priority-Setting
Resourcefulness
Tact
Team-Building
Time Management
Troubleshooting
Youth Advocacy

Other Skills

The following were listed as accomplishments by PCVs at a COS conference. Not each of them applies to every PCV, of course, but they serve as a reminder of the occasionally indistinct or discreet experiences that also represent Peace Corps accomplishments and experiences. Many of these relate to skills and qualifications. What are your similar accomplishments, and to what skills and qualifications do they speak?

- Learning foreign language(s)
- Integrating into culture
- Persevering under difficult situations
- Surviving the many trips via taxi *brousse*
- Budgeting our living allowances
- Teaching in classrooms for the first time
- Enjoying Mauritania
- Dealing with harassment
- Communicating in a different power structure
- Learning about Islam
- Managing projects
- Organizing effective committees
- Making lifelong friends
- Making commitments and following through
- Becoming more self-reliant
- Learning to see ourselves as Mauritians see us
- Becoming more culturally sensitive
- Eating with our hands and without utensils
- Doing without things we used to think were necessary
- Making the best of many situations
- Gaining insight into the Arab world and black African cultures
- Expanding our ideas of Africa and the Peace Corps
- Being assertive
- Learning nonverbal communication
- Expanding our concepts about development work
- Redefining expectations
- Managing anger
- Being kind to others
- Carrying water and other things on our heads
- Dealing with malnutrition
- Pushing ourselves beyond preconceived boundaries
- Showing generosity to poor people
- Becoming personally sustainable
- Learning the importance of chores in socializing (e.g., fetching water as a way of keeping in touch with other people)
- Handling chaos
- Learning to be a “bad cop”
- Developing a sense of humor (especially dark humor)
- Being selective about giving charity
- Finding hope in seemingly hopeless situations
- Self-diagnosing and treating a wide variety of medical conditions
- Sharing personal space while trying to maintain independence
- Learning what is, and what is not, sustainable
- Understanding how child-rearing practices affect social structure, and vice versa
- Learning gender roles in the society
- Dealing with competition and racial prejudice
- Learning to distinguish between individuals and their country's policies
- Learning patience

- Learning to stay healthy on a limited diet
- Learning new games: euchre, cards, lawn bowling
- Learning how much people are threatened by change
- Learning to slow down (e.g., taking an afternoon nap)
- Becoming grateful for being an American
- Understanding different perceptions about time
- Learning to deal with the Peace Corps administration
- Dealing with local systems of protocol and administration
- Evolving one's sense of self
- Becoming effective at bargaining, negotiating, and persuasion
- Repaying host families without using money
- Getting by *without* language skills
- Understanding the importance of building relationships before working with people
- Improving mental math skills in the marketplace
- Keeping oneself entertained
- Dealing with stress
- Establishing boundaries
- Maintaining identity, especially with regard to what we are willing or not willing to give up and change
- Experiencing the diversity of Americans
- Sewing
- Planning lessons
- Speaking in public
- Speaking in public in a foreign language
- Mentoring and counselling high school students
- Writing proposals and getting them funded
- Evaluating projects
- Improvising
- Living communally
- Living "in a fishbowl" with status as a celebrity, rock star, or side show freak
- Learning not to take animosity personally
- Dealing with loss and death, both here and in the United States
- Dealing with homesickness
- Conquering fears of insects and other critters
- Understanding the effect of local imam and mosque culture
- Experiencing new diseases
- Observing locusts and their control
- Living through drought conditions
- Pulling water from a well
- Brushing one's teeth with a stick
- Learning new sustainable hygiene routines
- Valuing health, diet, and vitamins
- Learning Mauritanian cellphone etiquette
- Improving writing skills
- Becoming introspective
- Gaining a greater sense of self
- Piranha fishing
- Deciphering body language
- Developing a sense of humor in tune with that of the community
- Dealing with accumulated culture

SESSION 4A

Closing Out Your In-Country Experience



Purpose

The purpose of this session is to provide the Volunteers with the administrative procedures for closing out their service at post.



Rationale

A smooth conclusion to the Volunteer experience is highly desired by both Volunteers and the staff members who support them at post. This session provides an opportunity to clarify the responsibilities and procedures involved in close of service, as well as giving the Volunteers necessary checklists and forms.

The second part of this session explains health benefits that follow Peace Corps service. See session 4B.



Duration

30 minutes



Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will have

- Reviewed the specific administrative and medical procedures required for closing out their Peace Corps status at post.
- Received a written handbook for procedures and forms for closing their service.



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

This session should be presented by the administrative officer or his or her designee. The person must be knowledgeable about the procedures and forms, and be able to answer Volunteer questions on close of service details. The PCMO may deliver the section on medical procedures.



Materials and Equipment

Prepared flip charts:

The Moving Process chart from Session 1

List of administrative items to be completed during COS workshop

Handout:

Close of Service Administrative Procedures Handbook for Volunteers

(See sample, Appendix 1)



Trainer Preparation

1. The materials for this session must be compiled by the administrative officer and PCMO. A well-organized handbook containing all the procedures and necessary forms, including a final checkout list, will help the Volunteers immensely. Appendix 1 contains a sample handbook from Ghana; it can be modified or updated for other posts by using the digitized format of the *COS Trainer's Handbook* (on the Intranet, GURU, and the ICE digitized resources CD, Sharing Promising Practices, ICE No. RE014K.)
2. The content of this session is strictly administrative information that Volunteers will receive in hard copy, so it is suggested that the presenter move through the handbook quickly. Session 4B, focusing specifically on health care after Peace Corps service, is more interactive.
3. It is highly recommended that this session be conducted early in the COS workshop. Should circumstances not permit that, consider conducting the session
 - a. After Session 2: Reviewing Your Experience
 - b. After Session 5: Providing Feedback

Avoid scheduling this session after the focus of the training has shifted toward returning home and third goal activities.



Methodology

I. Introduction (1 minute)

Explain that this session provides Volunteers with the administrative and medical procedures for closing out their service. These are part of the "Disengagement" phase of the "Moving Process." (Refer to the Moving Process flip chart from Session 1.)

II. Review administrative handbook (25 minutes)

Step 1: Suggest that Volunteers have a pen or pencil available to make notes in their handbooks. Distribute the handbooks.

Step 2: Talk through the sections without reading the text. Take questions as you proceed.

Step 3: As a summary, ask Volunteers to read the final checkout sheet.

Step 4: Take any final questions.

Step 5: If PCVs need to do any of the steps during COS, provide a list of those items on a flip chart. Tell them when and where to complete them. (Examples: Sign up for medical examination with PCMO after this session. Turn in the “cash-in-lieu” form—to receive cash rather than an airline ticket—to admin office by end of COS workshop.)

III. Transition to next session (4 minutes)

Explain that there is a second part to this session having to do with health care after the PCVs leave service—and that you’ll start that session in a few minutes, after they stand and stretch.

SESSION 4B

Health Care After Volunteer Service



Purpose

This session provides Volunteers with important information about health care benefits and options after their service ends. It is separate from Session 4A, which has many administrative details, in order to be more interactive and call attention to the importance of the information.



Rationale

After their service ends, RPCVs may travel, continue living abroad, or return home without work—possibly unprotected by health insurance. Depending upon their age, sex, and past health insurance status (on parents' plan, paid for by college or university or former employer), COSing Volunteers may or may not be aware of how health insurance works, what their possible need for medical benefits might be, and costs for health care. For younger Volunteers in good health and with little experience with health insurance, this may not seem like an important topic to think about.



Duration

45–60 minutes, depending on size of group



Objectives

By the end of this session, Volunteers will be able to

- Explain the three medical benefits they are entitled to: CorpsCare®, PC-127C authorization, and FECA benefits.
- Identify three reasons they personally should take advantage of CorpsCare® insurance.
- Identify the office in Peace Corps/Washington where they can get assistance with health care issues after their Peace Corps service ends.



Session Outline

- I. Introduction to health care options (15 minutes)
- II. Time-travel stories (15 minutes)
- III. Small-group presentations and discussion (15–30 minutes)



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

The facilitator of this session must be familiar with the three healthcare programs and the FAQs related to them. It is recommended that facilitators do the time-travel activity themselves in order to anticipate potential stories and prepare to help participants decide which health care benefit is appropriate for various situations.



Materials and Equipment

Prepared flip chart: The Moving Process (from Session 1)

Reproduce the chart in Handout A on flip charts, overhead, or PowerPoint.

PowerPoint presentation or prepared flip charts (see trainer notes at end of session)

Handouts:

- A. Post-service Health Benefits chart
- B. Time-travel Activity
- C. What to Do When
- D. Contact Information

Peace Corps Post-Service Medical Handbook (hard copy and/or on thumb drive)

Health Benefits identification cards



Trainer Preparation

1. Read the *Post-Service Medical Handbook* thoroughly and highlight talking points for each type of service. Provide only highlights of each benefit—about 5 minutes per benefit.
2. Prepare flip charts or a PowerPoint presentation from sample provided at end of session.
3. Develop a time-travel story of your own for at least three different scenarios so you can anticipate the stories the Volunteers might write and the issues they might raise.



Methodology

I. Introduction to health care options (15 minutes)

Step 1: Introduce the topic with a couple of “show of hands” questions:

- a. How many of you are thinking of health insurance right now? (Probably no one)
- b. How many of you are planning to travel before going home?
- c. How many of you have a job lined up that provides health care when you get home?
- d. Who’s planning on getting pregnant or having a wife or girlfriend getting pregnant within a year of leaving the Peace Corps?
- e. Who’s worried about having an illness or medical condition you had as a Volunteer recur?

Step 2: Refer to the Moving Process flip chart.

Note that this is an example of something they need to take care of in Disengagement that will have lasting influences, through time, into Re-engagement.

Step 3: Give the rationale for this session. Sample presentation:

“This session is important because you need to know your options about health care after you leave. I’m going to introduce you to three services or options that you are entitled to. We are going to work with these benefits a little bit so you get the gist of it and can make some informed decisions. Then you will get the details so you’ll have them as you need them.

“Why is this important?”

1. Continuity of health care coverage is important to U.S. health insurance plans. Any break in coverage could jeopardize your ability to obtain coverage in the future.
2. Whether you are healthy or have an existing medical condition, get and keep coverage. Health insurance protects you financially in the event of large medical bills.
3. Keep the information and list of resources handy at all times—ID card and phone numbers. The Peace Corps has taught you to be prepared for the unexpected, and this is no different.
4. Ultimately, you are responsible for your own health and health care.”

Step 4: Distribute Handout A, and using the PowerPoint or flip chart, explain Peace Corps authorization forms PC-127C and PC-209B.

Step 5: Using the PowerPoint or flip chart, explain FECA benefits and how you get them.

Step 6: Using the PowerPoint or flip chart, explain CorpsCare® Insurance.

II. Time-travel stories (30 minutes)

Step 1: Introduce the activity.

Explain that having just gone over a lot of technical information, you want to apply that information to potential scenarios in an activity that employs time-travel stories.

Step 2: Distribute Handout B and go over the instructions.

Step 3: Ask participants to suggest some scenarios they might be in after leaving PC service. (For example: traveling for three months or longer, staying in-country to work for an NGO or business, returning home immediately and taking some months to travel and see friends in the United States, returning home and going back to school, returning home and seeking a job.) Put key words on flip charts: traveling out of U.S., staying in country, traveling in U.S., seeking a job in U.S., etc. Post charts around the room.

Step 4: Form groups and develop stories.

III. Small-group presentations and discussion (15–30 minutes)

Step 1: Ask groups, in turn, to present their stories. They can use any of the options presented on the handout, or one of their choosing.

Step 2: After each presentation, confirm the correct option for seeking medical care and reimbursement, if applicable.

Step 3: Provide information for future reference:

- a. Distribute *Peace Corps Post-Service Medical Handbook* or identify that it is on the thumb drives.
- b. Distribute Health Benefits identification cards or tell the PCVs when and where they will receive them.
- c. Distribute Handout D with contact numbers. Remind the PCVs of the PC/Washington office where they can get their forms and have their questions answered.

HANDOUT A

Post-Service Health Benefits

Benefit Mechanism	Covers	Time Limit	How Accessed
PC-127C Authorization	Evaluation of medical and dental health conditions related to Volunteer service.	Must be issued and used within six months after service.	May be issued by the Peace Corps medical officer (PCMO) at post or the Peace Corps Office of Medical Services in Washington, D.C. (OMS). Present form along with Health Benefits identification card.
FECA Benefits	Treatment for most medical and dental conditions related to Volunteer service and conditions incurred or contracted while abroad during service.	Claims must be filed within three years after service, or within three years of recognition that a health condition is service-related.	Claims should be filed through the OMS post-service unit in Washington, D.C.
CorpsCare® Insurance	<p>Non-service-related medical problems. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some pre-existing conditions not covered by FECA • Conditions that arose during service that are not covered by FECA (e.g., while in the U.S. on vacation, home leave, emergency leave, or medevac) • Health problems arising after Volunteer service 	<p>The Peace Corps pays one month's premium for all Volunteers and their minor children (less than 18 years of age) who are living with the Volunteer at the time of service termination. Volunteers may purchase up to 18 months of additional coverage for themselves, their spouse, and all qualified dependents.</p>	<p>Contact CorpsCare® customer service for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency medical assistance. • Referrals to network hospitals, physicians, and other health services. • Insurance coverage extensions.

HANDOUT B

Time-Travel Stories

You are to develop a story of a Volunteer (or several Volunteers) after they finish their Peace Corps service. This story should include

- Who—man or woman, approximate age?
- Where—location (traveling, in some city, etc.)?
- What—what are they doing?
- Some medical issues—symptoms or something that recurs from their service, an accident, an illness or medical condition that arises not related to PC.
- What they can or should do about the medical situation—recall information about their options from the session and Handout A.

You will be sharing this story with the group. Some options:

1. Simply tell the story with all the details.
2. Tell the story and stop and ask the rest of group what they should do about the medical situations.
3. Make the story into a skit.
4. Follow the format below.
5. Use your own creative idea.

Maximum time to present your story to the whole group: 5 minutes

Sample story format:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Once upon a time, ... | 4. And because of that, ... |
| 2. Then one day, ... | 5. And because of that, |
| 3. Because of that, ... | 6. And because of that, |
| | 7. Until finally, ... |

HANDOUT C

What to Do When

If returning home immediately

First step—Reach a decision about how to continue health insurance coverage; enroll, and keep contact information should a medical need arise.

Second step—Use the 127C authorization forms to get an evaluation of medical and dental conditions related to time in the Peace Corps.

Third step—Based on the type of medical or dental issue or need, contact CorpsCare for coverage if the medical condition is not related to Peace Corps service; Peace Corps for FECA information on service-related conditions; or, if another health plan has been chosen, contact that administrator.

Traveling abroad, then returning home

First step—Reach a decision about how to continue health insurance coverage, enroll, and keep contact information should a medical need arise. Primary emphasis is always on securing coverage.

Second step—Authorization forms for evaluations must be used within six months, so if you are traveling longer than six months, obtain the evaluation while on travel. Medical expenses may have to be paid out of pocket, then reimbursed when you return home.

Third step—Based on the type of medical or dental issue or need, contact CorpsCare for coverage if the medical condition is not related to Peace Corps service; Peace Corps for FECA information on service-related conditions; or if another health plan has been chosen, contact them. Remember that CorpsCare coverage is worldwide. Payment for health services may have to be paid out of pocket, then reimbursed when you return home.

HANDOUT D

Contact Information

Seven Corners

127C authorization forms are processed and paid

- Bill payment: 1.800.544.1802
- Find a doctor, hospital, or dentist: 1.800.726.0766
www.peacecorps.sevencorners.com (Web)

CorpsCare

Medical conditions and services not related to Peace Corps service

- Pay premium or payment questions: 1.202.872.0060 or 1.800.872.0067
www.clements.com (Web)
Corpscare@clements.com (email)
- Health coverage questions: 1.317.221.8094 or 1.866.400.6090
Corpscare-claims@mnu.com (email)

Peace Corps Post-Service

Medical conditions related to service and for FECA processing

- 1.800.424.8580, ext. 1540 or 1.202.692.2000, ext. 1540
- psu@peacecorps.gov (email)

SESSION 5

Providing Feedback to the Peace Corps



Purpose

This session provides time for Volunteers to reflect on various aspects of their Peace Corps experience and provide feedback to the office on what went well and where they recommend changes.



Rationale

The Peace Corps program at post needs to be constantly revised in its attempts to meet the changing needs of the host country. One effective way of monitoring these changing needs is to solicit information from experienced Volunteers.

The Volunteer concluding his or her service is bound to have certain impressions and concerns, and can provide feedback that can be valuable to staff at post in shaping future programming, training, and Volunteer-management efforts.



Duration

Depends on activity option chosen



Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will

- Discuss individual and collective favorable and unfavorable experiences with Peace Corps' programming, training, administrative, and medical support, site selection, and safety issues.
- Formulate recommendations for the post based on their experiences.



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

Depending upon the post's preference, this session might be facilitated by an external consultant. This is particularly helpful if there have been issues that seem unresolved. Volunteers may be more honest and straightforward in their responses and recommendations, and staff may be less defensive and able to hear more refined opinions and recommendations.

If this option is chosen, it may still be helpful for staff to meet with the Volunteers to discuss their recommendations at some point during COS, perhaps at the end of the session.



Materials and Equipment

Questionnaires, sent prior to the workshop or distributed at the workshop
(see samples at end of session plan)

Prepared flip charts (see samples at end of session plan)

Blank flip charts and markers



Trainer Preparation

The post needs to determine what type of feedback they want during this session. There are various options, several samples of which are given at the end of the session:

1. Questionnaires sent in advance and compiled prior to the workshop. Discussion of the results at the workshop.
2. Questionnaires sent in advance and brought to the workshop. Compilation and discussion of responses during the workshop with recommendations.
3. Questionnaires handed out early in COS. Compilation and discussion of responses during this session with recommendations.
4. Questionnaires handed out and answered at the beginning of this session, followed by discussion of responses during this session, with recommendations.
5. Structured discussion by topic in small groups during the session, with some type of sharing and consensus building.

Questionnaires, if used, need to be designed and distributed. Sample from the field attached.



Methodology

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

Step 1: Introduce the session by explaining the value of the Volunteer's experiences and recommendations in helping the post maintain its quality services and improve its programs and systems where necessary.

Step 2: Explain the process you are using for gathering and discussing PCVs' recommendations.

II. Discussions (see sample formats at end of session) (30+ minutes)

III. Presentation of recommendations (15–30 minutes)

Activity Options

Questionnaires sent in advance; compiled prior to workshop

1. Develop questionnaire with input from APCDs/program managers, training manager/PTO, administrative officer, PCMO, safety and security officer, etc.
2. Send to Volunteers approximately one month prior to COS workshop, with deadline of at least a week prior to the workshop for completed questionnaires to be sent to the PC office.
3. Compile answers to be shared in this session.
4. Consider how to group participants to review results and provide recommendations. (see options below).

Questionnaires sent in advance; compiled during the workshop

1. Develop questionnaire with input from APCDs and program managers, training manager and PTO, administrative officer, PCMO, safety and security officer, etc.
2. Send to Volunteers approximately one month prior to COS workshop, with instructions to bring completed questionnaires to the workshop.
3. Determine how to group participants to share their responses and provide recommendations. (See options below.)

Questionnaires provided at start of COS workshop; compiled during the session

1. Develop questionnaire with input from APCDs and program managers, training manager and PTO, administrative officer, PCMO, safety and security officer, etc.
2. Provide questionnaire to Volunteers on the first day of COS workshop, with instructions to bring completed questionnaires to this session.
3. Determine how to group participants to share their responses and provide recommendations. (See options below.)

Questionnaires provided at beginning of session

1. Develop questionnaire with input from APCDs and program managers, training manager and PTO, administrative officer, PCMO, safety and security officer, etc. A questionnaire to be used during a session should not be too long or complex; Volunteers should be able to fill it out in about 15 minutes.
2. Determine how to group participants to share their responses and provide recommendations. (See options below.)

Topics for individual reflection and then discussion (no questionnaire)

1. Provide 15 minutes for Volunteers to write down their individual experiences with the following. (They may make their own notes or write directly on flip charts with these headings.)
 - a. Project direction and support from PC and host country
 - b. Training and conferences
 - c. Administrative support from PC
 - d. Medical support
 - e. Safety issues
 - f. Other (be specific)
2. Determine how to group participants to share their responses and provide recommendations. (See options below.)

Small-group discussion options

1. Volunteers may be grouped by project. Subgroups of project groups may be formed if there are more than six Volunteers per project. These groups may discuss all of the topics and compile their answers and recommendations.
2. Volunteers may work in two successive small groups; the first groups by project to discuss project-related issues, including training. The second small groups may be random collections of Volunteers to consider all other topics.

Charting and reporting

1. Small groups may make charts by topics of positive and recommended improvement.
2. Small groups may make two charts for each topic:
 - a. Start—Do more
 - b. Stop—Do less (or, Do instead)
3. Small groups may report to the whole group by taking turns. Each group, in turn, presents two ideas, the next group adds two additional ideas, and so on until all ideas are presented. Then general clarification and discussion can take place.
4. All small groups can post their charts around the room. Groups can do a gallery walk where they move from chart to chart, read the notes, and add their own reactions. Then general clarification and discussion can take place.

Sharing recommendations with staff

Staff can be invited to the last part of the session (if they haven't been a part of the session).

1. APCDs should have time with the Volunteers in each of their projects.
2. Administrative officer, PCMO, safety and security officers should be available to discuss the recommendations in their own areas.
3. It would be good to have the country director available for final recommendations and discussions.

Sample questionnaire from PC/Kenya

Please provide PC/Kenya with specific feedback about your experience as a Volunteer in Kenya. The feedback will help us make our program stronger for Volunteers who follow you.

The Director's Office

Whether you think PC policies are reasonable, the extent to which you felt comfortable speaking with the Director and his/her staff about policies and the implementation of them, and the degree to which you think your opinions were taken seriously as a result of personal interaction with the Director and his/her staff.

The Director's Office was helpful because...

The Director's Office could have been more helpful if...

Approachability and Responsiveness of Director's Office...

Overall Effectiveness of the Director's Office:

1 Very Poor	2 Poor	3 Average	4 Good	5 Very Good
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Comments:

2 [Questionnaire from Kenya, continued]

The Programming and Training Office

Please comment on the approachability of the PTO's Office and the extent to which you felt comfortable discussing programming and training issues. Please also comment on the extent to which the P&T Office was helpful in assisting with funding proposals.

The Programming and Training Office was helpful because...

The Programming and Training Office could have been more helpful if...

Overall Effectiveness of the Programming and Training Office:

1 Very Poor	2 Poor	3 Average	4 Good	5 Very Good
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Comments:

3 [Questionnaire from Kenya, continued]

The Regional Offices

Whether you received adequate support from your RAPCD when you requested it, the level of comfort you felt about approaching your RAPCD, the efficiency with which your administrative vouchers were processed by the Regional Offices.

RAPCDs with whom you've worked (names optional):

My RAPCD was helpful because...

My RAPCD could have been more helpful if...

Approachability and Responsiveness of my RAPCD...

Overall Effectiveness of my RAPCD's Office:

1 Very Poor	2 Poor	3 Average	4 Good	5 Very Good
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Comments:

4 [Questionnaire from Kenya, continued]

The Administrative Office

Whether you received your living allowance on a timely basis; staff's effectiveness in communicating banking, reimbursement and other related procedures; the efficiency (given the postal system) of mail services; receptiveness of staff in dealing with glitches or problems.

Admin. has been helpful because...

Admin. could have been more helpful if...

Approachability and Responsiveness of Admin. Staff...

Effectiveness of PC Administration:

1 Very Poor	2 Poor	3 Average	4 Good	5 Very Good
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Comments:

5 [Questionnaire from Kenya, continued]

The Training

The effectiveness of pre-service training in preparing you for your first 4–6 months as a Volunteer, the relevancy of IST training in responding to your needs for further language, cross-cultural and technical training, the approachability and responsiveness of staff in dealing with training concerns.

Training was helpful because...

Training could have been more helpful if...

Approachability and Responsiveness of Training Staff...

Overall Effectiveness of Training:

1 Very Poor	2 Poor	3 Average	4 Good	5 Very Good
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Comments:

6 [Questionnaire from Kenya, continued]

The Medical Office

The extent to which you felt comfortable requesting medical assistance, the quality of medical care you received, whether the health information you were provided was adequate so that you could initiate preventive measures.

Medical was helpful because...

Medical could have been more helpful if...

Approachability and responsiveness of medical staff...

Overall Effectiveness of medical care:

1 Very Poor	2 Poor	3 Average	4 Good	5 Very Good
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Comments:

8 [Questionnaire from Kenya, continued]

- [illegible]

Sample feedback via flip charts

On the walls around the room are posted six flip charts—Programming, Training, Medical, Administration, Safety/Security and Other. By the end of this session, we hope that you will have provided useful comments in each of these areas.

Sample topics for comments and suggestions	
Programming	Site selection and development, housing, host families and organizations, job description, counterparts and supervisors, project objectives and activities, SPA, regional meetings, APCD–Volunteer relations
Training	PST, IST, special events attended by individual Volunteers, training staff–Volunteer relations
Medical Services	Long distance PCMO support, care at Medical Unit, local care near site, lab services, medicines, confidentiality
Administrative Services	Supplies and equipment provided by PC, financial and banking matters, mail, work permits, Volunteer committees, newsletter, travel policies
Safety/Security	Conditions at your sites, EAP, local safety/security support
Other	Volunteer–Volunteer relations, etc.

Procedure

This will be a self-organizing session. Peace Corps staff will excuse themselves from the room so you can have a free, frank, and open discussion among yourselves.

1. Generating ideas and recording feedback

There are various ways in which you can generate ideas.

Option A: Before you start writing on the flip charts, you may want to meet in pairs or small groups for 10–15 minutes to quickly brainstorm thoughts. Then you may convene a large-group discussion, after which you write your comments on the flip charts.

Option B: You may decide to have a large-group discussion right away and write comments and suggestions as you go through the process.

Option C: You may decide to go directly to the flip charts on the walls as individuals and start writing comments and making suggestions. If someone has written something with which you agree or upon which you would like to extend the thought, write your additional thoughts beside that person's comments or suggestions.

2. Providing oral feedback

It is important that Peace Corps staff understand your flip chart comments and suggestions. So after you have spent an hour as a group, you will need to provide an oral review of what has been written on the flip charts.

You might assign one person to each flip chart to read the comments and facilitate any clarification questions that might be asked by Peace Corps staff. If you choose Option C above, you will have to spend some time as a group reviewing the individual comments so the person doing the oral debriefing understands the context of the comments and suggestions.

Footnotes

Everyone's Peace Corps experience has unique qualities. For example, some of you might have had excellent counterparts and others of you might have had weak counterparts. Some of you might have found medical support to be consistently excellent, whereas a few of you might have had a less satisfactory experience. So when reporting to staff, it will be useful to note whether a comment or suggestion is held by a majority or just a few of you.

Try to be both constructive and specific. A comment such as "My counterpart was useless" is less helpful than a suggestion such as "It might be worthwhile to delay the selection of a counterpart until a Volunteer has been at site for three months."

Certain comments and suggestions may require clarification by describing specific incidents. If necessary, think of a way of providing the clarification that preserves anonymity.

Please remember that the point of this session is not to throw darts; rather, it's to provide evidence that the Peace Corps needs to retain, eliminate, strengthen, or introduce things in order to provide a better Volunteer experience.

PC/Bangladesh: Project Plan Review and Feedback

Time: 2.5 hours

Objectives:

1. Obtain feedback on Peace Corps/Bangladesh's YCD [Youth and Community Development] and TEFL stated goals and objectives
2. Obtain feedback on Peace Corps/Bangladesh's YCD and TEFL stated training areas

Materials Needed:

1. Copies of TEFL and YCD simplified project frameworks (purpose, goals, and objectives) and Implications for Training (attached)
2. Handouts of Feedback Discussion Questions (attached)
3. Flip charts, markers, masking tape

Procedures:

1. Present session objectives and provide overview of the session. (5 minutes)
2. Explain the development of the YCD and TEFL project plans. (10 minutes)
3. Divide participants into project groups: TEFL and YCD. (2 minutes)
4. For each project group, summarize the project framework's basic content (i.e., capacity-building levels, structure of goals [general, lofty, result-oriented] and objectives [activities and outcomes], and actual activities). (10 minutes)
5. To each project group, explain the feedback discussion questions. (2 minutes)
6. Divide project groups into two smaller discussion groups and have each group address two or three different sets of goals and objectives, using the questions listed on the hand-out. Write major points on flip charts. (1 hour)
7. The four project groups get back into their larger project groups (i.e., all TEFL PCVs together and all YCD PCVs together) and representatives of each smaller group summarize the major points. Try to get the group's consensus on how the project framework should read. (45 minutes)
8. With all PCVs together, summarize the process, any findings, and next steps. (15 minutes)
9. Collect, label, and number all relevant flip charts.

Feedback Discussion Questions

Within your discussion group,

1. Select a recorder to write major points on flip charts.
2. Select a presenter to summarize the major points to the larger group.
3. Discuss the following questions in a focused and constructive way. (Please don't worry about wordsmithing, but simply discuss the concepts.)

A. Programming

1. For each goal:
 - a. Should this remain a major goal of the project? Why, or why not?
 - b. If no, how should it be changed?
2. For each objective (please note that each objective consists of an activity or set of activities [e.g., "Volunteers will teach students..."] and an outcome [e.g., "... students will improve their English skills"]):
 - a. How many in your group conducted this activity? Overall comments?
 - b. How many in your group had some success in achieving the outcome? Overall comments?
 - c. As a group, do you think this objective should be changed? If yes, to what?
3. Overall: Are there other things that should be included in the project's goals and/or objectives?
4. Stepping away from the project plan, what are your general recommendations for the future TEFL or YCD project?

B. Training

For a few minutes, review the "Implications for Training" section of your project plan.

1. Comment on the training areas identified in the project plan:
 - What's missing from the list?
 - What's *not* needed that is on the list?
2. Stepping away from the project plan, what are your general recommendations for the future training of PC/Bangladesh Volunteers?

PEACE CORPS/BANGLADESH

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Project

Goals and Objectives

It is important to note that not all Volunteers need to work on all the objectives, except for those indicated with an asterisk (*). Volunteers may choose which of the other objectives to address, depending on the needs and desires of their institutions and communities and their own skills and interests.

Purpose: To assist the Bangladesh government, schools, and teachers in providing students with personal and professional skills needed to improve students' lives, through English-medium instruction and activities. Additionally, Peace Corps Volunteers will work with local communities to support local and national development processes.

Goal 1 (Individuals): Students will gain skills and confidence to use English in and outside the classroom.

***Objective 1.1:** Volunteers will teach students using modern, learner-based teaching methods and materials so some of those students will improve their English speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills.

Objective 1.2: Volunteers will conduct co-curricular activities with students to provide a forum and environment where students feel more comfortable using their English skills so some of those students will improve their communicative abilities.

Goal 2 (Individuals): Students will broaden their understanding of the world and gain personal and professional knowledge and skills to improve their lives and their communities.

Objective 2.1: Volunteers will use innovative methods to teach students how to take an active role in their education and personal growth so some of those students develop personal knowledge and skills, such as critical and creative thinking.

Objective 2.2: Volunteers will facilitate learning events and service-learning activities and connect students to community resources so some of those students develop professional skills to examine and address local, national, and international issues.

Goal 3 (Counterparts/Colleagues): Through the exchange of skills and knowledge, teachers will implement learner-based teaching methods that are sustainable and applicable to Bangladeshi schools.

Objective 3.1: Volunteers will facilitate workshops and co-teach classes with teachers so some of those teachers create a learning-friendly environment and implement learner-based teaching methods in their classrooms.

Objective 3.2: Volunteers will train teachers, using various modern teaching methods so some of those teachers improve their communicative English skills.

Goal 4 (Institutions): Schools will be efficient institutions that provide a positive student-centered learning environment.

Objective 4.1: Volunteers will facilitate trainings/workshops, share knowledge and experiences, and help improve facilities and resources with staff in schools, so some of those schools will create better learning environments and more learning opportunities.

Objective 4.2: Volunteers with the staff in schools will organize co-curricular activities and fundraising events that promote better relationships between schools, parents and community members, so some of those schools will increase awareness about and participation in school activities.

Goal 5 (Communities): Communities will better address their needs and hopes.

***Objective 5.1:** Volunteers and their community partners will work with communities, so some of those communities better identify their assets and needs, and develop, implement, and monitor educational and development projects.

Objective 5.2: Volunteers and their community partners will assist communities, so some of those communities better support their initiatives.

***Objective 5.3:** Volunteers and their community partners will promote the empowerment of underrepresented community members, such as women, children, minorities, and people with disabilities, so some of those individuals will increase their representation and participation in community activities.

PEACE CORPS/BANGLADESH

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Project

3.2. Implications for Training

Individual Level

- Identifying and using resources
- How to develop a work plan
- Understanding Bangladesh's national English curriculum—"English for Today"
- Understanding national exams and syllabus for Secondary School Certificate
- Teaching Methodology:
 - Curriculum-building and development
 - Course development and design
 - Lesson planning
 - Assessment and evaluations
 - Methods of problem-solving and critical thinking
 - Classroom management
 - Teaching goal-setting and confidence-building
 - Facilitation techniques
 - Motivation techniques
 - Leading discussions
 - Activity building
 - Communicative activities
- Mobilizing and selecting participants
- Cross-cultural sensitivity practices, techniques, and activities
- Informal instruction methods/techniques
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Forms of civic responsibility in Bangladesh
- Methods of empowerment
- Identifying and implementing educational or development projects

Counterpart and Colleague Level

- Identifying a counterpart
- Identifying and using resources
- Co-teaching strategies or methods
- Model teaching
- Team building skills
- Methods on adult education and teaching staff
- Situation analysis for Bangladeshi teachers
- Networking with teacher training colleges

Institution Level

- Identifying assets and needs
- Structure in government schools and the of Ministry of Education, and how they operate
- Ministry of Education's School Based Assessment pilot program
- Background on Bangladeshi clubs (e.g., youth athletic clubs)
- Institutional management methods
- How to conduct participatory assessments (PACA)
- Methods on creating partnerships; networking
- Methods of monitoring and evaluation
- Office protocol
- Codes of professionalism
- Work ethics and values
- Government schools calendar year, exam schedule
- Parent Teacher Associations
- Connecting schools with community partners

Community Level

- Identifying marginalized groups
- Identifying community initiatives
- Integration techniques
- Development strategies
- Background on development in Bangladesh
- Background on development in general
- Methods of civic responsibility

Additional Training Needs:

- Reporting and filing
- Site history records
- Technical language sessions

PEACE CORPS/BANGLADESH

Youth and Community Development (YCD)

Goals and Objectives

It is important to note that not all Volunteers need to work on all the objectives, except for those indicated with an asterisk (*). Volunteers may choose which of the other objectives to address, depending on the needs and desires of their institutions and communities and their own skills and interests.

Purpose: Peace Corps will assist the Ministry of Youth and Sports to provide unemployed and underemployed youth with vocational and skills-development training. Additionally, the Peace Corps will work with local communities to support the local and national development process.

Goal 1 (Individuals): The youth of Bangladesh will gain the necessary knowledge and ability to develop their personal, professional, and technical skills to increase their employment opportunities and broaden their worldview.

***Objective 1.1:** Volunteers will teach youths through English medium classes, workshops, clubs, and discussions, so some of those youths will improve their communicative English abilities and their learning and employment opportunities.

Objective 1.2: Volunteers will facilitate the development of youths through classes, service learning, and mobile outreach activities, workshops, and clubs, so some of those youths gain technical and life skills, such as information technology, batik block printing, conflict resolution, critical thinking, health practices, goal setting, and learning skills.

Objective 1.3: Volunteers will facilitate learning events and service activities for youths about civic responsibility, other cultures, and global issues, so some of those youths develop the knowledge and skills needed to examine and address local, national, and international issues.

Goal 2 (Counterparts and Colleagues): To enhance the quality of teaching, counterparts and colleagues will train youths through a variety of innovative instruction methods.

Objective 2.1: Volunteers will co-teach, facilitate workshops, and model teaching techniques with counterparts so some of those counterparts and colleagues can learn and implement innovative teaching practices and classroom management methods.

Objective 2.2: Volunteers, along with counterparts and colleagues, will conduct and participate in workshops, trainings, and informal activities, so some of those counterparts and colleagues enhance their professional abilities, such as information communication technology, English, and technical skills.

Objective 2.3: Volunteers, along with counterparts and colleagues, will exchange ideas by participating in cultural activities, Peace Corps trainings, and community programs and discussions, so Volunteers and some counterparts and colleagues improve their cross-cultural understanding.

Goal 3 (Organizations): Organizations, such as DYDs, NGOs, and youth clubs, will provide the resources, skills and trainings to community members to better meet community needs.

***Objective 3.1:** Volunteers will assist organizations, so some of those organizations create and expand programs, services, and resources offered.

Objective 3.2: Volunteers will work with organizations, so some of those organizations increase their management capacity in such areas as identifying resources, training staff, enhancing communication, and improving monitoring and evaluation processes.

Objective 3.3: Volunteers will work with organizations, so communication, cooperation, and coordination on development projects is increased between some of those organizations.

Goal 4 (Communities): Communities will better address their needs and hopes.

***Objective 4.1:** Volunteers and their community partners will work with communities, so some of those communities better identify their assets and needs and develop, implement, and monitor educational and development projects.

Objective 4.2: Volunteers and their community partners will assist communities, so some of those communities better support their initiatives.

Objective 4.3: Volunteers and their community partners will promote the empowerment of underrepresented community members, such as women, children, minorities, and people with disabilities, so some of those individuals will increase their representation and participation in community activities.

Youth and Community Development (YCD)

3.2. Implications for Training

Individual Level

- How to develop a work plan
- Identifying and using resources
- Teaching methodology
 - Curriculum-building and development
 - Course development and design
 - Lesson planning
 - Assessment and evaluations
 - Methods of problem solving and critical thinking
 - Classroom management
 - Teaching goal-setting and confidence-building
 - Facilitation techniques
 - Motivation techniques
 - Employment teaching/building skills
 - Leading discussions
 - Activity-building
 - Communicative activities
- Mobilizing and selecting participants
- Cross-cultural sensitivity practices, techniques, and activities
- Methods for adult education and teaching staff
- Informal instruction methods/techniques
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Methods of civic responsibility in Bangladesh
- Methods of empowerment
- Identifying and implementing educational or development projects

Counterpart and Colleague Level

- Identifying a counterpart
- Co-teaching strategies or methods
- Model teaching
- Team-building skills

Organization Level

- Traditional systems of structure and hierarchy
- Structure of the DYD and what they're doing at all levels
- Background on Bangladeshi clubs (youth athletic clubs)
- Organizational and NGO management methods
- How to conduct participatory assessments (PACA)
- Methods for creating partnerships
- Methods of monitoring and evaluation
- Office protocol
- Codes of professionalism
- Work ethics and values
- Major cultural holidays and activities
- Identifying assets and needs

Community Level

- Identifying marginalized groups
- Identifying community initiatives
- Integration techniques
- Development strategies
- Background on development in Bangladesh
- Background on development in general
- Methods of civic responsibility

Additional Training Needs:

- Reporting and Filing
- Site History Records
- Technical Language Sessions

SESSION 6

Targeting Your Interests and Skills For Third Goal Activities



Purpose

In this session Volunteers will explore many possibilities for helping other Americans learn more about the world through the Volunteers' overseas experiences. They will complete the session having learned some new activities and strategies to share their experiences once they're home, and with an action plan to hone those strategies during their last few months in-country.



Rationale

Volunteers return home full of experiences they would love to share, but they often don't know how or where to begin. They often are discouraged when their friends' and families' eyes glaze over after looking at a few photos, handling a few exotic objects, tasting an unusual dish, or seeing their friend or loved one wearing unfamiliar clothes.

On the other hand, some may be uncomfortable with giving talks or going into a classroom because they "don't know what to say." Some tips on arranging photos and artifacts for shows, how to put a story together to make a point, or other ways of engaging people back home can focus their experiences so they can share them comfortably with various audiences.



Duration

1.5 hours



Objectives

Goal: Volunteers will plan how they can address the Peace Corps' third goal—helping Americans better understand other peoples—when they return home.

Objectives: By the end of the session, Volunteers will

- Name at least 10 ways returned Volunteers might help Americans learn more about the world.

- Identify at least two ways they would be willing to help Americans learn more about the world, based on their own interests and skills, including an awareness of the Peace Corps' Speakers Match program, which pairs them with a classroom wherever they settle in the United States.
- Locate two resources that will help them prepare for third goal activities.
- Develop an action plan to gather information or things they will need to carry out their activities before leaving the country.



Session Outline

- I. Introduction (5 minutes)
- II. Idea contest (20 minutes)
- III. Targeting interests and skills (20 minutes)
- IV. Resources (20 minutes)
- V. Action Planning (30 minutes)
- VI. Closing (5–30 minutes)



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

1. The facilitator should be familiar with various interactive techniques, be tolerant of noise and fun in the training room, and be able to help people creatively share their experiences.
2. The facilitator should review Appendix 3 ("Storytelling as Transition and Job-Hunting Strategies") to draw appropriate ideas and resources from it.



Materials and Equipment

2 blank flipcharts

2 chart stands

Markers

Prize (Bag of candy, other)

Handouts:

- A. Targeting Activity
- B. Action Planning
- C. Resource Packet
- D. The KEEPRAH System
- E. Optional handout: "Giving Presentations Is Easier Than You Think"
- F. Appendix 3 has other optional handouts

Prepared flip charts:

- A. Third Goal
- B. Contest Rules
- C. Targeting Grid

Video: "Bring Home the World: Peace Corps' Third Goal." If not already at post, available from the Communications Department Video Catalog. Email requests to the video production manager, PC/Washington.



Trainer Preparation

Prepare flip charts and handouts



Methodology

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

Step 1: Ask if anyone knows what the three goals of the Peace Corps are.

Step 2: After getting the goals from the group, display the third goal on a flip chart: Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

Step 3: State that this session will explore the third goal in more detail and that you'll begin with a contest

II. Idea Contest (20 minutes)

Step 1: Reveal flip chart B with contest rules. Go over them. Emphasize that being creative is valued.

Contest rules

1. Form groups of four to five Volunteers.
2. List as many different ways you can think of to help Americans learn about the world. One person in each group records their group's ideas.
3. After five minutes, time will be called.
4. The group with the most ideas wins.

Step 2: Tell the Volunteers they can begin making their lists as soon as they form a group. Give them the start signal.

Step 3: Call time five minutes after the last group has formed.

Step 4: Ask groups to tally their ideas. Determine which group has the most. Award a prize.

Step 5: Compile ideas from all groups.

- a. Ask two people with clear handwriting to record results on the two flip charts in the front. To make it go faster, have one person write one idea, the other take the next idea, and so on.
- b. Ask each group to submit one idea and then move to the next group. Continue until all ideas from all groups are recorded. If they fill more than two flip charts, post the full ones and continue on new sheets. When done, post all the sheets where the whole group can see them.

Step 6: Ask a few quick questions about the lists:

- a. What ideas surprise you? Why?
- b. What is the craziest idea? Why?
- c. What looks like the most fun?
- d. Did you find any interesting groups to target? Which ones?
- e. Which ones would people learn the most from? Why?

Step 7: Talk about making classroom presentations.

Note to trainer: The list should include at least one idea about presenting a third goal activity to a classroom. Likely more than half of the participants will have participated in Correspondence Match (CM).

- a. At this juncture the trainers should ask someone to volunteer to present briefly about the liveliness of “bringing the world back home” to children in a classroom setting.
- b. After that brief presentation, the trainer should reference Peace Corps’ Speakers Match program as a resource for those RPCVs wishing to be matched with a classroom wherever they settle.

Details about participating in the Speakers Match program can be found at http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/speakersmatch/rpcv_faq.cfm

III. Targeting interests and skills (20 minutes)

Step 1: What interests you?

- a. Ask Volunteers to look at the lists and pick out one idea that appeals to them... something they could imagine themselves doing when they go home. Ask a few to give their choices. Why did they choose those? (Answers should include things that sound interesting or that are related to an interest of theirs and things they feel they have the skills to do)
- b. Note that the group will look at a way they can match their skills and interests.

Step 2: Reveal flip chart C: Targeting Third Goal Activities

Interests:	1.	2.	3.	4.
Skills:				
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

- a. Ask Volunteers to call out some of their interests. Write four in the columns for interests.
- b. Ask them for some of their skills. List them in the skills rows.
- c. Then ask them to think of third goal activities—remind them of the charts on the wall. As you call out where an interest and skill intersect (such as travel and writing), ask them to say “yes” if they can think of ways the interest and skill could be used in a third goal activity. If many say “yes” put an X there; if there is not much response, just leave it blank and go on to the next intersection. Quickly go through the whole chart; there should be some X’s when you finish.
- d. Go back to one of the X’s and ask the group to think of how someone could use that skill and interest to help Americans learn about the world. Note their ideas below the chart; there should be several.

- e. Explain that they are going to do this targeting activity for themselves. Distribute Handout A: Targeting Activity. Read through the steps together.

Targeting Activity Steps

1. Write four of your interests in the columns at the top.
2. Write four of your skills on the columns down the side.
3. By yourself, look at each intersection of an interest and skill and put an X if it seems like you could combine those to work on third goal activities. Leave the square blank if no ideas come to you.
4. Get together with three or four other people.
5. Ask the group to help you think of third goal activities for any two of your X's. Write down all of their ideas; don't evaluate them.
6. Continue until each person in the group has gotten ideas for two of their X's.
7. Consider all of the ideas you have for your interest and skill combinations. Circle the two that most interest or intrigue you.
8. Note for each combination at least one experience that illustrates your intersection of interest and skill.

- f. Have them complete their charts individually and then meet in groups to develop options.
- g. When they are done, ask for a few examples of the choices they circled.

Step 3: (Optional) Show third goal video, "Bring the World Home: Peace Corps' Third Goal."

(Trainer's note: If the video is used here, it may reinforce some of the ideas developed and inspire the Volunteers to believe they can do meaningful third goal activities.)

IV. Resources (20–25 minutes)

Step 1: Ask what resources the Volunteers might need to carry out the third goal activities they just identified. (List some ideas on a flip chart.)

Step 2: Jigsaw activity with resource packet

Note to trainer: There is a resource packet (Handout C) for this session that can be divided into three sections. Each group can review one section during this activity to share ideas with other groups. The purpose of this review is to get the Volunteers thinking in specific terms about what they might want to collect or create before leaving the host country, such as interviews, photos, and artifacts. There are also optional additional resources (Handout B) that you might wish to make available at the end of the session.

- a. Using the list from step one, identify types of resources there are in the packet:
 1. Storytelling
 2. Creating slide shows or PowerPoint presentations
 3. Using artifacts
- b. Ask participants to form groups around the types of resources they would most likely use or would like to learn about. Each group will study the section of materials for their interests and prepare to share what they have learned with the rest of the participants. If they have time, they can prepare an example of an activity. In preparing an activity, participants should consider the experiences they noted on page 80, Step 2, under “Targeting Activity Steps,” to begin considering illustrative stories, pictures, or artifacts for their activity.
- c. Groups work for 5–10 minutes.
- d. Ask participants to form new groups with at least one representative of each resource area. They are to share what their group learned about their particular resources, and share an example they created if they did one. (10–15 minutes)

Step 3: Transition

Point out that the Volunteers now have some ideas of how they might address the Peace Corps Third Goal and have studied and learned about some of the resources that will help them. Now they’ll do some planning of what information or materials they’ll want to gather before leaving the country to be able to carry out their activities.

V. Action Planning (30 minutes)

Step 1: Individual planning (10 minutes)

- a. Ask what some of the things are that individuals need to do—to learn about, to gather, to photograph, before they leave.
- b. Distribute Handout B, the Action Plan handout. Note the three columns and the samples included on the second page.
- c. Ask individuals to work on their own plan for about 10 minutes, and then gather back in their resource groups to share their ideas and get input from the others.

Step 2: Resource group discussions (10 minutes)

Step 3: Plenary sharing (10 minutes)

- a. Ask if any group came up with interesting ideas they wish to share with the others.
- b. Ask if there are any research subjects or photos or other things they might like to do individually and then share with others. (If so, give them time to make some plans—who is doing what, how they'll share, etc.)

VI. Closing (5–30 minutes)

This is a good place to show the video “Bring the World Home: Peace Corps’ Third Goal” (if not used earlier) as an inspiration to Volunteers to follow their plans and make a difference when they get home.

You may wish to distribute the optional Handout D with additional resources.

Close in a way of your choosing.

HANDOUT A

Targeting Your Skills and Interests For Third Goal Activities

Directions:

1. On the grid below, fill in four interests in the columns across and four skills in the rows down.

Interests:	1.	2.	3.	4.
Skills:				
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

2. Look at each "intersection" of a skill and interest and consider if you could combine those skills and interests in some way. If you think so, put an *X* in the square. Continue through all the intersections, putting an *X* in each place that you can imagine a possible connection.
3. Now pick two of the *X*'s that seem the most interesting to you. Enter those two sets of interests and skills on the next page.

- Help others in your group by brainstorming their interest and skill combinations, too.

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HANDOUT B

Action Plan for Preparing to Share My Experiences in the Peace Corps

Focus (Photos, interviews, stories, recipes, sample “things” people use, multimedia approach around a theme)	Specifically what I need to gather (Photos of what, list of recipes, people to interview, specific items to collect/buy/ have made, etc.)	Items I want to share with or get from other Volunteers (Photos of different towns/regions, regionally specific examples—recipes, dances, holidays, etc.)

Sample Action Plan for Preparing to Share My Experiences in the Peace Corps

Focus (Photos, interviews, stories, recipes, sample "things" people use, multimedia approach around a theme)	Specifically what I need to gather (Photos of what, list of recipes, people to interview, specific items to collect/buy/ have made, etc.)	Items I want to share with or get from other Volunteers (Photos of different towns/regions, regionally specific examples—recipes, dances, holidays, etc.)
Interviews	My host family members Older man, woman Community leaders: political, religious, woman Teacher Teens—school age, older (both boys and girls) Children Medical person	
Music	Photos of musical instruments, groups, dances/concerts Actual instruments or miniatures Tape record _____, _____, _____ Interview musicians, instrument makers Interview older people to ask how music/use of music has changed Collect stories about uses, importance of music Buy CDs or tapes of _____, _____, _____	Get sample instruments from other regions Get tapes of different regional songs
Stories/Anecdotes	Reflect upon my experiences attending festivals, weddings, baptisms, funerals	
Speakers Match	List of teachers I know in the U.S. who might be interested in having me address their classrooms about my Peace Corps experience and what it might mean to them.	

HANDOUT C

Third Goal Resource Packet

There are many resources available to RPCVs to help them shape presentations, lessons, and displays with the things they bring back from their host countries. This packet addresses three areas: storytelling, creating slide shows/PowerPoints, and using artifacts.

The purpose of using it in the COS conference is to give the Volunteers some concrete ideas for which they might want to collect information while still in-country.

The packet includes:

- I. Storytelling
 - A. Why stories?
 - B. Some storytelling formats
 - 1. It Happened to Me
 - 2. A Day in the Life of...
 - 3. Story Spine
 - 4. Reader's Theater
- II. Photos
 - A. Composing the story first
 - B. Putting together slide shows and PowerPoints
- III. Using Artifacts
 - A. Displays
 - B. Props for storytelling
 - C. Key to presentations
 - 1. Anthropology Exercise
 - 2. D.I.E. Exercise

I. Storytelling

- A. Why stories? Sharing your experiences through storytelling is the most natural thing to do. You'll be surprised how many times that things people say or things that happen will prompt you to say, "In my host country...." In fact, your family and friends might get tired of you saying that!

Storytelling is effective and powerful in sharing images and experiences and you will want to use it in different forms and circumstances to help share your experiences and educate people around you. Stories reveal universals about the peoples of the world. Through them we can see how very different people experience similar life experiences and address the same human needs.

Stories can help people

- Experience different cultures.
- Gain insights into different traditions and values.
- Empathize with unfamiliar people, places, and situations.
- Understand that wisdom is common to all peoples and all cultures.
- Gain insights into universal life experiences.
- Consider new ideas.
- Explore their own roots.

What stories do you want to tell? Why? In addition to extemporaneous stories, consider how you might want to use stories for specific purposes. You may want to develop some stories for different audiences and purposes, as entertainment or to make a point. The purpose and venue may suggest different story formats.

- B. Some storytelling formats

1. ***It happened to me*** takes a critical incident or event that occurred in your experience and explains what you learned from it. There are usually five steps to developing an incident into a story:
 - a. Identify the event or situation as clearly as possible.
 - b. Describe the relevant details and circumstances surrounding the event so listeners will understand what happened. What? When? How? Why? Where?
 - c. Describe the people involved and their relationship to you and one another. Who?

- d. Describe your own role in the situation: what you did, how you reacted. How well or poorly did you understand the situation? Describe your interpretation of events.
- e. Give your analysis of the event: what you learned, what skills you needed, how you used what you learned after that.

When can you use this format? This is a good way to begin a discussion about cultural differences, developing a dual perspective, identifying cross-cultural skills, becoming reflective, and learning from experience.

If you want to get your audience involved:

- a. You could stop after step three and ask what they think was happening, what they would do in that situation. Then continue with your own experience.
- b. After finishing your story, ask if any of them have had experiences where they learned an important lesson. Let them describe their own experiences.
- c. Ask them to write their own stories, either for a classroom assignment or for another discussion when they could share them. In this case, you might want to give them the five steps written down.

References: Adapted from "It Happened to Me," *YFU Alumni Coordinators' Handbook*, Youth For Understanding: Washington D.C. 1984; and "Using Critical Incidents," *Beyond Experience: An Experiential Approach to Cross-Cultural Education*, Intercultural Press: Yarmouth, Maine. 1993. pp 101–105.

- 2. ***A day in the Life of...*** might be your own story as a Volunteer, or the story of any of your colleagues or community members. To compose the story, you might want to do a shadowing activity (see *Working with CCBI* [ICE No.M0073] pp 11) of specific people: a teacher, the mayor, a farmer (male or female or both), etc. Or you could compose the story by doing daily activity schedules (see *PACA* [ICE No.M0086] pp 40–41, 95–102) with a group of girls, boys, teachers.... If you want to do the story about yourself, your journal would be a good source.

When can you use this format? A story about a day in your life as a PCV would be a good frame for introducing the way you lived, the work you did, how you dealt with shopping, cooking, eating, etc. This could be a basic story you have available when called upon to do a presentation, and can be modified with events that relate to the group you are speaking to. It could include a few photos or actual items (clothing, cooking utensils, bus tickets, money, etc.) to add visuals to the words. You might develop a series of these stories so you can use them for comparison (girls' and boys' activities, teachers there with teachers at home, etc.).

If you want to get your audience involved:

- a. You could ask some questions about specific events you describe, such as how does this compare with how you shop? What you eat? How you get to work?
 - b. After your story, you can ask participants to share their daily activities spontaneously.
 - c. After one story, you might ask if they would like to hear another one (or read another one, if you have them written). Participants could read the stories, or small groups could each read one and discuss it, and then present it to the whole group.
 - d. After a sample story, you could ask your audience—children or adults—to compose their own to share with the group on another occasion.
3. **A story spine** provides a model for developing a story. It can be used to compose stories for all different kinds of purposes: to reveal details of how situations evolved, to describe how problems were solved, to teach a lesson, and so on. Here's a sample story spine:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| (1) Once upon a time... | (5) And because of that... |
| (2) Every day... | <i>(repeat as many times as needed)</i> |
| (3) And then one day... | (6) Until one day... |
| (4) And because of that... | (7) And as a result... |

When can you use this format? This can be used effectively at the beginning of a presentation to get your audience's attention and peak their interest. "Hello. I'm ____ and I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in _____. I'd like to begin by telling you a story. Once upon a time..." A story about feeling lonely, witnessing something you thought was strange, something funny, or an incident that made you realize you needed to learn the language—fast! All would be good presentation starters.

If you want to get your audience involved:

- a. With younger children, you might put the section prompts on the board or flip chart. Point to them when you are ready to tell that part and let them say the words.

- b. At the end of your presentation you might use it to find out what they learned. Start by saying, "Once upon a time there was a (class of third-graders)." Ask someone to do the "Every day..." And then say, "One day ___ came to talk to us." Then ask several different people to say, "And because of that..." Finish by having a couple of people do the last two prompts. Alternately, if there is time, you could have small groups create one of these and read them to the class.

Reference: Koppett, Kat, *Training to Imagine*. Stylus Publishing; Sterling, Va. 2001.

4. *Reader's Theater* is a wonderful way to tell stories through the voices of different people. It gets the audience involved, as different people in the audience read the voices of the people in the story. To do reader's theater, you need to develop a script your participants will read.

How can you get information for a reader's theater?

Make an interview template with questions that address the topics you'd like Americans to hear about.

Here's an example focusing on young people:

- a. What is your name? Does your name have a special meaning? Who gave it to you?
- b. How old are you?
- c. Tell me about your family: How many people are there? How old are they?
- d. What do your father and mother do?
- e. Do all the children in your family go to school? If not, why not?
- f. Do you go to school? (What grade are you in? What is your favorite subject?)
- g. Do you have jobs or chores you have to do before school in the morning? After school? (Describe the tasks.)
- h. What is your favorite holiday? (Describe what happens that day—celebrations, foods, etc.)
- i. What is your favorite food? (Describe it. Can you make it? How do you do that?)
- j. Do you play sports or games? (Describe them.)
- k. What are your dreams for the future?

Here's an example focusing on an issue:

- a. What is your name?
- b. How old are you?
- c. What is your job title?

- d. What do you think are the biggest challenges your community faces? (Do you think that disease is one of them?)
- e. Why do you think many people in the community are sick? (or other issue)
- f. What are the causes of the sickness?
- g. What would help stop the sickness?
- h. How are people taken care of when they are sick? (Are there doctors? A clinic or hospital? How much does it cost? How do people get there?)
- i. How do you think the community could make the situation better?
- j. How else might you get help for this situation?

How do you prepare a reader's theater script?

Think about a theme. Do you want your audience to just get a feel for who lives in the community and what life is like? Do you want young people to get an idea of how their age group lives in your community? Do you want to highlight how the community feels about an issue—perhaps one you were trying to help them improve? You can write scripts on all kinds of things, such as professions (farmers, health workers) or even one based on Volunteer experiences in your country. It would be nice to have the experiences of different Volunteers to share with some of your audiences.

List the people whose interviews you will use.

Example:

XXXX, 32 years old, town mayor

XXXX, 21, mother of two

XXXX, 14-year-old school boy

XXXX, 28, shopkeeper

XXXX, 35, clinic nurse

...and so on.

Prepare a name tag for each.

Develop five or six narrator questions, determined by the purpose of your presentation. You do not have to use every question from your interviews, nor everyone's response to each question. Prepare a script that makes your point. (You can prepare more than one script from your interviews.)

Example:

- a. Tell us who you are: your name, age, and what you do.
- b. Do you think sickness is a problem in your town? Have you or your family been sick a lot?
- c. Why do you think people are sick? What makes them sick?
- d. Can people see the doctor when they are sick?
- e. What do you think would help stop so much sickness?
- f. Who can help the community stop so much sickness?

After each question, list a person's name and his or her response. You do not need to use everyone's answer to every question—pick a variety of responses. Also change the order in which people speak in subsequent questions.

Example:

- a. Do you think sickness is a problem in our town?

XXXX

Sickness is a big problem. Many babies are sick and some die.

XXXX

Yes, many people are sick. Many of my classmates miss school because of stomach problems or malaria. Even teachers are sick.

Etc.

- b. Why do you think people are sick? What causes the sickness?

XXXX

People are not very careful. They need to boil the water for the family to drink. They need bed nets so mosquitoes do not bite them at night.

XXXX

We are hungry. Sometimes there is not enough food for everyone in the family. If we had more food, we would not be so sick.

XXXX

We need a doctor in town. We can't afford to go to the hospital in the next town, so we get sicker.

Etc.

[Continue with other questions and other responses]

Once the script is written, you need to make one copy for the narrator (probably you) and one for each character who speaks. Highlight the speaking part for each person on his or her script—that is, one copy has all the statements by the mayor highlighted, one has the mother's comments highlighted, etc.

How do you use reader's theater with a group?

Introduce the topic you want people to hear about. Give whatever background you need to—such as where your town was, population, etc. (Keep this relatively short.) Explain that they will have a chance to tell the story through some of the people in the town. Show the list of characters (on the blackboard or a flip chart) and let people volunteer to be each of the characters. Give each person the name tag for that role and the script with that role highlighted.

If it is a small group, form a circle where everyone can see and hear each other. If it is a larger group, have the speakers come to the front and stand.

Begin by reading the first narrator's question, and then have each person read his or her character's response. Continue through the whole script.

Plan to have some discussion questions afterward. The discussion should pertain to your purpose—is it to understand the health problems in a community? What was your role there as a PCV? What did you learn about the issue? What did you do to help the community to build its capacity to improve the situation?

Resources:

- There is an example of reader's theater in Session 8C about Peace Corps Response. If you did not use reader's theater in the conference, you might ask your trainer to see the script.
- There are good examples of stories on the World Wise Schools website and ways you can use technology to share your stories further, such as through podcasts. www.peacecorps.gov/wws.

II. Photos

Photos and videos provide dramatic value to presentations as they stimulate the eyes as well as the ears. The biggest problem with using photos is using too many and using them randomly.

- A. Composing the story first. Any presentation using photos needs to begin with a written script. The script helps you focus on what you want to talk about. Audiences cannot absorb more than 50 photos and lots of stories and facts. In fact, attention span is about 20 minutes! But you can create more than one slide show or PowerPoint. Keep them interested and wanting more. Come back for an encore with another topic!

Writing a script begins with determining what themes (three maximum) you wish to present. Write out what is important about your themes—the points you want to make. Your total script should not be more than three typed pages.

Some ideas for scripts:

1. Overview of your country: geography, people, and economy
 2. Traditional beliefs and religion
 3. Your PC project and issues it is trying to address
 4. Gender roles—same and different than in the U.S.
 5. Agriculture, lifestyles, and environmental issues
 6. What is capacity building?
- B. Putting together slide shows and PowerPoints. Once you know what you want to say, then pick out representative photos. There does not need to be one photo for every sentence or two. You may have one photo that relates to three points you want to make.

Select your photos and number them or tag them. Put your reference to them in the script where they fit. If you have more than 50, your program is too long. Divide it into two shorter presentations.

You can use your photos for more than one script.

Resources:

- There is useful help for creating PowerPoints, including some downloadable PC materials available to you on the website. www.peacecorps/returnedvolunteers/thirdgoal/getinvolved/howtotoolkits.
- There are good examples of slide shows on the World Wise Schools website and ideas such as video sharing that you could use in your presentations. www.peacecorps.gov/wws.

III. Using artifacts

Most Volunteers like to take home unique, attractive, and exotic items from their Peace Corps country. Some are for presents, some are to decorate their new abode, and some go along to presentations, just to create interest. Here are a few ideas on how to use artifacts for third goal activities. They may encourage you to look for and take home items you may not have thought of.

A. Displays

Consider where you might be able to put up a display for a month or so: library, school display case, community center, other?

Displays should be educational, not just random items. At the very least, there need to be small labels and descriptions of the articles. Perhaps you can make the display participatory. For example, not putting labels next to items but creating a matching display: Which artifact fits which description? (Artifacts on one side or across the top and descriptions put in random order on other side or at bottom.) Or perhaps, which artifact addresses one of the essential aspects every society has to address: food, shelter, safety, education, etc.? (See the KEEPRAH system described in Handout D.)

B. Props for storytelling

Think about using an artifact or two that relate to the story you are telling.

C. Key to presentations

You may wish to make the artifacts the main focus of your presentation. Rather than starting with telling your audience about your experiences, you might have them do an activity with artifacts you have brought back. Then you can follow up with your experience. Below are two examples of such activities.

1. Anthropology Exercise

Purpose: To have participants explore unfamiliar items and consider how they might be used by a group of people.

In this exercise, your participants form small groups (four to five people). They each get a box with up to eight items in it (some can be photos, but be sure to have some real objects). The items should represent different aspects of life.

Prior to having them open their boxes, you should introduce the activity.

- a. Begin by asking them what things all people in all cultures need to do for themselves. Put their ideas on a list that everyone can see. They should include food, shelter, safety, kinship (how they relate to each other), health, education, and a belief system. (Economics, religion, association, and politics might also be mentioned.)
- b. Ask who knows what anthropologists do. (They study physical and social aspects of human beings.)
- c. Tell them that today they are going to be anthropologists! They are going to study the things in their boxes to try to understand something about the people who use them.
- d. Tell them they'll have about 15–20 minutes to study their items. They should try to determine what the individual things are and how they relate to each other. At the end of the 20 minutes, they are to describe what they think they know about the people.

Let groups open their boxes and begin to work. Walk and around and raise questions, if they are stuck. For example, redirect them to the list, and ask, "Have you considered how 'your people' might have gotten their food?"

Have each group show their articles as they talk about how their people lived.

At the end you can briefly correct any misunderstood items and tie together their ideas to make a more coherent society. You might do this by using the articles, or by showing a slide show that incorporates the items being used.

The description of the KEEPRAH system (Handout D) may be useful to you for background reading and for putting objects together in boxes.

2. D.I.E. (Describe, Interpret, Evaluate) Exercise

Purpose:

- To allow participants to become familiar with the differences between description, interpretation, and evaluation.
- To become aware of value judgments.

Materials:

Whiteboard or flipchart and markers, or blackboard and chalk

Two (or more) "ambiguous objects"*

Optional: Pictures of "other-culture" scenes (one for each of five participants)**

*** Select "ambiguous objects" to use. If you are just using the objects for a demonstration, you need only two. (Then you'll use photos with groups.) Objects from your host country might include kitchen utensils or tools or unusual pieces of clothing. If you are going to use objects with the groups, too, consider how many participants you have and divide by about five per group. You'll need one object for each group.*

*** The best pictures are the most ambiguous ones, photographs that depict a form of interaction or a scene that is not familiar to participants.*

Procedure:

1. Select one of the ambiguous objects. Ask the large group to tell you something about it. (The phrasing of this question is important, because you can easily skew the answers. You should say, "Tell me something about this." (Do not ask them what they "see" or to describe it.) They can pass the item around. Keep asking, "What else can you say about this?" Spend two to three minutes on this.

As they tell you things, write them on the board or flip chart in columns (without headings.) Statements that are descriptions go in the first column, interpretations go in the second, and evaluations go in the third. Examples might be "It is round" (description), "It looks like a bowl" (interpretation), "It's not very well made" (evaluation).

2. Explain description, interpretation, and evaluation. Show how what they said divides into three columns.

Take the second object and ask them first to describe only what they see. Chart in the "description" column. Correct them if they make any interpretations or evaluations. Next, have them interpret, charting their responses. Finally, ask them to evaluate it, with both a positive and a negative evaluation for each interpretation. Spend about five minutes.

3. Give each group an object or photograph and ask them to write some descriptions, some interpretations, and some evaluations based on their interpretations. Spend about 10 minutes.

EXAMPLE of using a picture rather than an object:

Description: I can see a woman of Asian origin covering her mouth.

Interpretation: She's yawning, so she must be bored.

Evaluation: That's all right, I don't blame her a bit.

Interpretation #1: She's burping, and trying to be polite by covering her mouth.

Alternative Evaluation #1: I think that's great, that she's trying to be polite.

Alternative Evaluation #2: I think that's too repressed, she should relax.

Interpretation #2: I think she's surprised.

Alternative Evaluation #1: That's a natural reaction to shock.

Alternative Evaluation #2: She's overdoing that reaction, no big deal.

Interpretation #3: I think she's smiling because she's embarrassed.

Alternative Evaluation #1: She shouldn't be so concerned, smiling is nice.

Alternative Evaluation #2: She's should be embarrassed for exhibiting so much openness in her smiling.

1. Reassemble the large group, and ask small groups to give one example (DIE) about their picture.
2. Ask participants to report the most difficult aspect of the exercise. Usually, the response to this is that it is difficult to keep the original description free of evaluative terminology, and that it is hard to make other interpretations. Explain that that is because the processes we use to describe, interpret, and evaluate are culture bound, and limit our ability to understand other cultures.

This activity takes about 50 minutes.

Adapted with permission from the "Describe, Interpret, Evaluate Exercise" by Janet M. Bennett and Milton J. Bennett. Intercultural Communication Institute; Portland, Ore.

HANDOUT D

The KEEPRAH System

Anthropologists over the years have identified various elements which all societies must have in order to continue. These elements are common to all cultures irrespective of how economically advanced or primitive the society may be. We can use knowledge of these common elements as a tool to compare and contrast cultures around the world. One such framework for examining cultures is the **KEEPRAH** system. **KEEPRAH** is nothing more than an acronym for Kinship, Education, Economics, Politics, Religion/Recreation, Association, and Health. Two other elements added since the system was first developed are transportation and communication. An explanation of each of the elements follows.

KINSHIP: Every society, to continue to exist, must provide for the biological reproduction of new members and see that they are nourished and cared for during infancy and childhood. Nearly everywhere it is the family which performs these duties. Most of the early training and socialization of children also takes place within the family.

EDUCATION: Education is a facet of the socialization process necessary in all societies. As a system, education refers to all those activities which directly or indirectly contribute to providing new members with the knowledge, values and skills of the society. These are transmitted to the new member in order to prepare him to live and function within the society in a socially acceptable manner with some degree of independence.

ECONOMICS: Every culture must have some way of producing and distributing the goods and services which sustain the lives of its members. The set of institutions and roles which are organized around the performance of these activities, constitutes the economic system of the community.

POLITICS: All communities or cultures must have some means of maintaining internal order and, at the same time, regulating their relations with other communities or cultures. Internal threats to a culture's existence come from competition for power (control over human, man-made and natural resources). Since the availability of such resources has ultimate limits in any society (or culture), conflicts concerning their control and use are inevitable. The political system, therefore, is the network of institutions and social roles which exist to control the competition for power.

RELIGION & RECREATION: Religion and Recreation have been grouped together because both relate to the same functional prerequisite: the need to maintain meaning and motivation. In every culture, social life is supported by and supportive of a system of basic beliefs and values which provide an understanding of man's existence and his place in the universe. At

the same time, every culture includes a variety of ritual and recreational activities which add meaning and enjoyment to daily life. Although we may separate religion and recreation for analytical purposes, they are often integrally related, as in the celebration of a religious holiday.

ASSOCIATIONS: The network of associations in a community is one of the more difficult to conceptualize as a system by itself. In many cases, it will seem reasonable to treat the various community associations as part of one of the other systems (Example: trade unions). It is also important, however, to visualize the community's associations as a separate and complete system which interacts with and changes the culture as a whole. The set of social groups discovered by looking for associations will often have goals beyond those of the local society from which they draw their membership.

HEALTH: Since his earliest day, man has been concerned with his own survival and the survival of the people he cares for. Disease and ill health are a waste of human and material energy. Poor health limits what man can produce and affects his outlook on life. It is a direct affront to his well being. Health will most probably be one of the major concerns of the people with whom the cross-cultural missionary works and of the national and local government in the country in which he finds himself.

Transportation and Communication: These systems deal with the ways that men move themselves, their goods and their ideas.

The following chart helps provide an overview for each category.

System	Need	Element
Kinship	Biological Reproduction of New Members	Descent Authority Residence Inheritance Marriage
Education	To provide new members with the knowledge, values, and skills of the society	Formal: Schools Universities Trade Schools Informal: Books Television Newspapers Kinsmen Effective others

System	Need	Element
Economics	To distribute the goods and services which sustain the lives of its members	Enterprises Working Population Ecology Systems of Exchange Means of Payment
Politics	To maintain internal order and regulate relations with others	Government Courts City Police City Hall Public Service Public Utilities
Religion/ Recreation	To Maintain Meaning and Motivation	Religion Beliefs Rituals Organizations Recreation: Types of play Dancing Singing Sports Storytelling
Associations	Groupings of people with similar objectives and/or purpose	Symbols and Slogans Purpose (formal & informal) Number belonging
Health	Prevention and cure of physical and mental infirmities and disease	Resources Environment Nutrition Maternal Care Child Care Health Ed. Communicable diseases
Transport/ Communication	Movement of people, goods, and ideas	Transport: Vehicles Roads/Tracks/Ports Geography Communication: Postal Service Media Publishing Language

The origin of this scheme is unknown but KEEPRAH system materials were used in the early 1970's in the U.S. Navy intercultural relations courses taught in San Diego, California, and Norfolk, Virginia.

HANDOUT E (OPTIONAL)

Peace Corps Week: Giving Presentations Is Easier Than You Think!

By: Liz McEntee

RPCV/Namibia, 2004–2006

Remember when you had those interesting guest speakers come to school? You know, people like the woman with the animals, the D.A.R.E. officer, or someone's parent on Career Day. What made them so interesting was that they brought something unique to the classroom and conveyed it in a way that was different from how our teachers taught. Even if they had never given a presentation before, we loved having them there because they were out of the ordinary...and, best of all, it meant that we got a break from doing the "normal" schoolwork!

By default, we RPCVs are those interesting guest speakers. Chances are good that if you're speaking in the general community, most members of your audience haven't been outside the U.S. other than to visit major landmarks and stay in hotels with other tourists. In contrast, not only did we visit a country outside the U.S., but we *lived* there. The majority of our day-to-day interactions were with people who were from that country and not working in the tourism sector. The villages of many PCVs can't even be found on a map.

Giving a presentation is easier than you may think. First, you need to find an audience. If you're like me, you don't want to call places at random and ask if they need a guest speaker. However, you probably know people who teach or work with a group of individuals who would want to hear about your PC experience. By sending out a simple email to your friends and colleagues offering to give a presentation (and explaining what the third goal is), the opportunities to present will come to you.

Once you have a presentation lined up, you may feel nervous or strange about going into a classroom or other venue to speak, right? You may feel some personal pressure to enlighten the audience with your vast knowledge of the Peace Corps, your host country, and your service area of expertise. Remind yourself that at some point during your service you conveyed American culture to people in your host country, whether formally or informally. You knew then what sparked your audience's interest—with kids, you were more likely to talk about American music than the U.S. welfare system—so just apply that same knowledge here.

There are five things that I've found make a presentation great no matter who your audience is:

1. Flaunt your "show and tell" skills. Didn't use up every last bill or coin before COSing? Bring some of them with you. Currency goes over really well with any audience. Have some clothing that you bought or that was given to you? Bring it, or better yet, put it on during your presentation. It will bring out a few giggles. Flags and "traditional" items are great too. Basically, anything hands-on will get rave reviews.

2. A picture is worth a thousand words. If you have access to a computer for your presentation, put together a slide show of some of your photos. Tell your audience what they're going to see (where you lived, where you worked, what animals you saw, etc.) and if possible, set it to music from that region. If you don't have a computer available, mount some pictures on a poster board or two.
3. Never underestimate a simple "hello." By teaching your audience a few words or phrases in your host country's language, they'll feel like they're multilingual. Write out a simple "Hello, how are you?" Dialogue on some poster board, with each speaker's voice in a different color. Lead your audience through it a couple of times and then have them do it on their own. Teaching hand gestures and dances are also great ways to get the audience to participate.
4. Leave enough time to fit in a question-and-answer session. That's the time when you find out what your audience is really interested in. That's also the part that will make you laugh the most, since some of those questions probably will be things that you never expected to be asked.
5. Who doesn't like getting free stuff? If you send a simple email to the Peace Corps Week folks (pcweek@peacecorps.gov) with your mailing address and the approximate size of your audience, they'll send you supplies such as stickers, a world map showing countries where the Peace Corps has served, and perhaps a promotional CD. I've sent them multiple requests (pretty much any time I had a presentation coming up during the year) and they've sent me a plethora of supplies. Presentation gifts will definitely get some *oohs* and *aahs* from your audience.

In our host countries, we didn't like hearing that all Americans are rich, white, saw celebrities all the time, or lived in one of three cities: New York, LA, or Miami. On the flip side, we don't like hearing from Americans that everyone we met in our host countries was poor, starving, that they hunted for their food, were non-white, or had wild animals roaming around their living areas (which were nothing but mud huts). We have enough knowledge about our host countries to change perceptions and teach our American audiences a few things they wouldn't otherwise know. Trust me, giving a presentation isn't as scary as going off to another country for two years...so give it a shot. There's no better time than during Peace Corps Week, [around the first week of March every year]. Visit www.peacecorps.gov/pcweek to register for your free presentation kit today.

Liz is a computer teacher with The Doe Fund, Inc., a nonprofit organization in New York City with a work-based program to help formerly homeless and incarcerated people turn their lives around. She taught computer literacy to grades 8 through 10 while serving as an IT Volunteer in Namibia from 2004 to 2006.

SESSION 7

Anticipating Readjustment to Life in the United States: Issues and Strategies



Purpose

In this session Volunteers begin to plan for their re-entry into the United States. They learn to recognize re-entry situations and potential difficulties that may occur, and identify strategies to address them. They learn about resources available in the United States.



Rationale

For many people who live abroad, returning to their own country and culture is a more difficult adjustment than moving into the foreign culture. There are many reasons: (1) They have changed due to their experience abroad but may not be aware how much. (2) They expect home to be just like they left it, but people and things at home have changed, too. (3) They have lots of interesting stories to tell but many listeners can't relate to their experiences and have limited patience to listen. (4) They are shocked that most of their family and friends have limited or no foreign experience and, therefore, ask naive questions. (5) When frustrated abroad, they may have idealized their own country. When arriving home, they may be disappointed, which is particularly upsetting because they are "home" and expect to feel comfortable there. (6) They do not expect to have trouble readjusting to home.



Duration

45 minutes (or more if adding other options)



Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will

- Explore the concept of "reverse culture shock."
- Identify concerns, problems, and issues that may arise in returning to the United States.
- Differentiate audiences or groups that can either exacerbate readjustment or facilitate readjustment success.

- Experience the critical need for being able to translate the Peace Corps experience for those unfamiliar with its goals and mission.
- Develop personal strategies and resources for dealing with re-entry to the United States.
- Review the transition resources available to RPCVs, including Peace Corps' Returned Volunteer Services, the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA), the Office of Medical Services (OMS), the Office of Volunteer and PSC Services (VPS), and Peace Corps Response.



Session Outline

- I. Introduction (5 minutes)
- II. The process of leaving (5 minutes)
- III. Hot potato activity (10 minutes)
- IV. Four components of re-entry (20 minutes)
- V. Closure (5 minutes)



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

Ideally, the facilitator(s) of this session will have experienced re-entry themselves. If there are RPCVs among the current Volunteers or staff, they may be good facilitators.



Materials and Equipment

Flip chart paper, markers, tape

Softball or beanbag

Hat

Prepared flip charts:

- A. Re-entry (with quotation)
- B. The Moving Process (obtain from Session 1)
- C. Four Components of Re-entry (reproduce Handout B)
- D. Readjustment reminders

Handouts:

- A. Hot Potato!
- B. Four Components of Re-entry
- C. Life After the Peace Corps—Personal Realities



Trainer Preparation

1. Read the session plan and all of the handouts. Make your own notes of highlights in the steps of the session.
2. Cut up one copy of the handout "Hot Potato!" to have one question per slip of paper. Fold the questions in half and place them all in a hat.
3. Contact Returned Volunteer Services for transition resources currently available to RPCVs.



Methodology

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

Step 1: Begin the session by discussing the notion of readjustment. Write the term on a flip chart and ask Volunteers what that term means to them.

Step 2: Ask Volunteers what some of their concerns and issues are about leaving service and how they envision their own strategies for readjustment.

II. The process of leaving (5 minutes)

Step 1: Using the flip chart of the moving process, remind Volunteers that the process has both physical activities (change) and psychological effects (transitions). Explain that in this session the group will focus on making the transition home.

Step 2: Point out that many people say the hardest part of the Peace Corps is leaving it. Ask how the Volunteers' feelings about leaving relate to how they felt about leaving home for the Peace Corps. (*Answers will vary, but probably many will talk about the excitement and the adventure of going into the Peace Corps, which may not be replicated as they anticipate returning home.*)

Step 3: Ask if the group remembers the transition into the Peace Corps. What were the steps and feelings? (*Leaving family and friends, staging, arriving in-country, trying to figure things out, language, training, cultural adjustments, learning the job, getting settled...*)

Step 4: Inquire about what things they assume will be the same for the transition home. What will be different? (*Trainer note: You may wish to quickly note their ideas on flip charts.*)

III. Hot potato activity (10 minutes)

Step 1: Ask how the PCVs expect to share their experience with others. (*Stories, photos, artifacts...*)

Step 2: Ask what kinds of reactions they expect from their stories. (*People will be interested; some may get tired of my thinking of things to tell them; some people won't want to hear anything...*)

Step 3: Introduce the activity, explaining that you have a group of questions RPCVs say they have been asked about their Peace Corps experience, and that you'd like the group to answer them. Proceed this way:

- This activity is called "Hot Potato!"
- In this hat, I have questions written on slips of paper.
- When it's your turn, take a question, toss the beanbag to someone, and then read the question.
- If you get the beanbag, you need to answer the question—quickly!
- Then you'll get a chance to pull a question and toss the beanbag.

Step 4: Play the game for five or six rounds. Then stop and discuss:

- What do you think about the questions? Do you think people will really ask things like this?
- Why might they ask these things? (*No experience abroad—or at least in the developing world; have seen things on TV and want to ask you something, but aren't sure what to ask; can't imagine living where you did, etc.*)
- How might you use questions like this to your advantage—to give you a chance to change perceptions, share your experience? (*1. Try not to be defensive. 2. If possible, say "Yes, but..." such as "Yes, they have toilets, but they don't have a lot of running water, so toilets are..." 3. If information is wrong, ask where they heard or read it. Say "In my experience it wasn't like that..."*)

Step 5: Play the game for several more rounds, trying to make answers more instructive.

Step 6: Transition to the next step by asking how they felt about the questions. Which ones did they not expect? What are their expectations about what people will ask, want to hear about, be willing to listen to?

IV. The four components of re-entry (20 minutes)

Step 1: Reveal the flip chart of the four components of re-entry. Explain that experience has shown that these four areas contribute to how most people re-entering their home culture go through a readjustment period.

Step 2: Briefly describe each of the four components.

Losses—Losses include people, places and things. If you are feeling comfortable and successful in your Peace Corps assignment and your community, the thought of leaving them may be difficult. (Refer to the transition chart: disengagement.) It is important to your readjustment to do a good job of saying goodbye. We'll address that in a session a little later.

Changes in Expectations—We did an activity a few minutes ago to help you readjust your expectations about how knowledgeable and interested your family and friends may be in hearing about your experience. What are some other expectations about returning home that you may have? *(There are many. [1] Volunteers have changed due to their experience abroad but may not be aware how much. [2] They expect home to be just like they left it, but people and things at home have changed, too. [3] When frustrated abroad, they may have idealized their own country. When they are disappointed, it is particularly upsetting because they are "home" and expect to feel comfortable there. [4] They do not expect to have trouble readjusting to home.)*

Employment Changes—Will it be difficult to find a job? Will potential employers think what you have been doing is valuable? Do they know about the Peace Corps and what Peace Corps service brings in terms of experience and maturity? What will you be doing when you find a job at home? Or, will you find one that brings the same sense of "doing something that is important" that you may have found in your PC job?

Cross-cultural Adaptation—How can returning to your own culture be a "cross-cultural" adjustment? Consider for a minute: How have you changed? Have you changed any of your values or attitudes since you have been away from the United States? Will anyone be surprised by changes in your values and how they are reflected, in your dress, what interests you, your attitude toward time, whom you respect?

Step 3: Distribute Handout B, “Four Components of Re-entry,” and Handout C, “Life After the Peace Corps—Personal Realities.”

- Ask participants to take a few minutes (5–8 minutes) to jot down some ideas on the handout “Life After the Peace Corps...”
- Then ask them to turn to a neighbor and share their ideas. (8–10 minutes)
- Finally, ask the whole group to share a few of their entries that were surprising or particularly useful to think about.

V. Closure (5 minutes)

Step 1: Remind Volunteers that they are veterans of culture shock and adjustment. They will need to use their adaptation skills and strategies even more so when they leave the host country.

Step 2: Reveal Flip Chart D: “Readjustment Reminders.” Go through them.

1. Remember to continue to observe, not judge.
2. You can only add to people’s knowledge, you can’t just replace it.
3. Expect to feel frustrated, even depressed at times.
4. Take your time, slow down.
5. Develop a support system.
6. Have a plan.
7. Get involved in something right away.
8. Stay connected: through the RPCV association, your country interest group, third goal activities.

Step 3: Remind Volunteers that no matter how frustrating the process may be, they are not alone. Thousands of past Volunteers have successfully made the transition. (Give personal examples and “freak-out” moments. How did you handle them?)

Step 4: Ask the group if they want to pledge at least one thing they can do to support each other after they COS. (Someone may want to take charge to poll for ideas for presentation at the conference closure.)

Activity options

Small group discussions of four dimensions of re-entry (PC/Peru)

After introducing the four dimensions of re-entry, four small groups can form, each to discuss one aspect in more depth. It is helpful to have a facilitator or panelist who is an RPCV with each. Provide each group with guidance through a prepared flip chart or handout, such as this sample:

Losses

Consider:

Losses associated with returning to the U.S. from Peace Corps service in Peru include

- Loss of role
- Loss of status
- Loss of a major network of support

Discuss:

- Does this make sense? To what extent do you anticipate this issue will be a part of your readjustment experience?
- How might it affect you?
- What are some ways you can cope?

Present:

After your discussion, your group will be asked to present its impressions, observations, conclusions, advice, and profound thoughts.

Unemployment

Consider: Ending Peace Corps service means a change in your employment status, and changes in daily work patterns can be stressful. Unemployment is daunting. Financial concerns also complicate matters. Further, when you do begin work, the structure and supervision of traditional work environments can be difficult because of the degree of autonomy you have enjoyed as a PCV.

Cultural Adjustments

Consider: Returning to the United States will require cross-cultural adaptation. The pace of life, one's diet, the observance of different values—these are all areas in which adjustment may be necessary. You may have integrated Peace Corps and (Peruvian) language and culture into your own behavior and assumptions. Re-assimilation will likely be gradual and can present difficulty.

Expectations

Consider: As with any experience, how realistic you are about your transition will affect it positively or negatively. The expectations of pre-Peace Corps friends will also affect your re-entry. For instance, family members may expect RPCVs will be unchanged, just as many PCVs believe nothing at home will have changed while they were gone.

The Return Cabbage

(Repollo de Regreso—[sounds better in Spanish!] from PC/Peru)

Create a head of cabbage by writing questions or phrases about returning home on individual sheets of paper—one question or phrase to a page. Have as many sheets as participants—or a selection of sheets for a large group, in which not everyone will get one. Crumble the first sheet into a tight ball. Wrap each additional sheet around the first, so they can be peeled off like leaves of cabbage.

Toss the head of cabbage to someone. That person peels off the outer leaf, reads the question aloud, and answers it. He or she then tosses the head to someone else. Continue until all the questions have been raised.

This can be used as a motivation to the session, at the beginning, with the rest of the session providing a structure and discussions for thinking more deeply about re-entry. It could also be used in place of the hot potato activity, or as a closure to the session.

Sample questions:

- One thing I want to do before leaving (Peru) is...
- One thing I am doing to prepare for re-adjustment is...
- I sure will miss...
- When I think of being in the U.S., I feel...
- I'll be going back to...
- When I think about the upcoming transition, I know I will...
- One thing I have learned during my service that will be of use to me in the U.S. is...
- Something my community will remember about me is...
- I expect that for me the process of returning to the U.S. will be...
- Someone I will miss is...
- When I think of seeing my family again, I...
- I think my family will expect me to...
- One thing I will no longer be able to do back in the U.S. is...
- The nearest RPCV to me will probably be...
- Regarding money, I'm going to be...
- I expect my friends to...
- "Home" for me means...

- In terms of career plans, I hope to...
- Going back will enable me to...
- The hardest part of going back for me will be....
- I think the easiest thing for me to handle will be...
- I'm really looking forward to...
- Something I want to take back to the U.S. with me is...
- Something I will be glad to leave behind in (Peru) is...
- One thing that I will be eager to explain to my friends about my experience in (Peru) is...

Guided Visualization (adapted from PC/Ghana)

A guided visualization can be a powerful experience, one that may raise emotions that a facilitator may not be aware of. So it should be used with care and by someone who is able to work with individuals for whom the visualization brings up strong emotions. For example, some Volunteers may be returning to a divorced family, or to a situation where a family member or friends have died in their absence. The family may have moved and nothing is familiar. Friends may have moved away.

A guided visualization can be used with re-entry. It might be used at the beginning to get participants to consider different aspects of re-entry, within the session to introduce the topics that will be covered, or as a closure. Your prompts may include the different dimensions of re-entry in order to introduce the dimensions or to reinforce them.

Develop your guide along these lines:

1. Have participants close their eyes, sit back and relax, and think only about the prompts you will give them.
2. Imagine that they are landing back in the U.S. Where will they be landing? Their hometown airport? The one they left from? Or a new place their family has moved to since they left? Or a city where friends live? (pause)

Who will be meeting you at the airport—family members? Relatives? Friends? Can you picture them? (pause)

Where do you go from the airport—to your old home? To a new home where your family members now live? To a family place where friends live? (pause)

What kinds of questions are you getting—are you happy to be home? What was your PC experience, your country, your community, your people like? What did you miss? What do you want to eat? (pause)

Some time passes and you are meeting friends—at a coffee shop, a favorite restaurant, a bar. What are they asking you? About your experience? About what you are going to do now? (pause) What are you asking them? (pause)

You are invited to make a presentation about your experience—to family, to friends, to a school group, to a church group. What things do you want to say? What things do you have to show? (pause)

What are you missing? (pause)

...and so forth.

3. Bring visualization to a close by having participants sit quietly with their thoughts for a few minutes. Then encourage them to bring themselves back to the classroom by opening their eyes.
4. Recognize that they may have experienced a lot of emotions with these thoughts: excitement at seeing familiar people, places, things; sadness at things that have changed since they left; disappointment with questions people ask or how something they dreamed about really tastes; overwhelmed by thinking they have to fit back in.
5. If desired, take some comments from the group. No one should be required to share thoughts, and don't make this an exhaustive reporting session.
6. Transition to next part of session.

An RPCV Panel

In place of the hot potato activity, a panel of RPCVs can fulfill the same purpose. Prep the panel by having them address issues that are reflected in the four components of re-entry.

Pre-session handout: Moving On (PC/Honduras)

Moving On

Instructions: Complete each statement with the first thoughts that come to your mind.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. When I think of returning to the States, I feel... | 7. I expect that my friends there will be... |
| 2. I'll be going back to... | 8. Regarding money, I'm going to be... |
| 3. I expect that for me the process of returning will be... | 9. Going back will enable me to... |
| 4. When I think of seeing my family again, I... | 10. I think the hardest part of going back for me will be... |
| 5. I think my family will expect me to... | 11. I think the easiest thing for me to handle will be... |
| 6. A. In terms of career plans, I hope to...
B. If this doesn't work out, I'll... | 12. I'm really looking forward to... |

Storytelling Your Way Back Home

Appendix 3 contains a session plan and materials that can be used to focus on storytelling as a strategy for transitioning home and facilitating the job search. Handouts C and D in this session are resources.

Additional resources

Appendix 2 has resources about job hunting and applying for federal jobs.

Appendix 4, "Reinventing Yourself," has additional advice about job hunting, especially related to one's attitude about finding a job.

Appendix 5 has a session plan and ideas about elevator pitches.

Appendix 6 has job-search resources.

Prepared Flip Chart A

Re-entry

**"[A person's] mind, once stretched
by a new idea, never regains its
original dimensions."**

— Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

Prepared Flip Chart D

Readjustment Reminders

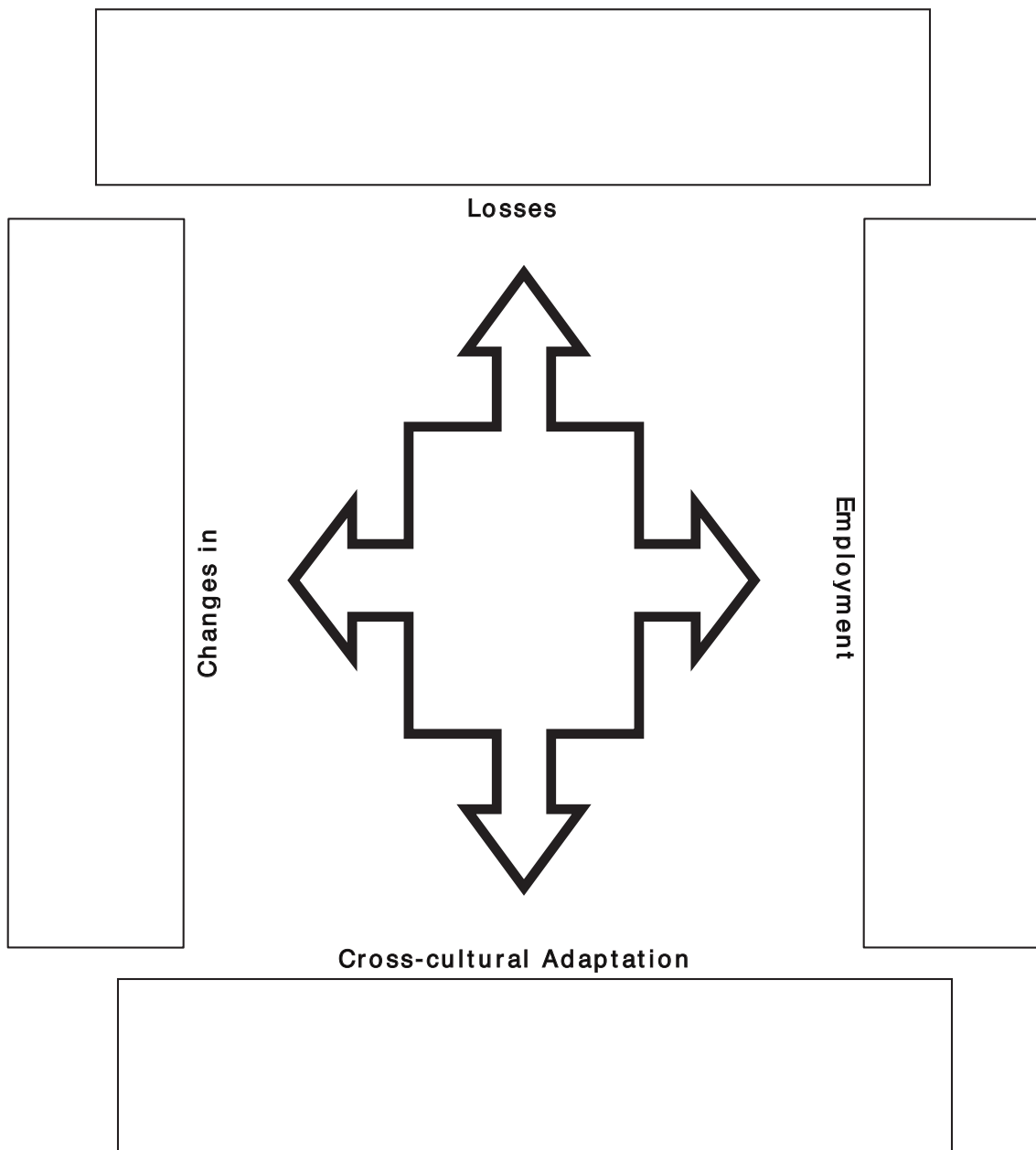
1. Remember to continue to observe, not judge.
2. You can only add to people's knowledge, you can't just replace it.
3. Expect to feel frustrated, even depressed at times.
4. Take your time, slow down.
5. Develop a support system.
6. Have a plan.
7. Get involved in something right away.
8. Stay connected: through the RPCV association, your country interest group, and third goal activities.

HANDOUT A

HOT POTATO!	
So what was it really like?	Aren't you glad to be back in the real world?
What kinds of toilets do they have?	Hey, did you see any elephants?
Were you in danger?	Will you ever go back?
What was it like being evacuated?	What's the weirdest thing you ever ate?
Were the natives friendly?	Did you have toilet paper?
Say something in (Swahili)!	What was the crime like in your town?
Did you have TV?	Aren't you afraid of freaking out in U.S. culture?
What was the food like?	Did you have running water?
Do they have McDonald's?	What were the (Muslims) like?
Did you live in a hut?	What's the most annoying thing about (Kenyan) culture?
What do they think of Americans?	What will you miss the most?
Did anyone ever think you were a spy?	What do (Kenyans) think of our President?
How could you live there for so long?	Did you ever get robbed?
Weren't you lonely?	Did you date any (Kenyan) people?
What were the other Volunteers like?	What will you miss the most?
Was it safe?	Was it fun?
Are there terrorists there?	Did you ever get depressed?
Are you ready to get a real life now?	Are you going to get a real job in the States now?
Was there electricity in your village?	Do they have roads?

HANDOUT B

Four Components of Re-entry



HANDOUT C

Life After the Peace Corps—Personal Realities

[The following material is adapted from World Learning's *SIT Study Abroad Re-entry Toolkit*, copyright 2008.]

1. In what ways have I changed? (Consider your personal coat-of-arms and the soft skills you have developed. Which of those attributes will best define you?)

2. What are the values I have developed and prioritized that now define me?

3. In what ways might my friends or family have changed? What experiences have they had (or not)? What events (pop-cultural, geopolitical, economic, community) have occurred back home that have helped shape them?

4. How would I like my family and friends to treat me when I return home? How can I help them be sensitive to that preferential treatment? Consider the re-entry issues raised in Session 7.

5. What are the critical aspects about my experience that I want to share with my family and friends? What significance do I want them to attach to these experiences?

6. Since re-entry can be more challenging than the departure, what are some things I might do to make the adjustment easier?

7. What activities and experiences am I looking forward to the most? Do these transitions (ground) me, or will they facilitate adjustment?

8. What can I do to stay connected to my experience—to extend the reconfigured me? What volunteer, civic, community, cross-cultural, and language-based activities can I participate in to keep from losing contact with me? How might the third goal fit into this?

9. What can I do to ensure that I have time to ease into the transition and be in a position to better manage adjustment? How much time will I need? How do I monitor this and then communicate it to family and friends? What answer will I have for those well-intentioned people who ask me, "Now that you are in the *real* world, what will you do?"

SESSION 8A

Looking Ahead: Next-Step Options



Purpose

This session provides an opportunity for Volunteers to look at various next-step options in their lives, share ideas, and receive information on the ways the Peace Corps can help with some of the options.



Rationale

There may be a variety of plans—and lack of plans—Volunteers have for the next steps in their lives. Plans will vary by their past educational level, financial situation, and age, among others. Some may be able to travel for a period of time, others have interest in continuing volunteer options, some may want to continue their education, and others have a need or desire to find a job immediately upon return. Some already may have retired and will be looking at their options differently.

Because of the potential variety of interests and needs, this session should focus on the possibilities and programs and services of the Peace Corps that are available.



Duration

Depends on options chosen.



Objectives

By the end of the sessions, Volunteers will

- Consider the next steps they may take after their in-country service.
- Be aware of the resources through the Peace Corps that are available.
- Clearly understand the decisions, and the timing(s) thereof, that they need to make for their future status as RPCVs (especially implications for noncompetitive eligibility for federal employment).



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

The facilitator should be familiar with the materials and programs available through the Peace Corps. If a stations method is used, it would be helpful to have a facilitator at each station.



Materials and Equipment

Many reference materials for this session are in the COS Kits for Volunteers. (See Overview, pages 6-7.)

For Peace Corps Response or other service organizations

PCR session plan (Session 8C) with cocktail party materials or reader's theater script

PCR brochure

Other volunteer resources: AmeriCorps, U.N. Volunteers

For education/grad school:

Peace Corps Fellows/USA video

Video player and television monitor

Fellows/USA Graduate School "At a Glance List"

Job resources:

Sample *Hotline* newsletter

Handout outlining career programs and resources available through Returned Volunteer Services



Trainer Preparation

The facilitator should determine how he or she wants to present the session: whether to present all information to all the Volunteers, to arrange stations where they can seek the information they want, or perhaps a combination of methods. For example, the session may begin with the introduction and the Peace Corps Response activity, and then break into stations where Volunteers can further explore volunteer opportunities, educational options, and job search assistance.

Access any recent materials or updates through Returned Volunteer Services, the Peace Corps Fellows program, and Peace Corps Response.



Methodology

I. Introduction (10 minutes)

Step 1: Introduce the session by referring to the transition chart (see Session 1).

- a. "In the last session we talked about some of the psychological aspects of the transition back home."
- b. "In this session we want to focus on the more concrete aspects: What are you going to do when you leave the Peace Corps? How will you be re-engaging when you get home?"

Step 2: "What are your options?" (Ask them to call them out or list them on a flip chart.)

Step 3: "We want to offer you a chance to explore these options in the workshop so you have the benefit of everyone's thinking, and to let you know there are a number of ways the Peace Corps can help you with some of the options."

Step 4: Explain how the rest of the session will be conducted.

II. Noncompetitive eligibility presentation (see Session 8B)

III. Peace Corps Response session (See Session 8C) and/ or presentations on various options (Peace Corps Response, Peace Corps Fellows, etc.)

SESSION 8B

Looking Ahead: Federal Employment And Noncompetitive Eligibility (NCE)



Purpose

This session provides an opportunity for Volunteers to consider noncompetitive eligibility (NCE) and federal employment for “continuation of service.”



Rationale

RPCVs often want to continue serving communities, both at home and abroad. Noncompetitive eligibility is a key resource for RPCVs considering federal service as a means to continue serving communities at home. In addition, as noted in the introduction, PCVs approaching RPCV status are distracted by a number of next-step activities during a COS conference, not the least of which is planning for travel post-COS. Since NCE has a limited life of one year, or 365 days, beginning immediately upon close-of-service, this session enables soon-to-be RPCVs to make an informed decision about the opportunity cost of lost noncompetitive eligibility due to extended post-COS travel.



Duration

15 minutes.



Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will

- Consider federal employment as a means for continuation of service.
- Be aware of noncompetitive eligibility.
- Understand the application and duration of NCE, especially vis-à-vis post-COS travel.



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

The facilitator should be familiar with the materials and programs available through the Peace Corps.



Materials and Equipment

Presentation on NCE

Handouts of articles and FAQs on following pages

"Jeopardy!"-type questions (optional)



Methodology

I. Presentation on NCE

(Trainer's note: use the talking points—PowerPoint slideshow text on the following pages)

II. Application activity:

Depending on how much time is allotted for the session, facilitators could supplement the presentation with one of the following activities:

A. Jigsaw activity:

1. Pass out NCE-related articles (on following pages).
2. Have RPCVs read them in small groups and identify best practices or helpful hints for using NCE.
3. Groups then re-form, with new groups having representation from someone who has read each article or tip-sheet
4. Jigsaw groups share best practices among themselves.
5. Optional: Jigsaw groups report to everyone.

B. "Jeopardy!"-type quiz or other quiz game

1. Facilitator makes up NCE-related questions ahead of time (or asks PCVs to make them up as part of this activity)
2. Play according to standard quiz-game rules

Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Services Talking Points— PowerPoint Slideshow text: Writing Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Statements (KSAs) For Federal Employment

1. Federal workforce composition

1.9 million federal workers—D.C. and regionally
11 million contractors

2. Why work for the feds?

Projections show that about 60 percent of federal workers will be eligible for retirement over the next 10 years, and whereas officials do not expect them to leave all at once, they are worried that federal programs could be at risk if agencies fall behind in hiring replacements.

—*The Washington Post*, April 2007

Governmentwide, about one-third of federal career employees on board at the end of fiscal year 2007 were eligible to retire between then and 2012—nearly half of employees on board at the end of fiscal year 2007 at the Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Transportation, and at the Agency for International Development and the Small Business Administration, will be eligible to retire by 2012.

—GAO, April 2008

While it's fairly well known that Uncle Sam intends to hire enough people (the Partnership for Public Service estimates 600,000) over the next few years to populate a good-size city, in [its report] "Where the Jobs Are," the Partnership for Public Service focuses on some 273,000 "mission-critical" positions it estimates the government will need to fill by the fall of 2012. The report defines those gigs as "positions considered crucial by agencies to fulfill their essential obligations to the American people."

—*Washington Post*, September 2009

"As the government kvetches over how to hire enough new workers to replace the retiring baby boomers who likely will vacate more than half of federal jobs over the next decade or so, returning Peace Corps Volunteers may be a place to start."

—*Government Executive*, November 28, 2006

3. What is NCE?

- NCE permits (but does not require) a competitive service agency to hire an RPCV who meets the minimum qualifications for the position.
- NCE allows RPCVs to compete for positions not available to the general public.
- NCE is granted to RPCVs under Executive Order (EO) 11103.
 - You must have completed at least 12 months of Peace Corps service (including PST), and have been separated for reasons beyond your control, to receive this status.
 - If you're not sure if you have NCE, check your DOS or the May 15, 2008, issue of *Hotline*.
- NCE does not mean that RPCVs are entitled to federal employment.
- Agencies hire RPCVs using NCE at their own discretion—the Peace Corps does not control this process.
- We advise you to make the hiring agency aware of your remaining NCE as clearly as possible (in your online application, cover letter, and résumé).

4. What are competitive service agencies?

- Most federal agencies go through a hiring process regulated by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM).
- Certain other agencies, such as the State Department, USAID, and others, are excepted service agencies. This means they regulate their own hiring procedures—your NCE is not relevant there.
 - For a list of excepted service agencies, visit www.usajobs.gov/EI6.asp
- State and local governments are also not part of the competitive federal civil service, so your NCE is not relevant at these agencies.

5. How do I find jobs for candidates with NCE?

From www.usajobs.com "search jobs" tab

The screenshot shows the USAJOBS website interface. At the top, the USAJOBS logo is on the left, and navigation links for Search Jobs, My USAJOBS, Info Center, Veterans, Forms, and Employer Services are in the center. A 'HELP' link is on the right. Below the navigation bar, there's a 'Refine Your Search' sidebar on the left with filters for Public or Status Jobs (Public, Status), Agency (Advisory Council On Historic Preservation, Agency For International Development, Architect Of The Capitol, Broadcasting Board Of Governors, Congressional Budget Office, etc.), and Job Category (Accounting Budget and Finance, Biological Sciences, Business Industry, etc.). The main content area shows a search for '20526' in the 'City' field. Below the search bar, there are tabs for 'Browse Search', 'Agency Search', 'Series Search', 'Advanced Search', and 'Senior Executive'. The search results are displayed in a table with columns: Closing, Job Summary, Agency, Location, and Salary. The first result is for 'SOIL SCIENTIST, GS-470-05/07' at the 'Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service' in 'US-DC-Washington DC Metro Area'. The salary is '\$28,349.00+'. Below the table, there's a detailed view of the job, including the vacancy announcement number (UK535258), who may apply (Public), pay plan (GS-0470/05-07), appointment term (Permanent), job status (Multiple Schedule Options), opening date (09/25/2008), and salary range (From \$28,349.00 to \$35,116.00 USD per year).

USAJOBS
"WORKING FOR AMERICA"

USAJOBS is the official job site of the US Federal Government.
It's your one-stop source for Federal jobs and employment information.

HELP

Search Jobs My USAJOBS Info Center Veterans Forms Employer Services

Refine Your Search

Public or Status Jobs ?

Public Status

Agency

Advisory Council On(1) Historic Preservation

Agency For International Development (33)

Architect Of The Capitol (34)

Broadcasting Board (19) Of Governors

Congressional Budget Office (8)

Job Category

Accounting Budget (161) and Finance

Biological Sciences (41)

Business Industry (149)

Browse Search | Agency Search | Series Search | Advanced Search | Senior Executive

20526 > Advisory Council On Historic Preservation > Agency For International Development

Refine your search with additional keywords ? Save this search and email me jobs!

20526 5 miles REFINER

Keyword Search Tips City Postal Code

Detailed View Brief View Show Jobs Posted: All

Results 1-50 of 2121 Page: [1] 2 3 4 5 6-10 >> Next >> Page 1 of 20

Closing	Job Summary	Agency	Location	Salary
9/25/2009	SOIL SCIENTIST, GS-470-05/07	Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service	US-DC-Washington DC Metro Area	\$28,349.00+

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. ... [more](#)

Vacancy Ann #: UK535258
Who May Apply: Public
Pay Plan: GS-0470/05-07
Appointment Term: Permanent
Job Status: Multiple Schedule Options
Opening Date: 09/25/2008
Salary Range: From \$28,349.00 to \$35,116.00 USD per year

Collapse Save job More like this

6. Look for “Status Candidates” positions (under “Who May Apply”)

Closing ▲	Job Summary ▲	Agency	Location	Salary ▲
4/6/2009	Budget Analyst The Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) makes the world safer by reducing the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. In the 21st century few tasks are as challenging or demanding. Join this p ...[more] Vacancy Ann.#: DTRA-09-241611 Who May Apply: US Citizens and Status Candidates Pay Plan: YA-0560-02 Appointment Term: Permanent Job Status: Full-Time Opening Date: 3/6/2009 Salary: From 49,354.00 to 113,007.00 USD per year	Defense Threat Reduction Agency	US-VA-Fairfax, Ft Belvoir, Manassas	49,354.00+
4/6/2009	Management Analyst About the Position Incumbent serves as a Management Analyst for the Veterinary Services, Eastern Region, located in Raleigh, NC and is responsible for performing a wide variety of comprehensive and ...[more] Vacancy Ann.#: 6VS-2009-0113 Who May Apply: Status Candidates Pay Plan: GS-0343-11/12 Appointment Term: Permanent Job Status: Full-Time Opening Date: 3/16/2009 Salary: From 58,155.00 to 90,610.00 USD per year	Agriculture, Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service	US-NC-Raleigh	58,155.00+
4/6/2009	Senior Management Analyst (Writer/Editor) This position is located in the Information Management and Analysis Branch (IMAB), Administrative Services Division (ASD), of the Office of Management (OM) which provides oversight leadership to Age ...[more] Vacancy Ann.#: W-OM-ASD-2009-0014 Who May Apply: Status Candidates Pay Plan: GS-0343-11/12 Appointment Term: Permanent	Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service	US-DC-Washington DC /Beltsville MD Metro Area	60,989.00+

7. Confirm status requirements

The screenshot shows the USAJOBS website interface. At the top, the USAJOBS logo is displayed with the tagline "WORKING FOR AMERICA". Below the logo, there are navigation tabs: Search Jobs, My USAJOBS, Info Center, Veterans, Forms, and Employer Services. The main content area features a banner for the "Working for the Great Outdoors" campaign, specifically for the USDA Forest Service. To the right of the banner, the following information is provided: Department: Department Of Agriculture, Agency: Forest Service, Sub Agency: DO NOT SEND MAIL, Job Announcement Number: ADS09-ROCKY-MTN-4596R (DN). Below the banner, there are tabs for Overview, Duties, Qualifications & Evaluations, Benefits & Other Info, and How to Apply. The "Overview" tab is selected, showing the job title "Program Analyst". The salary range is listed as 49,970.00 - 78,591.00 USD per year. The series and grade are GS-0343-09/11. The promotion potential is 11. The open period is from Friday, April 17, 2009, to Thursday, May 14, 2009. The position information is Full Time Permanent - No time limit. The duty locations are: vacancy(s) in one of the following locations: 1 vacancy - Throughout Colorado, CO. A box titled "WHO MAY BE CONSIDERED:" contains the following text: "Status eligibles - This announcement is open to current or former status Federal employees in the Rocky Mountain Region Two and veterans eligible for consideration under the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA). Also, disabled veterans with a 30% or more disability; veterans eligible under the Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA); persons with Disabilities; and former Peace Corps and Vista volunteers may be considered under special hiring authorities. The applicant must furnish the required proof or certification of eligibility if selected."

8. How long do I have NCE?

- RPCVs have NCE for one year from the date of COS.
- NCE can be extended (up to a total of three years from your COS date) only for three reasons:
 - You enter a university full-time.
 - You enter the military.
 - You engage in another activity that the hiring agency deems to warrant an extension (again, this is determined by the hiring agency, not the Peace Corps).

9. How can I calculate how much time I have left before my NCE runs out?

Example:

- Emily COSed in December 2007.
 - (She had 12 remaining months of NCE.)

- She traveled in Central America for two months after COS, until February 2008.
 - (At this point, she had 10 remaining months of NCE.)
- She worked in the U.S. from February to September 2008.
 - (Now, she had three remaining months of NCE.)
- She entered graduate school in September 2008, and will be a full-time student until May 2010.
 - (NCE was paused at three remaining months for the entire time she was matriculated.)
- Emily's NCE will run out in August 2010, since May–August 2010 are her last three months.
 - Emily can use her NCE to apply to as many competitive service jobs as she wants until August 2010, when her NCE runs out.
 - Emily should begin applying during her last semester of school.

10. How can I make federal employers aware of my status?

- Informational interviews are a great way to let federal hiring managers know you have NCE.
- Always indicate your NCE on your résumé, in your cover letter, and in any online application you complete. Mention it in your interview.
 - "I am eligible for noncompetitive appointment because I am a returned Peace Corps Volunteer and meet the requirement under 5 C.F.R. 315.605."
- Include your DOS in any application you submit, as this is official proof of your status.
- Include a copy of the Peace Corps' letter to federal employers with your application.
 - Available in the May 15, 2008, special issue of *Hotline* on federal employment
- Refer federal employers to Returned Volunteer Services, [rvsinfo@peacecorps.gov](mailto:rvinfos@peacecorps.gov) or 202.692.1430, with any questions.

11. Peace Corps and NCE

- Though it is an excepted service agency, the Peace Corps recently began accepting NCE from returned Peace Corps Volunteers.
- To apply, visit www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv and click on "RPCV Non-Competitive Employment Program."

- This announcement is “open-continuous,” which means the positions listed are not necessarily vacant.
 - When you apply using this mechanism, you are adding your résumé to a pool of RPCV candidates.
 - You must recertify your eligibility and interest every 90 days; otherwise you will be removed from the roster.
 - You may be contacted for an interview right away, or you may never be contacted—it depends on hiring managers’ needs.
 - For more information, please contact Peace Corps’ Human Resources office at 202.692.1200 or hrmjobs@peacecorps.gov

12. Some basic information about federal employment

- The federal government needs to fill 273,000 critical needs positions in the next couple of years; as many as 600,000 in the next decade—the government is a great place for RPCVs to work!
- As a PCV, you were not a federal employee. You should not fill in a series or grade level on any application.
- You were also not assigned a GS-level; however, most RPCVs qualify at the GS-7 or GS-9 levels.
- As a PCV, you did not have a security clearance.

13. Useful websites and contacts

- May 15, 2008, special issue of *Hotline* on federal employment: www.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/former/hotline/hotline051508.pdf
 - Includes more details about NCE, as well as the federal hiring process and sample NCE documentation
- A list of major excepted service agencies: www.usajobs.gov/EI6.asp
- NCE information for federal agencies (in case a hiring manager is not familiar with NCE): www.usajobs.gov/infocenter/howjobsgetfilled.asp
- Peace Corps’ Volunteer and PSC Services office (to request a copy of your DOS): 202.692.1784 or certifications@peacecorps.gov
- Peace Corps’ Returned Volunteer Services: 202.692.1430 or rvsinfo@peacecorps.gov
- Peace Corps’ Returned Volunteer Services events calendar—lists virtual and in-person events: www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/events

Noncompetitive Eligibility Frequently Asked Questions

Unclear about your Noncompetitive Eligibility? Here's what it is:

Under the Provisions of Executive Order (EO) 11103 (5 CFR, § 315.605), certain returned Peace Corps Volunteers are awarded one year of noncompetitive eligibility (NCE) for selection for federal employment. This eligibility does not mean that returned Volunteers are entitled to federal employment. However, although noncompetitive eligibility does not require, it does permit an agency to hire a returned Volunteer who meets the minimum qualifications for the position without going through all of the formalities of the competitive process. The decision whether to hire a returned Volunteer under noncompetitive eligibility is within the discretion of the hiring agency. Therefore, to alleviate any confusion it is advised that RPCVs make the hiring agency aware of their remaining NCE as clearly as possible. RPCVs who have completed less than one year of service (including training time) will not receive NCE. However, the Country Director may issue certification to Volunteers who have satisfactorily served for 12 consecutive months, including training, and whose termination is determined to be for reasons beyond the Volunteer's control. Country directors will include the certification statement as the final paragraph on the Description of Service statements for Volunteers granted this benefit.

What are competitive service positions?

Congress has established laws, policies, and procedures governing employment. This formal process is designed to eliminate discrimination and favoritism and to provide fair and open competition so hiring and promotion are based on merit. These competitive service jobs are governed by specific examination or appointment procedures as set out by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Thus, RPCVs (with NCE) who have an interest in a "competitive service" position may be hired more easily because that employing agency can select that RPCV without going through all the competitive-related hiring procedures.

How do I make sure the employing agency is aware of my NCE?

RVS has developed a sample cover letter that can be tailored to help explain NCE status to the hiring agency. The regulatory authority for NCE is set out under Title 5 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) § 315.605. RPCVs should highlight NCE status in their cover letter, on their résumé, and through the supplemental documents area most online applications systems provide. In addition, we have made available an informational letter from the Peace Corps that RPCVs may also give to prospective federal employers explaining their noncompetitive eligibility.

How do I prove NCE?

NCE is officially granted to you through your Description of Service (DOS) and is proved by attaching a copy of your DOS when applying for a federal job. The DOS will reference "Executive Order 11103," which is the Presidential directive that established NCE. If you have misplaced your original DOS, the Peace Corps can send you a copy. Contact the Office of Volunteer and PSC Financial Services for a copy. They can be reached at 800.424.8580, ext. 1770. Also note the earlier response regarding how to make an agency aware of your NCE.

How do I prove NCE without filling in a grade or series on the application?

Many federal applications require that you enter your grade and series when proving NCE. RPCVs do not have a grade and series since they were Volunteers and weren't federal employees. An RPCV must contact the employing agency to determine how they should fill out an application that requires a grade and series in order to prove NCE.

What are some instances in which noncompetitive eligibility is extended? And, if I qualify for the extension, how do I make sure that it is granted?

Noncompetitive eligibility can be extended by the hiring agency for up to two additional years (which would equal a maximum of three years from the COS date) for three reasons:

- If, after Peace Corps service, you enter the military.
- If you become a full-time student at a recognized institution of higher learning.
- If you engage in another activity that the hiring agency thinks warrants an extension. The Federal Personnel Manual states, "Generally, work experience which is pertinent to the position being filled and which can be expected to enhance the candidate's performance and value to the agency could be an appropriate basis for extension. Extensions should not be granted routinely, but should be reserved for situations in which the activity has truly enhanced the RPCV's value to the agency."

Can noncompetitive eligibility be "used up" during the 12-month period?

The answer to this question is "no." You are able to use your noncompetitive eligibility more than once during the period of eligibility if the hiring agency permits you to do so.

Does noncompetitive eligibility apply only to federal positions?

Yes. NCE is applicable only to federal government positions. Noncompetitive eligibility does not apply to state or local government jobs. State and local governments are separate organizations under the Constitution.

Noncompetitive Eligibility Sample Introductory Letter

Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Personnel Operations
123 Downtown Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Re: Grant Analyst Position, GS-7
Vacancy Announcement EX-03-03
Noncompetitive Eligibility

Dear Selecting Official/Panel:

I am very interested in the above-captioned Grant Analyst position. *[In two to three paragraphs and less than one page, state reasons why you are interested in and qualify for the position. This letter should cover your interest and purpose, highlight your enclosed résumé by stressing what you can do for the employing agency, and request an interview while providing your best contact information.]*

As a recently returned United States Peace Corps Volunteer, I request that I be placed on your agency's "noncompetitive" certificate of eligibles upon the finding that I meet the qualifications for the position. Per Federal employment regulations, **I am eligible for noncompetitive appointment because** I am a returned Peace Corps Volunteer and meet the requirement under 5 C.F.R. 315.605. If you have any questions about my noncompetitive eligibility status, you can review information related to this special appointment authority at U.S. Office of Personnel Management's website at <http://www.opm.gov/employ/html/sroa2.asp> and go to the "Miscellaneous Authorities Regulated" section.

Sincerely,

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer

(Article first appeared in *Hotline*, December 1, 2006)

What Is Noncompetitive Eligibility?

By Matt August (RPCV/Nicaragua, 2000–2002)

This article was submitted by an RPCV on noncompetitive eligibility (NCE) and is strictly an opinion. We publish it as a peek into the challenges and opportunities RPCVs may face with using NCE. Returned Volunteer Services advises RPCVs to conduct their own research using the resources provided in this Hotline issue, the Career Resource Manual, and the Office of Personnel Management's website (www.opm.gov).

I remember several things when I think back on my COS conference in 2002. For the most part the memories involve good friends, food, and a nice air-conditioned hotel. I clearly recall the many hours of meetings and the mountain of information given to us concerning everything from medical requirements to readjustment strategies. Everything was important, but at that time nothing seemed as pressing as the refreshments and festivities planned for the evening among English speakers. Incorporated somewhere into those three days was an extremely valuable bit of information about Executive Order No. 11103 (located on all DOS), or better known as noncompetitive eligibility. After having been with the federal government now for over a year, I have witnessed firsthand the benefits and advantages of having noncompetitive eligibility (NCE). It is my intention to clarify what this hiring authority enables and how one should use it while hunting for a post-Peace Corps career.

First and foremost, noncompetitive eligibility allows RPCVs to be directly interviewed and hired by program managers within federal agencies. That is very appealing to most agencies! Normally, all applicants have to go, either directly or indirectly, through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Whenever there is a vacancy, the hiring agency writes the job description and selects from hundreds of questions those that applicants usually will have to answer online. The hiring agency then gives that information to OPM for official posting through USAJOBS. Applicants, in turn apply, either through USAJOBS or through a designated hiring system (e.g., Avue Digital Services), which selects the initial qualified roster based on the score the applicants received on the questionnaire responses and from perhaps a couple of written paragraphs. That roster, along with résumés and questionnaire responses for each of the applicants, is forwarded to the program manager for evaluation and interview selection. In theory, the process seems fine; however, going through this open application process takes several months and costs the agency money for the service. Plus, the process limits opportunities that are often created by personal interaction.

An RPCV with good interpersonal skills and solid, relevant work experience, coupled with noncompetitive eligibility, therefore is highly marketable to a hiring agency. My story is a perfect example of how advantageous NCE is. When I first arrived in Washington, D.C., I spent two months in the Peace Corps Career Center applying for every kind of job that interested me. I applied for many federal positions via USAJOBS, and after about a month I would receive a short letter that told me I was “tentatively qualified” for the position. Needless to say, after the tenth letter I was more than frustrated with the search for gainful employment. One afternoon I rushed home from a lunch shift waiting tables to attend an RPCV career fair sponsored by Returned Volunteer Services. Many agencies attended, and nearly all of them were taking résumés. I spoke with several recruiters and handed out a couple of résumés. I was surprised to hear recruiters asking for our COS date and how much time we had left on our noncompetitive eligibility. A week later I received an interview invitation, and less than a week after that I was looking at an official offer of employment. I never even applied for the position I was offered and still currently occupy.

In retrospect, knowing what I now know about how government agencies operate, I would have marketed myself much differently. I suggest creating a bullet on your résumé that refers to your DOS and noncompetitive eligibility. Also refer to your Peace Corps service and eligibility in cover letters. A colleague of mine and former PCV told me she created business cards with her service dates, complete with bullets on the back describing her work experience. Informational interviewing can also be extremely effective and can lead to many opportunities for an RPCV with NCE. Again, the agency can both interview and bring eligible people on board without any OPM application process. While in the informational interview, be sure to have copies of your résumé and be prepared to speak to any of your relevant experience or career goals. Always inquire about intern programs (many agencies have two- and three-year programs that pay well and train new employees), and ask to speak with current interns or intern coordinators to find out more information.

It is important to remember that Executive Order No. 11103 sets forth some criteria for the duration of noncompetitive eligibility. From the COS date we have 12 months to use it or lose it unless we go back to school, volunteer, or join the military, etc. It can be extended by the hiring authority up to two additional years. Every agency has its own internal policy regarding how it deals with Executive Orders. Know your eligibility well enough to educate managers who are not familiar with what it is. Push for face-to-face interaction and have confidence Peace Corps experience is invaluable, and managers want employees like you!

(Article first appeared in *Hotline*, November 1, 2007)

Making Noncompetitive Eligibility Work for RPCVs

By Christine Jolley (RPCV/Madagascar, 2003–2004) and Jan Hiland, workforce and career development officer, Coordinating Office for Global Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

I signed up for the Peace Corps career event in Atlanta on the last day that participants were allowed to enter. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was hosting an information session for RPCVs at their central campus near Emory University on August 21. Ten of us attended to learn more about career opportunities and job planning after the completion of a Master's in Public Health. I had just earned my Master's in Public Policy through the RPCV Fellows/USA program offered at Duke University, but was interested in public health work because of my experience as a health Volunteer in Madagascar.

Less than two months later, on October 1, I started work with the CDC's Coordinating Office for Global Health.

While this may not seem remarkable to some, anyone who is familiar with the federal hiring process knows that a six-week span from expression of interest in working at a federal agency to actually beginning work as a full-time permanent civil servant is almost miraculous. Most often this recruit-to-hire process can easily take six months, as compared with my brief six-week experience.

What made my expedited path possible is the noncompetitive eligibility (NCE) status of RPCVs. What it means is that certain federal agencies (competitive service agencies) can hire an RPCV without posting a vacancy announcement, screening or interviewing candidates, or going through other steps (which can take months) that are involved in the standard recruitment process. All that is required is that the agency have a classified position, an available opening, and a human resources department that understands the NCE status of RPCVs. While the human resources department still must follow some of its own internal processes, the recruit-to-hire time frame can be shortened dramatically by the NCE status that we hold as RPCVs.

I was hired by Jan Hiland, workforce and career development officer, who coordinated the information session at the CDC that day. Why did she call me? Says Jan, "She did some things right at the information session. She spoke up in a positive way that got her noticed. She asked good questions. So when I found myself with an unanticipated vacancy in my office, five days after the information session, I remembered Christine's questions at the meeting and what was said about how quickly an RPCV with NCE could be hired. Fortunately, the Human Resources office that provides services to CDC is fully versed in the NCE provisions for RPCVs. I called that day to see if she was interested and if she had NCE status."

While noncompetitive eligibility typically lasts up to one year after a Volunteer has COSed, my eligibility had been extended to a total of three years because of my full-time graduate studies. With the proper documentation from the Peace Corps, a copy of my university transcripts, and some easy math, I was able to verify my eligibility and provide proof of my noncompetitive hiring status to CDC.

The rest is record-breaking federal hiring history.

SESSION 8C

Looking Ahead: Peace Corps Response



Purpose

This session is designed to give Volunteers a feel for Peace Corps Response (PCR) experiences. While interacting with a range of people who have become PCR Volunteers (PCRVs), they will discover the motivations, benefits, and some of the kinds of projects that are possible.



Rationale

For those Volunteers who have had a deeply meaningful experience, the thought of leaving the Peace Corps may be difficult. Learning about possible future assignments through PCR may make the future seem brighter in terms of possibly returning to overseas service in some way some day. It is an option that the Peace Corps would like COSing Volunteers to know about.



Duration

45 minutes to 1 hour (depending upon the choice of activity and amount of information about PCR that is given).



Objectives

Goal: To provide COSing Volunteers with information on possible future short-term assignments through PCR.

Objectives: By the end of the session, Volunteers will

- Explain the PCR programs, how one can learn about openings, and apply.
- Explain why RPCVs might want to do one of these short programs and how they can benefit from doing them.
- Give some examples of types of projects.



Session Outline

- I. Introduction (5 minutes)
- II. Cocktail Party or Reader's Theater activity (20–30 minutes)
- III. Information about PCR (10 minutes)



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

The facilitator needs to know how PCR functions.



Materials and Equipment

Blank flip chart, markers, tape

Handouts:

- A. Information on PCR—1 copy per participant
- B. PCR Volunteer name tags—1 copy, cut up
- C. For cocktail party activity—
 1. PCR Volunteer stories—1 copy each story
 2. Meet and Greet worksheet—1 copy per participant
- D. For reader's theater activity—
 1. Seven copies of the script
 2. Flip chart listing the PCR Volunteers and where they served
 3. Motivations and Benefits worksheet—1 copy per participant



Trainer Preparation

1. Request the most updated materials on PCR to distribute to Volunteers from the PCR office in PC/Washington.
2. Determine if you will use the cocktail party or reader's theater format.
3. If using the cocktail party, (1) select which stories (if not all) you will use. (2) Practice filling in the Meet and Greet worksheet using selected stories to make sure you have a variety of motivations, benefits, and projects. (3) Copy name tag for each person in story. (4) Make copies of the Meet and Greet worksheet. (5) Prior to the session, ask Volunteers to read one story and take on that persona for the activity.
4. If using the reader's theater activity, (1) make seven copies of the script. (2) Highlight the name of one PCR Volunteer on one script and highlight each time that Volunteer speaks in the script. Continue preparing a script for each speaker in the same way. (3) Copy name tag for each person in story. (4) Make copies of the Motivations and Benefits worksheet.



Methodology

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

Step 1: Ask if any participants have heard of Peace Corps Response. If so, ask them to tell a little about what they know.

Step 2: Explain that the participants will have a chance to meet some PCR Volunteers to get an idea of what the program is and whether they might see that as an option soon after their COS, or perhaps later.

II. The cocktail party activity option (10–15 minutes)

Step 1: Explain that they will be milling around meeting some PCR Volunteers. The idea is to find out why they joined, what they did, and what they thought the benefits were. (Distribute the Meet and Greet handout.)

Step 2: Ask those who will be playing the part of PCR Volunteers to put on their name tags. Tell everyone they'll have about 10 minutes to mingle and talk to each other.

Step 3: Have everyone stand and start moving around and talking to each other. Let them continue until they have had time to talk with four or more of the PCR Volunteers.

Step 4: Ask everyone to be seated. Let those who pretended to be PCR Volunteers know that they can participate in the discussion.

III. Reader's theater activity option (15–20 minutes)

Step 1: Explain that they are going to have a chance to hear the voices of some PCR Volunteers through an activity called reader's theater.

Step 2: Reveal the flip chart with the names and where each PCR Volunteer served. Explain that these will be the voices they'll hear.

Step 3: Ask for a volunteer to read each PCR Volunteer's story. Hand them the name tag and script with the appropriate person's voice highlighted.

Step 4: Ask all readers to come to the front of the room and face the rest of the group. (They should stand if it is a large group, so they can be heard.)

Step 5: Distribute the Motivations and Benefits worksheet to everyone else. Explain that as they listen, they should pay attention and note what they hear.

Step 6: Read the prompt questions and have the volunteers read what the PCR Volunteers answer. Continue through the whole script.

Step 7: Thank the readers, collect the scripts and name tags, and have them take seats with the rest of the group. Ask them to participate in the discussion to follow.

IV. Activity debriefing (5–10 minutes)

Ask what the group found interesting about the people they talked to or listened to. (If you wish, these items can be flip charted, but it is not necessary.)

- a. What led them to sign up?
- b. What kinds of things did they do? Did any of those projects sound particularly interesting to you?
- c. What benefits did they see in serving a short-term assignment?
- d. Does the idea of PCR appeal to you? If so, why?

V. Distribution of information on PCR (15–20 minutes)

Distribute the information provided by the PCR office in PC/Washington. Answer questions.

Notes

An alternative is to have actual PCR Volunteers who are serving in your country come to the session. In this case, doing the cocktail party activity with actual Volunteers is possible. They could also do a panel presentation. A drawback of this approach would be losing the variety of experiences and assignments provided in the written materials. Those might be summarized, however, as a handout.

HANDOUTS

Meet and Greet

Meet and greet as many of the Peace Corps Response Volunteers as you can in 5–10 minutes. As you talk to them about their experiences, try to find out the following information:

Motivations for joining Peace Corps Response	1.
	2.
	3.
	4.
Types of projects they worked on	1.
	2.
	3.
	4.
Benefits of their PCR experience	1.
	2.
	3.
	4.

HANDOUT**Motivations and Benefits**

As you listen to the PCR Volunteers relate their experiences, try to find out the following information:

Motivations for joining Peace Corps Response	
Types of projects they worked on	
Benefits of their PCR experience	

Name tags

Make one copy. Cut out and use the name tags for the PCR Volunteers you chose.

Roy PCV Paraguay PCR Guatemala	Rosie PCV Namibia PCR St. Lucia
Juanita PCV Panama PCR Honduras	Casey PCV Malawi PCR Malawi
Clay PCV Gabon PCR Kenya	Rob PCV Colombia PCR Sri Lanka
Katie PCV Ghana PCR Namibia	Jacob PCV Thailand PCR Thailand

Diana

**PCV Malawi
PCR Zambia**

Sarah

**PCV Costa Rica
PCR Central Texas, U.S.**

Howard

**PCV Ghana, South Africa,
and Samoa
PCR Uganda**

Jennie

**PCV Benin
PCR Sri Lanka**

Michelle

**PCV Senegal
PCR Namibia**

Liz

**PCV El Salvador
PCR Louisiana, U.S.**

Connie

**PCV Botswana
PCR Malawi**

Maria

**PCV Philippines
PCR Philippines**

Peace Corps Response Volunteer Stories

Print one copy of each.

Jacob

PCV and PCR in Thailand

My Peace Corps Response assignment in a tsunami-devastated region of southern Thailand involved supervising the construction of a donated potable drinking water treatment plant with a market value of \$400,000 USD. My responsibilities included working closely with the local subdistrict government staff regarding scheduling, design interpretation (reading the construction drawings, including electrical diagrams), construction management, and operations and maintenance training. In addition, I helped with construction tasks. I wanted to return to my PCV country, in a time of need, to give back to the Thai people who were so kind to me during my initial assignment. (Plus, I wanted to eat real Thai food again!)

For this assignment, it required many of the skills and abilities that I gained from jobs that I have held since being an environment and water resource PCV in Thailand 16 years ago. I am not sure that I could have accomplished my PCR assignment with the original skill set that I came to Thailand with when I was straight out of college. Before volunteering for PCR, I did not expect or realize that the PCR assignment would demonstrate to me how much I had learned and grown professionally *after* my original assignment. This was very rewarding to see the proof of what I have learned over the years.

Although my initial assignment in Thailand as a PCV 16 years ago was very enriching, the PCR experience in some ways was even more urgent and rewarding. PCR provided an opportunity for me to give back to my former country with more maturity, skills, wisdom, perception, and professionalism.

Roy**PCV Paraguay; PCRV Guatemala**

In a world blinded by the specious allure of deficit spending and so focused on improving the bottom line, I choose to invest my time and energy in both broadening and deepening my balance of real-life human interactions and experiences. To serve as a Peace Corps Response Volunteer on the heels of my Peace Corps experience has provided me with an excellent opportunity to continue to put my money where my mouth is.

Whereas one's Peace Corps experience (I was an agroforestry Volunteer in Paraguay) is an extremely decelerated process emphasizing the fundamentals of building community relationships, a Peace Corps Response experience has a more heightened, task-oriented feel to it. In effect, Peace Corps Response is the ultimate extension of resource identification and allocation: matching the linguistic and technical skill sets of RPCVs with individuals, communities, and countries that need them most.

I served as an agroforestry Peace Corps Response Volunteer in the town of Tacana, in the southwestern highlands of Guatemala, which is located 50 kilometers south of the Mexican border. I helped to coordinate the reforestation efforts of the NGO CARE/Guatemala and the local Tacana forestry office in a dozen rural communities hardest hit by Hurricane Stan.

Hurricane Stan's weeklong rainy presence over this remote mountainous region during the first week in October 2005 caused massive and widespread mudslides that destroyed houses, water systems, roads, and bridges and turned countless hectares of arable land into a wasteland of rocks and debris. Working alongside two other Peace Corps Response Volunteers—a civil engineer and a livestock specialist—as well as a resident agroforestry Peace Corps Volunteer, our multidisciplinary team was able to address some of the more pressing concerns of post-hurricane recovery: bringing potable water systems back online, increasing food security through small-scale chicken and pig projects, and land recuperation through the establishment of agroforestry systems.

As always in one's Peace Corps experience, Peace Corps Response experience and the experience of life overall, the learning curve is steep but the return on investment is more than fulfilling, if one is keen enough to realize which currencies are of true value.

As they say: Life is an everyday affair.

Rosie**PCV Namibia; PCRV St. Lucia**

Returning to the Corps eight years after I first ventured to Namibia in 1996 to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer was an easy decision to make. In the years since I completed my Peace Corps service in 1998, I completed a master's degree in international affairs with a focus on health and development. I went on to a second master's in public health, focusing on international health, and am currently working on my doctorate in public health. I also acquired many years of further experience as a prevention specialist in the Global AIDS Program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which allowed me to further refine my skills, gain more international experience providing technical assistance to CDC offices in Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, Ethiopia, Botswana, and Namibia.

The impetus to serve as a Peace Corps Response Volunteer came at a most opportune time. As a doctoral student in public health at the University of California at Berkeley, I had to fulfill a residency requirement, which entails spending up to three months pursuing a practical experience. This is meant to apply skills and competencies learned in the classroom in a real world setting. I looked at various agencies to gain this experience, and stumbled across a Peace Corps Response position for an HIV/AIDS technical officer for the National AIDS Programme Secretariat in St. Lucia. The chance to fulfill my residency, serve as a Volunteer, work on HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean, and live on a sun-drenched, beautiful Eastern Caribbean island was just too much to resist. My decision to join Peace Corps Response was an easy one.

My primary responsibilities as an HIV/AIDS technical officer were to provide support to the Secretariat in a multitude of capacities, such as attending donor meetings with the World Bank and the Global Fund, serving as a resource person to civil society organizations (CSO) and helping them develop proposals, and conducting workshops for community groups. One of my primary roles was to use my technical skills and experience to develop and conduct an assessment of the national HIV/AIDS Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) Program. This assessment included developing a survey instrument, conducting one-on-one interviews with key decision-makers at the Ministry of Health, conducting site visits and interviews with VCT implementers at the five current VCT sites in the country, and doing record reviews of HIV testing data at the national reference lab. The final assessment report was presented to all of the stakeholders at the Ministry of Health and the National AIDS Programme Secretariat and will inform policy and operational decisions to improve and expand the national VCT Program.

One of the areas in which I feel most fulfilled in terms of a lasting accomplishment is that I have been able to see the implementation of at least two of my recommendations, as a direct result of my assessment. By the end of my service, I made friends, colleagues, and professional contacts, and also contributed to the improvement of the HIV/AIDS response. I have gained both further professional experience in the area of HIV/AIDS and I have become a better person.

Juanita

PCV Panama; PCRV Honduras

I served as a Peace Corps Response Volunteer in Honduras in an area greatly affected by Hurricane Mitch. I worked on a project that was run by the Pan American Development Foundation, with resources and expertise of USAID, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the American Association of Flood Plain Management. It was a great experience, completely different from my Peace Corps experience as an agroforestry Volunteer in Panama. I highly recommend Peace Corps Response to any RPCV. It is a good way to see the skills you developed as a Volunteer put to work.

Casey

PCV and PCRV in Malawi

After finishing Peace Corps service as a high school English teacher in Malawi from 1997–1999, I returned to Malawi from 2000–2001 to work as one of the country's first Peace Corps Response Volunteers. My assignment at the SOS Children's Village orphanage in Lilongwe, the capital city, was to collaborate with the Village's elementary school teachers in the creation of an HIV/AIDS education curriculum.

The first step I took was to organize training in the basics of HIV/AIDS for all SOS staff, to create the foundation of knowledge they would need to help implement the new curriculum. I then worked with fellow teachers and some students to draft workbooks for grades one through seven that integrated life skills education with HIV/AIDS awareness. The final step in my eight months of service was to test the workbooks in classrooms and train all of the elementary school's teachers in the use of the new curriculum.

Peace Corps Response was the first step I took in a career focusing on HIV/AIDS. It led to a master's degree in international development at Tufts University's Fletcher School, with a focus on the intersection between public health and development. While completing that graduate degree, I interned at Population Services in Uganda, working with small health centers to hone their marketing messages to promote voluntary counseling and testing for HIV. In mid-2003, I joined CARE as a Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellow tasked with "mainstreaming" HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation efforts within CARE Malawi's agriculture, microfinance, education and humanitarian relief projects. I am now working with CARE's office in Washington, D.C., conducting research and advocacy on the U.S. government's response to global HIV/AIDS.

Clay**PCV Gabon; PCRV Kenya**

I was a community health Volunteer in Gabon in 2001–2003. I was always interested in Africa and became even more so after my Peace Corps service.

I joined Peace Corps Response to work with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Mombasa, Kenya. I was coordinator of its program there. My primary role was to coordinate the development of services for heroin addicts and commercial sex workers to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. The project targets this high risk population, but focuses specifically on reducing the risks to others. The project provides information, education, and resources to deal with one's HIV status and reduce the subsequent spread of the disease. This is accomplished by facilitating HIV testing among such a high-risk population and encouraging them to know their HIV status. After my Peace Corps Response service, I was hired by the UNODC and continue to work on the project today as a paid employee.

Rob

PCV Colombia; PCRV Sri Lanka

It never goes away. The memories. The people. The work. The satisfactions. Peace Corps Response is a chance to do it all again.

It's like before, but now you're better at it. More experience to draw on, to add focus to the raw enthusiasm. The perspective of the intervening years. Better organization and management skills. Some gray hair, both figurative and literal—and they both help.

After two previous assignments in Colombia (1966–1970) and then 30 years back in the States, I joined a PCR team headed for Sri Lanka to do civil engineering and reconstruction after the 2004 tsunami. The needs were real and evident. The people wanted the help and were receptive to it. Motivation and buy-in weren't an issue.

I was assigned to a local group of host-country engineers and social workers. We executed a fast-track program of surveying the damage, prioritizing a list of projects, doing the design work, contracting with local constructors, and supervising the construction. By the end, we renovated or rebuilt parts of four schools, a hospital, a community health center, and a public park.

It felt unbelievably good to be back at it again. It never goes away.

Katie**PCV Ghana; PCRV Namibia**

In November of 2004, three years after completing my Peace Corps service in Ghana in community development, I started feeling the pull to do more service abroad. I looked at the available Peace Corps Response posts on the Peace Corps website and was thrilled to see a position in Ghana. I quickly completed the application and sent it off. I was disappointed to discover that the posts were already full. One week later, I received an email from a Peace Corps Response recruiter asking me to consider a digital video conferencing post in Namibia. Within one week, I had been interviewed and invited and had resigned from my full-time job.

The position was immensely rewarding. I was working within the Rundu Regional Health Training Centre (a Ministry of Health Nursing College), which is situated within the Rundu State Hospital. My project involved training staff of the training centre and hospital to use the video-conferencing equipment and to help to develop a national plan to use the equipment. I quickly came to know all of the nurses, doctors, students, and administrators as we experimented with the equipment.

As with any Peace Corps-related post, I did so much more than my assigned project. I taught English to a Cuban nurse and helped the training centre with day-to-day work. Within a very short period of time, I was a fixture in the college and the hospital and felt completely at home there.

As returned Peace Corps Response Volunteers have said before me, Peace Corps Response is like Peace Corps crammed into a much shorter period of time. It is just as intense and just as meaningful as two years of Peace Corps. The difference is that I went in as a much different person, having had the Peace Corps experience to build upon. This experience enabled me to be much more effective in a shorter period of time.

Diana

PCV Malawi; PCRV Zambia

One of the greatest days in my life was the day I was accepted into the Peace Corps. I was assigned to go to Malawi, Africa, as a health educator, where I served from 1997 to 1999. At the end of my service, I left Africa with a heavy heart—but with fond memories and a new knowledge about myself and the world.

Four years later I found myself wanting to return to Africa, and yet I didn't feel that I wanted to do a two-year program. I was a 57-year-old woman with three grandchildren, and yet I longed to work in Africa and see my African family in Malawi!

Then Peace Corps Response came to mind. Peace Corps Response was exactly what I needed. It was short term, and I could work in my field—HIV/AIDS—and in peer education. After a short time, I was on my way to Zambia.

My assignment was with a newly-formed NGO called PANUKA, which means “wake up.” Although some PCR assignments are more urban, I was, once again, in a rural area, in the south of Zambia. My main focus was to design and implement a curriculum for the training of trainers in HIV/AIDS issues for the women in the village. I also was able to work with the youth, training them in peer education and life skills.

PCR put me perfectly into a job and area that I was comfortable with and had a passion for. In contrast to my Peace Corps experience, I definitely had a different mindset in PCR. I had a specific job to do, and six months to do it. Yet I had to be accepted into the community to be able to complete my work. Six months passed in a flash, and again it was time to close my service.

But, the story doesn't end there. I was chosen to be a trainer with a new HIV/AIDS program. We got 23 new trainees, and I worked with them for nine weeks.

So my love for Peace Corps and Africa has continued. It is a great experience to return to Africa and to PCR. I was able to use my professional skills, and also the skills I learned in the Peace Corps. It has been a wonderful six months and, yes, even PCR is the toughest job you will ever love.

Sarah**PCV Costa Rica; PCRV Central Texas, U.S.**

I was an education Volunteer in Costa Rica in 1986–1988, working with special education programs. Now I am a faculty member at Texas A&M University, where my area of expertise is in disability and special education. In 2005, as I was getting ready to take leave from the university for research, I saw reports on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, including stories of people who lost their wheelchairs, assistance dogs, or communication devices; people separated from their caretakers at their community living centers or nursing homes; people who were nonverbal and could not be identified; as well as people with disabilities who were unable to evacuate and died in the aftermath of the storm. It was clear to me and others in my field that individuals with disabilities were horribly at-risk—not only during the disaster, but also following the disaster—and were receiving inadequate and sometimes inappropriate support services. After seeing individuals with disabilities who were affected by Hurricane Katrina, I knew I wanted to volunteer to help relief efforts in the Gulf Coast region.

As a PC Response Volunteer, I was assigned to FEMA. Given my knowledge of services for individuals with disabilities in the state, I was often assigned to complete intake applications and referrals for these individuals. I also assisted in developing a resource guide for use by nonprofits and agencies in Central Texas that assisted in disaster recovery. Two weeks after our deployment to Austin, Hurricane Rita hit the Texas coast and another wave of evacuees were dispersed through Texas, which allowed for me to observe close-at-hand how FEMA prepared and responded to this additional disaster.

Following my assignment with FEMA, I continued to be closely involved with the disaster response efforts in Central Texas. I represented my local community at the Central Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) meetings and served as a liaison to the Texas Interagency-Interfaith Disaster Relief (TIDR). I obtained training in housing hurricane evacuees, and attended disaster training delivered by two different organizations.

I returned to my university, Texas A&M, which is a new member of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). We successfully submitted a proposal to evaluate the services received by individuals with disabilities through the national Case Management Consortium of Katrina Aid Today. Subsequently, our Center on Disability has become involved in the long-term recovery efforts of evacuees with disabilities, and we recently distributed a resource guide on disability services for use by extension agents throughout Texas. I have been named as a Fellow through the Disaster Research Education Mentoring Program at Dartmouth University and will spend the next two years with a research mentor who will guide me in studying the literature on the effects of disaster on individuals with disabilities and in submitting proposals for future research.

Peace Corps Response gave me the opportunity to explore a new facet of my area of expertise. So much has generated from one small month of service in Peace Corps Response!

Howard

PCV Ghana, South Africa, and Samoa; PCRV Uganda

I was the first Peace Corps Response Volunteer to serve in Uganda. This was my fourth stint with the Peace Corps, as I had already served two-year tours in Ghana, South Africa, and Samoa. In fact, I first took the Peace Corps oath as part of the second training group in Ghana; the fourth Peace Corps Volunteer group ever to be sworn into service.

I was a PCR Volunteer in Kampala, Uganda, during 2005 and 2006. My assignment was to develop a monitoring and evaluation system in an NGO that was involved in HIV/AIDS prevention.

On the first day of my assignment, a newly hired Ugandan and I met the entire staff. He was introduced as the new monitoring and evaluation specialist. The director then asked me what I would be doing over the next six months. My response was to help them in any way possible. Over the next three weeks, I interviewed all the staff to determine their needs and then conducted a needs assessment as to the type of training they would like to have. I conducted a series of management seminars using experiential methodologies based upon the adult education model.

I also participated in four district workshops for youth leaders through their Young Empowered and Healthy (YEAH) Project. YEAH is a national communication campaign for young people between ages 14 and 24, combining mass media, community, and person-to-person approaches that promote positive behaviors toward HIV/AIDS. The campaign promotes dialogue and action in communities, schools, and health facilities around young people's needs and models positive practices through local and national media. My role included enhancing the YEAH Project's monitoring and evaluation by establishing systems for collecting and reporting data and helping build the capacity of the YEAH team and partner organization staff to record, compile, and process data to assist in decision-making.

I also developed an HIV/AIDS board game and established a newspaper essay contest.

There was ample time during the weekends and official holidays to take in the game parks, go whitewater rafting, and hike and bicycle around. The PCVs serving in Uganda were also very supportive and friendly.

I would recommend the Peace Corps Response experience to any former PCV.

Jenny

PCV Benin; PCRV Sri Lanka

After serving in the Peace Corps in Benin from 2001 to 2003, I had an opportunity to volunteer again with Peace Corps Response. I was assigned to an organizational development project in Sri Lanka with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

After the tsunami, IOM's mission grew to over 250 employees virtually overnight and continued to grow as the reconstruction needs evolved. Over three months I facilitated the establishment of a formal HR department by identifying needs for additional staff and working with the team to implement IOM's procedures on records management, recruitment, selection, medical clearance, hiring, training, evaluation, and payroll processing systems. The project was very intense and required the ability to quickly adapt to a new culture.

The success of the project was a direct result of combining the skills I had acquired as a Peace Corps Volunteer with my background in human resources to achieve tangible results in a short period of time.

Michelle

PCV Senegal; PCR Namibia

Being a Peace Corps Response Volunteer was a wonderful, unique opportunity that allowed me to apply the knowledge I had from my previous Peace Corps service while simultaneously learning new information and skills applicable to my interest in education, health, and sub-Saharan Africa.

Having served as a rural health Volunteer in Senegal (2000–2003), I was placed with the Ministry of Education in northern Namibia. Working for the Regional AIDS Committee of Education (RACE), my main responsibility was to organize HIV/AIDS education activities in a large school district. My efforts were focused primarily on training teachers in grades 5 to 12 to be HIV/AIDS educators in a country where HIV infection rates are an astonishing 22 percent.

My previous service as a Peace Corps Volunteer, as well as post-service job experience, gave me the confidence to “jump into” my new job. In just a few months, I trained 115 teachers from 75 schools to be HIV/AIDS resources in their communities and institutions. I also was able to expand the HIV/AIDS resource library for the school district and develop a newsletter for teachers and students. Additionally, I helped train other Ministry staff to facilitate some of the workshop sessions, providing them with an opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge about HIV/AIDS, to reach out to teachers, and to gain leadership and public speaking skills. I was particularly impressed by two young staff members who, despite local taboos, bravely and accurately provided information and a demonstration of both male and female condoms. Even the older female teachers, who were very embarrassed at first to even look at a condom, were able to repeat the demonstration themselves by the end of those sessions.

I am very glad I had the opportunity to serve as a Peace Corps Response Volunteer because it allowed me to work for a government ministry, which helped me to understand the various challenges and opportunities governments face (and the obstacles they sometimes create), as well as how they “fit in” the development picture that so often seems to be dominated by NGOs. I also learned firsthand how the HIV/AIDS pandemic is affecting sub-Saharan Africa, something I did not fully comprehend until I lived in Namibia. Having another overseas living experience has also broadened my knowledge and perspective of Africa and development in general. Moreover, this overseas experience has helped diversify my CV and perhaps set me apart somewhat from my peers.

Upon returning, I enrolled in graduate school, where I am currently a candidate for a master's in development management, with a focus on education and training. Through my Namibia experience, I gained firsthand knowledge that I have been able to apply to my graduate coursework and studies. Importantly, my PCRV position also gave me the opportunity to facilitate (and not just plan) workshops, which helped me to develop confidence as a public speaker and to gain invaluable teaching/training experience. That experience has gotten me very interested in training efforts, and I have consequently taken a graduate level class in how to design training programs.

Liz

PCV El Salvador; PCRV Louisiana, U.S.

My Peace Corps assignment was in El Salvador 1969–1972. Years later I was able to serve again.

To be assisting people in a national disaster instead of sitting at home witnessing it on television is an indescribable feeling. Working with the multitudes of workers assisting the victims also was very rewarding. Volunteering with Peace Corps Response in LaPlace, Louisiana, was extremely exhausting but tremendously rewarding.

We spent the first week in Louisiana helping organize food storage, a clothing distribution center, an animal shelter, and a family shelter. Days were long and weather was hot and muggy, but knowing that I was helping to make life easier for people in need was a highlight of my life.

Then we were assigned to LaPlace, where I worked with the FEMA staff assisting people in resources. We worked up to 14 hours a day, seven days a week. Outside the buildings it was hot and muggy. Most of my time was spent in cold, air-conditioned buildings. Our center was an empty old Rite Aid building.

The hurricane victims welcomed not only our assistance in housing, financial, and other tangible things, but also an open ear, open eyes, and some humor along the way. The people were very grateful for all our support and time.

My main contribution, other than what I have mentioned, is that I helped organize our file system and was a mentor of work ethic. Being a Volunteer, I was working to help the people and not to make money. I worked extremely hard to help to make others' lives better. Others would wonder why I would volunteer and work so hard. It would inspire them to work harder.

We felt there was much more that I could contribute, and when my site supervisor asked if I would extend my stay another month, I agreed to do so.

We first slept in a tent city, which was able to house 1,400 people in tents. I slept in a tent for 60 women and had to walk about 70 steps to the outdoor latrine and 200 steps to the showers. When Hurricane Rita was coming, we needed to move out. I went to a Job Corps location and slept with 99 others in their gym and later transferred to a room of four.

I still have a tie to Louisiana and can relate to the tragedy. I feel that I have contributed to their relief. I had never known much about Louisiana except the Mardi Gras. I now have a greater respect and admiration for the area and the people. I have gained a greater respect for how people handle a crisis. The strength of the people in the New Orleans area, including southern Mississippi, is something that I would not have believed if I hadn't seen and experienced it myself.

Peace Corps Response (PCR) Reader's Theater

Note to trainer: This script calls for seven volunteer readers. Each reader needs to have a name tag (name tags attached to session plan) and a copy of the whole script with his or her role name highlighted each time it appears. The readers do not have to get the scripts in advance.

I. Introduction

"We're going to have an opportunity to learn about Peace Corps Response by hearing the voices of several PCR Volunteers. While I introduce the Volunteers, listen and decide if you would like to read the words of one of them."

"We are going to hear from [you might list these on a flip chart] ...

Maria—PCR Volunteer in Philippines

Katie—PCR Volunteer in Namibia

Rob—PCR Volunteer in Sri Lanka

Rosie—PCR Volunteer in St. Lucia

Howard—PCR Volunteer in Uganda

Sarah—PCR Volunteer in Texas, U.S.

Roy—PCR Volunteer in Guatemala

Who would like to read...? Hand out all of the name tags and scripts.

II. Reading

Have the readers come to the front of the room unless the group is seated in a circle. Everyone needs to be able to see and hear each reader.

You are the narrator. Read the bolded question and then have the readers each read their parts. Continue in the same way with the next three questions.

III. Debriefing

After the script is finished, thank the volunteers and collect the scripts and name tags.

Ask the participants to reflect on what they heard, with questions such as

- *What were some of the motivations to sign up for PCR?*
- *What kinds of things did they do? Do any of those sound interesting to you?*
- *What benefits did they receive from the short-term assignments? Would those types of benefits motivate you?*
- *Does the idea of volunteering for Peace Corps Response appeal to you? If so, why?*

Distribute the Peace Corps Response brochure or fact sheet. (Obtain from PC Response office in Washington, D.C. pcresponse@peacecorps.gov/response)

Script

Narrator: Will you please introduce yourselves and tell us where you served as Peace Corps Volunteers?

Maria

Hi everyone, my name is Maria and I was an education Volunteer in the Philippines.

Katie

Hi! I'm Katie and I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ghana.

Rob

I'm Rob and I was a Volunteer in Colombia from 1966 to 1970.

Rosie

My name's Rosie and I served in Namibia from 1996 to 1998 as a health Volunteer.

Howard

I'm Howard. As you can see, I've got some age on me! I was first a Volunteer in 1963–1965 in Ghana! Nearly 40 years later, in 2001, I became a Volunteer in South Africa. And then I did yet another tour in Samoa from 2003 to 2005.

Sarah

Hello, my name is Sarah and I served as a PCV in Costa Rica in the Eighties.

Roy

Hi there. I'm Roy and I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Paraguay in the agroforestry sector.

Narrator: Please tell us what motivated you to become a Peace Corps Response Volunteer.

Rosie

The impetus to serve as a PCR Volunteer came at a most opportune time. As a doctoral student at the University of California at Berkeley's public health program, I had to fulfill a "residency" requirement, which entails spending up to three months pursuing a practical experience. This is meant to use skills and competencies learned in the classroom and apply them to a real-world setting. I looked at various agencies to gain this experience, and stumbled across a position for an HIV/AIDS technical officer for the National AIDS Programme Secretariat in St. Lucia. It wasn't long before I applied, was interviewed, was nominated, accepted the nomination, and began the process of preparing to serve as a Volunteer yet again.

Sarah

In 2005 as a faculty member at Texas A&M University I was getting ready to take leave for research when there were terrible reports on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, including stories of people who lost their wheelchairs, assistance dogs, or communication devices; people separated from their caretakers at their community living centers or nursing homes; people who were nonverbal and could not be identified; as well as people with disabilities who were unable to evacuate and died in the aftermath of the storm. It was clear to me and others in my field that individuals with disabilities were horribly at-risk—not only during the disaster, but also following the disaster—and were receiving inadequate and sometimes inappropriate support services. After seeing individuals with disabilities who were affected by Hurricane Katrina, I knew I wanted to volunteer to help relief efforts in the Gulf Coast region. Through PC Response, I was assigned to work with FEMA.

Katie

I started feeling the pull to do more service abroad. I looked at the available Peace Corps Response posts on the Peace Corps website and was thrilled to see a position in Ghana. I quickly completed the application and sent it off. I was disappointed to discover that the posts were already full. One week later, I received an email from a Peace Corps Response recruiter asking me to consider a digital video conferencing post in Namibia. Within one week, I had been interviewed and invited and had resigned from my full-time job.

Maria

When you hear the words *Peace Corps Response*, what typically comes to mind? Adventurous volunteers wielding a hammer and nail as they help construct a house with Habitat for Humanity? Or perhaps skilled engineers designing water sanitation plans for a community recovering from a conflict or natural disaster? Those were the kinds of projects I always imagined Peace Corps Response Volunteers undertook, so as a former education PCV with a background in teaching elementary students, I never gave much consideration to the possibility of serving as a PCRV. That is, not until I learned about a new education program that Peace Corps Response was supporting in the Philippines. It spoke to my background and expertise.

Narrator: Please give us an idea of what you did in your Peace Corps Response project.

Rob

I joined a PCR team headed for Sri Lanka to do civil engineering and reconstruction after the 2004 tsunami. I was assigned to a local group of host-country engineers and social workers. We executed a fast-track program of surveying the damage, prioritizing a list of projects, doing the design work, contracting with local constructors, and supervising the construction. By the end, we renovated or rebuilt parts of four schools, a hospital, a community health center, and a public park.

Maria

I was assigned to work with The Bicol Assistance Project, or BAP, a two-year program being funded by USAID and implemented by Save the Children. My job as a PCRV was to assist the BAP staff in documenting the educational activities they have undertaken in the schools, local government units, and communities they've been assisting. One of my projects has been to edit a series of children's workbooks on disaster preparedness that were developed by local elementary teachers and schoolchildren. The workbooks contain lessons, stories, games, and activities designed to educate children about different kinds of natural hazards and safety precautions. These workbooks are the first instructional materials on disaster preparedness to ever be integrated into the school curriculum in the Philippines, so it was critical that they be accurate and well designed. I provided technical assistance with editing and revising the text, making recommendations to improve the visual layout, and reorganizing the content into chapters devoted to specific hazards.

Howard

I was a PCR Volunteer in Kampala, Uganda, during 2005 and 2006. My assignment was to develop a monitoring and evaluation system in an NGO that was involved in HIV/AIDS prevention. I conducted a series of management seminars using experiential methodologies based on the adult education model.

I also participated in four district workshops for youth leaders through their Young Empowered and Healthy (YEAH) Project. YEAH is a national communication campaign for young people between the ages of 14 and 24, combining mass media, community and person-to-person approaches that promote positive behaviors toward HIV/AIDS. The campaign promotes dialogue and action in communities, schools, and health facilities around young people's needs and models positive practices through local and national media. My role included enhancing the YEAH Project's monitoring and evaluation by establishing systems for collecting and reporting data and helping build the capacity of the YEAH team and partner organization staff to record, compile, and process data to assist in decision making.

Sarah

Given my knowledge of services for individuals with disabilities in the state, I was assigned to complete intake applications and referrals for individuals. I also assisted in developing a resource guide for use by nonprofits and agencies in central Texas that assisted in disaster recovery. Two weeks after our deployment to Austin, Hurricane Rita hit the Texas coast and another wave of evacuees were dispersed through Texas, which allowed for me to observe close-at-hand how FEMA prepared and responded to this additional disaster.

Roy

I served as an agroforestry Peace Corps Response Volunteer in the town of Tacana, in the southwestern highlands of Guatemala, which is located 50 kilometers south of the Mexican border. I helped to coordinate the reforestation efforts of the NGO CARE/Guatemala and the local Tacana forestry office in a dozen rural communities hardest hit by Hurricane Stan.

Katie

I was working within the Rundu Regional Health Training Centre (a Ministry of Health Nursing College), which is situated within the Rundu State Hospital. My project involved instructing centre and hospital staff in how to use the video conferencing equipment and to help to develop a national plan to use the equipment. I quickly came to know all of the nurses, doctors, students, and administrators as we experimented with the equipment. The position was immensely rewarding.

As with any Peace Corps-related post, I did so much more than my assigned project. I taught English to a Cuban nurse and helped the training centre with day-to-day work. Within a very short period of time, I was a fixture in the college and the hospital and felt completely at home there.

Narrator: One last question: What did you find were the benefits of being a PC Response Volunteer?

Katie

As RPCRVs have said before me, Peace Corps Response is like Peace Corps crammed into a much shorter period of time. It is just as intense and just as meaningful as two years of the Peace Corps. The difference is that I went in as a much different person, having had the Peace Corps experience to build on. That experience enabled me to be much more effective in a shorter period of time.

Rob

I think that PCR was so rewarding because the feelings it evokes never goes away. The memories. The people. The work. The satisfactions. Peace Corps Response is a chance to do it all again. It's like before, but now you're better at it. More experience to draw on, to add focus to the raw enthusiasm. The perspective of the intervening years. Better organization and management skills. Some gray hair, both figurative and literal—and they both help.

Roy

The greatest benefit was to be able to truly find myself in the fortunate position of being able to provide meaningful technical support while sharing in the daily lives of rural community members as they summoned the strength to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives and move forward with hope and purpose. To put it simply, it is a sight to see and a lesson to be learned by all of us. As always in one's Peace Corps experience, Peace Corps Response experience, and the experience of life overall, the learning curve is steep but the return on investment is more than fulfilling if one is keen enough to realize which currencies are of true value.

Sarah

Peace Corps Response gave me the opportunity to explore a new facet of my area of expertise—and to better understand the experiences of individuals with disabilities in disaster. I plan to continue to pursue this line of research, as well as to explore how to best support the long-term recovery of individuals with cognitive disabilities. So much has been generated from one small month of service in Peace Corps Response!

Maria

It has been really rewarding to see how the workbooks have evolved over the past couple of months, and it's truly a project that we—the students, teachers, and BAP staff—can be proud of. When they were completed, we formally presented the published books at a dedication ceremony in a relocation center for families displaced by the typhoon. The U.S. ambassador to the Philippines, along with representatives from USAID, handed the workbooks over to several members of the Junior Emergency Response Team at a local elementary school. Some of these students had contributed their own personal survival stories. I can take satisfaction in knowing that these kids are going to teach their peers about disaster preparedness by using the workbooks as a tool.

Rosie

By the end of my service, I made friends, colleagues, and professional contacts, and also contributed to the improvement of the HIV/AIDS response in this beautiful island in the sun. I have gained both further professional experience in the area of HIV/AIDS and I have become a better person. I highly recommend that one and all who may hear the call to serve in the Corps again heed that call and once again explore the toughest job you'll ever love.

SESSION 9A

Saying Goodbye: Bringing Effective Closure To Your Last Months In-Country



Purpose

This session helps Volunteers plan to make the most of the last months in-country by bringing assignment and community activities to a close and then saying goodbye appropriately before moving on to the next steps in life. This is a critical step toward making a good transition. Volunteers discuss strategies for reviewing their work with counterparts to help communities plan for the next steps with a new Volunteer, or to move forward without a Volunteer. Volunteers review issues of safety and security that are specific to the last few months of service—often a vulnerable time for Volunteers.



Rationale

The last three months of Volunteer service should be approached differently from all the time that went before. During these final months it is important for Volunteers to conclude their assignment responsibilities; say goodbye to their friends and co-workers; and prepare for leaving the host country, or, if staying, moving into a new status.

These months are extremely busy ones for most Volunteers. The demands of work, social life, and planning for the future can make the time fly by and perhaps even create stress and exhaustion. These factors can contribute to more vulnerability in terms of safety and security. In addition, some people may find it difficult to discuss their departure at their site and face the farewell events and parties.

This is a good time for Volunteers to begin thinking about the closure of overseas service as a means of preparing for the future, which includes third goal activities that will benefit the peoples they served for two years. Presenting this concept at this session allows the Volunteers to consider their last three months in-country as a time for closure as well as a time of opportunity. (Here, you can remind Volunteers that they are Volunteers for a brief time, but are returned Volunteers for the rest of their lives.)



Duration

45 minutes–1 hour



Objectives

By the end of the session, the Volunteers will

- Accept and plan for the fact that their Volunteer service abroad is coming to an end.
- Explain the importance of saying goodbye and seeking closure.
- Identify activities to be completed prior to departure from assigned community and country.
- Plan how to review status of work with counterpart, community, or host organization and help them prepare for what happens next.
- List last things to see or experience, as well as people to receive goodbyes.

[Session 9B: Review safety and security strategies related to closing service.]



Session Outline

- I. Introduction (10 minutes)
- II. Closing out assignment and life in community (10 minutes)
- III. Personal goodbyes (20 minutes)
- IV. Superlatives (5 minutes)



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

1. Facilitator should be aware of what is expected of Volunteers, in terms of site reports, project follow-up documents, etc.
2. Facilitator should also be aware of any special issues with the particular group COS-ing, such as difficult assignments, unpleasant events, etc., that might affect how this session will unfold. Make modifications to address any special issues.
3. If possible, have an HCN co-facilitator who can give tips on culturally appropriate ways to say "Thank you" and "Goodbye"—written cards, types of gifts, etc.
4. Facilitator should review Appendix 3 for appropriate ideas and resources.



Materials and Equipment

Blank flip charts

Prepared flip charts

A. Transition Chart (from Session 1)

B. Superlatives

Handout: "Saying Goodbye"



Trainer Preparation

If post has guidance for Volunteers on reports and documents for transitioning out of projects and sites, those should be made available in this session, if they were not covered in Session 4.



Methodology

I. Introduction (10 minutes)

Step 1: Look back at the transition chart. Note that saying goodbye happens while physically in-country, but that the effects of doing it well—or not doing it well—will linger into their re-engagement. Ask if anyone has an example of not saying goodbye well before leaving home and how it affected him or her once in the host country. (Examples: leaving relationships open-ended and feeling bad; not calling or visiting an older relative who becomes ill or dies; having tasks left undone (reports, papers) follow you to post where it is difficult to finish them; etc.)

Step 2: Ask, “Why do you think we sometimes don’t do a good job of saying good-bye?” (Denying that we have to leave people or things we like; not ready to leave—procrastinating; don’t think it is important; uncomfortable with expressing emotions, receiving emotional expressions of others; fed up with certain tasks or people—just want to leave them behind, etc.). “If saying goodbye sounds dreadful to you, and you prefer to just ‘disappear,’ think about how your counterparts, host family, and others you worked and lived with would feel—rejected and unappreciated.”

Step 3: There are two aspects of leaving: one is disengagement—all the paperwork and physical things we have to do—and the other is saying goodbye. Saying goodbye is putting closure to relationships and recognizing what places and things will be missed. By planning how we will say goodbye and getting tasks on the calendar, we can do a better job of it, and leave the country in a better state of mind to face whatever comes next.

Step 4: Review the objectives of the session.

II. Closing out assignment and life in community (10 minutes)

Step 1: We have already had a session and a big checklist of things you must do to close out your service with the Peace Corps. But what are the things you need to do with your school, agency, NGO, and community to put closure to the work you have been doing? Make and discuss two lists: one if the Volunteer will not

be replaced and one if there will be a next generation of Volunteer in the same job. (Items may include writing down information on projects to be followed up, reports that may be required, transition meetings with counterpart(s) who will take over projects, site information for next generation Volunteer; be careful not to raise false expectations—like giving away things or money, or promising to send things back from home.)

Step 2: Discuss local customs for people who are leaving or are honored in some way. What might Volunteers expect to happen to them? How do they feel about it? What strategies do they have for handling it? Do they feel there will be expectations of them doing something special? If so, what?

III. Saying goodbye to personal friends, special places, and things (20 minutes)

Step 1: “There are both professional and personal goodbyes to say. Just as we thought about the professional things above, you need to make plans for the personal things as well.”

Step 2: “What are some of the personal things you will miss?” (Just have PCVs call them out.) Are there any special ways to remember them?

Step 3: “Since things will start getting busy once you leave this conference, let’s take some time for you to make your own plans for saying goodbye.” Distribute the worksheet “Saying Goodbye” and give them about 10 minutes to work.

Step 4: Ask PCVs to pull their chairs into groups of five or six and share some of their items.

Step 5: Ask an HCN facilitator to give specific tips on culturally appropriate thank you’s and goodbyes to different people (supervisors, colleagues, friends)—written, verbal, gifts or gestures (such as taking a cake or cookies to workplace). Ask if Volunteers have any specific concerns they would like advice about, such as someone who might go to the airport although they don’t want them to. What are culturally acceptable ways to address their concerns?

IV. Closure: Superlatives (5 minutes)

Trainer's note: As this session may have been unpleasant for many Volunteers who have enjoyed their service and are finding leaving difficult, this is a way to lighten up at the end.

Step 1: Explain that as a final step, the group will look at superlatives. Reveal the flip chart and ask participants to think back to the group discussion, their individual planning, and their small-group sharing. In a minute, you'll call off the superlatives and they are to call out their responses.

Step 2: Read through the list and have the PCVs call out their responses. There are no right or wrong ones, and people may say the same thing for different categories. Hopefully, there will be some laughter!

Prepared flip charts

A. Transition chart (from Session 1)

B. Superlatives

- The hardest
- The most complicated
- The most popular
- The saddest
- The most expensive
- The most obvious
- The most surprising
- The most intriguing
- The most dreaded
- The most unusual
- The silliest
- The cheapest
- The most poignant
- The cleverest

HANDOUT

Saying Goodbye

	Who I need to see <i>(individuals, groups)</i>	What I need to do <i>(make appointments, call a meeting, prepare remarks/gifts, take photos)</i>	Places I want to visit; things I want to do	How will I remember these people, places, and things?
Professional				
Personal				

SESSION 9B

Safety and Security at COS



Purpose

There are three purposes of this session: (1) to alert Volunteers to their risk of crimes that are more likely to occur late in their service; (2) to have Volunteers report incidents that they have not yet reported; and, (3) to invite Volunteers to provide feedback for improving the post's Volunteer safety support system.



Rationale

Volunteers who are COSing may be anxious about leaving and be less vigilant about their personal safety. Or, they may feel very comfortable in their surroundings, also leading them to be less vigilant. On the other hand, they may be already "moving on" in their minds and paying less attention to their surroundings. This session raises their awareness of the need to remain vigilant and gives them an opportunity to explore actions they can take to avoid crimes that tend to occur late in Volunteers' service.



Duration

1 hour



Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will

- Explain the crimes that are most likely to occur late in their service and state several strategies to avoid them or reduce their effect.
- Report any incidents that they have not yet reported.
- Provide feedback for improving the post's Volunteer safety support system.



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

This segment of the COS training is often done by the post safety and security coordinator.



Session Outline

- I. Introduction (5 minutes)
- II. Safety concerns at end of service (30 minutes)
- III. Reporting past incidents (10 minutes)
- IV. Feedback for improving post safety support (15 minutes)



Materials and Equipment

Blank flip chart paper, markers, tape

3 x 5 cards or ¼ sheets of paper

Pens and pencils

Prepared flip charts:

- A. Transition chart (from Session 1)
- B. Objectives of the session
- C. Chart of time-in-service crime trends
- D. Small group task

Handouts:

- A. Sample End-of-Service Crimes
- B. Post-created incident report form



Trainer Preparation

1. Prepare up-to-date information about what crimes are most likely to occur during the last three months of service. Use the post's own crime data, or seek assistance from the subregional Peace Corps safety and security officer. The Crime Statistics and Analysis Unit in PC/Washington can also provide data analysis assistance and may be contacted at CIR@peacecorps.gov. For most posts the most common crimes at the end of service are robbery, burglary, and theft, but may also include rape or attempted rape, vandalism, aggravated assault or physical assault, stalking, or intimidation. If possible, contrast these end-of-service crimes with the types of crimes that may be more likely to occur earlier in service or at a year into service. (See sample information at end of session titled Trainers' Resource.)
2. Use or modify the handout to collect previously unreported crimes to ensure that all necessary information is available to complete a Consolidated Incident Reporting System [CIRS] report. For example, date of incident, time of day, what happened, what type of weapon was used, location of incident, etc. (for Part III, step 4.)



Methodology

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

Step 1: Refer to the transition chart from Session 1. Ask how the transition PCVs are in now might affect their safety and security. *(Answers may include anxiety about leaving and less vigilance about their personal safety. Or they may feel very comfortable in their surroundings, also leading them to be less vigilant. On the other hand, they may be already “moving on” in their minds and paying less attention to their surroundings.)*

Step 2: Explain that this session will address safety and security. Introduce yourself and the objectives.

II. Safety concerns at end of service (30 minutes)

Step 1: Explain that based on data you have been gathering (or compiled at headquarters in Washington, D.C.), we can identify certain crimes that are more likely to occur later in a Volunteer's service.

Step 2: Reveal the crime data flip chart (or distribute Handout A) and explain the data. Identify crimes more likely to occur later in service.

Step 3: Explain that PCVs will have about 10 minutes to consider these different crimes in small groups: burglary, robbery, and theft.

- a. Reveal the small-group-task flip chart and explain that PCVs should address
 1. Why the incidence of this crime might be most common toward the end of service.
 2. What you already do to manage your risk of this crime.
 3. What additional action COSing Volunteers could take to further reduce their risk.
- b. Ask them to divide into the same number of groups as the number of crimes you have identified.
- c. Give each group a blank flip chart and marking pen, and tell them which crime to discuss.
- d. Remind them when they have two minutes left.

Step 4: Ask the whole group to come back together. Have each small group report their conclusions about the causes for the pattern and their suggestions for preventing the crimes.

For example, one group might be assigned to examine burglary, and might observe it is common at the end of service because PCVs might become complacent about their integration into the community and stop locking doors; criminals may seek to steal items before the PCV leaves; the PCV may be absent from home frequently for wrap-up activities; PCVs' property such as cameras might be more conspicuous as they take pictures around the community in anticipation of leaving, etc. The group might then describe steps they take to manage their risk, such as asking neighbors to help keep an eye on their house, purchasing personal articles insurance, securing windows in a certain fashion, etc. Finally, they should identify additional ways to reduce their risk at the end of service, including locking one's door, even if you're just down the street for a short time; reducing travel; not conspicuously displaying property; backing up data on electronic devices so a loss will be less traumatic.

Step 5: Ask Volunteers if they have any reactions to the exercise, or if they noticed anything from the groups' work. *(Most of the strategies are their own responsibility; the strategies sound like things they have been doing throughout their service—they merely shouldn't let down their guard as COS approaches; talking to other Volunteers, it is possible to collect a lot of security ideas; it is a lot easier to prevent a crime from occurring than to reduce the impact once it occurs, etc.).* Acknowledge that Volunteers have identified many ways to reduce the risk of the crimes that are most common at the end of service, and it is your hope they can conclude their service without incident. Further, explain that gathering these insights—along with crime information—from past Volunteers enables present and future Volunteers to better understand the risks they face.

III. Reporting past incidents (10 minutes)

Step 1: Transition from the previous activity by saying that you would like the PCVs to contribute to the understanding of Volunteers' experience with crime by letting you know about any crimes they have not yet reported. Explain that you understand that Volunteers experience crimes that they sometimes do not report to Peace Corps; give some of the reasons they do not report them: fear of administrative consequences, shame, believing there is nothing the Peace Corps can do to help, loss of privacy, etc.

Step 2: Explain that the Peace Corps is using a more powerful and automated system for collecting and analyzing crime data. But in order to better analyze crimes and reveal trends, we need more data. We also need to know about crimes so we can provide better support to Volunteers. This means we would like Volunteers to report all crimes and attempted crimes they experience.

Step 3: Encourage Volunteers to report any crimes or attempted crimes they experienced, even if those crimes happened a long time ago. Crimes that should be reported include rape, attempted rape, robbery, attempted robbery, physical assault, burglary, forced kissing, groping, threats, stalking, theft, attempted theft, vandalism, or other crimes.

Step 4: Distribute the incident report form. Give about five minutes to complete. (Ask anyone who needs more time to keep the form and complete it later.)

III. Feedback for improving post safety support (15 minutes)

Step 1: Explain that there is one more part of this session. This is where the PCVs can help the post serve new Volunteers better.

Step 2: Using a white board or a flip chart, brainstorm elements of the post's Volunteer Safety Support System (VSSS). (*For example: newsletter articles informing PCVs about risk, requirement to wear bike helmets, PST training sessions, site locator forms, rape whistles, incident response procedures, the EAP, out-of-site policy, housing criteria, etc.*)

Step 3: Explain that post is always trying to improve safety support to Volunteers. Ask the PCVs to consider the brainstormed elements of post's VSSS, and write one piece of advice for post to improve the safety support the Peace Corps provides to Volunteers. Instruct participants to make the suggestion short, specific, and concrete. Offer an example, or invite someone to give an example or two to ensure everyone understands the activity. (*APCDs should meet with police when they visit sites, think through evacuation routes before placing PCVs in individual sites, explain what crimes are occurring in-country more often, give PCVs bikes with brakes that function, stress the importance of living near a family in selecting housing, etc.*)

- a. Distribute 3x5 cards or small pieces of paper.
- b. Give them a few minutes to write down their idea. Encourage them to write clearly because others will have to read it.

Step 4: Ranking activity.

- a. Explain that they are going to do an activity called Thirty-five. They will exchange their cards with others until you call stop.
- b. At that point they find a partner.
- c. Each person reads aloud what is on his or her card to the partner. Together they decide how many points each idea gets.
- d. They have a total of 7 points to assign. All seven can go to one idea, with 0 to the other, or any other combination of 7, such as 3 and 4. Write the number on the backside of each card. For example, if a pair has "Remind us who our EAP wardens are more often" and "Make sure our houses are safe," the pair might allot 2 points to the EAP wardens statement and 5 points to the housing safety sentence.
- e. Then the activity will repeat. You will call out what to do.
- f. Ask everyone to stand, take their card and something to write with.
- g. Ask them to begin exchanging cards. After about 10 seconds, call out "stop." Then "find a partner."
- h. Each couple compares the two ideas and assigns scores: the total number of points to assign, once again, is 7.
- i. Continue with four more rounds (or fewer) of exchanging cards and assigning points.
- j. Ask everyone to take whatever card they ended up with and sit down.

Step 5: Ask everyone to add up all the numbers on their cards.

Step 6: Two options:

- a. You may call out descending numbers, starting from 35 (the maximum, if you did a total of five rounds) until someone has the number you are calling out. That person reads out the idea on the card. Continue counting down to about 20.
- b. You may ask everyone to line up in numerical order according to the total on his or her card. Have the top 10 or so read out their ideas so everyone hears the recommendations that got the highest number of points.

Step 7: Thank Volunteers for their input.

- a. Ask if they have comments or questions about the ideas they ranked.
- b. Note that you will record their suggestions and their importance (from the ranking) for later discussion with the CD and other senior staff members. Collect all of the cards.
- c. Tell them when you'll be available, if they would like to talk further.

Trainer Resource

Commonly Reported Crimes Toward the End of Service

Each post should examine its own experience with crime to discern trends, including which crimes are most common at the end of service. Worldwide, robbery, burglary, and theft are the most common crimes to be reported at the end of service.

The Africa and IAP regions mimic the global pattern, with robbery, burglary, and theft as the most commonly reported crimes toward the end of service. The EMA Region is distinct due to its high proportion of thefts (over half of reported crimes), coupled with the fact that robbery and burglary essentially are not reported at the end of service. Physical assaults and threats, however, each account for 8.5 percent of reported incidents.

In Africa, the subregions of West Africa, Southern Africa, and East Africa/Indian Ocean all experience robbery, burglary, and theft as the predominant types of crime reported.

In the Eastern Europe/Mediterranean subregion, thefts and other physical assaults were the most commonly reported incident types during the last three months of service. No burglaries are reported, and there is a low proportion of robberies.

In the Central Asia/Caucasus subregion, the most commonly reported incident types are split among four classifications: aggravated assault, threat, burglary, and theft. No incidents of any type are generally reported in the last two months of service.

Finally, the East Asia subregion reports a high proportion of thefts and robberies in the last three months of service.

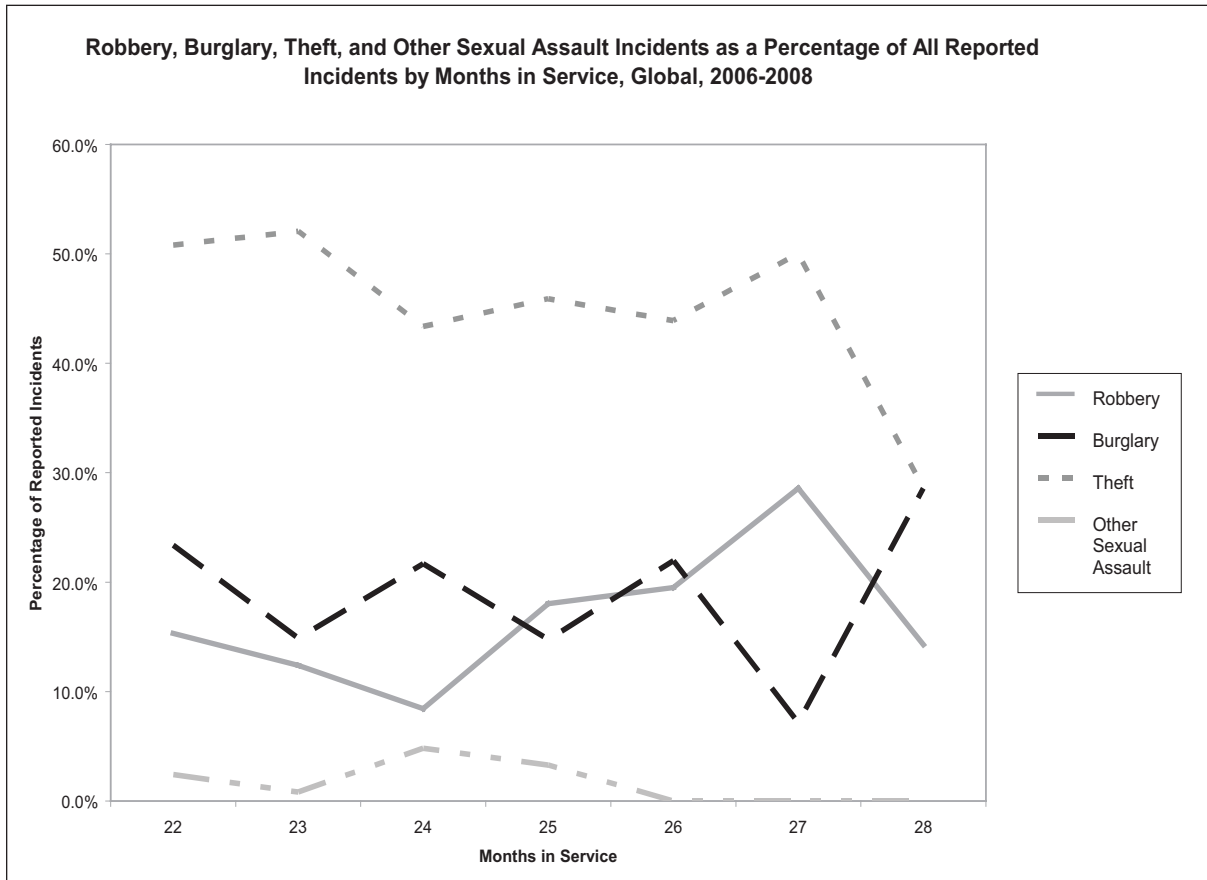
The Central America subregion reports the same three most common crimes as the global and regional assessments; however, the proportion of robberies begins to increase dramatically toward the end of service.

The Pacific subregion, with a relatively small number of Volunteers and reported crimes, has an irregular pattern in the last three months. Theft is generally not reported, but instead threats and burglaries are most common.

The South America and Caribbean subregions are consistent with the global pattern, reporting mostly robbery, burglary, and theft in the last three months.

Prepared flip charts

- A. Transition Process chart (from Session 1)
- B. Session Objectives (see page one of session plan)
- C. Sample End-of-Service Crimes



Flip Chart D

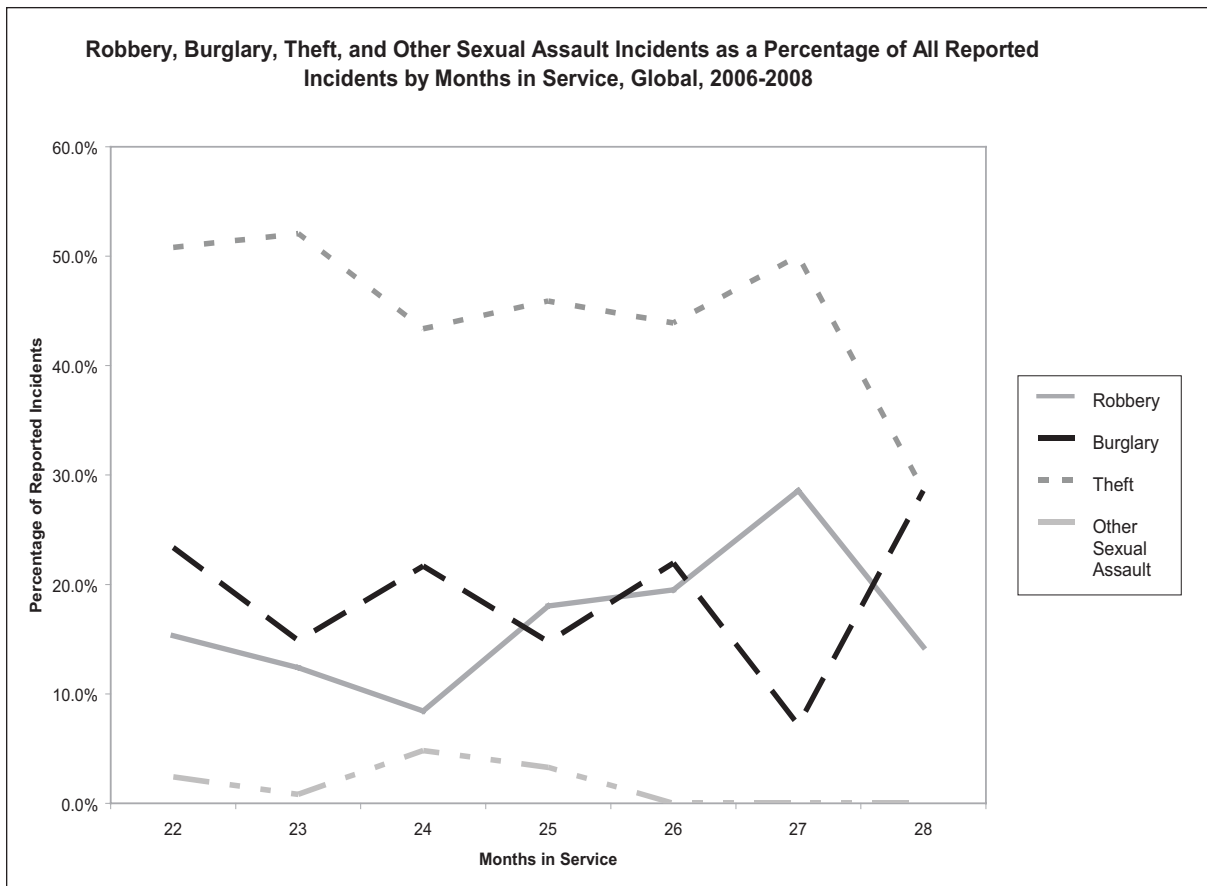
Small-group task

For the crime you have been assigned, list

1. Why the incidence of this crime might be most common toward the end of service.
2. What you already do to manage your risk of this crime.
3. What additional action COSing Volunteers could take to further reduce their risk.

Use a flip chart and be prepared to report on your discussion.

HANDOUT A (OPTIONAL)



HANDOUT B

Crime Incident Report Form

Please let us know if you've experienced an incident that you have not previously reported to Peace Corps staff, including rape, attempted rape, robbery, attempted robbery, physical assault, burglary, forced kissing, groping, threats, stalking, theft, attempted theft, vandalism, or other crimes.

Name: _____

Date of Incident: _____

What happened: _____

Support I would like (or would have liked after the incident) from Peace Corps:

SESSION 10

Wrap-up and Closure



Purpose

This session provides an opportunity to review and wrap up the content of the whole conference and bring closure to the COSing groups' activities. To the extent possible, some of the group members should help determine how they would like to bring closure for the group and design a closing activity.



Rationale

A final session provides a review of the workshop content, revisiting objectives, and reinforcing important information. It should also include an evaluation—either oral or written—to assist the post in providing further COS events.

The closure for the COSing group can include presentation of activities started earlier in the workshop, such as a group mural or a collection of addresses and memories.



Duration

Varies according to activities chosen.



Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will

- Reflect on the objectives and content of the conference.
- Evaluate the conference.
- Receive reminders of follow-up they need to do.
- Receive thanks from the Peace Corps staff for their service.
- Enjoy a closure activity for their Peace Corps group.



Session Outline

- I. Introduction (5 minutes)
- II. Reflect on the objectives and content (15–40 minutes)
- III. Evaluation (10 minutes)
- IV. Reminders (5–10 minutes)
- V. Thank you (5–15 minutes)
- VI. Closure activity (depends on activity)



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

Peace Corps staff should be present for this session, even if not facilitating it. Volunteers in the COSing group should run their final activity.



Materials and Equipment

Handouts:

- A. Sample Evaluation
- B. Sample thank you from staff



Trainer Preparation

1. Determine how each part of the session will be presented. (See options at end of session plan.)
2. Collect materials from other sessions, such as the objectives, the moving process chart, etc.
3. Prepare the “thank you” to Volunteers. This can be any type of activity, anything from a personal statement from each staff to a staff skit or rap or song. A written thank you might be given. (See sample, Handout B.)
4. Work with representative COSing Volunteers to plan their closure activity.



Methodology

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

Introduce the session by explaining the objectives and activities.

II. Reflect on objectives and content of the conference (15–40 minutes)

Step 1: Explain how you will conduct this review.

Step 2: Carry out the review.

III. Evaluation (10 minutes)

Step 1: Distribute evaluation form and ask participants to complete it.

OR

Step 2: Conduct a discussion.

IV. Reminders (5–10 minutes)

Step 1: Provide a checklist, or return to checklist in COS booklet.

Step 2: If participants were supposed to have completed items during the conference (such as signing up for medical appointments), make sure this has been done.

V. Thank you from staff (5–15 minutes)

As determined.

VI. Group closure activity (time depends on activity)

As determined.

Activity Options

Reflect on objectives and content of conference

Instead of the facilitator conducting a review, participants can do it. Here are some possibilities:

Divide the session topics among small groups. Each group's task is to review that topic or session, including any flip charts and handouts, and prepare a short review for the group. They have five minutes to present. Their reviews could be

- a. An oral report.
- b. A flip chart without words that represents the key ideas that the group has to decipher.
- c. A skit, song, rap, or pantomime.
- d. Filling a section of a mural—a mural made up of flip charts for each topic area, done in order.

Closing Circle (PC/Honduras from PC/Dominican Republic)

Length: Depends on number of Volunteers

Objectives:

- Bring closure to COS conference
- Allow final opportunity for sharing/reflection among group

Materials:

- Slips of paper for all, each with a Volunteer's name on it.
- Poem: "The Road Not Taken"
- Bells with comforting sound or tranquil music, which signifies leaving

Preparation: A day or two before the closing circle, fill a bag with strips of paper, each with a Volunteer's name on it. Have each of the PCVs draw out a name other than theirs. Tell them to prepare to tell a funny story about the Volunteer or say something brief but significant about that person at the closing circle.

- Procedure:
- Review the “path” of the COS conference and tell PCVs that they are now in the final closing circle.
 - Point out that it may be one of the last times the group is all together.
 - At the closing circle—with everyone seated in a tight circle—ask one person to start. That person goes behind the person they drew and puts their hands on their shoulders. They tell the story or make a statement about that person. After they finish, the person recognized then gets up and goes to the person they drew and repeats the process. It continues until all have been recognized.
 - The facilitator who suggested this activity describes a personal wrap-up: “Then I usually tell them how they have personally affected my life and how I admire them for taking the road less traveled. I read Frost’s poem to them and then ring the Tibetan peace bells, letting the sound ring for 30 seconds. I say ‘Thank you,’ and that it is time to move on.”

The Road Not Taken

Two Roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

*by Robert Frost—Poet Laureate under
President Kennedy*

Sample Volunteer-generated closure activities

When the invitation to COS goes to the Volunteers, they are asked to organize a special activity for the end of the workshop. They can communicate with each other prior to the workshop and let the office know if they will need any special materials. Activities Volunteers in various countries have created:

- Time capsule
- Slide shows or PowerPoint—of COS, of their experiences (encourage a thoughtful slide show or PowerPoint of their communities and activities, and offer to provide copies for all)
- Talent show
- PCV “Jeopardy!”-type game
- General trivia game

Sample Handouts

A. Evaluations

COS Conference Evaluation (PC/Bolivia)

Please present your comments on each session:

Admin. Procedures Session (note facilitator)

Project Review with APCDs (indicate which APCD)

Your Peace Corps Experience (note facilitator)

Informal PST Evaluation (optional) (note facilitator)

Evaluation of Site Development and APCD Support (note facilitator)

Looking to the Future & Self-Assessment & Job Search / Résumés / Interview Tips
(note facilitator)

Returning Home & Peace Corps' Third Goal (note facilitator)

Country Director Forum (note facilitator)

Other:

To what extent has this conference been of interest and useful to you?

not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 extremely

If you ran a conference for another PC group COSing, what would you do differently?

(use reverse side for additional space and other comments)



Close of Service Conference Evaluation

1. To what extent has this conference been informative/useful to you?
(Please circle the appropriate number: 0 = not at all; 5 = extremely)
not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 extremely
2. What were the two most important things you learned from this conference?
a) _____
b) _____
3. What did you particularly like about this experience?
4. What did you particularly dislike about the experience, and why?
5. What suggestions do you have to improve the conference?
6. To what extent did you find the following sessions interesting/informative/useful?

6.1. Sharing your PC Experience: How have I changed?
not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 extremely

Comments: _____

6.2. What have we accomplished? Compiling, Analyzing, and Sharing Your Work-Related Accomplishments (as a group, then present to PC Staff)

not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 extremely

Comments: _____

6.3. Suggestions to PC/CR: Compiling and Sharing Your Suggestions for PC/CR (as a group, then present to PC Staff)

not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 extremely

Comments: _____

(continue with sessions presented)

7. How helpful do you think the material provided will be (oral and written materials)?

not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 extremely

Comments: _____

8. How would you rate the meeting space/facilities/food/services at the hotel for this conference?

poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 excellent

Comments: _____

9. How would you rate the overall content/(agenda), organization, and facilitation of the conference?

poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 excellent

Comments: _____

OTHER COMMENTS: _____

Thank You!!

Sample from PC/Costa Rica

Sample Handouts

B. Thank you

This sample from PC/Ghana can be localized and made either as a simple handout or a fancier version with the Peace Corps logo, country name, signatures of staff, etc.

As you close your service...

Thank you for leaving your friends and families for what were sometimes two (or three) very long years.

Thank you for giving up many of the comforts from back home.

Thank you for struggling to master a new language, and, in many cases, two new languages.

Thank you for reaching, squishing, sweating, and stretching, often more than you ever thought you could.

Thank you for staying and struggling, when the road was almost too sandy or muddy or steep, and the hot season was almost too hot.

Thank you for learning to walk in another's flip-flops, and learning to walk by his/her side.

Thank you for being open to the beauty of a mud brick home, a thatch home, a cement home, and to the warmth of the extended families within them.

Thank you for empowering others to believe in themselves.

Thank you for your piece in the puzzle of connectedness.

Thank you for helping a child start on a road of possibility, helping a woman to stand a little taller, and helping a farmer to value his land and his friendships.

Thank you for your openness to live as the majority of the people in the world live.

Thank you for giving the rest of us a little more hope.

You will never be quite the same, nor will (Ghana). Thank you.

Appendix 1

Peace Corps/Ghana

Close of Service Administrative Procedures Handbook for Volunteers

April 2007

Updated by CFO/VPS and CFO/GAP
March 2010

Note: All specific figures should be updated for each COS group.

The horizon leans forward, offering you a new space to place new steps of change.

—Maya Angelou

Abbreviations:

COS	Close of Service
DOS	Description of Service
HOR	Home of Record
VPS	Volunteer & PSC Financial Services
OHJ	Overseas Health Jacket
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
RVS	Returned Volunteer Services
RPCV	Returned Peace Corps Volunteer

This is pretty serious, though only for experience sake...it'll be interesting, you bet, and I'll look back on it someday and feel sure I did the right thing and all, but not be sure exactly why I think so; full steam ahead.

From *The Sportswriter*, by Richard Ford



VOLUNTEER CLOSE OF SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been prepared to assist you in the timely planning of your scheduled departure upon Close of Service (COS). While the information provided here will not answer all your questions and concerns, it is intended to address the most pertinent administrative procedures of the Peace Corps agency and Peace Corps/Ghana. You should have ample opportunity to obtain further clarification of general and specific issues before, during, and after the COS conference.

This handbook is an attempt to pull assorted information together. It is intended as a guide. Readers are encouraged to check other authoritative sources for complete information and developments that may affect their specific cases.

The process of COS begins early. The COS conference, the COS physical, the paperwork required by Peace Corps/Washington, and travel and medical arrangements for the trip home all take place prior to your actual close of service date. The purpose of this booklet is to make the checkout process organized and efficient for you and the Accra office.

Please take the time to review the information contained in this handbook. Upon completion of the reading, do not hesitate to request further information. Copies of the forms you need to complete are included in the back of this manual. The forms are important—a few of them provide information needed to order your U.S. Treasury payments from Washington. Always be sure to check the Peace Corps Intranet for the most up-to-date copies of each form. There is also a checkout list detailing the matters you must handle. Use it as a guide to organize your closeout.

Please remember that most tasks take time and leaving them to the last minute can be stressful. As you make your plans, remember that no COS is completely smooth; checks can be delayed, officials may not be in their offices, you may have too much luggage, etc. Please make yourself a loose schedule and allow time to deal with unexpected snags and delays. You'll do great! We're here to help. Best of luck!

Thanks.

GENERAL INFORMATION



COS Entitlements, Allowances, & Money Matters

Your COS date is very important as allowances are calculated based on this date. In brief, you will be receiving the following allowances and settling the following financial accounts prior to your departure:

- 1. Living Allowance**
- 2. SPA/PCPP Projects Clearance**
- 3. Leave Allowance**
- 4. Allotments**
- 5. All in-country accounts and debts**
- 6. Plane Ticket or "Cash-in-Lieu"**
- 7. Readjustment Allowance- "1/3 Payment"**

Other Financial Matters you should keep in mind:

- 8. Cashing Checks**
- 9. Taxes**
- 10. Student Loan Deferments/credit card payments**

COS Date Verification

YOUR GROUP'S COS DATE is August 17, 2007

During your COS conference, you should be planning for your successful conclusion of service and transition to a new stage in your life. Your current COS date represents a commitment of service that has allowed us to program effectively, allowed our partners and counterparts to plan their work with you, and to communicate that each Volunteer is committed to two years of service. However, **in exceptional circumstances**, we can consider and approve a COS date that is earlier or later than your scheduled date.

Moving the COS forward. Advanced COS dates (early COS) can be granted, primarily, on the basis of (a) a Volunteer's completion of primary and secondary activities and (b) concurrence of their host country supervisors, taken together with (c) an articulated need for closing service ahead of the scheduled date. Please consult with your APCD if you think you must seek an approval for an early COS and for guidance as to the appropriateness of the request. If the request is for 30 days or less, then your APCD recommendation and country director approval will be needed. For exceptionally difficult or urgent circumstances, we can recommend an early COS date of 31–90 days to the regional director for approval.

Moving the COS back. An extension of service can be granted for Volunteers who have remaining work responsibilities, provide unique importance to the total program and to the overall benefit of Ghana, and have the support of their supervisor and other host country officials. PC/Ghana will also consider the Volunteer's motivation for seeking the extension, previous conduct, quality of service to date, and the total time the Volunteer will have served as a result of the extension. *A PCV extending six (6) months or more must have medical approval from the Peace Corps medical officer.*

A Volunteer may request permission to extend service by submitting a written request for their APCD's recommendation for approval by the country director. *For administrative and medical purposes requests for extensions should be made at least three months before the established COS date.* In unusual situations an extension request made during the last two months of a Volunteer's service may be considered for approval by the country director, in consultation with the APCD and administrative officer.

Living Allowance

Your final living allowance will be calculated up to the end of the month of when you COS. If you leave earlier than originally scheduled, the Peace Corps will collect the unused daily living allowance from you in cash before you depart. If a change in your COS date is approved and you remain a PCV for several days or weeks after your specified date, PC will extend your living allowance for those days.

SPA/PCPP Projects Clearance

PCVs with SPA or PCPP projects are reminded that prior to your COS all funds must be accounted for—including the submission of receipts and other relevant documentation required for project completion. If this is not possible, please talk with your SPA/PCPP program coordinator for other arrangements. There are special procedures for transferring the project to another PCV. Be advised that your SPA/PCPP closeout is part of your required COS check-out and must be cleared and signed by the SPA/PCPP coordinator. PCPP project receipts also require AO final clearance.

Leave Allowance

Leave allowance is issued with your living allowance. It is calculated based on your scheduled COS date. If you plan to COS early, it is possible that you may need to pay back part of your leave allowance. Allowance is given as the local currency equivalent per month of \$24 (\$12 for the first 15 days of the month and \$12 for the remainder of month).

Allotments

If you are making regular monthly payments from your readjustment allowance (e.g., for credit cards or student loans), be reminded that the last allotment check will be mailed during the first week of the month in which you COS. An October allotment payment would, therefore, be the last allotment for PCVs COSing on or before the last business day in October.

U.S. Saving Bonds, purchased by allotment from your readjustment allowance during your Peace Corps service, will be mailed to your HOR after final payment of your readjustment allowance. For more information on savings bonds, see www.savingsbonds.gov.

In-Country Accounts and Debts

Bank Clearance

Property Return

BANK ACCOUNT: It is your responsibility to close your bank account and clear all phone bills or other in-country accounts before departure. **Proof of closure is mandatory prior to completion of the COS process. You must present a letter from your bank or a bank statement reflecting a “Zero” balance to the admin staff before you will be allowed to COS.**

Remember, closing accounts may take time and may not be as simple as one would like. Inquire now about closeout procedures with your bank or other service providers so you are prepared! Think about the arrangements that need to be made in case bills are delayed past your departure.

DEBTS: You will be required to sign a “Certificate of Non-Indebtedness and Accountability” upon your departure. This is a certified statement that you have no outstanding debts in Ghana.

PROPERTY: You will also be asked to return all Peace Corps/Ghana property for which you were accountable to the general services officer. PC property includes medical kits, dictionaries, books, bike helmets, etc. Please begin making arrangements with your APCD, Kwame, and/or the PCVL to transport any large items (which is Peace Corps’s property) back to Accra, Tamale, or Kumasi **PRIOR TO COS**. Our current policy allows for appliances and other miscellaneous equipment, as well as textbooks and resource materials to remain at site if a Volunteer is being replaced by a new Volunteer. Volunteers are required to inventory all PC/Ghana items and complete the attached property inventory form in duplicate: one copy for submission to the GSO/admin unit; a second copy to be left with items remaining at site. Items left for an incoming PCV must be secured. Consult with your APCD or the GSO staff if you believe it would be unwise to leave property under the care of someone at site.

The following items must be returned prior to COS. If they are not, you will be responsible for reimbursing Peace Corps/Ghana for them and the cost will be deducted from your readjustment allowance:

- Medical kit (replacement value \$30 USD)

You may leave the following items at your site with written confirmation from your APCD that another Volunteer will replace you at your site. Otherwise, they must also be returned to Accra.

- Water barrel (replacement value \$30 USD)
- Water filter (replacement value \$30 USD)

\$ Plane Ticket or "Cash-in-Lieu" \$

Travel back to the U.S. may be arranged in two ways. At the COS conference you will inform the Peace Corps which option works for you. Requesting EFT payment (electronic funds transfer) or ordering plane tickets takes time, **so your decision at the COS conference is final. You must declare at the COS conference that you would like cash-in-lieu. If the forms are not returned at the conference, then you will receive a plane ticket home.**

The options are:

a. Plane ticket to your home of record

PC makes the reservation, purchases the ticket, and provides you with an enroute allowance of \$16 USD. Plane tickets can be picked up upon completion of the COS Checklist. (PC/Ghana does not have any special arrangement to guarantee reservations. We make reservations like any other traveler and are subject to space availability.)

OR

b. Cash-in-Lieu of a ticket \$\$\$

This money is normally deposited in your U.S. bank account (based on the banking information provided during your COS conference); or, if you do not have a U.S. bank account, it comes in the form of a U.S. dollar Treasury check for an amount equivalent to what Peace Corps would pay to purchase a one-way ticket on a U.S. carrier to your home of record (HOR). No additional costs, including en route per diem, taxi from airport to HOR, check-cashing fees or other charges are to be included. This check is picked up in the admin unit with a memo allowing you to cash the check at Standard Chartered/High Street Branch in Accra.

Fares for cash-in-lieu are calculated on the amount of money Peace Corps would pay for a ticket to your home of record, not a full fare economy ticket. Also, fares are based on the cost of a one-way ticket, to the nearest airport to your home of record.

Should you decide to receive an EFT or U.S. Treasury check in lieu of the plane ticket, you are expected to make your own travel arrangements and pay all check-cashing fees (non-reimbursable). Volunteers who elect to receive an EFT/U.S. dollar Treasury check instead of a ticket are expected to use American flag carriers for all portions of their air travel where American carriers are available, per U.S. government regulations. In acknowledgment of this regulation, each Volunteer must sign the "Agreement to Fly American Flag Carriers for Return to Home of Record." The Volunteer is solely liable for any infringement of this travel regulation.

Volunteers are responsible for the packing and shipment of all personal effects. The Peace Corps will assume no responsibility for accompanied or unaccompanied baggage, sea freight, etc., which is damaged, stolen, or lost. Volunteers are required to submit any claims directly to the carrier or, if applicable, to their insurance company.

Post-COS Travel Itinerary

Volunteers are requested to provide a projected travel itinerary and email contact information prior to departure. Family or friends may try to contact us in case of an emergency.

Readjustment Allowance—"1/3 Payment" & "2/3 Payment"

Volunteer readjustment allowance has been accruing at the rate of \$225.00 per month from the first day of your staging event. This allowance is subject to deductions for federal income tax FICA (which is Social Security and Medicare), and life insurance.

Your readjustment allowance accrues for each month of service, and is pro-rated for any partial months of service (LWOA, EOD/COS dates). Your readjustment allowance is reported as income annually (on your W-2 form). If you have no other income than your Peace Corps living allowance and readjustment allowance income, you will be below the base salary level required to pay federal income taxes. Group life insurance premiums are also deducted unless you waived this insurance on the registration form that you submitted during staging. Also note, your net readjustment allowance might be reduced if any allotments or withdrawals were requested over the course of your service (credit card/loan payments/savings bond allotments).

The 1/3rd: You will receive 1/3 of your readjustment allowance at COS in the form of a U.S. Treasury check, or an electronic funds transfer (EFT) into your bank account at home. The remainder of your RA will be forwarded to the address in the United States that you specify (but it must be a U.S. address), or EFTed into your bank account. If you choose EFT for the 1/3, your 2/3s will also be EFTed. In the case of 1/3 RA check, it will be held by the admin unit until all COS requirements are met (a completed COS Checklist).

Note. If the 1/3 RA check is cashed and the money is lost or stolen, the Volunteer cannot be reimbursed for the loss. For this reason, PC/Ghana will not release the "1/3 Check" until right before your departure. Any unusual or dire circumstances requiring a PCV to request an early release of this check should be communicated to the country director and administrative officer. We strongly urge PCVs not to take the "Cash-in-Lieu Check" before you absolutely need it to pay for your tickets. Again, if the cash is lost or stolen, Peace Corps WILL NOT reimburse you. If you lose the 1/3 check, a report must be filed, the check must be canceled, and a new check ordered and sent to you at your HOR. This process has been known to take several months.

The Final 2/3rds: Within two business days of your actual COS date, Peace Corps/Ghana sends an official communication, including your COS date, mailing address, and possible RA deductions for CorpsCare, etc, to Peace Corps/Washington. With the information contained in this communication, PC/Washington begins to process the final two-thirds readjustment allowance paperwork. Your final 2/3 readjustment payment will either be EFTed to your bank account or physically mailed from the U.S. Department of the Treasury within four weeks of COS. This check will be sent to the address you specify at COS.

\$\$Cashing Checks \$\$\$

*The Standard Chartered High Street branch in Accra will cash U.S. Treasury checks into U.S. dollars, with a letter of request from the admin unit. Standard Chartered can also issue American Express traveler's checks. PC/Ghana is not responsible for any transaction fees associated with cashing checks or in issuing traveler's checks. **Be courteous and kind at the bank!** Bring a book and expect this transaction to take time. How you treat the bank staff affects how the bank staff will treat your fellow PCVs.*

Tax Information—Save This Info!

Volunteer and PSC Financial Services (VPS) will send a copy of your W-2 earnings statement for your readjustment allowance directly to your Home of Record. Be sure to file it with your taxes. In order to figure out your in-country taxable income, please visit the following page on the Peace Corps website, and select the link for the current Tax Guide under "Tax Information for Peace Corps Trainees, Volunteers, and returned Volunteers": (www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=pchq.Policies.docs).

If you have changed your home address since you departed for staging in the U.S., please be sure to go to the Peace Corps website and change your information prior to December 1, so your W-2 forms will be sent to the correct address.

Deferment of Student Loans

Pursuant to the deferment eligibility rules mandated by the Department for Peace Corps Volunteers, you are only eligible for loan deferment if you are actively serving.

You (or your Power of Attorney) are completely responsible for your loans. All matters of deferment, payment, reactivation, and cancellation of loans following your service are your responsibility. Please note that Peace Corps does not contact lenders on your behalf. If payments on educational loans were deferred while you were a PCV, you are responsible for notifying the lender(s) of your completion of Peace Corps service.

If your Perkins loan is eligible for partial cancellation, you will need to contact the Volunteer certification specialist at certifications@peacecorps.gov (or 1.800.424.8580, ext. 1770) in order to obtain this certification. You are responsible for contacting your lender for any forms that they may require for this process. After the requested information has been submitted to your lender, you must follow up with your lender to determine the status of your request.



Peace Corps Identification Card

Peace Corps Volunteer identification cards are government property and must be returned. Volunteers who would like to keep their I.D. card as a souvenir can have it invalidated by PC/Ghana (admin unit) and returned.

Passport

Volunteer “no fee” passports are valid for 90 (ninety) days after official COS date (regardless of the actual passport expiration date listed in the passport). If you do not plan to return to the United States within the 90-day period, you should apply at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate for a regular tourist passport several weeks in advance.

If you have a tourist passport valid for travel at the time your service ends, as well as a Peace Corps “no fee” passport, you may retain the Peace Corps passport as a souvenir of your service. Volunteers who return to the United States on their Peace Corps passport may also retain it when their travel is complete. This can be used as proof of U.S. citizenship when applying for a passport in the future. Please do not send your passport to Peace Corps/Washington. If you apply for a new passport of any kind, you must turn in your Peace Corps passport to the office or embassy where you are applying for the new passport. The Peace Corps passport will be canceled and returned to you.

For those electing to travel after their COS, it is a good idea to have a photocopy made of your passport and WHO card and keep it separate from the original.

WHO Card

The World Health Organization (WHO) card is a record of your immunization and should be kept for your records. This card is also necessary to prevent additional immunizations when you re-enter the U.S. or travel to other countries. Please get your WHO card from the medical unit prior to COS.

Former Volunteers' Claims For Unemployment Compensation

Pursuant to a ruling by the Solicitor of the Labor Department, former Volunteers are not eligible for federal unemployment compensation. States will *not* credit Peace Corps service in determining compensation for any unemployment claim.

Forwarding of Volunteer Mail

PC/Ghana is **not responsible for forwarding mail** or packages to Volunteers after they COS. However, as a professional courtesy, PC will forward letters for one month after COS. Please speak with the mail clerk to inform him of your COS date and your forwarding address. Packages will not be forwarded. Please notify everyone of your change of address well before you leave. You should also make arrangements with friends and/or PCVs and have them collect and send mail and packages on to you. Friends should present a note signed by you if you wish them to pick up letters or packages remaining in the mailroom after your departure.

Rid Room

Many of you will be bringing big packages and Ghana Gucci Bags to send home. Please clearly mark all packages stored in the Rid Room. Have your name and estimated date of removal on the bag. Packages that are unmarked or kept more than 45 days after your COS date, will be purged.

How to Organize My Transition Out of Accra

There is a lot to do in the office before you can fly away. Please organize your time wisely and try to get as much done in advance as possible. Call and schedule appointments to see staff members, as they too are busy and/or in meetings. Per diem and lodging will be paid as follows:

Day One: Travel Day	Day Two: Close Out	Day Three: Close Out	Day Four: COS Day
Arrive in Accra	Conduct business	Finish business	You are an RPCV
Allowed 75% meals per diem plus lodging	Full per diem and lodging	Full per diem and lodging	Allowed 75% meals per diem

Lodging may be at a place of your choice for these three nights as we realize that you will be carrying a lot of baggage, documents, and money. The PCV lodging reimbursement ceiling remains the same. If you arrive in Accra over the weekend, reimbursement for those days will be counted as part of the four days.

Please keep in mind that when you are in Accra, you will have a number of staff that you need to meet, and that fellow PCVs, who are also COSing, will be trying to meet the same staff. We will try to be as flexible with our schedules as possible, but you also need to be responsible in setting up meetings with staff members.

When you are in Accra for your COS medical, please take care of programmatic and administrative requirements as well.

COS REQUIREMENTS

- Medical and Dental Examinations
- Certificate of Group Health Plan Coverage
- COS Checklist
- Addresses
- Description of Service
- Housing Checkout

REMINDER: MAKE APPOINTMENTS EARLY !

If you show up at the office unannounced, you could expect to be frustrated or disappointed by staff absences.

Medical Examinations

Prior to your COS date you must receive a termination medical examination. You will be asked to set appointment dates at the COS conference. Please contact the Peace Corps Medical Unit to change or arrange for additional appointments for your exam accordingly.

Description of Service (DOS)

You should see your APCD for guidance in drafting a nonevaluative statement of your service in Ghana. It describes your training and overseas activities. Your DOS continues to be available to you as an RPCV, and with your consent, to prospective employers and school officials.

Write your DOS before you come for the final checkout. If you have access to email, send it to your APCD (as part of the text, not as an attachment). The APCD will edit the DOS and pass it on to the program secretary or program assistant for final typing. Two final copies will be produced on PC letterhead and given to the CD for signature. The documents will be ready at your exit interview.

Your DOS is an official certification of your Peace Corps service and should be held in safe-keeping. When inquiries from employers and educational institutions interested in your work are made to Peace Corps/Washington, this is the only official statement Peace Corps will make concerning your experience. Copies are maintained at Peace Corps headquarters; however, please do scan a copy of your DOS electronically for your own records. Obtaining a copy of your DOS from HQ may take seven to 10 business days. Please keep this timeframe in mind when you submit a request for your DOS.

If you apply for a federal position, your DOS must be attached to your résumé, or SF-171 (the official, but not required, job application form for the U.S. government). Since the DOS is an official certification of your Peace Corps service, it should be composed carefully. Detail your work and other related activities in nonevaluative terms. Include secondary projects, fundraising activities, and Peace Corps Ghana-related activities, such as training. DOS should not be more than two typed pages in length. Your DOS will be reproduced on Peace Corps letterhead.

The signed original will be given to you by the country director during your exit interview before you leave Ghana. You may want to send a copy of this statement to your college placement office to be included with your credentials already on file (if applicable).

The following paragraphs are Federal Employment Tenure Benefits and Executive Order no. 11103. If you have satisfactorily completed your Peace Corps service this will be included at the end of your DOS statement.* This order established special benefits for the employment of former PCVs to U.S. government positions.

Pursuant to Section 5(f) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C.) 2504 (f), as amended, any former Volunteer employed by the U.S. Government following his/her Peace Corps Volunteer service is entitled to have any period of satisfactory Peace Corps service credited for purposes of retirement, seniority, reduction in force, leave and other privileges based on length of Government service. That service shall not be credited toward completion of the probationary or trial period of any service requirement for career appointment.

This is to certify in accordance with Executive Order (EO) 11103 of April 10, 1963, that _____ served successfully as a Peace Corps Volunteer. His/her service ended on _____. He/she is therefore eligible to be appointed as a career-conditional employee in the competitive civil service on a noncompetitive basis. This benefit under the Executive Order extends for a period of one year after termination of Volunteer service, except that the employing agency may extend the period for up to three years for a former Volunteer who enters military service, pursues studies at a recognized institution of higher learning, or engages in other activities that, in the view of the appointing agency, warrant extension of the period.

*Noncompetitive eligibility is a special mechanism through which RPCVs can be appointed to federal GS positions without competing with the general public in order to be hired. RPCVs may find that, at some agencies, their applications will not be rated by a panel prior to being invited to interview. An agency may, however, still require you to submit a Supplemental Statement. Federal agencies sometimes seek out noncompetitive RPCVs for employment. The primary advantage to the agency is the speed with which the candidate may be hired. Remember, noncompetitive eligibility is not a guarantee of a job. The agency is not required to hire a noncompetitive RPCV. You must always meet, and more often than not, exceed the minimum qualifications for a position.

Certificate of Group Health Insurance Plan Coverage

You will be given a certificate during your COS checkout with the admin unit. This is evidence of health plan coverage under the health benefit plan for Peace Corps Volunteers and is used for Medicare Part B re-enrollment purposes. An example of the certificate is attached, for those on Medicare.

Housing Checkout

In advance of your final departure, you should work with your APCD to ensure that formal notice has been sent to your organization and landlord stating the date you will vacate the premises.

You are required to present the administrative staff with a letter signed by your landlord, that states that the apartment/room/house you occupied during your service has been left in good order and that keys have been returned. Minor repairs should be completed prior to your departure from your site. If your host agency handles your housing, they should sign the clearance letter.

Changing your Home of Record (HOR)

Your official Home of Record (HOR) is important for several reasons. First, your plane reservations or "cash-in-lieu" calculations, are based on this address. Second, all official mail, including "2/3 RA payment," tax information, returned Volunteer (RPCV) information and the like will be sent to this address.

You **must submit** any requests for changes in your home of record through the country director **90 days before your COS date**. The official form must be filled out and submitted to the country director. This information is forwarded to Washington for approval. If you have questions about whether or not your requested change was approved, contact your APCD or the admin unit.

Requests will normally be approved when:

- A Volunteer who has married another Volunteer during the course of their Peace Corps service wants to return to the HOR of the spouse. Requests for a change of HOR under this condition must be accompanied by verification from the country director of the marriage.
- A Volunteer who has separated from or divorced another Volunteer during the course of his or her Peace Corps service wants to return to a location other than that of the spouse. Requests for a change of HOR under this condition must be accompanied by verification from the country director of the divorce or separation.

- The person, spouse, parent(s), sibling or child whose residence was designated as the permanent residence by the Volunteer before entering the Peace Corps has moved to a different U.S. address.
- The person, spouse, parent(s), sibling, or child whose residence was designated as the permanent residence by the Volunteer before entering the Peace Corps has moved outside the U.S., i.e., its territories and possessions. In such cases the Volunteer may receive transportation to the most appropriate U.S. port-of-exit for the foreign country to which that individual has moved or transportation to the foreign country, whichever is less.
- The Volunteer identified a parent's, sibling's, child's, or other person's address as the HOR, but actually resided at and was provided original transportation, at Peace Corps' expense, from another location. The Volunteer now wishes to return to that original point of departure.
- The only surviving parent, spouse, sibling, or child who resided at the Volunteer's HOR dies.
- There is an authorized emergency leave in conjunction with either an advance completion of service or close of service or early termination and the location of the emergency leave is different from the originally listed HOR.
- A Volunteer claims that the original HOR was only chosen as a place of contact. Requests for a change of HOR under this condition must be accompanied by proof of prior residence, such as a copy of tax forms, a driver's license, or a voter registration card.

Addresses—Release Form and Forwarding Mail

Please fill out yet more attachments. The first authorizes Peace Corps/Ghana to release your address to specified entities, such as family, friends, and prospective employers. Without this written consent Peace Corps/Ghana may not release your address to anyone. The second form gives Peace Corps/Ghana the address to which you want your mail redirected. Letters will be forwarded only for up to one month. Peace Corps/Ghana cannot forward packages, so if you have not received an expected package that is important to you, you must make prior, personal arrangements for forwarding the package. Return both forms to the admin unit. A copy of the Forwarding Mail form should also be handed to the mail clerk.



INSURANCE, Documents & Records

Insurance—Life and Health

Peace Corps Group Life Insurance—If you are insured by the \$32,500 policy offered through the Peace Corps, this coverage will expire 60 days immediately following termination of service or upon your return to one of the states or the territories of the U.S., the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico, whichever is earlier. This insurance policy cannot be changed to another type of insurance.

Health Insurance: CorpsCare—All Peace Corps and Peace Corps Response Volunteers and trainees and all United Nations Volunteers who close service are automatically eligible for CorpsCare, a comprehensive health insurance policy specifically designed to meet Volunteers' post-service health care needs.

After service, Peace Corps automatically enrolls Volunteers and trainees in a post-service health insurance plan known as CorpsCare and pays the first month's insurance premium on their behalf.

CorpsCare was designed to fill gaps in post-service health benefits by complementing the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) program. CorpsCare is private, comprehensive insurance that provides coverage for health conditions that:

- Existed before your Peace Corps service.
- Developed while you were on personal business in the U.S. during service.
- Arise after you have left Peace Corps service.

You may purchase up to 18 additional months of CorpsCare coverage. You can pay for the coverage by check, credit card, or a deduction from your readjustment allowance. You may purchase additional months (not to exceed the limit) once in the U.S. You may also shorten an elected coverage period and apply for a refund if needed. Eligible non-PCV spouses may also qualify. Married PCVs serving together must each purchase their own policy; one spouse cannot be covered as a dependent spouse under the other spouse's policy. The PCV spouse may also have the premium deducted from their readjustment allowance.

To meet health care needs not covered by FECA during your post-service readjustment period, you are strongly encouraged to purchase this additional CorpsCare coverage when you complete your Peace Corps service. If you do not sign up for this extended insurance before the end of the 31-day coverage period, you forfeit your right to subscribe to it.

Volunteers returning home directly (within 72 hours) may be covered by FECA, *if* their injury was incurred or their medical condition began during, or as a result of, their Peace Corps service. If an illness or injury should occur during this time, seek prompt medical care, and within 48 hours, or as soon as possible, contact the Peace Corps Office of Medical Services (OMS), 1111 20th Street N.W., Washington DC 20526. (800.424.8580, ext. 1540). Be prepared to provide OMS with a detailed physician's and/or hospital report and appropriate receipts.

Medical Records

Your Overseas Health Jacket (OHJ) is kept at the Medical Office in Peace Corps Washington for one year and then it will be retired to a Federal Records Center, where it will be stored for **25 years**. This file contains a record of medical exams required for Peace Corps placement, record of immunizations, dental records, etc. Keeping your own copy is a good idea. If you would like a copy, please inform the Medical Unit at least three weeks in advance of your COS date so that the records can be finalized. Copies can also be requested from the Office of Medical Services, Peace Corps, 1111 20th St., NW, 3rd Floor., Washington, DC 20526. Phone number 1.800.424.8580, ext. 1500.

Description and Verification of Service (DOS)

Your DOS is filed in the PC Office of Volunteer and PSC Financial Services in Washington for **60 years**. Copies are available by written request to VPS, Peace Corps, 1111 20th St. NW, Washington, DC 20526. The DOS is an official account of your responsibilities, duties, and accomplishments while serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer. VPS will also provide written verification of service. The phone number is 1.800.424.8580, ext. 1770.

PCV Administrative Files

Your **administrative file**, which consists of readjustment allowance information and official correspondence, is **kept in the Peace Corps/Ghana Office for one year** following your COS and then destroyed.

Returned Volunteer Services

In Peace Corps/Washington, the Office of Domestic Programs maintains a Returned Volunteer Service staff who can provide you with up-to-date information in a variety of career, employment, and educational areas. Job counseling services are available by appointment or on the telephone, as well as access to computers, typewriters, and telephones for long-distance job searches. If you are in the Washington area, stop by this office to use these services, or call 1.800.424.8580.

Career Resources Manual

Returned Volunteer Services (RVS) is the source of the comprehensive Career Resource Manual, which, among other things, explains the various services provided by RVS. This manual is a wealth of information on job-hunting, dealing with the Peace Corps bureaucracy,

noncompetitive eligibility in civil service jobs, and many other subjects of interest to RPCVs. Because the manual is expensive, it cannot be replaced if lost, misplaced, or left behind. Therefore, we strongly urge you to carry it with you when you head for home or send it by airmail. You don't want to have it shipped by sea if you may need it immediately. For more information regarding Career Manuals published by RVS and a helpful list of job-hunting websites, please refer to the returned Volunteers section of www.peacecorps.gov.

HOTLINE

Hotline is an online bulletin of employment and educational opportunities for returned Peace Corps Volunteers that is published twice a month and resides on the Peace Corps website in PDF form (www.peacecorps.gov/hotline). Returned Volunteers receive semimonthly *Hotline* alerts via e-mail for two years after Close of Service (COS). Expect to begin receiving these updates between two and six weeks after your Close of Service date. If you have not received an alert after six weeks, contact Returned Volunteer Services at 202.692.1430 or rvs@peacecorps.gov.

RPCV Alumni Groups

These organizations can assist newly returned Volunteers with readjustment and job search issues. They provide a ready-made job network of people in different fields. Some groups consist of RPCVs in a given region or city, while other groups are national in scope, consisting of RPCVs who served in the same country. Many of these organizations are affiliated with the National Peace Corps Association. The NPCA and all of the individual RPCV groups are private efforts and independent of the Peace Corps.

Staff Contacts

If you want to contact any Peace Corps/Ghana staff member following your departure (for recommendations, etc.), write to them in care of Peace Corps, CDU/Ghana Desk, Africa Region, 1111 20th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20526.

If you thought there was a lot of paperwork required to get into the Peace Corps, you won't believe the amount required to get out.

FORMS

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FORMS

COS DATE:**PC/GHANA • COS CHECKLIST**

MONEY OWED PEACE CORPS (if any)

Printed Name: _____ Vol ID#: _____

The appropriate PC staff must initial and date prior to your departure. Please try to visit staff in the following order:

A. PROGRAM OFFICE - SEE APCDs:	Staff Initials	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete Description of Service	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete Site Evaluation/	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> History Report/APCD Interview	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> SPA Clearance Interview	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> PCPP Clearance Interview	_____	_____

B. SEE MEDICAL UNIT:	Staff Initials	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Specimens submitted	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical exam completed	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> WHO Card returned to PCV	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Insurance coverage forms explained/issued to PCV	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Kit returned to med unit	_____	_____

C. SEE RESOURCE CENTER MANAGER/GSO:	Staff Initials	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Return books and other program materials	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> "Where There is No Doctor"	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Return water barrel	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Return water filter	_____	_____

D. SEE COUNTRY DIRECTOR:	Staff Initials	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Departure Interview	_____	_____
(make appointment with CD secretary)	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Receive signed DOS from CD	_____	_____

E. SEE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT: (we want all these forms)	Staff Initials	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Plane Ticket/Cash-in-Lieu Request	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Group Health Certificate Form delivered to PCV	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing Clearance & Release	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Telephone Release	_____	_____

- | | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bank Account Closure-Receipt/Verification | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Indebtedness/Accountability Statement | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Address Release and Forwarding Addresses | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Statement of No Financial Gain | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notification on Insurance Termination | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of DOS to Volunteer Records Clerk | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PC ID returned (invalidated with hole punch) | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passport returned to PCV | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All items in safe removed | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Signed up for CorpsCare | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Living/Vacation Worksheet Reconciled | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1/3 rd RA check released, <i>if paid by check</i> | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airline ticket/cash-in-lieu released | _____ | _____ |

ALL SECTIONS Completed/File Complete and Approved by AO _____

Housing Clearance Attestation at Quitting of Premises

I, the undersigned, owner of the house located at_____

Attest and affirm that_____vacated this lodging

on_____. The house and it's inventory are in good condition, and

from this date I will make no further claim for damages of any kind from Peace Corps.

Name of Landlord _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Witness _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Name of Volunteer _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Peace Corps wishes to thank the landlord for the providing housing and services. Please contact our main office in Accra if you have any questions or comments. Thank you.

Peace Corps, P.O. Box 5796, Accra-North
Telephone: 021-775984



Utilities Clearance

Attestation Upon Departure
(please have filled out where applicable)

We the undersigned:

1) E.C.G. _____

2) G.W.S. _____

3) P&T _____

Attest that the Peace Corps Volunteer here named: _____

Upon departure of the residence at _____ is fully up to date on all payments for electricity/water, or telephone service and is free of any liability for further payments owing for electricity/water or telephone charges at the above named residence.

1) Signature and seal:

Date:

2) Signature and seal:

Date:

3) Signature and seal:

Date:

I certify that I had no water/sewer, electrical, or telephone utilities accounts during my service.

PCV Name/Signature:

Date:



Bank Account Closure

Attestation of Bank Account Closure

I, the undersigned, representative of _____ Bank

Attest to the closing of account number _____

Held by Peace Corps Volunteer _____ and that
no further transactions or other charges remain outstanding.

Date _____

Name of bank representative _____

Signature and seal _____

Volunteer Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Peace Corps wishes to thank your bank for providing financial services to our Volunteers and your continued support.

Please contact our main office in Accra if you have any questions or comments.

Thank you.

Peace Corps, P.O. Box 5796, Accra-North
Telephone: 021-775984



PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER CERTIFICATE OF NON-INDEBTEDNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF PROPERTY

I certify that, except as indicated below:

1. During my Peace Corps service I have not incurred any indebtedness overseas to any individual or entity (governmental, commercial, private or otherwise) which I now have not discharged in full.

2. I have returned or otherwise accounted for all records and property of the United Government or of the Government and/or entity and/or individual of the country in which I have been serving, and for which property I was responsible.

3. Exceptions: _____

I hereby authorize Peace Corps to withdraw from my Readjustment Allowance Account amounts sufficient to discharge any indebtedness or obligation listed under Item 3 above.

I understand that it is my responsibility to close my bank account(s) in Ghana prior to my COS date. In the event that I fail to close any of my accounts, I hereby authorize Peace Corps to deduct from my Readjustment Allowance or refer all bank claims to my home of record.

Volunteer Signature

Date



Authorization to Release Home Address

I, _____, hereby authorize Peace Corps to release the following address:

to all parties EXCEPT those listed below (or state you do not wish Peace Corps to release your address to anyone). Indicate name, company, office or other identifying information.

-
-
-
-
-

_____ I authorize Peace Corps to release my address.
Volunteer Signature/Date

or

_____ I do not authorize Peace Corps to release my address.
Volunteer Signature/Date



Certification of No Financial Gain

I have been reminded that as outlined in PCMS 204, trainees and Volunteers may not accept payment for their services except from the Peace Corps, or engage in any activity for personal financial gain within the host country. This prohibition includes a ban on making investments within the host country, receiving payments for advice or lessons given during the Volunteer assignment, selling property and personal items, and receiving payment for written work or photographs relating to the Volunteer's assignment during the period of Volunteer Service.

By signing below, I certify that:

- I have not engaged in any activity for personal financial gain,
- I have not accepted payment for my services except from the Peace Corps or all payments that I have received have been reported to the Country Director and turned over as outlined in PCMS 204.

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF GROUP HEALTH PLAN COVERAGE

IMPORTANT—This certificate provides evidence of your prior health plan coverage under the health benefit plan for Peace Corps Volunteers authorized by Section 5(e) of the Peace Corps Act (22 USC §2504(e)). This coverage is *creditable coverage* for purposes of the group health market provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). You may need to furnish this certificate if you become eligible under a group health plan that excludes coverage for certain medical conditions that you have before you enroll. This certificate may need to be provided if medical advice, diagnosis, care, or treatment was recommended or received for the condition within the six-month period prior to your enrollment in the new plan.

The CorpsCare insurance administrator, Clements & Co., 1.800.872.0067 or 1.202.872.0006, will, upon request, issue a similar certificate to document the period of time you elected post-service health insurance coverage under that plan.

At this time, coverage under the health benefit plan for Peace Corps Volunteers is not creditable coverage that entitles you or your family to buy an individual insurance policy that does not exclude coverage for medical conditions incurred before you enroll unless your most recent prior creditable coverage was under a group health plan, a governmental plan, or a church plan as those terms are defined in 45 CFR §144.103, and followed your Peace Corps service without a break of more than 63 days.

If you become covered under another group health plan, check with the plan administrator to see if you need to provide this certificate.

1. Date of this certificate: _____
2. Name of Plan:
Health Benefit Plan for Peace Corps Volunteers under section 5(e) of the Peace Corps Act
3. Name of participant: _____
4. Identification number of participant: _____
5. Name and address of issuer responsible for providing this certificate:

Peace Corps
1111 20th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20526
6. For further information call: 1.800.424.8582, ext. 1540 or 1.202.692.1540
7. Date waiting period or affiliation period (if any) began: None
8. Date coverage began: _____
9. Date coverage ended: _____

Peace Corps Certifying Official (Name & Title)

CERTIFICATE OF GROUP HEALTH PLAN COVERAGE INSTRUCTIONS

This certificate must be given to each Volunteer or trainee as he or she leaves Peace Corps service.

LINE 1: This date will normally be the last date of the Volunteer or trainee's (V/T's) service but may be a later date if issued after the conclusion of service.

LINE 3: Enter the V/T's name.

LINE 4: Enter the V/T's social security number if the V/T is Medicare eligible. Enter the V/T's Volunteer ID if the V/T is not Medicare eligible.

LINE 8: Enter the V/T's enter-on-duty date.

LINE 9: This date will always be the date Peace Corps service ends.



Inventory of Peace Corps Property at Site

Name	Vol ID
Site/Town/Region	Today's Date

1. Non-Resource Materials (Enter "N/A"—Not Applicable—if item not assigned)

Item Description	PC/C Property No.

2. Resource Materials

(Textbooks, ICE materials, etc.—all items marked "Property of Peace Corps/Ghana," or that were purchased with job related funds or Peace Corps money)

Text Book Title or Item Description	Quantity

I have left the items listed above in the custody of _____

Check one below:

_____ This responsible party will hold these items until the next PCV's arrival, or...

_____ Peace Corps staff members should pick up these items at a later date.

PCV Signature: _____

Responsible party: _____

Witness: _____



Living/Leave Allowance Reconciliation Worksheet

1. Final deposit period covered

_____ 200 to _____ 200

2. Living Allowance

PCV has been overpaid _____ days and _____ months living allowance:

Calculation: _____ = _____ owes Peace Corps

3. Leave Allowance

PCV has been overpaid _____ days and _____ months leave allowance:

Calculation: _____ = _____ owes Peace Corps

PCV has been underpaid _____ days and _____ months leave allowance:

Calculation: _____ = _____ Peace Corps owes

4. Other Payments

PCV owes for the following:

Description:

PCV is owed for the following:

Description:

5. Total amount owed by/owed to (circle one) PCV: = _____

a. Method of Payment

____ Payment of ____ made to PCV on _____

____ Payment of ____ received from PCV on _____

____ Deduct from Readjustment Allowance

Name _____ Admin Officer _____

Signature _____ Signature _____

Date _____ Date _____



Peace Corps/Ghana

PLANE TICKET/CASH-IN-LIEU SELECTION

VOLUNTEER NAME: _____
please print clearly

COS DATE: _____ Vol ID: _____

CLOSEST AIRPORT TO MY HOME OF RECORD:

SELECT ONE:

(Please circle A or B)

- A. Please provide me with a plane ticket for return travel to my Home of Record.
- B. Please provide me with cash-in-lieu in the form of a U.S. Treasury check equivalent in amount to the cost of a one-way economy class fare from Accra to international airport closest to my home of record.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT TO FLY AMERICAN-FLAG CARRIERS FOR RETURN TO HOME-OF-RECORD

"I have been advised that Section 5 of the International Air Transportation Fair Competitive Practices Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-623) is applicable to funds provided to me for air transportation. I understand that I may not use other than an American-flag carrier, except between points where no American-flag airline operates, or where other justification, such as unreasonable delay exists (see 6 FAM 135, Attachment to MS 812). Such use of foreign flag carriers may result in my being held personally liable for the cost of the unjustified foreign flag transportation."

Volunteer Signature

Date

Appendix 2

Writing KSAs For Federal Job Applications

Please note: Although the focus of the COS conference should certainly be the upcoming transition that Volunteers will make, we understand that there may be those who are anxious about next steps in the job-search process. We recommend covering the following information at your COS conference only if PCVs express interest and have a firm grasp of the skills they have developed during their service, as covered in Sessions 3, 7, and 8. Alternatively, if a small group of PCVs expresses interest in this information, please direct them to contact Returned Volunteer Services directly at rvs@peacecorps.gov.

Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Services

Talking Points/PowerPoint Slide Show text:

Writing Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Statements (KSAs) for Federal Employment (Adapted from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management)

1. What does “KSA” mean? “KSA” stands for “knowledge, skills, and abilities.”

- Knowledge: The foundation upon which skills and abilities are built
 - *Examples*: Federal regulations and directives, operating systems and procedures, budget and accounting principles, engineering practices
- Skill: The observable demonstration of proficiency to do a task
 - *Examples*: computer software proficiency, second language proficiency
- Ability: The capacity to perform a job function
 - *Examples*: organize and plan work, analyze situations, communicate orally and in writing, coach and mentor others

2. What is a KSA statement?

- A KSA statement is a written essay response on a federal application for a vacancy that asks you to describe specific skills in relation to that vacancy.
- KSA responses describe your written and oral communication abilities, demonstrated technical abilities, and knowledge in specific subject-matter areas.
- KSA responses function as written answers to interview questions. In answering questions about KSAs:
 - Give concrete and specific examples (professional, coursework- or volunteer-based) of how you demonstrate a particular competency.
 - Focus on the results you’ve achieved, and especially on quantifiable results, complexity, or leadership.
 - Use each KSA prompt to convey what makes you stand out.
 - Write in the first person and don’t be too modest!

3. Sample KSA Screen (Avue)

4. How can I write a good KSA statement?

- Study the vacancy announcement.
 - Know what you're looking for. Check out FOCUS2, a self-assessment tool free to RPCVs and licensed by Peace Corps (email rvs@peacecorps.gov for access).
 - Use keywords from the announcement in your narrative.
- Gather information about yourself:
 - Description of Peace Corps Service (DOS)
 - Résumé
 - Quarterly reports from Peace Corps service, writing samples, copies of grant proposals
 - Handouts and session outlines from trainings you've attended, in PC or elsewhere
 - Documents from previous jobs: performance evaluations, emails from colleagues and supervisors
- Make a list of the projects to which you've contributed:
 - Note important numbers or measurables.
 - Focus on results and highlight accomplishments.
 - Link your accomplishments to the duties and responsibilities for the vacancy.
- Use the **STAR** model (see following step) to identify and qualify your skills and accomplishments.

5. STAR Example

- **Situation:** the circumstances and context in which you were working
 - Lunchtime feeding program for students at impoverished primary school
- **Task:** your actual job, assignment, or recommended course of action
 - Identified and developed an income-generation activity to both provide food and generate income for the school.
- **Action:** the specific steps you took to achieve your goal
 - Consulted with village councils, chiefs, and school staff.
 - Assessed community resources.
 - Coordinated project design, ownership, and management.
 - Raised funds for startup capital.
 - Trained local project partners.
- **Results:** the effects of your work—your accomplishment
 - Egg-laying enterprise to provide protein and money for more cabbage and potatoes.
 - Fed 150 students across three villages.

6. KSA Example: ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE ORALLY

Poor Response:

I am quite capable of oral communication as I have a lot of experience talking to my peers about a variety of subjects. You will see my skills at the interview.

Better Responses:

GS 5-7: As a student, I completed course work in public speaking and drama. I received training in clear and concise communication of all types of information, as well as training in persuasive presentation of views. During summers, I worked as a tour guide, which required that I convey information regarding the nation's capital to tourists from around the world. Enunciation and sentence structure were vital for effective communication, especially with persons for whom English was not a primary language. ...

GS 9-11: As a worker's compensation claims examiner, I explain highly technical information related to the laws, policies, and regulations regarding the Workers Compensation Program. I must gauge the comprehension level of the inquirer and deliver the information using terminology appropriate to that level. In addition to my duties as technical expert and point of contact, I participate in the preparation and delivery of presentations regarding the status of our program. I have delivered technical presentations to managers up to the associate director level. ...

7. KSA Example: ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE IN WRITING

Poor Response:

In my time as a student, I have written many, many papers and letters which often communicate terribly complex information for the edification of the readership. I am a good writer and have no trouble making sure that what I write says what I want it to.

Better Responses:

GS-5/7: As an undergraduate student at the State University, I produced a minimum of five research papers each semester. These were technical papers that present and support a thesis statement, providing detailed documentation to justify my position. In my senior year, I produced a 25-page paper that explored the issue of public health systems in Europe and their possible application in this country. The paper received a grade of 98 and was published in the School of Public Administration's newsletter. ...

GS-9/11: For the past five years I have served as a freelance writer, preparing text for publication in technical manuals, magazines, and other publications. I have written and edited materials in subject areas such as medicine, the arts, politics, and law enforcement. I conduct research and select the appropriate level of complexity for the target audience. In addition to the technical writing and editing that I have performed, I have published a collection of essays and several short stories. I am a member of the Writers Guild and have been a guest speaker for various professional writers' seminars. ...

8. KSA Dos

- Include key words and phrases mentioned in the position description.
- Tie your experiences to each KSA.
- Use concrete, illustrative examples—include measurables.
- Focus on outcomes to which you contributed.
- Use plain language, without acronyms.
- Review answers to ensure they are succinct, easy to read, grammatically correct, and devoid of typos (use MS Word spell check, but don't rely on it exclusively).
- Compose your KSAs in a Word document, then copy and paste into the browser.

9. KSA Don'ts

- Do not use bulleted lists or sentence fragments to answer the prompts.
 - Many application systems allow up to 4,000 characters for answers.
 - Employers are often willing to read up to one page of text per KSA.
- Don't use acronyms or professional jargon ... even for Peace Corps jobs.
- Never write "see above" or "see résumé."
 - If you are asked a similar question three times, answer it three times, with slightly different phrasing or emphasis.

- Don't use the same KSA narratives for multiple applications.
 - Pull phrases from a master for common prompts (like, "Ability to communicate effectively in writing"), but tailor KSAs to the position for which you are applying.

10. Some basic information about federal employment

- The federal government needs to fill 200,000 positions in the next few years.
 - The government is a great place for RPCVs to work.
- As a PCV, you were not a federal employee. You should not fill in a series or grade level on any application.
- You were also not assigned a GS-level; however, most RPCVs, with college degree and two years' PCV work experience, qualify at GS-7 or GS-9, depending on total work and education experience.
 - Please see www.opm.gov/qualifications/sec-IV/A/GS-PROF.asp
- As a PCV, you did not have a security clearance.

11. Useful websites and contacts

- Tips on composing KSAs:
 - www.usajobs.opm.gov
 - www.makingthedifference.org
 - www.cdc.gov/hrmo/ksahowto.htm
 - www.va.gov/JOBS/hiring/apply/ksa.asp
 - www.ars.usda.gov/careers/whatksa.html
 - www.nps.gov/training/tel/Guides/KSA_Writing_pg_Jun_2006.pdf
 - www.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/former/hotline/hotline061508.pdf
- May 15, 2008, special *Hotline* issue on federal employment: www.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/former/hotline/hotline051508.pdf
- Peace Corps' Volunteer and PSC Services office—to request a copy of your DOS: 202.692.1770 or certifications@peacecorps.gov
- Peace Corps' Returned Volunteer Services—for information about all RPCV services: 202.692.1430 or rvinfos@peacecorps.gov
- Peace Corps' Returned Volunteer Services events calendar—lists virtual and in-person events: www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/events

Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Services Supplemental Handout:

Writing Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Statements (KSAs) for Federal Employment

So . . . How Do I Write a KSA?

Apply the same rules when writing KSAs that you would in submitting an essay response or writing sample—use the active voice, don't ramble, and make sure you are answering the question being asked. Don't forget to read it over before submitting your responses.

Here are some pointers:

- Read the job announcement carefully, highlighting key words or phrases describing the position responsibilities so you remember to address those points in your KSA responses.
- Go back to your résumé and outline a list of experiences you've had that address each KSA. Review each list and select the items that best illustrate a link between your experience and each KSA as you compose your responses.
- Add information relevant to each KSA that may not be included in your résumé—such as any specialized training, publications, leadership roles, student activities, or awards. Make sure you take credit for your entire range of experiences, including volunteer work, internships, school projects, and extracurricular activities.
- Link all these different examples explicitly to the KSA questions. Whether you've worked as a waitress or cashier, served as a student club officer, or volunteered at a nursing home, the key is to tie these experiences to the KSAs in a way that demonstrates that you are the best candidate for the job being advertised.
- Write your KSAs in the first person, and use concrete examples to illustrate your skills. This is your opportunity to more fully elaborate on skills and responsibilities outlined in your résumé, and examples are much more compelling than simple assertions. Be sure to include examples that demonstrate your ability to take initiative.
- Focus on any outcomes to which you directly contributed, citing quantitative data where possible. For example, use data that measure how much (like how much money or time you generated or saved), or how many (like how many people attended, how many units you produced), and point to positive change (percentage growth or savings) wherever possible.
- Make sure your answers reflect your level of responsibility. Similarly, clearly identify with whom you interacted—and how (like providing key information to a manager, working with a group of peers, or supervising a team).

- Tailor each KSA answer to read between half a page and a page in length. Remember that a busy person will be reading through your application, so it is important to find the right balance between providing compelling information and information overload.
- Review your answers to ensure they are succinct and easy to read. Always use plain language and don't use acronyms. Focus on content, and don't forget to proofread.
- Ask a friend who knows you well to read over your finished answers. Your reader should make sure that you have included all of your relevant experiences, that your responses flow well, and that the answers don't contain any typos or grammatical errors.

A Sample KSA: Skill in written communication

Below are examples of answers to a common KSA, "skill in written communication." It should be clear to you which is the stronger response.

Example of a poor response:

My communication skills are excellent. I am often asked to help out in this regard and have been commended for my work.

Example of a better response:

In the past 10 months, I have taken over a number of assignments previously held by my supervisor:

1. I have been drafting monthly reports on leasing activities under the purview of our office. These are routinely approved by my supervisor without change and are circulated to 10 field offices and regional directors.
2. I have assumed the responsibility of reporter for the quarterly meeting of the bureau's research directors. Reports of these meetings are reviewed by the director's office prior to distribution to all participants.
3. In January, I completed the course, "Writing Analytical Reports," offered through the National Independent Study Center. This was a six-month course involving 24 hours of training and covering such areas as planning an analytical report; collecting and analyzing data; identifying possible solutions to problems addressed in the report; and organizing, writing, and editing the report.

In addition, while I was a student in college I developed and was recognized for my strong written communication skills in a variety of capacities:

1. After my junior year, I was selected for a summer internship with my state representative, for whom I drafted constituent correspondence and press releases. Though I was an intern, the majority of the pieces I wrote were sent out without modification.

2. During my senior year, I served as the chapter president of my honor society, and routinely wrote progress reports to send to the headquarters of the honor society.
3. Throughout college I was a staff writer for the student daily newspaper. As a reporter I wrote both short news stories as well as in-depth feature articles on a weekly basis, and was selected for a feature writing award by the editorial board my junior year.

Appendix 3

Storytelling As Third Goal and Job-Hunting Strategies

Crafting Your Story

Adapted from sessions by Stephen Moles, Office of Programming and Training Support, and Returned Volunteer Services, Office of Domestic Programs



Purpose

To better achieve the third goal of the Peace Corps, which is “to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans,” this session will help PCVs develop Peace Corps stories to tell family, potential employers, and members of their communities. PCVs will learn about putting together portfolios and how to structure their story in ways that are effective in conveying the rich essence and spirit of their experience.

Target Audience

Peace Corps Volunteers at their COS conference



Duration

2–3 hours



Objectives

By the end of this session, Volunteers will

- Share the importance of storytelling for an effective transition back home.
- Be familiar with best practices that make a quality RPCV presentation into an engaging learning experience for the audience.
- Target interest areas for third goal storytelling activities.
- Know how to document their last few months of experiences, as they happen, in ways that will make it easier to construct a quality presentation once back in the U.S.
- Discuss the Peace Corps’ third goal: To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.



Session Outline

- I. Explain the reasons why stories are important to readjustment, as well as a good way for PCVs to share their experiences as Volunteers; then, discuss the benefits to their own learning of using the portfolio as a tool for reflection and insight.
- II. Introduce the technique of creating a “story portfolio” and work with the accompanying handouts.
- III. Engage in brief practice using the portfolio to craft a story.
- IV. Explore how the portfolio and other authentic materials from the host country can be used to contribute to the Peace Corps’ third goal.



Facilitators and Technical Expertise

It is useful if the facilitator has experience with storytelling, with the nuances of readjusting to the home culture after a significant period of time away from it, or, ideally, both.



Methodology

1. Background: Storytelling

Solicit from participants why storytelling might be important to (a) readjustment and (b) intercultural competence and understanding. You might choose to share the following with participants, either on flip charts or handouts:

- Story-based learning appears to work best when you are sharing principles and concepts that are complex and abstract, for example, making sense of your Peace Corps service and all that you learned while in-country.
- Stories are effective teaching tools because they facilitate an audience’s appreciation of complex concepts by lowering their resistance to unfamiliar ideas.
- Stories can make the everyday memorable, make abstract notions concrete, and unravel complexity by making use of story elements in a structured manner.
- People remember stories based on a picture, even if they have forgotten exactly what the picture looked like. Thus, storytelling can (and should) involve many of the senses, thereby making the main points more memorable and enriching the audience’s experience.
- The process of crafting your story has the added benefit of reflection and insight on what you have been learning along the way, rather than just at the end. This is especially important during your last few months in-country.

2. Peace Corps Portfolios

- Distribute copies of the handout “My Peace Corps Portfolio.”
- Discuss the utility and application of portfolios.
 - Have participants used them in other contexts in the past?
 - How else (besides what the handout suggests) might they be used to convey the PC experience?
- Ask PCVs (individually, as a large group, or in small groups, as appropriate) to brainstorm things to include in the portfolio.
 - Share the items listed in the handout “Suggestions for Things to Include in Your Portfolio” and ask PCVs to record their group’s ideas for their own future reference.

3. Crafting Your Story

- Participants, in groups, brainstorm ways that their portfolio can be used to facilitate and support storytelling. Examples:
 - Cooking a dish for which the recipe is included in the portfolio and then discussing times you ate it, how you bought the ingredients while in-country, or any special occasions associated with the dish.
 - Asking audience members—especially children—to create their own story based on a photo from your PC service that you share with them; then compare their versions with what actually happened.
 - Using three or four photographs of the same people or place and talk about some change that happened over time. This helps create a thread among pictures.
- Share the following storytelling best practices with PCVs:
 - When crafting a story to tell an audience, ask yourself the following questions:
 - › What is really important about this story?
 - › How did it make me feel?
 - › What did it make me wonder about?
 - › How did it surprise me?
 - › Which mental images were the strongest for me?
 - › What did this story teach me about the world, myself, and others?

- Stories should have a beginning, middle, and end. Too many times when people show photographs, they just say who or what the subject is. When using photos from your portfolio, ask yourself, “So what?” and try to answer that question as you comment on the pictures.
- Journaling activity: PCVs should respond to the prompts in the handout “Suggested Topics for Stories” to begin crafting their stories.
- Participants volunteer to share some of their responses.

4. Third Goal Contributions

- Introduce goal three of the Peace Corps: To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.
- Participants, in pairs or small groups, identify compelling stories from the journaling or sharing activity above that strengthen Americans’ understanding about the world and its peoples.

HANDOUT

My Peace Corps Portfolio

This multimedia portfolio, which you will be putting together, is designed as an aid for you to record and understand your Peace Corps experience so you can better represent it to others upon your return home. Take the time during these last few months in-country to record events, perceptions, and feelings before these extraordinary characteristics are forgotten or too distant to you to be accurately conveyed to others. It's useful to compare this portfolio with your other journals and notes, if you have been making them over the course of your service, because now you may have insights to add about your journey and what you have learned along the way.

This portfolio will help you understand the uniqueness of your host country, and of your personal experiences, and how those might be of interest to others. It also facilitates the important third goal of Peace Corps—both while you are overseas and when you return home. The portfolio is for you and you are not required to share it with anyone, including Peace Corps staff.

Even though there are only a few months left in your Peace Corps service, there is still time to develop a portfolio. This project can be fun—ask host-country national friends to help you with your responses. Collect pictures, recipes, stories, newspaper articles, or whatever you want to insert into your memoir. Think of activities that you can do while in-country that you will be able to share with people when you return home.

One of the best ways to preserve your Peace Corps experience is to capture it digitally. Having a visual presentation to share with groups who may invite you to speak seems like the best way to share your experience. Of course, gaining access to video equipment may not be easy, but there are many digital cameras that have video capacity; this can be a good option for shorter scenes to record the sights and sounds around you in your everyday life as a Volunteer. For example: local animals, bodies of water near to you, the hustle and bustle of your local marketplace, a town meeting, local festivals, religious ceremonies. You might also choose to interview your friends and counterparts. While in your host country, consider interviewing a child. Ask him or her about school, hobbies, sports, family life, etc. Record the responses. This sort of addition to your portfolio will be especially handy for use when you are presenting to children in the United States.

When you have finished you will have a detailed account of your experience that you can take home and share with everyone.

HANDOUT

Suggestions for Things to Include in Your Portfolio

Collecting and Preparing

Photos, drawings, and recordings will be a great addition to your portfolio. They can capture parts of the country and culture that writing cannot, and make interesting things to show people and talk about when you return home.

Things to Bring Home:

Postcards
Posters, menus, bus or train tickets
Recipes, especially of national dishes
Tapes or CDs of local music
Samples of cultural dress
Local arts and crafts
Textiles
Household gadgets
Books
Small musical instruments
Other things:

Take Pictures of:

Places of worship
Local businesses
Marketplace
Cultural events: carnivals, festivals, weddings, baptisms, funerals (if appropriate)
Animals
Food and agriculture
Children playing
Country life vs. city life
Your home
Transportation systems
Other things:

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Suggested Topics for Stories

A Day in the Life: “Walk a mile in another man’s shoes,” says the adage to help people think about acting in someone else’s role. Reflect on how the average day of someone in the host country differs from yours, both as a Peace Corps Volunteer, and as a resident of the United States.

1. Consider the following, for they provide both content *and* context for your story:
 - Describe an average day for a woman in your area.
 - Describe an average day for a man in your area.
 - Describe an average day for a child in your area.
 - What is a typical day like for you?
 - How are women treated? Men? Elders? Youth? How are you treated, comparatively speaking?
 - How do your neighbors feel about the lives they lead? How have their lives changed over time?
 - Do people like their way of living, or are they hoping for something different? If they are wanting change, what are they looking for?
2. Now place yourself in the context of the local culture. Considering your place and involvement, ask yourself, “What is it about the following examples of everyday life that were challenging? How did I overcome those challenges? Which were locales for successes? Why? What happened?”

• Churches	• Food
• Local businesses	• Animals
• Marketplace	• Agriculture
• Cultural events, such as carnivals, festivals, weddings, baptisms, funerals	• Children playing
• Local practices—social or cultural	• Country life vs. city life
	• Transportation systems
3. What interpersonal and other skills did you use to cope with these challenging situations?

(From Returned Volunteer Services *Hotline* : 2/15/2007)

Peace Corps Week: Storytelling Your Way Back Home

By Robert Michon, Manager, Returned Volunteer Services/Office of Domestic Programs

"Re-entry in short is a deeply personal experience and a cultural one as well." (Craig Storti. The Art of Coming Home. Intercultural Press/Nicholas Brealey, Boston 2001.)

In past issues of *Hotline* we have written about re-entry and the challenges with coming back "home." Generally, that focus is on the job search, graduate school selection, or career development. Typically we write about different methods whereby the recently returned PCV can make sense of his or her volunteer experience, and then how to communicate it across different media, at various venues, to audiences with different needs (see August 15, 2006 and September 1, 2006). Not often do we at *Hotline* write to address the re-entry process itself, i.e., the process of re-entering the U.S., your community, your social environment, your family, and—in some cases—your career (however, it is addressed in chapter 3 of the *RPCV Handbook* given out to all PCVs at their COS conference).

Yet the re-entry process is the initial phenomenon of returning home, thereby serving as the keystone for much that follows, and consequently is a critical issue for most returning RPCVs. A successful re-entry can enable a smoother transition and catalyze personal and career ambitions. So, then, what is it about this process that you need to know in order to manage a "successful re-entry"? An easier way of understanding this phenomenon is perhaps to take a look at some of its markings.

One recent RPCV described the process this way:

"I find myself struggling with some of the everyday trials and tribulations of being back in America. I look back at what my country director told us during our COS conference and think just how apt he was and how at the time I naively believed I would be able to avoid many of the issues that he discussed with us having to face upon re-entry, such as coping with the apathy that so many people have in regards to your service and your experiences, the distance between your 'old' life and your 'current' life, and many of the other small issues that were not issues pre-service."

Many of these struggles are a result of expectations associated with home. Similar to our expectations with going out to the field as a PCV, re-entering RPCVs need to realign expectations to conform to encountered realities—realities that have surprisingly shifted. These shifts have much to do with what home means.

In this regard "home" is not your "home of record," your domicile serving as a roof over your head with a fridge to open. Instead, "home" is that place of recognizable feelings, predictable responses, and known routines; of comfort and trust. It is the locale where you have an

intimacy of geography (streets, buildings, stores, clubs), of the social scene (how and why people relate to each other), and of phenomena (events, activities, occurrences). Finally, it is an environment wherein traditions and habits are worn without considering whether to slip them on. It is where you can be yourself and still be recognized, understood, and accepted. And when that doesn't happen—in the place most of us grew up—what we thought we knew as reality has shifted. When we thought transition was over, transition begins anew.

Craig Storti writes in *The Art of Coming Home*, “[F]or all its minor and a few major annoyances, [re-entry] can’t begin to diminish the luster of any expatriate experience. Indeed it is in some ways precisely because the overseas experience is so rich and stimulating that re-entry becomes a problem. In other words if you are having trouble readjusting, it’s probably because you had such a terrific time abroad” (xxi).

I find these to be critical words, for it is that very aspect of your overseas experience that can well serve you, the returning RPCV, as a deep reservoir of relevance from which to draw. Your success in re-entering and readjusting to “home,” as we have noted in our past articles on re-entry job searching, can be facilitated by calling forward that “rich and stimulating” experience, understanding its significance and implications and how it redefined you, and then telling your story to different audiences (friends, family, community, hiring managers, graduate school administrators, et al.), through different canvasses (written résumés, oral résumés, presentations), and across different venues (interviews, coffee shops, libraries, schools) to satisfy their needs...and yours. You have a wealth of incidences, activities, accomplishments, and other experiences to share—each one relevant in some way; a relevance for you to uncover and then communicate.

So I encourage you to reflect and make sense of your PCV experience. Look back and then bring the meaning forward by practicing your storytelling with others either in the same situation as you, or those who have experienced re-entry themselves. These are the individuals who get it—who can empathize—and who can encourage you along that path of readjustment. Generally, these are repatriates past and present, among whom, most notably, are other RPCVs. As our earlier quoted RPCV put it, *“I would like someone to be able to talk to about the transitioning period, about getting readjusted and settled into my ‘American’ life. More importantly, I would like to talk to someone who I know understands completely and can commiserate. I’d like to meet someone who could introduce me to local Peace Corps events so I can meet other RPCVs in my area.”*

Seek these RPCVs out. They could be your PCV cohort, or they might be members of a returned Peace Corps Volunteer group (many of which can be found online at www.rpcv.org/groups). These individuals can serve as transitional partners, as coaches, as friends, or as mentors. Whatever the role, they can assist you in negotiating that transition.

It is precisely for that reason—to facilitate face-to-face and direct support for those recently returned Volunteers encountering re-entry challenges—that the National Peace Corps Association and the United States Peace Corps (through this Office of Domestic Programs) have entered into a cooperative agreement to develop a mentor program in which recently returned Peace Corps Volunteers (those back a year or less) are matched with more established RPCVs (more information can be found at <http://rpcvmentoring.org/>). Whether you participate in this program or not, know that a crucial element to your re-entry success might be connecting with other RPCVs who “get it” and who can help you craft compelling stories to help others understand who you are and where you are going. Good luck, and we look forward to hearing your story!

(From Returned Volunteer Services *Hotline*: 2/1/2008)

Peace Corps Week: Telling Your Story to Transition Back and Land a Job

By Jodi Hammer, RPCV Career Center Coordinator (RPCV/Ecuador, 1994–1997)

Many of you are undoubtedly venturing into the infamous post-Peace Corps readjustment phase that most RPCVs talk so much about, struggling to reconcile the disparity between the simple, yet meaningful life you left behind in the distant land of your Peace Corps service and the mind-boggling complexity and pressure of post-Peace Corps life here in the States. Working hard to create a new home and facing the fact that your readjustment money is running out quickly leads to yet another pressure—that of having to get a job...and *soon!* It's enough to make you consider running back to your dear little *pueblo* you just recently left behind, but for most of us, that's just not an option. So we do our best to deal with what comes, as difficult as it seems sometimes, and to move forward. But frustrating scenes like the following seem to come up time and time again, which thwart that process.

Scenario: You're at some social event—or in the bank, in the elevator, or wherever else you might run into people who realize you just returned from Peace Corps. And here comes the infamous question (the one that may cause more frustration and heartache than any other single question in the universe, at least for RPCVs): “Wow, so how was your Peace Corps experience?!” After responding to this question a few times, the cynic in you might see this inquiry as a misleading one, as it seems to indicate a real sense of interest far beyond the 20- to 30-second time period that encompasses the attention span of your listener. However, you might consider instead that this seeming lack of interest may be as much a reflection of the listener's inability to fully “get” the Peace Corps experience. In other words, the key to reducing at least part of readjustment frustration may come down to the age-old art of storytelling—*how* to tell your Peace Corps stories in a way that is engaging and facilitates an understanding by the non-RPCV. If done appropriately, storytelling cannot only reduce your frustration by allowing you to avoid the glazed-over look from your audience, it can also ease your transition, and perhaps even land you an awesome job. Following are a few tips related to effective storytelling.

TIP #1: Respond to questions about your service in brief, targeted sound bites: two to four short, compelling sentences, maybe fewer. Perhaps start off by acknowledging how difficult it is to reply concisely to that question—“Wow, it's hard to put it into words how life-changing it was. I spent two years working in a rural village in Ecuador with 10 mothers' groups on child survival and health and HIV/AIDS prevention. It was an amazing experience.” [*Period! Pause and take a breath.*] This allows the interested listener to digest what you've said, and, if interested in hearing more, to follow up with another question, like, “Wow, so what exactly did you do

related to child survival and health?"To which you would respond again with a few targeted sentences *max*. [*Pause and breathe again.*] This will allow your listener to take in the information in a digestible form or change the subject when he/she wishes, no hard feelings, no sense of rejection. The key is in putting the information out there in *small* sound bites.

TIP #2: This storytelling advice also rings true for job interviews and networking events. Remember to keep your sound bites short and targeted to the person asking the question or the organization they represent. For example, if you are networking with someone from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), you might focus more on the health aspects of your Peace Corps service, and talk about some of the secondary projects in HIV/AIDS even if you weren't a health Volunteer. Remember, your sound bites are a lure that can, if effectively used, draw people in to your story and experiences. Apply this same principle in the job interview. When someone asks about an aspect of your service, respond with a concise answer that connects the skills you learned in Peace Corps with the skills necessary at the job for which you're interviewing. As you highlight your background, remember to work in other stories too—not just Peace Corps ones—in order to show your diversity and range of experiences (even if some were in college). You'll come to see that the art of interviewing really comes down to the art of *storytelling* (and I don't mean story *weaving*—make sure what you say is the truth).

If you would like more practice telling your story as a tool to finding employment, consider attending the next Career Event taking place in Washington, D.C.... This four-day event will include interactive sessions on networking, interviewing, and résumé writing, among others, and opportunities to actually put into practice what you've learned while interacting with employers participating in the career fair.... For more information or to register for the event, contact rvsevents@peacecorps.gov.

TIP #3: Another great way to practice telling your story while fulfilling the third goal of Peace Corps is by taking part in this year's Peace Corps Week celebration [always around March 1]. During this time, thousands of RPCVs will join forces with local schools, places of employment, or other institutions to share stories and cross-cultural experiences from their Peace Corps service. Assistance and many resources are available for RPCVs participating in this initiative. Register online today and we'll send you a free presentation kit containing ideas and resources for whatever Peace Corps Week activity you choose to organize. Visit www.peacecorps.gov/pcweek for more information, tips, and downloadable resources to enhance your presentation. This is a fun and easy way to stay connected, fulfill the third goal *and* keep your Peace Corps experience alive as you transition back into life in the States.¹

TIP #4: Finally, consider connecting with your local Peace Corps recruitment office to tell your story as part of a recruitment event—there are nine regional recruiting offices, spanning the entire U.S. so there are bound to be periodic recruiting events scheduled for almost every

1. For ideas on how to share your rich and stimulating Peace Corps story with others, please see the December 15, 2006 and February 1, 2007 issues of *Hotline*.

region of the country. You might volunteer to be an RPCV guest speaker at a General Information Meeting—a recruitment event where folks interested in learning more about the Peace Corps gather and talk to a recruiter or returned Volunteer. Though this is not the time to tell your “largest amoeba” story, you’ll certainly get a captive audience of idealistic folks who are champing at the bit to hear the stories of real, live returned Peace Corps Volunteers. You might really enjoy the chance to share some of your experience and answer questions while helping others learn more about Peace Corps opportunities. To contact your local Peace Corps recruiting office, call 1.800.424.8580 and press option “1.”

So, go forth and conquer with these storytelling tips, and don’t forget to share your successes with us by sending an email to rvs@peacecorps.gov. You might just be the author of an article in an upcoming *Hotline* article about the success of storytelling in getting a job. Happy storytelling!

Appendix 4

Reinventing Yourself

(From Returned Volunteer Services Hotline: 3/15/2008)

Reinvention: Zen and the Mobile Employee

By Adrienne Benson Scherger, Office of University Programs Marketing Specialist
(RPCV Nepal, 1992–1994)

No matter what the school board is saying, there is one group of people for whom evolution is a fact of life. Deciding to follow one's career, or one's spouse, at different points around the globe calls for the flexibility of a yogi and an ability to spin that would make a Washington politico green with envy. Mobile workers and their spouses are a skilled bunch, and not always in the expected ways. Recently, I surveyed the education and work experience of a small community of Americans (and in some cases their third-country spouses) in Tirana, Albania. Just in Tirana, where the surveyed group totaled 13 people, were five master's degrees, one law degree, and one registered nurse practitioner. Seven others came to Tirana armed with bachelor's degrees. In the group were writers, teachers, social workers, architects, Romance language experts, business people, flight attendants, and several office managers. Although the skills are always divergent, aside from being smart, well-rounded and flexible, any group of internationally mobile people share one particular skill in common: the ability to evolve.

Recently I was having a conversation with the wife of a Foreign Service officer. She told me that what she was most proud of in her life as a mobile spouse was her ability to find work that was interesting and relevant to her own career goals. This was a revelation to me, because it clearly defines one of the major issues of being in an internationally mobile family. People interested in finding work internationally—either because they want to stay in their country of service after Peace Corps, or because they are the “non-contracted” spouse of a development worker—more and more are interested in keeping to a career trajectory. Many are not willing to give up on education and previous experiences when they leap into the wild and wonderful life of international nomadism. In fact, I think many see a distinct challenge in working while living the transitory lifestyle. It takes a special person to find meaningful work in a new locale every few years. However, as special and talented as most mobile workers are, everyone needs help from time to time. To that end, I've compiled a list of best practices for mobile job seekers.

Get Ahead of Yourself

It is certainly helpful if you have an interest in a career that is transportable. If you are just starting a career, and are new to this life, think ahead about types of jobs that can move easily. I watched my mother, a teacher by training and passion, find a job in every post of my father's USAID career. Each time we moved she was snapped up literally within days of alerting

the international school that she was ready and willing to work. Obviously not all of us are teachers, but we have a distinct technological advantage these days—the Internet allows us the option of telecommuting, and it allows us to explore job possibilities in our new posts before we get there.

Smarten up, Sister (and Brother)

The Internet provides another boon to the life of savvy mobile workers—online classes. There are a million ways to get a degree or further an education by taking advantage of virtual classrooms. Your dream degree could be a mere mouse-click away. Some international organizations provide some training for spouses. If your other half is employed with a large agency or business, and is knee-deep in language training, see if you're eligible to get down in the muck with him or her. The more of the local language you know, the better your options are for finding work at your next post. Plus, there's something about being able to ask for the restroom or order a beer in five different languages that reeks of class. Hey, it's a perk of our lifestyle. Go with it.

If it Isn't Great, Hesitate

This is an important one. I think that some job seekers who want to find work in a particular foreign locale get there and panic. They feel they have to work so they take the first job they hear about. Then later, when the dust has settled, they see that there may have been other opportunities that would have better fit into their personal career trajectory. I was a victim of “job panic” at my first post as a spouse, and am grateful for the lesson it taught me—take things slowly. The job I had was perfect—for someone else—yet I took it and performed it to the best of my ability, all the while regretting the fact that, three months later, someone else discovered and jumped on a job that was perfect for me. Research is key but not difficult. Find people who work in your career area and network with them. This may mean pumping host-country nationals for information, or finding an international women's group (even if you're a male) whose members have varied professions, and networking there.

It Ain't Always the Dough, Joe (It's the Dojo)

There are plenty of ways that an unpaid (or underpaid) job can help you. Sometimes jobs at the relative salary you made in the States are simply not available. There are two choices when you're faced with this situation. Don't work at all, or take less money. It's no fun to be paid less than you're worth, but it's even less fun to stew about it. Taking a job in the local economy can sometimes be a blessing in disguise. You'll meet a wide variety of people in your field, you'll potentially learn a great deal about the host-country culture and language, and you'll have a very interesting talking point on your résumé. This is also a way to ensure, to a degree, that you stay within your career. I know an architect whose wife was assigned to a post where, not surprisingly, the embassy had no use for an eligible family member architect. He found a local company that was interested in an American but who could pay

only local rates. The experience was positive for all involved, and he was able to continue in his specific field even while posted overseas. He left that post empowered to stay focused on what he wanted to do, and with the impetus to find more jobs in his field in future posts.

Focus, Focus, Focus, Till It Hurts

Nothing is more helpful than knowing what you want. If you have a specific long-term goal for your career, it is much easier to match up jobs with it than it is to just willy-nilly take what's available and hope that, in the end, your career is satisfying. In some locales there will be great jobs to choose from, and at others the pickings will be much slimmer. For the people who are concentrating on one particular career goal, let your focus be what gets you through job panic.

One spouse I know followed her husband and his development job throughout Africa. She took only jobs (including volunteer opportunities) that related one way or another to gender in development. She didn't work at some posts because she was totally committed to only doing work that she loved and that would further her desire to be an expert in her field. After her husband retired, she found herself a position with the U.N. doing exactly what she always wanted to do. The jobs she had held while overseas were so focused, that by the time she applied for her dream job, her résumé was bursting with appropriate skills and apropos experience. Her technique can be a good one if you are able to think in the long term.

Your Glass Is Never *Not* Half Full (Even When It Looks Empty)

Here's where you need to channel your inner Zen-master. Being happy, fulfilled, and internationally mobile can be tricky, and calls for a superhuman amount of positive energy and *joie de vivre*. Nobody feels that way all the time. However, the people who would classify themselves as "successful" at navigating this lifestyle would surely also consider themselves lucky to be living it. Finding the good in each location is the key to finding happiness both in your career and in your life. Making sure that you're not succumbing to job-panic and selling yourself short hinges, to a certain extent, on your overall satisfaction. So find the silver linings. A post with little in the way of viable paid work may have a host of interesting volunteer opportunities. A post that seems like a career dead-end may offer up the luxury of exploring a hobby and spending more time on non-career tasks.

Having to really pound the pavement (or dust) in search of your perfect job will give you a unique window into host country culture. The smaller sites in developing nations that may seem like the last place you'd like to live may, in fact, be real career boosters. How many Yale-educated, English-speaking lecturers of forestry can there be in Fredonia? Play your cards right and you could be a consultant to the Ministry of Agriculture while posted there. To quote a fortune cookie: Opportunities are found in the oddest of places. Go out and find them.

Appendix 5

Elevator Pitches

Returned Volunteer Services Session Plan: Elevator Pitches Workshop

(The term “elevator pitch” refers to a hypothetical meeting of an RPCV and a prospective employer in an elevator, with only a few seconds for dialogue.)

Objectives

- To understand the critical need for translating the Peace Corps experience for prospective employers.
- To continue to identify concrete and transferable skills gained during Peace Corps service.
- To practice framing Peace Corps service in short sound bites for recruiters and other professional contacts.

Duration

Approximately 2 hours

Session Outline

- A. PCVs identify and discuss skills and accomplishments during service
- B. PCVs practice discussing those accomplishments for prospective employers
- C. PCVs create and practice elevator pitch (verbal résumé)
- D. PCVs engage in elevator pitches role-play

Session Format

- A. PCVs identify and discuss skills used during service
 - Recall the content you developed for the third goal workshop of Session 6, “Targeting Your Interests and Skills for Third Goal Activities.” Now place yourself within the Volunteer project (primary *and* secondary) within that same context. What was your role, what did you do, and what kind of impact did you have?
 - Consider your role and impact: The role of the PCV is to help people help themselves.
 - That role is manifested
 - › In daily life though work in a community.
 - › In relations with community partners and counterparts.

- › Through actions that empower people to
 - a) Build their capacity (defined as commitment, resources, and skills) to help themselves—and others.
 - b) Make decisions for themselves.
 - When considering the above, discuss the following questions with a partner:
 - What was one work-related problem, situation, or issue you encountered? What needed to be done, and how were you involved (directly and indirectly)?
 - What specific actions did you take (initiate or direct) to deal with the problem or situation? Try to use action verbs in answering.
 - What skills—technical, interpersonal—did you use for those actions?
 - What were the results of your efforts? Quantify and be as concrete as possible (this is an accomplishment statement).
- B. PCVs practice discussing accomplishments for prospective employers.
- With your partner, identify compelling and illustrative stories (concrete examples) from the discussion above that could serve to strengthen employers' understanding of your Peace Corps work and your qualifications. You might choose to highlight skills such as
 - Project management
 - Budgeting
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Foreign language
 - Marketing and communications
 - Practice telling employers
 - Climate setter: Develop a 45- to 60-second (not longer) answer to the question, "What did you gain from your Peace Corps experience?"
 - Form a pair with someone (interviewer and interviewee) and have the interviewer ask the question. Stop the answer at one minute. Interviewer gives the interviewee feedback on his or her answer (Was it concise? Did it highlight the person's skills? ...). Switch roles.
- C. PCVs create and practice elevator pitch (verbal résumé)
- Review elevator pitch presentation with PCVs (find talking points and slide text at the end of this appendix).
 - With their partners, PCVs work to pare down the 60-second answer (from section B above) to a 30-second verbal résumé. They should be sure they have included all four of the elements referenced in the presentation.

D. Elevator pitches role-play

Notes:

1. *You will need to tape off a space (or spaces) of about three by four feet; these will function as the "elevators" (one elevator per break-out group).*
 2. *Participants and facilitators should role-play the entire situation, including the approach, introduction, entering "elevators" with a facilitator, and delivering the elevator pitch.*
 3. *This activity is meant to be both instructive and fun, so every attempt should be made to provide a supportive atmosphere and encourage PCVs to maintain their sense of humor.*
- PCVs break into as many groups as session facilitators.
 - Volunteer PCVs enter taped-off "elevator" with one of the facilitators and practice engaging a networking target with his or her elevator pitch.
 - PCV initiates greeting; facilitator replies with expressed interest in PCV; PCV has 30 seconds to deliver elevator pitch.
 - If facilitator finds the oral résumé engaging, properly leading, or interesting, the facilitator has up to an additional 30 seconds to continue dialogue.
 - If facilitator does not find the oral résumé to be any of the previous things, then the engagement ends with a "bye" (or a brush-off) from the facilitator.
 - For either case, the engaged facilitator provides a critique on what worked or what did not work and, therefore, how the elevator pitch could have been improved. The other participants support the constructive feedback. Allow two or three minutes for this, before next PCV enters the "elevator" with the facilitator.
 - Process continues until you run out of time. Depending on the time allotted, perhaps approximately 10 volunteer PCVs for each group will have a chance to role-play, with any remaining PCVs taking in the process and learning through witnessing.
 - Lead facilitator asks PCVs who participated to express what their concerns were and what they've learned; witnessing PCVs can share what they learned.

Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Services

Talking Points/PowerPoint Slide Show text:

Oral Résumés: Your “Elevator Pitch”

1. What is an elevator pitch? (The term “elevator pitch” refers to a hypothetical meeting of an RPCV and a prospective employer in an elevator, with only a few seconds for dialogue.)
 - It answers the question, “What did you gain from your Peace Corps experience?” in a networking setting.
 - It is short and sweet: This is not the time to elaborate on every project you undertook; rather, stick to a few concrete and transferable skills and abilities you gained.
 - It’s useful for making initial contacts with people—serving as a conversation starter.
 - Its ultimate aim is to get you some kind of follow-up with this person: a business card, informational interview, etc.
2. What does an elevator pitch look like?
 - It should contain the following elements:
 - **Opener:** Establish a connection; comment on why you are there.
 - **Where or what you’re coming from:** What you have done so far, or most recently did.
 - **Career focus; where you’re going:**
 - › Years of experience and a few distinguishing qualifications or illustrative experiences.
 - › Why are you interesting?
 - › Bonus: What type of employment you are seeking?
 - **Request for follow-up:** Try to get their business card!
It should be no longer than 30 seconds!
3. Sample elevator pitches

“Hello, I very much enjoyed your presentation about alleviating the impact on sustainable livelihoods through changes in land-use practices.” **[opener]** “Having recently arrived from China **[coming from where/what]** where I worked with communities on implementing a sustainable natural resources project, I found the suggestions quite relevant. However, I’m relatively new in the discipline and not sure how best to build a career in this critical field.” **[career focus/where going]** “I see that you are with USAID. I would be interested in any advice or guidance you could give me. May I contact you sometime?” **[follow-up]**

"Hello, I'm Arpi Seevee." **[opener]** I recently relocated to D.C. and am seeking information about D.C. employment." **[coming from where/what]** "I have five years of experience in financial management both domestically and abroad but don't know the local market." **[career focus/where going]** "Do you know anyone who is either a financial or program manager with whom I could discuss this? At your convenience, perhaps we can chat over coffee or lunch sometime." **[follow-up]**

Appendix 6

Finding the Job: Job-Search Resources

A compilation of free job listing services and online resources to help RPCVs with all aspects of the job search process

(Please note: The listing below is a sample of available resources compiled by Peace Corps' Returned Volunteer Services, and is not intended as a comprehensive or all-inclusive list. Inclusion below does not imply endorsement of any kind on behalf of Peace Corps. For the most current version of this resource list, please contact Returned Volunteer Services at rvs@peacecorps.gov)

Free Job Listing Services

- **America's Job Bank**—www.ajb.org
- **American Society of Association Executives**—www.asi.careerhq.org/search.cfm
- **Career Journal.com**—www.careerjournal.com/salaryhiring/industries/nonprofits/20050923-needleman.html
- **Career Path**—www.careerpath.com
- **Community Career Center**—www.nonprofitjobs.org
- **Common Good Careers**—www.cgcareers.org/findajob/viewjobs
- **Craig's List**—www.craigslist.com
- **Employment Guide**—www.employmentguide.com—Job fair listings nationwide
- **Expatriot**—www.lists.topica.com/lists/expat_list/
- **Foreign Policy Association**—www.fpa.org/—publishes Global Jobs e-news and contains Jobs Board
- **Flipdog**—www.flipdog.com—job listings by location, industry—nationwide
- **Foreign Policy Association**—Job Board: <http://www.fpa.org/jobs>
- **The Foundation Center Job Newsletter**—www.fdncenter.org/newsletters/—Job postings/newsletter + free trainings, philanthropy
- **Idealist: Action Without Borders**—www.idealist.org—(clearinghouse of nonprofit jobs and volunteer opportunities)
- **Indeed**—www.indeed.com
- **International Jobs Center**—www.internationaljobs.org/—publishes the International Career Weekly e-news.
- **Job Source**—www.jobsourcenetnetwork.com
- **Monster**—www.monster.com
- **Monster.com international**—www.international.monster.co.uk/
- **Myspace Jobs**—<http://jobs.myspace.com>
- **Nonprofit Jobs Cooperative**—www.nonprofitjobscoop.org
- **Nonprofit Times**—www.nptjobs.nptimes.com/
- **Opportunity Knocks**—www.opportunitynocs.org

- **Orion Grassroots Network**—<http://www.orionsociety.org/pages/ogn/ics.cfm>—Jobs & internships
- **PNN Online**—www.opnnonline.org—Nonprofit news
- **Sustainable Business**—www.sustainablebusiness.com
- **Topica Email List Directory**—www.topica.com/lists/expat_list/read
- **Women's Job Search Web**—www.womensjobsearch.net

Peace Corps-monitored group lists and listservs

- **Hotline:** www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=resources.former.hotline (Published on first and 15th of each month and sent via email to RPCVs back from service two years or less; current and past issues all available on Peace Corps website link above.)
- **RPCV-only Yahoo Group list/listserv:** www.groups.yahoo.com/group/rpcvnetwork (Note: Available only to RPCVs—to join, visit link above, click on “join now,” and provide full name, country of service, and dates of service. Strongly suggest choosing “daily digest” option.)

Paid job listservs (FREE for RPCVs—Peace Corps pays, free passwords available to RPCVs):

(RPCVs: to request your free passwords for the below six listservs, email rvs@peacecorps.gov and provide your full name, PC country and dates of service, and which listservs you're requesting.)

- **Alliance for Conflict Transformation**—www.conflicttransformation.org
- **Ethical Jobs**—www.ethicaljobs.net
- **Environmental Career Opportunities**—www.ecojobs.com
- **InterAction**—www.interaction.org
- **International Career Employment Weekly**—www.internationaljobs.org
- **Public Health Jobs Worldwide**—www.jobspublichealth.com

International/Humanitarian Organizations

- **International Organizations and United Nations postings**—www.missions.itu.int/~italy/vacancies/
- **Concern Worldwide**—www.concern.net/about
- **Directory to the United Nations System**—www.unsystem.org/
- **Employment Office of the Health Commissioner for Human Rights** www.ohchr.org/english/about/vacancies/index.htm
- **Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)**—www.fao.org/VA/Employ.htm
- **International Labour Organization (ILO)**—www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/index.htm
- **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**—www.imf.org/external/np/adm/rec/recruit.htm

- **International Organization for Migration (IOM)**—www.iom.int/en/who/main_vacancies.shtml
- **Organization of American States (OAS)**—www.oas.org
- **Pact**—www.pactworld.org
- **Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)**—www.paho.org/english/am/hrm/re/hrm-geninfo.htm
- **Relief Web**—www.reliefweb.int—lists vacancies for academia, NGOs, the U.N., government, news and media, plus more. Can receive weekly announcements of vacancies by country. Provides country profiles in several sectors, e.g., health, economics.
- **United Nations (U.N.)**—www.jobs.un.org/Galaxy/Release3/vacancy/vacancy.aspx
- **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**—www.unicef.org/about/employ/index.html
- **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** www.unctad.org/Templates/Page.asp?intItemID=1652&lang=1
- **United Nations Development Program (UNDP)**—<http://www.undp.org/jobs/>
- **United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT)**—www.unhabitat.org/vacancy/index.asp
- **USAID OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)** www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance
- **Vacancies in International Organizations**—www.state.gov/p/io/empl/
- **The World Bank**—www.worldbank.org/careers/
- **World Health Organization (WHO)**—www.who.int/employment/en/
- **World Learning**—www.worldlearning.org

Federal Government

- **USAJOBS**—www.usajobs.opm.gov/—U.S. government's official site for jobs and employment information
- **KSAs—How to Write Effective KSAs/Applications for government jobs**—www.cdc.gov/hrmo/ksahowto.htm
- **Avue Central**—www.avuedigitalservices.com/ace/applicant.html—Peace Corps employment/job listings plus other government job listings.
- **Congressional Research Service**—www.loc.gov/crsinfo/—Library of Congress
- **Corporation for National and Community Service**—www.CNS.gov—AmeriCorps Opportunities (includes VISTA, AmeriCorps State and National, and NCCC).
- **Department of Commerce**—www.commerce.gov/jobs.html
- **Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)**—www.dia.mil/employment/index.html
- **Department of Defense (DOD)**—www.defenselink.mil/
- **Department of Justice (DOJ)**—www.usdoj.gov/06employment/index.html
- **Department of State (DOS)**—www.careers.state.gov/
- **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**—www.fbijobs.gov/

- **International Broadcasting Bureau**—www.voa.gov/vacancies/personnel.html—job listings for Voice of America, Worldnet Television, and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative—USTR.
- **Making the Difference**—www.makingthedifference.org—federal government hot jobs, info.
- **Partnership for Public Service**—www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS
- **Peace Corps**—www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=pchq.jobs
- **US Agency for International Development (USAID)**—www.usaid.gov/careers/
- **United States International Trade Commission (USITC)**—www.usitc.gov/employment/employment.htm
- **US Trade & Development Agency (USTDA)** www.tda.gov/USTDA/Job%20Opportunities/jobopps.htm
- **USDA: Writing KSAs**—www.ars.usda.gov/careers/whatksa.html
- **Writing KSAs**—www.va.gov/JOB/hiring/apply/ksa.asp

Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)—a selection

- **Academy for Educational Development**—www.aed.org
- **ACDI/VOCA**—www.acdivoca.org
- **America's Development Foundation**—www.adfusa.org/home.htm
- **CARE**—www.careusa.org/careers
- **Catholic Relief Services**—www.catholicrelief.org/about_us/jobs/index.cfm
- **Center for Human Services**—www.chs-urc.org
- **CEDPA**—www.cedpa.org
- **Conservation International**—www.wwf.org
- **Engender Health**—www.engenderhealth.org/
- **Family Health International (FHI)**—www.fhi.org/
- **Food for the Hungry**—www.fh.org
- **Habitat for Humanity International**—www.habitat.org
- **InterAction.org**—www.interaction.org
- **International Rescue Committee**—www.irc.org/
- **International Youth Foundation**—www.iyfn.org/
- **Partners of the Americas**—www.partners.net/
- **PATH**—www.path.org/
- **Plan International**—www.plan-international.org/
- **Project Concern International**—www.projectconcern.org/
- **RTI International (Research Triangle Institute)**—www.rti.org
- **Save the Children**—www.hub.savechildren.org/jobs.nsf/HomeWeb?OpenForm
- **Wildlife Conservation Society**—www.wcs.org/
- **World Vision**—www.worldvision.org
- **World Wildlife Fund**—www.wwf.org

International Development Consulting Companies

- Association of International Consultants—www.aic2000.org/
- ARD, Inc—<http://www.ardinc.com/>
- Casals and Associates—www.casals.com/
- Checchi and Company Consulting—www.checchiconsulting.com/
- Chemonics International—www.chemonics.com/
- Creative Associates International—www.caii-dc.com/
- Development Alternatives, Inc.—www.dai.com
- Development Associates, Inc.—www.devassoc.com/
- DPK Consulting—www.dpkconsulting.com/
- John Snow, Inc.—www.jsi.com/
- Louis Berger International, Inc.—www.louisberger.com
- Macro International, Inc.—www.macrointernational.com
- Management Sciences for Development Incorporated (MSD)—www.msdkglobal.com/about.html
- Management Sciences for Health (MSH)—www.msh.org (nonprofit international health organization)
- Management Systems International—www.msiworldwide.com/
- PADCO, Inc.—www.padcoinc.com/
- Pragma Corporation—www.pragmacorp.com/
- Raytheon Engineering—www.raytheon.com/
- Research Triangle Institute—www.rti.org/
- Robert R. Nathan Associates—www.nathanassoc.com
- Training Resources Group (TRG)—www.trg-inc.com (job opportunities listed under “contact us” tab)
- University Research Corporation—Center for Human Services—www.urc-chs.com/
- Washington Consulting Group—www.washcg.com/

International Business/Accounting Consulting Firms

- Arthur D. Little, Inc.—www.adlittle.com/
- Bain and Company—www.bain.com/
- Booz Allen Hamilton—www.bah.com/
- Boston Consulting Group—www.bcg.com/
- Deloitte & Touche—www.deloitte.com/
- Emerging Markets Group—www.emergingmarketsgroup.com/
- Ernst & Young—www.ey.com/
- Hewitt Associates—was4.hewitt.com/hewitt/
- KPMG Consulting—www.kpmg.com/
- McKinsey & Company—www.mckinsey.com/
- PricewaterhouseCoopers—www.pwcglobal.com/

Think Tanks

- **The Brookings Institution**—<http://www.brookings.edu/>
- **Center for Global Development—CGD**—<http://www.cgdev.org/>
- **Center for International Development Research Triangle Institute** <http://www.rti.org/index.cfm>
- **Center for International Policy (CIP)**—<http://www.ciponline.org/>
- **Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)**—<http://www.cfr.org/>
- **Institute for International Economics (IIE)**—<http://www.iie.com/>
- **Institute for Policy Studies (IPS)**—www.ips-dc.org/
- **Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR)**—www.iwpr.org/
- **International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)**—www.icrw.org/
- **International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES)**—www.ifes.org/
- **International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)**—www.iiss.org/
- **International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)**—www.iisd.org/
- **Lehman Social Sciences Library information on Think Tanks (Columbia University)**
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/lehman/guides/ttanks.html>
- **Migration Policy Institute (MPI)**—www.migrationpolicy.org/
- **New America Foundation**—www.newamerica.net/
- **Overseas Development Institute (ODI)**—www.odi.org.uk/
- **RAND Corporation**—www.rand.org/
- **University of Michigan, Political Sciences Resources for Think Tanks** <http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/psthink.html>
- **U.S. Government Information—Think Tanks**—<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/politics/thnktank.htm>
- **World Resources Institute (WRI)**—www.wri.org/
- **World Press Review, Library of International Affairs**—<http://www.worldpress.org/library/ngo.cfm>
- **Worldwide Directory of Think Tanks**—<http://www.nira.go.jp/ice/nwdtt/index.html>

Senior-level jobs

- **CEO Update**—www.associationjobs.com—association and nonprofit executive jobs
- **Executive Searches**—www.execsearches.com (executive/senior level positions, mostly in the nonprofit sector)
- **The Ladders—Sr. Level/100K+ jobs**—www.theladders.com –jobs postings and articles (free basic level membership)

Sector-Specific Job Links

Public Health

- **Core Group Job listserv**—www.coregroup.org/jobs/jobconnection.cfm—free job and consultant website with international job postings for child/maternal/public health jobs.
- **FDA Jobs**—www.fda.gov/jobs/default.htm
- **Global Corps**—www.globalcorps.com/
- **Global Health Careers**—www.explorehealthcareers.org/en/Career.51b.aspx
- **Global Health Council**—www.globalhealth.org
- **Medical Service Corporation International** (www.msconline.com)
- **National Institutes of Health**—www.jobs.nih.gov
- **Partners in Health**—www.pih.org
- **Pathfinder**—www.pathfind.org (reproductive health)
- **Population Services International**—www.psi.org
- **PEPFAR Employment opportunities**—www.pepfar.gov/c22629.htm
- **Public Health Jobs**—www.jobspublichealth.com/topjobs.html
- **Public Health Candidate Connection**—<http://cfusion.sph.emory.edu/PHEC/phec.cfm>—in connection with Emory University, updated daily.

Environment and Agriculture

- **Eco-Employ Job Listings**—www.ecoemploy.com/jobs—Environmental job listings
- **Environmental Center**—www.environmentalcareer.com
- **Environmental Career Opportunities**—www.ecojobs.com
- **Environmental Jobs**—www.environmental.jobs.com
- **Environmental Jobs**—www.enviroNetwork.com
- **Environmental Jobs/Careers**—www.ejobs.org
- **Environmental Education Directory**—www.enviroeducation.com/careers-jobs—
- **Environmental Careers Organization**—www.ECO.org—environmental jobs, resources

Education

- **Chronicle of Higher Education**—www.chronicle.com/jobs/
- **Dave's ESL Café**—www.eslcafe.com—job opportunities and an ESL resource
- **Higher Education Jobs**—www.higheredjobs.com
- **Teachers At Work**—www.teachersatwork.com
- **TedJob**—www.tedjob.com—higher education jobs

Youth/Community Development

- **International Youth Foundation**—www.iyfnet.org
- **ABCD: Action for Boston Community Development, Inc** www.abcdaccess.net/JobSys/EachListing.cfm—community development programs specifically in the Boston area
- **National Youth Development Information Center** www.nydic.org/nydic/staffing/jobdatabase/index.cfm

Business Development/Information Technology

- **Beyond.com**—<http://technology.beyond.com>
- **CareerBuilder.com**—<http://information-technology.careerbuilder.com>—information technology
- **Careers Front Page**—www.shsinc.com/meded-busdev_jobs.htm
- **Executive Registry**—<http://sales.business.development.jobs.executiveregistry.com>
- **Payments Jobs: information technology**—www.paymentsjobs.com/a/jbb/find-jobs?oc=30
- Development Work
- **Development Executive Group**—www.developmentex.com/index.jsp
- **Development jobs**—www.finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/developmentjobs/
- **DevJobs**—www.devjobsmail.com/main/homepage.php
- **Development Net**—<http://www.devnetjobs.org> (free job emails)
- **Dev-Zone**—www.devzone.org
- **EcoConsult**—www.finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/ecoconsult-announce/
- **ELDIS**—gateway to development information www.eldis.org/cf/search/index.cfm?keywords=disaster%20relief&resource=f1
- **The Drum Beat**—www.comminit.com/vacancies.html—email job posting service

The Job-Search Tool Kit

General job-seeker resources

- **www.quintcareers.com/job-seeker.html**—a comprehensive site with free resources and articles on all aspects of career/job search and application process
- **www.professional-resumes.com/job-search-articles.html**—Free articles on a variety of job-search topics
- **www.einfostream.com**—general resources on all aspects of the job-search process

Résumé writing

- **www.free-resume-tips.com/10tips.html**—tips for effective résumé writing
- **www.quintcareers.com/resume_mistakes.html**—10 mistakes in résumé writing
- **www.quintcareers.com/functional_resume.html**—functional vs. chronological format
- **www.bestsampleresume.com/resume-tips.html**—résumé writing tips
- **www.careerbuilder.com/jobseeker/resumes/StellarResSamples.aspx?sample=executive&stage=after**—sample functional résumé (vs. chronological)

Cover Letters

- www.nonprofitprofessionals.com/library/cover_letter.htm
- www.quintcareers.com/covres.html
- www.bestcoverletters.com—samples of cover letters, follow-up letters, acceptance letters
- www.jobsearch.about.com/od/coverletters/Cover_Letters.html
- www.jobstar.org/tools/resume/cletters.php

Interviewing

- www.jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/jobintquest.html—comprehensive list of interviewing questions
- www.interviewtips.org—Interview tips, dos and don'ts
- www.ga0.org/nptimes/notice-description.tcl?newsletter_id=17054461—dress for success
- www.howtointerview.com—offers free advice on interviewing, preparing, etc.
- www.einfostream.com/interview.htm—tips on interviewing to get the job
- www.necn.com/Boston/Business/2009/03/10/Standing-out-on-a-job/1236686253.html—video clip of interview tips
- http://business.kosmix.com/topic/Job_interview/overview/video_trv?vid=7&channel=sem—video clip, re: what not to say in a job interview

Salary Negotiation

- www.jobinterviewquestions.org/questions/salary-negotiation.asp
- http://www.questcareer.com/salary_survey.htm—salary calculator for positions, regions

Professional References

- www.provenresumes.com/fqa/ref.html—references and formatting examples
- www.professional-resumes.com/how-to-select-your-professional-references.html

Networking/Volunteering

- **Linked In**—www.linkedin.com/jobs?displayHome=&trk=tab_jobs—allows you to build or expand your networking group free, (re)connect with people in different industries and search for jobs
- **Volunteer Clearinghouse**—www.1800volunteer.org—Volunteer opportunities—can be good way to check out organizations/network for future jobs
- **RPCV Mentoring Option**—allows you to become connected with an RPCV who has agreed to mentor other RPCVs—a great free resource. www.rpcvmentoring.org

Cross-Cultural

www.culturecrossing.net—free intercultural etiquette site useful for international workers, job seekers, and travelers

Furthering Your Education and Grad School Resources

- **Graduate School Admissions Counseling**—www.kaptest.com/Graduate/Graduate-School/GR_home.html?cid=45881
- **Grad School Search Guide**—www.gradschool.com
- **Grad School Shopper**—www.gradschoolshopper.com/—search by school, subject, location, or degree type
- **Graduate Management Admissions Test**—www.mba.com/mba/TaketheGMAT
- **Graduate Management Admissions Council**—www.mba.com/mba
- **Graduate Record Examinations Information**—www.ets.org
- **Kaplan, Inc.**—www.kaplan.com
- **Law School Admissions Council**—www.lsac.com
- **LSAT Prep**—www.testmasters180.com/
- **Medical College Admissions Test**—www.aamc.org/students/mcat/
- **MBA & Graduate Business Programs**—<http://business.gradschools.com/>
- **National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration**—www.naspaa.org/students/graduate/graduate.asp
- **Peterson's**—www.petersons.com/—search for colleges and universities
- **PhDs.org**—www.phds.org/ search grad school rankings
- **Students Review: Graduate Schools**—<http://grad.studentsreview.com/>
- **The Graduate School Search Engine**—www.graduateschools.com/
- **US News: [America's] Best Grad Schools 2008**—www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/grad/rankings/rankindex_brief.php

Fellowships

- **Democracy Fellows Program**—www.wlid.usaid.gov/dfp_index.html (a cooperative agreement between World Learning and USAID)
- **Foundation Center** (www.foundationcenter.org)—resource for job seekers and persons looking to fund their higher education through fellowships

For additional information on any of the above categories, do your research (using Google or whatever search engine you prefer) and you're bound to find lots of additional information.

Best wishes with your job search!

