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DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR

To: Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Deputy Director

Through: Esther Benjamin, Associate Director for Global Operations *EB*
Bill Rubin, General Counsel *Bill Rubin*

From: Sonia Derenoncourt, Director, Office of Overseas Programming & Training *Sonia Derenoncourt*

Cc: Stacy Rhodes, Chief of Staff
Elisa Montoya, White House Liaison and Senior Advisor to the Director
Paul Weinberger, Director of Congressional Relations
Kristina Edmunson, Acting Director of Communications

Date: February 7, 2012

Subject: Name change for two sectors and one current initiative, and confirmation of programming and training term: Cross-Sector Programming Priorities, as distinct from "initiatives."

Executive Summary

The purpose of this memorandum is to request approval to change several current programming definitions and the names of programming areas as well as to define next steps to implement such changes. These recommended changes are based on priorities articulated in the Peace Corps Act, recommendations from the comprehensive agency assessment, a review of current development trends, and the need to align these areas better with the agency's Focus In/Train Up efforts. The attached, Appendix A explains in detail the background for each of these decisions and outlines next steps.

Background Information

As part of the Focus in/Train up strategy, the Peace Corps reviewed the agency initiatives and programming themes it supports. Currently, there are four agency initiatives and a multitude of cross-cutting themes.

The agency initiatives working group, comprised of staff members from various agency offices, including Office of Global Operations (OGO), Office of Programming and Training Support (OPATS), Peace Corps Response (PCR), Intergovernmental Affairs and Partnerships (IGAP),

Office of Global Health & HIV/AIDs (OGHH) and the regions was tasked with the following objectives:

1. Assess the current state and definitions of agency initiatives and themes as they relate to programming, training, and evaluation.
2. Recommend criteria for each of the initiatives related to policy, programming, training, and guidance with the goal of increasing quality and impact in Volunteers' work.
3. Outline the implications of the proposed changes and make recommendations for the various offices and for post programs in line with Focus In/Train Up strategies.

Actions Requested

1. Approval for the following definitions:

- A. **Sectors:** The group of highly effective technical interventions around which Volunteer assignments are developed that address specific host country development priorities. They are Agriculture, Education, Community Economic Development (CED) (replaces Small Enterprise Development), Environment, Youth in Development (YD) (replaces Youth) and Health.
- B. **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (acronym TBD):** This term replaces Women in Development/Gender and Development (WID/GAD) to better reflect current trends from other gender offices in development agencies and to represent the work of our Volunteers in the field.
- C. **Cross-Sector Programming Priorities (CSPP):** This term replaces the term "initiatives."
 - Cross-Sector Programming Priorities are *on-going*, cross-sector areas of development in which the agency seeks to maximize quality, quantity, and impact of Volunteer activities. The six identified are: Gender, Youth as Resources, HIV/AIDS, Technology for Development, V² Volunteerism, and People with Disabilities. For background and rationale of each, see the table in Appendix A below.
 - Note: The term "initiative" will be reserved for *shorter, time-bound* cross-sector efforts that aim to meet a specific development priority with targeted interventions such as malaria. See D below.

Summary of Proposed Name Changes for CSPPs

Current Agency Initiative (posts previously encouraged to do all)	Proposed Cross-Sector Programmatic Priorities (posts select 2-4 on which to support and report)	Staff
Women in Development/Gender and Development (WID/GAD)	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (acronym TBD)	Gender Specialist
Not currently defined as such	Support of people with disabilities	Disability Specialist*
Not currently defined as such	Support of host country volunteering and volunteer programs (V ²)	Youth/V2 Specialist (overlaps with sector specialist currently)
Youth	Youth as Resources	
HIV/AIDS	HIV/AIDS	Team from the Office of Global Health and HIV/AIDS (OGHH)
Information Communication Technology (ICT)	Technology for Development	Technology Specialist*

*Currently, there is no funding for these positions.

D. Regional and Director's Initiatives: Targeted, short-term, cross-sector and time-bound technical interventions that reflect a regional or global development priority (e.g., ECPA, Malaria, etc.).

2. Affirm agency commitment and support:

Cross-Sector Programming Priorities and initiatives should have substantial agency commitment and support. We recommend the following requirements for each:

- Clearly defined strategy, goals, and objectives
- Designated agency champion and staff lead
- Vital field networks and communities of practice
- Articulated partnerships designed to help meet strategic goals of each CSPP or initiative
- Field guidance to establish appropriate roles for Volunteers
- A strategy for staff development that includes various methods of support including a virtual community of practice that enables overseas staff to serve as technical and training resources for other staff and Volunteers at their posts.
- Training packages that allow posts to integrate essential concepts
- Streamlined annual monitoring and reporting systems for posts
- Appropriate resources for current and future staffing needs

3. Proposed Guidelines and Next Steps

When the Cross-Sector Programming Priorities are approved by the Deputy Director, posts will be asked to choose **two to four of these programming priorities** on which to focus their efforts

and for which they would be responsible for reporting. **This is different than the current approach where posts are encouraged to integrate all four agency initiatives.** This change will help posts focus in and concentrate their efforts on programming areas that make sense for them. For example, where post participates in a PEPFAR Country Operating Plan or a PEPFAR Regional Operating Plan, HIV/AIDS will be one of post's Cross-Sector Programming Priorities.

Additionally, while all posts will continue to integrate gender-sensitive training approaches for all Volunteers in PST, they may or may not choose to support Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment as a CSPP. In that case, they might not have a Gender committee at post or provide additional annual reporting on their gender activities.

Next steps and responsible offices:

1. Short-term action

- Communicate new framework for CSPPs and initiatives to posts (OGO)
- Develop two hour introductory training sessions for posts to build into PST for selected CSPPs or initiatives as part of the global core training package- *currently in development* (OPATS, regions, OGHH)
- Request that posts focus on 2-4 CSPPs to integrate into Volunteer projects (OGO)
- Incorporate framework for CSPPs and initiatives into future programming and training guidance (OPATS)
- Seek funding for Disability Specialist and Technology Specialist positions (OPATS, Office of Strategic Partnerships, and IGAP)
- Conduct review of current and potential agency partnerships that would analyze and develop support for CSPPs and initiatives. (IGAP)

2. Longer term action

These steps will be primarily the responsibility of the agency champions, working in concert with each other and the FITU Steering Committee

- Integrate these new definitions for CSPPs into the revised programming and training guidance. (OPATS)
- Communicate with other offices such as Communications, Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS), Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning (OSIRP), and Peace Corps Response (PCR) to update recruitment or communication materials to reflect any changes.
- Develop field guidance and/or strategy documents for CSPPs and initiatives (similar to the sector guidance only more concise).
- Create staff development strategies and various methods for delivering on-going technical support.
- Determine roles and responsibilities for each CSPP within various agency offices, including OPATS, OGHH, PCR, OGO, Office of Strategic Partnerships, and the regions.
- Update OST session design to begin to roll out training on how CSPPs and initiatives will be handled in the field. (OPATS)

- Assess current partnerships to determine where greater collaboration efforts could be focused.
- Consider new partnerships that align with these CSPPs and provide additional resources to support these efforts.
- Plan a series of global WebEx sessions or develop a voiceover PowerPoint to be uploaded and distributed through PC University that will educate and update the field on changes or implications. (OPATS)
- Develop a well defined system for monitoring and evaluating each programming priority area, including incorporating or changing questions in the VRT. (OPATS)

Approved: ☒ _____

Not Approved: ☐ _____

Need to Discuss: ☐ _____

Carrie Hessler-Radelet
Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Deputy Director

Date: 3-7-12 _____

Attachment A: Proposed Global Agency Programming Priorities, Initiatives and Rationale

Type	Source	Proposed Definition	Title	Rationale	Proposed Changes & Parameters
Global Programmatic Priorities	Set Forth in the Peace Corps Act	Programmatic priorities that are articulated in the Peace Corps Act.	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (The Gender Group)	<p>"...the Peace Corps shall be administered so as to give particular attention to those programs, projects, and activities which tend to integrate women into the national economics of developing countries, thus improving their status and assisting the total development effort."</p> <p>-gender sensitive approaches are a foundation to PC's approach to participatory development</p>	<p>The first three of these programming priorities have always been a part of the Peace Corps Act, but have not historically received focused attention or support (with the exception of WID/GAD). The working group recommends that each of these become more integrated into current policy, programming, training and evaluation systems so that the agency is more accountable, has greater impact in these areas, and can better capture that impact.</p> <p>The latter three of these programming priorities, (outlined on the following page), HIV/AIDS, Youth as Resources, and Technology for Development have been historical areas of priority and opportunity. There are good reasons for these to continue, <i>but only provided</i> they are given adequate leadership and support.</p> <p>All six proposed global agency programming priorities can be defined by three common factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are cross-cutting topics that influence the quality and impact of Volunteers' work in each of the project sectors. • They represent areas of opportunity in which Volunteers would find valuable work- whether or not the agency formally supports it as an initiative. • When their roles are defined appropriately, each
			V ² : Support of Host Country Volunteering and Volunteer Programs	<p>"The Congress declares that it is the policy of the United States and a further purpose of this Act (1) to encourage countries and areas to establish programs under which their citizens and nationals would volunteer to serve in order to help meet the needs of less developed countries or areas for trained manpower; (2) to encourage less developed countries or areas to establish programs under which their citizens and nationals would volunteer to serve in order to meet their needs for trained manpower; and (3) to encourage the development of, and participation in, international voluntary service programs and activities."</p> <p>-support of host country volunteer efforts is a logical extension of PC's sustainable development efforts that are done in partnership with host countries.</p>	

			Support of People with Disabilities	<p>“...the Peace Corps shall be administered so as to give particular attention to programs, projects, and activities which tend to integrate disabled people into the national economies of developing countries, thus improving their status and assisting the total development effort.”</p> <p>Clarification: Role for Volunteers would be around community advocacy, mobilization, and inclusion. NOT a focus on special education.</p>	<p>reflects work in which most Volunteers can excel and which respond to host country priorities.</p> <p>It is up to overseas posts to determine how and if they choose to concentrate their efforts on these agency programming priorities. (See note on page 4 regarding posts’ participating PEPFAR country operating plans). While overseas posts would not be required to program for all of these areas, they would be responsible for choosing between two to four programming priorities on which to concentrate and then:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate that post considered available programming opportunities and partnerships in these areas, Ensure trainees and Volunteers are adequately informed about these programming priorities and trained on the best opportunities to support them and, Provide annual reporting on their Volunteer and post activities that relate to these programming priorities. <p>PC/Washington would provide agency leadership and technical guidance and support in each of these programming priorities. For each of these six that are confirmed as programming priorities, this would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring there is an agency level champion and adequate resources to support the programmatic priority Developing time-bound strategies for each programming priority, guided by field input and
	Agency development priority <i>or</i> area of Volunteer and programmatic opportunity	Areas of cross-cutting programmatic priority and opportunity in which the agency seeks to maximize impact.	<p>HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Youth as resources</p>	<p>-Volunteers fill a unique and important niche in country, USG, and global response to the epidemic</p> <p>-Important role in PEPFAR and country operating plans</p> <p>-High level of host country demand (and need in many countries)</p> <p>-Key development priorities in which most Volunteers can excel</p> <p>-Represents Peace Corps’ primary clients (72% of all beneficiaries)</p> <p>-Aligned with USG priorities (WH, State and USAID)</p> <p>-Key opportunity area with high country demand that overlaps with strengths of Volunteers</p> <p>-Agency’s strengths and success are not adequately represented through youth development sector alone.</p> <p>-53% of Volunteers indicate that working with youth is part of their primary assignment, across sectors, 47% indicate that it is part of</p>	

				secondary activities (2010 AVS)	<p>partner priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking out strategic external partnerships and leveraging resources for the field. Developing programming, training, and evaluation guidance for each programming priority. This would include learning objectives to be included in Volunteer core competencies as well as training packages or session plans post can integrate into their training continuum. It would also include the development of global agency indicators which align with the current strategies.
			Technology for Development	<p>-High-priority area in USG and high demand area on the part of host countries</p> <p>-Leverages skills most Volunteers have</p> <p>-7060 Volunteers reported involvement in ICT activities (2010 PSRs)</p> <p>-Computer literacy & internet skills most common areas of activity.</p>	
Type	Source	Proposed Definition	Title	Rationale	Proposed Changes & Parameters
Initiatives	Director or Region Led Initiatives	Targeted, short term, cross- sector technical interventions	<p>Malaria</p> <p>ECPA</p> <p>Food Security</p>	Arise because of particular development challenges or strategic partnership opportunity.	<p>These initiatives may be prioritized by specific regions or posts as cross-cutting priorities for Volunteer activities.</p> <p>If posts concentrate on the initiative they would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide training and resources to Volunteers -Dedicate staff support -Complete some sort of annual reporting <p>At the agency level there would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -An assigned champion -A time bound strategy with specific goals and objectives -Dedicated programming & training guidance and resources, as well as defined M&E approach. -Changes would not be made in the VRT