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From: Kathy A. Buller, Inspector General 

Date: May 12, 2017

Subject: Final Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Kosovo (IG-17-02-E)

Transmitted for your information is our final report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Kosovo.

Management concurred with all 27 recommendations, all of which remain open. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. OIG will review and consider closing recommendations 1, 2, 5, 9-12, 14-17, 19, 22, and 24-27 when the documentation reflected in OIG's comments and the agency's response to the preliminary report is received. For recommendations 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 13, 18, 20, 21, and 23 additional documentation is required.

We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities. However, when we feel it is warranted, we may conduct a follow-up review to confirm that action has been taken and to evaluate the impact.

Our comments, which are in the report as Appendix G, address these matters. Please respond with documentation to close the remaining open recommendations within 90 days of the receipt of this memorandum.

You may address questions regarding follow-up or documentation to Assistant Inspector General for Evaluation Jeremy Black at 202.692.2912.

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

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PEACE CORPS

Office of Inspector General



A Volunteer and her host family.

Final Country Program Evaluation

Peace Corps/Kosovo

IG-17-02-E

May 2017



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Over 100 Peace Corps Volunteers have served the people of Kosovo since the program was first launched in 2012. At the time of our evaluation there were two projects in Kosovo: teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) and community development (CD). At the onset of fieldwork, 61 Volunteers were serving in Kosovo. All Volunteers lived with host families for their full 27 months of service.

WHAT WE FOUND

We found a number of areas of no particular concern. We determined that the safety and security program was well run, particularly in the areas of emergency preparedness and safety incident response. The post's management of site history files complied with standards, and the trainings for safety and security, language, and health were all well-regarded by Volunteers. We also found that the country director managed the post in a way that was supportive to staff and Volunteers and that administrative support was effective. Further, we found that TEFL Volunteers understood their project objectives and felt their work contributed to achievement of those objectives.

However, we identified several areas of concern related to programming, training, and Volunteer support. Specifically, we found that the CD project lacked the key building blocks of a successful project, including a finalized logic model, reporting indicators, and clear learning objectives to guide the design of pre-service training for Volunteers. None of the staff had significant technical expertise in CD, nor had any staff been substantially involved in development of the CD logic model. In addition to concerns about the CD project, we found that technical training was weak for both CD and TEFL Volunteers, and although Peace Corps/Kosovo enjoyed good coordination with the host country government, neither project had a memorandum of understanding with the appropriate ministry or a project advisory committee.

Other areas of concern included that Volunteers were frequently changing host families, medical officers were not approving sites, site visits from staff were unhelpful, counterpart training was ineffective, and the post did not have a supervisor/counterpart handbook. Furthermore, cross-cultural training did not prepare some Volunteers to integrate into their communities, especially those Volunteers living or working with minority populations.

Regarding the regional medical unit, which had been in place for only 3 months at the time of fieldwork, we identified that the medical action plan had not been updated, a medical emergency drill had not been completed, and Peace Corps medical officers were not conducting site visits or medical facility assessments. Furthermore, Volunteers lacked confidence in the regional medical unit's ability to provide them with timely and adequate medical care.

Finally, we noted that although headquarters staff generally thought the agency's opening of Peace Corps/Kosovo had been very successful, post staff reported that the process had been rushed. OIG observed in Kosovo, as in other new country evaluations we have conducted, that the agency's rushed time frame for opening the post resulted in a number of problems, including

poor Volunteer training, poorly developed sites, and an uneven quality in staff hiring, training, and involvement in key programming decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF

Our report contains 27 recommendations, which, if implemented, should strengthen post operations and correct the deficiencies detailed in the accompanying report.

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HOST COUNTRY BACKGROUND

The Republic of Kosovo is a small country on the Balkan Peninsula in southeastern Europe bordered by Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, and Montenegro. The fertile valleys of the Kosovo field and Dukagjini field are surrounded by mountainous terrain.

Historically, Kosovo was part of the Roman and Byzantine Empires before becoming the center of a Serbian Empire in the Middle Ages. In 1389, Serbian forces were defeated at the Battle of Kosovo which was followed by five centuries of Ottoman rule. By the end of the 19th century, ethnic Albanians outnumbered Serbians, but Serbia regained control of Kosovo in the First Balkan War of 1912. Kosovo became an autonomous province of Serbia within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia after World War II. A brutal civil war began in 1998, and NATO intervened in 1999, forcing Serbia to withdraw its military and police forces from Kosovo. This led to almost 10 years of transition supervised by the United Nations until Kosovo declared its independence in 2008. The United States was one of the first countries to recognize Kosovo's independence and has supported Kosovo in the years since.

The majority of Kosovo's labor force is in agriculture, livestock raising, forestry, and mining. Kosovo is moving to a market-based economy with low labor costs. However, aging equipment and insufficient investment have led to a decline in its minerals and metals industry, and limited, unreliable electricity supply has been an impediment to economic development.

According to the World Factbook, people in Kosovo are the poorest in Europe, with 30 percent of the population living in poverty. Its 2016 human development index was 0.739, the lowest in the region and in Europe.¹ The country's unemployment rate stands at 31 percent overall, and youth unemployment is 60 percent. As a result, Kosovo has experienced significant outward migration and has a large informal, unreported economy. The country is highly dependent on international donor assistance and remittances from the Kosovar diaspora.

There are three levels of free education in Kosovo: primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary, though only primary and lower secondary are mandatory. Kosovo's literacy rate is estimated at 91.9 percent of the population.

Approximately 1.87 million people live in Kosovo, with a majority ethnic Albanian population. Other ethnic groups include Serbs, Bosniaks, Turks, Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani, and Roma. The official languages are Albanian and Serbian, and the primary religions are Islam and Christianity.

¹ "The Human Development Report" publishes an annual Human Development Index. The Index provides a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and income. Countries are ranked from "very high human development" to "low human development" based on related data.

PEACE CORPS PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The President of Kosovo formally invited the Peace Corps to work in Kosovo in October 2012. In December 2012, the agency's assessment team determined that Kosovo was prepared to host the Peace Corps, and a country agreement was signed on September 9, 2013. The first Peace Corps/Kosovo Volunteers arrived in country in June 2014 to teach English as a foreign language.

Peace Corps/Kosovo began placing Volunteers in Serbian communities in 2015. At the time of this evaluation, five Volunteers were living and working in Serbian communities. Tensions remained between Serbia and Kosovo, and between Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority (approximately 90 percent to 93 percent)² and ethnic Serbian minority (approximately 1.5 percent to 5 percent). Ethnic Serbian communities tend to be segregated from ethnic Albanian communities, and schools there follow the curriculum of the Serbian Ministry of Education, believing themselves still a part of Serbia. When the Peace Corps began placing Volunteers in ethnic Serbian schools, school directors raised concerns about the qualifications of two Volunteers and did not allow them to teach; this matter was eventually resolved.

In 2016, the post added a community development project with help from six-month Peace Corps Response Volunteers³ who assisted in identifying sites for Volunteers to respond to the needs of the country. The latest input in Kosovo arrived in June 2016, and there were a total of 61 Volunteers at the time of field work. However, the post expected to grow to approximately 70-80 Volunteers in the next two years.

The post's Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 operational budget plan was approximately \$1.3 million.⁴ This is the first OIG evaluation of Peace Corps/Kosovo since the post opened in 2014.

A more detailed explanation of the two project areas are discussed here:

- **Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

According to the post's country briefing paper, the objectives of the teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) project were "to improve the effectiveness of English language instruction and to assist students in improving their English language communication skills, critical thinking skills, and independent lifelong learning skills." Project activities included team-teaching with Kosovar teachers, preparing joint lesson plans with colleagues, preparing interactive teaching materials, and developing English-language centered extra-curricular activities. The Peace Corps prioritized placing Volunteers in schools located in rural and smaller communities where the need was greatest. There were 51 TEFL Volunteers at the time of this evaluation.

² Due to a boycott of the Kosovo national census, it is unknown exactly how many ethnic Serbians live in Kosovo, necessitating estimated ranges for population percentages.

³ Peace Corps Response provides qualified professionals the opportunity to undertake short-term assignments in various programs around the world.

⁴ This amount does not include the salaries, benefits, and related cost of U.S. direct hires assigned to the post and other costs the agency has determined should be centrally-budgeted. The budget also included provision of a Peace Corps medical officer, and this amount has been removed because Peace Corps/Macedonia hosts the Peace Corps medical officers in the regional medical unit.

- **Community Development**

Community development Volunteers were placed in governmental and non-governmental organizations, typically working on building organizational capacity through training, consultation, and mentoring. Volunteer projects are expected to focus on municipal development, business development, tourism/cultural development and preservation, and capacity building in information and communications management and technology. There were 10 community development Volunteers at the time of this evaluation.

Peace Corps/Kosovo changed its staffing structure in 2016 with the creation of the CD project. The country director who opened the post originally instituted a regional model. Instead of hiring program managers, the post hired two regional managers who shared oversight of Volunteers by geographic region rather than by project. With the new CD project in place, the post moved to the traditional program manager model, assigning one regional manager to the CD project, and the other to the TEFL project. However, program managers continued to function regionally as well, sharing responsibilities related to supporting Volunteers in both projects based on the Volunteers' geographic location.

EVALUATION RESULTS

PROGRAMMING AND TRAINING

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

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

Our evaluation also sought to answer the question, “Does training prepare Volunteers for Peace Corps service?” by examining the adequacy of different types of training for Volunteers, as well as how staff assessed the effectiveness of such training.

Below we provide a summary of the aspects of programming and training that our evaluation determined were reflective of effective management practices and so were not areas of concern, including: Peace Corps/Kosovo's oversight of Volunteers' small grants projects, the achievement of the TEFL project's objectives, the post's management of site history files, and the provision of safety and security training, language training, and health training.

Management and Oversight of Volunteers' Small Grants Projects Was Effective. The small grants process at the post seemed to be well managed. In FY 2016, the post approved 14 Volunteer grants that totaled more than \$38,000 in funding. According to an OIG survey of

Kosovo Volunteers, 100 percent of Volunteers who have applied for a small grant were satisfied with the small grants process.⁵ In addition, staff and Volunteers reported that they were satisfied with the performance of the grants coordinator. One senior staff member stated, “I couldn’t be more impressed with [the grant coordinator’s] management of the grants program. She has been very responsive with my requests, particularly around translations.”

TEFL Volunteers Understood and Could Achieve Project Objectives. During interviews with Volunteers, most TEFL Volunteers said that they understood the project’s objectives. When asked to explain the goals of the TEFL project, 94 percent of Volunteers discussed goal one (capacity-building for teachers) and 81 percent of Volunteers discussed goal two (increase student English language proficiency). While only 25 percent of Volunteers referenced TEFL’s third goal of community outreach, headquarters staff noted that the lack of focus on this goal was not a concern at this relatively early point in the TEFL project lifecycle.

In addition, OIG’s Volunteer survey found that 87 percent of TEFL Volunteers felt that their work was contributing to their primary assignment’s project objectives. The Minister of Education commented:

“The impact of Volunteers is noted after they leave the country. We note that the teachers have improved the quality of teaching. Their standards of language teaching is increasing. At the same time, we are exposed to the American experience of teaching and learning. We consider that very important for our students and teachers. In other words, we are very satisfied.”

Management of Site History Files Complied with Agency Standards. During our evaluation, we requested and received site history files for eight randomly selected Volunteer sites. We found that the post generally complied with their standard operating procedures and kept up-to-date documentation on sites in both hard and electronic copies. The post also maintained a central reference database which summarized all site information in one place, including quality ratings for each site.

Safety and Security Training Was Effective. Volunteers were very positive about their safety and security training. All interviewed Volunteers reported that the safety and security training was effective. In addition, multiple Volunteers commented that they had a high level of confidence in their safety and security manager. One Volunteer stated, “I think [the safety and security training] was the strongest part of our training. Our [safety and security manager] is phenomenal. I have never had a bad experience working with him.”

Language Training Was Effective. Volunteers, in general, liked their language training and found it effective. An analysis of language proficiency interview scores showed that by the end of pre-service training 84 percent of Volunteers in ethnic Albanian communities and 83 percent of Volunteers in ethnic Serbian communities had passed the proficiency benchmarks for their respective languages. Additionally, 100 percent of Volunteers thought the in-service language training was effective because it focused on regional dialects as well as grant-related technical

⁵ Volunteer interviews were conducted using a standardized interview questionnaire, and Volunteers were asked to rate many items on a four-point scale (1 = not effective, 4 = very effective). The percentage of Volunteers who gave a favorable rating includes those who gave ratings of “3” or “4.”

language. Multiple Volunteers mentioned that the in-service language training advanced their language ability.

While Volunteers voiced some concerns about their language training (such as insufficient time devoted to language during pre-service training, challenges related to learning the local dialect,⁶ or trainees not advancing in the language training at the same rate), staff were aware of these concerns and had taken steps to address them. Staff and Volunteers both agreed that the language and cultural coordinator was highly skilled and an effective trainer.

In addition, Volunteers were very positive about the quality of their language and cultural facilitators. Many Volunteers kept in touch with their language and cultural facilitators after pre-service training and continued to reach out to them with questions.

Medical and Health Training Was Generally Effective. Out of the Volunteers interviewed, 90 percent felt that their medical and health training was effective. While some Volunteers thought that some topics were dry or tedious, they still recognized the importance of the sessions. The majority of Volunteers remarked that they liked the Peace Corps medical officers and felt comfortable reaching out with a medical concern. Because the post had moved the location of the medical unit from Kosovo to nearby Peace Corps/Macedonia after the latest pre-service training, additional training on the procedures associated with operating in a different country may be required, but these concerns are addressed in the volunteers support section below.

Although our evaluation determined that the above programming and training areas were operating effectively, it also revealed several important challenges that require management attention. In particular: the community development project lacked the building blocks of a successful project, technical training did not sufficiently prepare Volunteers for service, Volunteers frequently changed homestay families, Peace Corps medical officers were not approving sites, and Volunteers reported that staff site visits were not helpful.

In addition, while Peace Corps/Kosovo enjoyed support from the highest levels of the Government of Kosovo, including the President of Kosovo, the post had not developed a project advisory committee or memorandum of understanding with host ministries. The evaluation further found that training for Volunteers on the different ethnic cultures in Kosovo did not prepare them to live and work in non-ethnic Albanian communities. Also, counterpart training was ineffective and the post did not have a counterpart/supervisor handbook. The remainder of this section provides more information about these topics.

⁶ Peace Corps/Kosovo teaches Volunteers standard Albanian. However, standard Albanian is understood but rarely spoken throughout Kosovo. Given the number of dialects spoken throughout the country and the extreme localization of those dialects, Volunteers understood that it would be impossible to build a language training around the issue of dialect. The language and cultural coordinator has attempted to support Volunteers' dialect learning by developing resources such as dialect dialogues.

The community development project lacked the key building blocks of a successful project.

The first input of CD Volunteers arrived in Kosovo in June 2016. During the evaluation, we learned that no one on staff expressed a sense of ownership of the community development project. At the time of fieldwork, the post did not have a director of programming and training nor did it have any local staff with experience or knowledge of community development. Senior Kosovar staff did not understand the goals and objectives of the CD project. When we asked a senior member of the programming and training team to describe the project's goals we were told that they were "murky" and had something to do with increasing the capacity of non-governmental organizations.

Neither program manager had been substantially involved in the development of the CD project's logic model, and the only staff person who had participated significantly in the project's launch has retired. As discussed above, the program manager responsible for the community development project was initially hired as a regional manager and did not have the experience and technical skills that the job demanded. Senior staff at both headquarters and the post have acknowledged the need for ongoing staff development. They have prioritized it according to the FY 2017 Integrated Planning and Budget System (IPBS) report and increased their budget to support staff training and exchanges.

At the time of fieldwork, Peace Corps/Kosovo's CD project lacked a finalized logic model, reporting indicators, and clear learning objectives to guide the design of pre-service training for CD Volunteers. Only 55 percent of the 2016 input of Volunteers felt that their technical training was effective, and multiple Volunteers observed that the technical training they did receive did not align with their widely diverse primary assignments. Furthermore, Volunteers had a poor understanding of their project's logic model. Due to the limited staff capacity to support the CD project, OIG determined that the programming, training, and support for the next input of CD Volunteers in June 2017 was likely to be inadequate to sufficiently prepare the Volunteers to meet the needs of Kosovar communities and organizations.

Due to the time-sensitive nature of this finding, OIG issued a memo to the agency on January 25, 2017, recommending:

- 1. That the post, with the support of the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region, postpone the second input of community development Volunteers until it has addressed the weaknesses with the project's design and related training for Volunteers, and staff are better equipped to manage and support it.**
- 2. That the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, in consultation with the post, identify alternative placement opportunities for Volunteers already invited to the community development project in Kosovo.**

The Peace Corps concurred with these recommendations, postponed the input of community development Volunteers, and identified alternative placements for Volunteers who had been invited. (See Appendix D for OIG’s memo and Appendix E for the agency’s response.) In addition to the two recommendations above, we are issuing the following recommendation.

We recommend:

- 3. That the country director, with the support and guidance of the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region as well as the Office of Programming and Training Support, develop a plan with clear benchmarks that outlines how Peace Corps/Kosovo will improve the programming and training of the community development project, and support the current input of community development Volunteers.**

Technical training did not effectively prepare Volunteers for service in their communities.

According to Peace Corps Manual Section (MS) 201, “Selection Standards,” “To qualify for selection for overseas service as a Peace Corps Volunteer, [trainees] must demonstrate that they possess the following personal attributes: ... Technical competence. Proficiency in the technical skills needed to carry out the assignment.”

Only 50 percent of surveyed Volunteers felt that their technical training prepared them to perform their primary assignments, including 49 percent of TEFL Volunteers and 55 percent of CD Volunteers. TEFL Volunteers expressed that pre-service training did not enable Volunteers who lacked teaching experience to achieve the requisite level of competence before going to site. CD Volunteers reported that the technical training did not align with their widely diverse primary assignments, and each interviewed CD Volunteer commented that their technical practicum was poorly designed.

There were several factors that contributed to the poor technical training, including: lack of qualified technical trainers on staff; over-use of currently serving Volunteers to deliver trainings; lack of a logical connection between project objectives and technical training; and insufficient assessment of training effectiveness. Each of these factors is described in more detail below.

Lack of Technical Trainers. Peace Corps/Kosovo was unable to hire and retain qualified technical trainers. The post has had to hire a new TEFL technical trainer for each input, and the technical trainer for the first CD input resigned five weeks into pre-service training.

The agency’s “Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post” states that “clearly, having the same person responsible for training throughout the year and from one year to the next greatly increases the chance for good practices to be continued and replicated and the less than successful ones to be recognized as such and improved or abandoned.” Without consistent technical trainers, Peace Corps/Kosovo provided inconsistent technical training to each input and created extra work for post staff to train up new technical trainers. Senior staff said that technical

trainers were the hardest positions to fill, and that the post did not yet have strong candidates for a CD technical trainer for the upcoming pre-service training.

The country director reported that the post hopes to hire a full time TEFL technical trainer in 2018. Due to the limited size of the CD project, the post did not expect to have a sufficient number of Volunteers to justify a full-time CD trainer. One post staff member commented, “One challenge is that every year, because [the technical trainer] is a short term position, you have to change the trainer every year. And it takes some of the energy out of our staff because we have to explain the Peace Corps philosophy and how the Peace Corps works.”

Overreliance on Volunteer Trainers. Without strong technical trainers, the post relied heavily on currently serving Volunteers to deliver technical training. According to “Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post,” program managers “play an active role in [training] planning and activities” and “programmers’ direct participation in all phases of training ... is a critical element of the programming job.” Programmers should be involved in planning, facilitating, and coordinating trainings.

While many Volunteers stated that as trainees they found the Volunteer-led sessions useful and appreciated hearing about Volunteers' experiences, others felt that many of the sessions were repetitive, disjointed, and ill-conceived. The Volunteer trainers, who had not been included in the post's training of trainers, lacked an understanding of what trainees had already learned. One Volunteer commented, “Having the burden be on Volunteers to teach makes it ineffective. You spread out responsibility amongst a number of Volunteers. They don't know what you have already heard.” Furthermore, relying on currently serving Volunteers contributed to a perception among Volunteers that staff lacked the ability to train them.

No Connection to the Framework. As stated in the “Programming, Training, and Evaluation Guidance,” the design of technical training must be based on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to accomplish the goals of the project. The post's training team is responsible for using the training design and evaluation (TDE) process to adapt the global sector training package to the local culture and work environment.

The training team, however, had not used the TDE process to tailor technical training to the needs of Volunteers in Kosovo. The CD project in particular did not have a list of the terminal objectives for technical training. According to senior staff at the post, the programming and training staff did not understand either project framework well enough to be able to use them in designing technical training.

Poor Assessment of Learning. In January 2015, an official memo from headquarters required all posts to adopt a set of global learning standards for all Volunteers that addressed standard training content as well as sector or project-specific content—referred to as the trainee assessment portfolio (TAP)—by January 1, 2016. According to agency guidance, the TAP is “the standardized and comprehensive tool for measuring trainee achievement of terminal learning objectives in pre-service training.” It allows training staff to monitor trainees' progress, provide additional support if necessary, and clarify expectations and areas for improvement. Each trainee

should be given a copy of the trainee assessment portfolio to ensure transparency and a final copy of each evaluation should be recorded in the trainee's file.

The training manager admitted that the post had not developed a TAP for trainees. Instead of using the global learning standards and the TAP, the post had created a spreadsheet to track several core competencies. Without the TAP, the training team had not fully documented their process for determining that trainees were technically prepared for service or steps the training team had taken to address trainees' challenges. As a result, the training team lacked information it needed to improve the effectiveness of training in the future.

We recommend:

- 4. That the country director review the post's staffing model to ensure that it has qualified full-time staff with sufficient technical expertise to fulfill the programming and training requirements for both projects.**
- 5. That the director of programming and training improve preparation and oversight of Volunteers who co-facilitate training so that trainees receive consistent and accurate information.**
- 6. That the director of programming and training use the training design and evaluation process to tailor technical training to align with the project frameworks.**
- 7. That the director of programming and training implement the global learning standards and use the trainee assessment portfolio to provide formative assessments to trainees and document the assessment process.**

Volunteers frequently changed homestay families and were sometimes placed in unsafe housing arrangements.

According to the Peace Corps "Programming, Training and Evaluation Guidance," "a high-quality worksite and housing are critical for Volunteers to have a safe and successful Peace Corps experience." In Kosovo, the site development process typically began 11 months prior to Volunteers' swearing-in.

The post's site development procedures required staff to make two to three visits before selecting a site. The first visit was to include a meeting with the host agency to present Peace Corps work in Kosovo and the second visit required an in-depth interview with the host agency about priorities and was a chance to assess the counterpart's motivation. The second or third visit was the opportunity for post staff to assess housing and homestay options.

Our evaluation found that 95 percent of Volunteers were satisfied with their sites, and only 15 percent of Volunteers had changed sites during their service. Peace Corps/Kosovo had a 27-month homestay requirement, meaning that Volunteers stayed with a host family throughout their service. When asked about their experience with their current homestay, 95 percent of Volunteers rated it favorably.

However, 40 percent of Volunteers had changed host families, indicating a shortfall in the vetting process in place for staff to identify appropriate host families. We found several instances where Volunteers were placed in uncomfortable—and in a couple of cases dangerous—homestay situations. Staff had not confirmed that Volunteers in fact had their own bedroom with a locking door, that there was not excessive drinking or drug use in the household, or that Volunteer rooms had heating. Housing checklists we reviewed were not accurate indications of Volunteer housing compliance with the post's housing criteria.

Other Volunteer housing problems were not addressed by the post's housing criteria. The criteria did not specify whether the Volunteer would have the only key to their bedroom, nor did it address particular issues regarding the immediate surroundings (such as a history of civil disorder or proximity to a bar).

Multiple Volunteers reported challenges with their host families regarding heating. The Peace Corps expected families to provide a heated room for Volunteers but did not make this responsibility clear during site development. As a result, some Volunteers did not have heated rooms, and the cost of heating had created tensions with the families for some other Volunteers. Peace Corps/Kosovo recently updated the host family agreement to clarify the need for a heated room, but the old agreement without that clarification was mistakenly used for the most recent input. To solve the immediate problem of families not providing heat, the post gave some families extra money to pay for heating the Volunteer's room so that the Volunteer would not have to find a new host family.

Senior post and headquarters staff expressed concern that programming staff was not spending enough time at sites before site selection and approval. Programming staff said that they usually made one to two visits, with the second visit being optional. Senior staff reported that programming and training staff did not want to stay overnight at prospective sites, reducing the time spent in each community and rushing their site development process. A headquarters staff member we spoke with thought that the insufficient time spent vetting sites could be a result of Peace Corps/Kosovo's new country entry process, since there had not been time to visit sites more than once when the program started.

The site development process contributed to poor homestay experiences because staff did not vet more than one host family per site unless there was a problem with the first family it had identified. By not interviewing more than one host family, staff lacked the flexibility to choose a different host family.

In addition, the post had difficulty identifying host families because in Kosovo homestays are a foreign concept. The homestay model was new to local staff who appeared uncomfortable with the idea and had requested a homestay coordinator do the work of vetting host families. Staff

was reluctant to offend the potential host families by doing all of the checks that were required for housing, some of which were perceived as culturally invasive.

A common complaint among Volunteers regarded strained relationships with their host families due to unclear expectations about financial responsibilities. Per the post's policy, Volunteers gave their host family a fixed amount per month for housing and utilities, and extra funds for food based on how much they consumed. Volunteers had to negotiate the amount for food within their first month of being at site, which several Volunteers noted was a challenge due to their language level early in their service. Volunteers requested that staff do more to set expectations with host families prior to their arrival or present a list of optional amounts rather than placing all the negotiating responsibility on the Volunteers' shoulders.

To address these challenges, post staff proposed a solution that may not solve the problem. Specifically, they proposed that the director of management and operations attend the next host family conference and explain the heating issue. However, host family conferences occur in the fourth week of pre-service training, after site assignments have already been made. At that time, if families do not agree to provide heating, the post will either have to reassign the Volunteers or agree to pay the families for the cost of heating. It will be difficult to replace families towards the end of pre-service training. For the 2016 input, the conference's timing would have left only eight days for staff to find a replacement host family if these financial issues were not resolved with the first host family.

We recommend:

- 8. That program managers interview and do housing checks with more than one host family, where feasible, for each Volunteer in order to choose the best possible fit.**
- 9. That programming staff, in consultation with the Peace Corps medical officer and safety and security manager, review and update the housing and homestay criteria to include additional known risks and hazards to Volunteer health and safety.**
- 10. That the director of programming and training work with the safety and security manager and Peace Corps medical officer to improve site development in Kosovo so that staff involved in identifying sites and host families are trained in how to identify and select an appropriate host family to ensure the basic elements are in place before Volunteers arrive.**

Peace Corps medical officers were not approving sites as part of site development.

The site development procedures developed by the post required that the Peace Corps medical officers (PCMOs) approve potential work sites. Although PCMOs approved sites for the first input of Volunteers, there were changes to the medical unit over the course of the second and third inputs, and sites were not approved by the PCMO. It was only after the placement of the third input that the regional medical unit model was fully established; the PCMOs have since expressed their ability and desire to become more involved in the site development process for future cohorts, specifically by approving target work sites.

Since PCMOs visit medical facilities and are privy to information on Volunteer health throughout their service, they are in the best position to assess possible health concerns at a particular site. If they are not involved in approving sites, Volunteers could be placed in sites that negatively impact their health and wellbeing.

We recommend:

- 11. That the Peace Corps medical officers receive a list of target work sites for their approval, as is outlined in their site development procedure.**

Site visits by program managers were not helpful to Volunteers and were sometimes counterproductive.

According to the “Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post” resource guide, “site visits are one of the most critical, and should be one of the most enjoyable, parts of any staff member’s job.” They are a tool for staff to understand what is going on in the field and listen to Volunteer concerns, while Volunteers can “show off some accomplishment, seek advice, and discuss problems.”

The post’s policy regarding site visits was for program managers to visit every Volunteer after their third month at site and again early in their second year. Our evaluation included a review of site visit documentation for the 20 Volunteers we interviewed. We found that program managers were conducting the required quantity of site visits, and documentation of site visits was kept in the Volunteers’ files.

During interviews, 85 percent of Volunteers said that their program manager was supportive. Volunteers in general described their program managers as being very supportive and responsive. Several Volunteers said they felt comfortable going to them with any issues that arose. Some Volunteers, however, complained that their program manager was dismissive or unwilling to help, particularly regarding host family issues. Furthermore, 75 percent of Volunteers did not feel that their program manager was effective in helping them with the technical aspects of their work.

As discussed above, the structure of program staffing changed from a regional model to a program manager model when the CD project was added in 2016. When the program managers' statement of work changed due to the new model, it required them to possess additional technical expertise which were not required to have under the regional manager model. The lack of TEFL technical expertise under the regional manager model had not been a problem previously because the former director of programming and training had extensive TEFL expertise. However, that staff member is no longer at the post. This left the post with neither the TEFL nor the CD expertise required to support Volunteers. As mentioned above, post senior staff acknowledged the need for ongoing staff development and have increased their budget to support staff training and exchanges.

While Volunteers were generally satisfied with the quantity of site visits, 37 percent of Volunteers who had received site visits from staff reported that the visits were unhelpful. Multiple Volunteers commented that site visits from their program manager were counterproductive. In some cases, counterproductive visits made Volunteers feel unsupported and some may have harmed the Volunteers' relationships with their communities or counterparts. OIG assessed that the limited ability of program managers to offer helpful technical guidance or support during site visits to Volunteers raised the risk that some Volunteers would not be as productive or effective in accomplishing their project objectives.

During interviews, headquarters staff expressed concern that program managers did not spend enough time at sites. A senior staff member at the post characterized one of the program manager's visits as "drive-by" site visits. Program managers were reluctant to stay overnight outside of the capital which reduced the amount of time spent on visits. The resource guide "Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post" states that it is "valuable, where appropriate and feasible, to stay overnight at Volunteers' sites," explaining that it gives more time for exchange and discussion, and Volunteers get more attention from their program managers.

We recommend:

- 12. That the director of programming and training develop and implement a plan to increase programming staff capacity in the area of TEFL and CD technical expertise.**
- 13. That the director of programming and training develop a plan to improve and monitor the quality of site visits by program managers.**

The post did not have memoranda of understanding with host country ministries.

According to the Peace Corps "Programming, Training, and Evaluation Guidance," memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with relevant host country ministries that "establish a clear understanding of the goals, objectives, and working relationship between the Peace Corps ... help

to manage expectations and affirm the host government's support of the Peace Corps' work in the country.”

As of September 2016, the post did not have an MOU for either the CD or TEFL projects. The former director of programming and training informed us that the post hoped to sign an MOU for each project by the end of the year.

According to the former director of programming and training, the process for developing an MOU for the TEFL project was impeded by frequent turnover in the host country government. A headquarters staff member involved in new country entry asserted that, at the time of entry, the former Minister of Education did not appear to see the need for a formal MOU.

For the CD project, the Minister of Labor and Social Welfare and the country director of Peace Corps/Kosovo signed an MOU on September 15, 2015. The MOU stipulated that the Ministry would donate €20,000 to the Peace Corps and, in return, the Peace Corps would implement Peace Corps Partnership Program projects to benefit communities in Kosovo. Due to a perceived conflict of interest concerning the post's decision to hire a close relative of the President, Peace Corps/Kosovo eventually declined the government's donation. The MOU had been designed strictly in relation to the monetary gift and the Peace Corps Partnership Program. As a result of the gift being declined, that MOU was irrelevant.

While Peace Corps/Kosovo enjoys strong support from the host country government, including the Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Education, with no formal understanding of the goals and objectives of the Peace Corps' work in Kosovo, and without clear guidelines for cooperation, there could be a misalignment of expectations, roles, or responsibilities between the post and its project partners. An MOU would help ensure that the Peace Corps continues to meet the needs of the host country.

We recommend:

- 14. That the post develop a memorandum of understanding for the teaching English as a foreign language project with the appropriate Kosovar ministry.**
- 15. That the post develop a memorandum of understanding for the community development project with the appropriate Kosovar ministry.**

The post did not have a project advisory committee for either project.

The post did not have project advisory committees (PACs) for either project. The Peace Corps “Programming and Training Guidance: Project Design and Evaluation” states that a PAC is “the 'voice of key project stakeholders' that helps the Peace Corps ensure that it develops credible, realistic and responsive project plans and training programs.” The guidance states that PACs

should be established for each new project and should remain active throughout the life of a project to help share the responsibility for the design, evaluation, and revision of the project.

While Peace Corps/Kosovo had created a structure for future PACs, staff admitted that they had not yet established a PAC for either project. The post's strategic plan for FY 2017-18 identified the development of functional PACs for both projects as a priority.

Post programming staff recognized the usefulness of PACs for ensuring that all stakeholders are in sync with the purpose and direction of Peace Corps projects and welcomed the idea of developing them for each project. One staff member stated, "From the first time I saw the reference to the PAC, I have thought we should have one. I have seen the benefit—it is a good platform to disseminate information and discuss how to improve a project." Another commented, "We don't have a PAC yet, so we need to establish one so that cooperation [with project partners] is more structured."

Post staff noted that although the cooperation with host country partners was informal and ad hoc, the post could count on their support when needed. For example, staff worked closely with the ministry when starting the CD project, so creating a formal PAC was not a priority.

Although the post had a positive relationship with host country partners, PACs would help formalize collaboration and accountability. One minister stated that he would like to receive reports in order to have clear information on Volunteers' work, and so that if certain Volunteers' activities were working well, the ministry could provide additional support and possibly replicate the activities in other parts of the country.

We recommend:

16. That the post develop a project advisory committee for the teaching English as a foreign language project.

17. That the post develop a project advisory committee for the community development project.

Pre-service training did not sufficiently prepare Volunteers to integrate into their communities, especially those Volunteers placed in non-Albanian communities.

According to Peace Corps Manual Section 201, to qualify for Peace Corps service, Volunteers must have adequate knowledge of the culture and history of the country of assignment. Guidance from the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support also states that posts need to understand and apply the training design and evaluation process to ensure that training is culturally and contextually appropriate. The context in this case is that Kosovo is a post-conflict country with many diverse and segregated ethnic groups.

In response to the 2016 All-Volunteer Survey, only 62 percent of Peace Corps/Kosovo Volunteers felt that training had prepared them to manage cultural differences at their site. This was lower than the 76 percent of Volunteers globally and regionally who reported that training

had prepared them to manage cultural differences. Our evaluation found two areas of cross-cultural pre-service training that were not sufficiently addressed: training on ethnic minority communities and post-conflict training.

Ethnic Minority Cross-Cultural Training. Kosovo is made up of diverse ethnic groups: ethnic Albanians, Serbians, Bosnians, Turks, Roma, and others. In many areas these groups—especially the Albanian and Serbian ethnic groups—are segregated in their schools or communities. Some Volunteers work and live primarily with a single ethnic group, but others reported that they work with more than one ethnic group in some capacity.

All Volunteers lived with ethnic Albanian host families during pre-service training. Even though different ethnic groups were present in the homestay community, trainees did not have any planned interaction with them. For each of the previous two cohorts, seven trainees were taught both Albanian and Serbian language and culture in pre-service training. The rest of the trainees learned primarily about Albanian language and culture. The pre-service training in 2016 provided one day of training to all trainees on Serbian culture, but the pre-service training in 2015 did not. Neither training included study of Romani, Bosnian, or other minority cultures even though some Volunteers work with these communities.

In 2016, Peace Corps/Kosovo placed two Volunteers in Bosnian communities. These trainees learned Serbian, which is similar to the Bosnian language. However, they did not receive any pre-service training on Bosnian culture. Another Volunteer began working with a Roma community after arriving at site, but Romani cross-cultural training was not taught in pre-service training either.

All of the post's permanent staff and training staff were ethnically Albanian with the exception of one language and cross-cultural facilitator (LCF) who was ethnically Serbian and taught the dual language group. Since so few Volunteers were placed in each minority community, the post could not afford to hire an LCF from each community. However, a senior staff member did say that training staff who were raised in ethnically diverse communities could introduce an understanding of additional ethnic groups into pre-service training.

Because training did not include an introduction to other ethnic groups like Bosnian or Roma, Volunteers living or working in those communities were not well prepared for integration. The agency's model of Volunteer safety and security is based on community integration. Trainees who are not prepared to integrate into their host communities or manage cultural differences may be at greater risk for safety and security incidents, and may face other adjustment issues and challenges while serving in their communities.

Post-Conflict Training. Some unique aspects to Peace Corps service in a country recovering from recent violence are the importance of maintaining political neutrality and the nuances of working with populations traumatized by war and repression. Successful integration into post-conflict communities requires Volunteers to navigate these challenges in daily life.

According to headquarters staff, post staff did not adequately prepare the first input of Volunteers on how to work in a post-conflict country. However, the post did conduct a training

session on working in a post-conflict setting for all three pre-service trainings since the post opened. The training covered the dangers of expressing political opinions as well as understanding how locals continued to be affected by the trauma of the conflict.

Seventy percent of Volunteers reported that they felt that the post-conflict training was effective. While many Volunteers appreciated the post-conflict training they did receive, a number of Volunteers felt that there should have been more. One Volunteer commented, “There should have been a whole lot more training [on working in a post-conflict area]. It opened a lot of questions and feelings... It impacts everything we do here. Having one session by one American is not sufficient. But the presentation was very good.”

Senior staff we interviewed explained that local staff had not been involved in delivering post-conflict training to Volunteers because it would be difficult for them to remain neutral given their own traumatic experiences.

A headquarters staff member who visited the post in 2016 had the impression that Volunteers were not fully prepared for the post-conflict trauma that continued to affect the local population. Many locals had experienced—or knew people who had experienced—atrocities during the war, and Volunteers were affected by the stories they heard and the realities of a post-conflict society.

Some Volunteers had internalized aspects of the trauma affecting their community members, which put them at odds with other Volunteers who served in communities that had different perspectives on the conflict. For example, two Volunteers (one living in an Albanian community, the other a Serbian community) argued during a pre-service training session about which ethnic group had experienced more trauma during the war. When discussing how Volunteers sometimes did not understand or appreciate different ethnic groups outside of their community, one Volunteer said that it was hurtful for her because she served in an ethnic community that other Volunteers disparaged. Additional training could provide Volunteers with a better understanding of the traumas on both sides of the conflict and better prepare them to manage the hardships that come with working in a post-conflict country.

We recommend:

- 18. That the director of programming and training train all trainees and Volunteers on all of the major ethnic groups and provide cross-cultural training for trainees whose sites are in ethnic minority communities.**
- 19. That the director of programming and training develop a strategy and plan to prepare trainees and Volunteers for post-conflict-related challenges.**

Counterpart training during pre-service training was ineffective.

According to Peace Corps Manual Section 270, posts must provide counterparts with an appropriate orientation in order to promote more supportive counterparts and better-defined roles. In accordance with this requirement, Peace Corps/Kosovo held a counterpart conference in July 2016, during the fourth week of pre-service training. Together, trainees and counterparts attended two days of technical sessions. At other posts, the counterpart conference typically occurred in the final week of training or even after Volunteers had established themselves at site. The timing of the counterpart conference in Kosovo was a relic of the rushed manner in which the post had conducted the first pre-service training in 2014, and had not been adjusted since. (See “Other area of note” below.)

Only 26 percent of Volunteers interviewed felt that the counterpart conference was effective. The most common reasons Volunteers rated the training as ineffective were the timing, poor counterpart attendance, and weak technical training. The early timing of the counterpart conference may have contributed to low counterpart attendance. The post’s site management procedures did not require final decisions on which sites would receive Volunteers until the fourth week of pre-service training, right before the counterpart conference. Although post staff tried to set expectations with supervisors during site development that schools and organizations would be required to send a counterpart to the conference, site selection was not finalized until just prior to the conference, leaving little time for counterparts to plan to attend.

Another factor that led to reduced counterpart attendance was that pre-service training occurred during the summer months when teachers were on vacation. Many counterparts did not attend or sent a representative in their stead which was a missed opportunity for the counterparts to increase their understanding of the Peace Corps and how to work with a Volunteer.

These counterpart absences may have contributed to reported misunderstandings between Volunteers and their counterparts regarding roles and expectations. As one Volunteer said, “I think I have a great understanding of my role as a volunteer but it seems that across the board in Kosovo counterparts aren’t clear about it.” Another Volunteer said, “my counterpart is great, but I believe since Peace Corps doesn’t establish with our placements why we’re here, it makes it very difficult for a lot [of] Volunteers to contribute to our goal.” To reduce the number of absences in the future, the post worked with the Ministry of Education to offer credits to teachers who attended the conference, helping them fulfill their yearly continuing education requirement.

Finally, Volunteers commented that the low effectiveness of the counterpart conference was partially due to technical training that was vague and focused on the wrong things. The training covered topics such as how to teach a class or plan a lesson, instead of focusing on methods of co-teaching with Volunteers, which was likely new to the counterparts. This caused counterparts to become bored and disengaged. At least one counterpart chose not to attend the second day because they felt the conference was not worthwhile, and other counterparts were unimpressed or questioned attending future Peace Corps training events due to the poor quality of the training.

We recommend:

- 20. That the director of programming and training assess and implement different strategies to improve the timing and quality of counterpart training.**

The post lacked a counterpart handbook.

According to site development and monitoring guidance for the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region, the post is required to have a supervisor/counterpart handbook “to orient host agency partners to their role in working with a Volunteer.” Creating the handbook was not a high priority for post staff, and it was still being drafted as of January 2017, after we completed fieldwork for this evaluation.

As described above, several Volunteers said there was confusion on the part of their counterparts regarding the roles and expectations. Volunteers also said the confusion extended to the host agency and community as well. One Volunteer said that “there was a distinct lack of understanding on the part of the host community as to why I was here at site.” Through the post’s Volunteer advisory committee, Volunteers requested the post give documentation to counterparts, not knowing that a supervisor/counterpart handbook was required by Peace Corps guidance. The handbook would likely help set expectations and clarify roles for the communities and counterparts.

We recommend:

- 21. That the programming and training team complete a supervisor/counterpart handbook and take steps to educate supervisors and counterparts on the contents of the handbook.**

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

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

During the evaluation, we determined that in some areas, including emergency preparedness, response to safety incidents, administrative support, and senior staff support, the post provided adequate support and oversight to Volunteers. In these areas, elaborated briefly below, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post.

Staff and Volunteers Were Prepared to Respond to Safety and Security Emergencies. Our review of documentation showed that the post had conducted successful drills to test Volunteer responses when the emergency action plan was activated. During our fieldwork, 19 of 20 Volunteers (95 percent) correctly identified their emergency consolidation points. OIG also spot checked the Volunteer database and found it contained primary cell phone numbers, e-mail addresses, GPS coordinates, and host family names and contact information for all Volunteers in our sample.

Volunteers Had Confidence in Staff's Ability to Respond to Crimes and Other Safety Incidents. Volunteers reported that they were satisfied with the post's ability to respond to a safety incident and were comfortable reporting a crime to the safety and security manager. In addition, of the surveyed Volunteers who reported concerns to staff about their personal safety, 95 percent felt that staff had been responsive to their concerns. One Volunteer commented, "I have not had extremely large concerns, but the safety and security manager especially has made it clear that if any concern, no matter the size, should arise, he is there to help."

Administrative Support Was Effective. Volunteers had a high regard for the director of management and operations. While eight out of 20 Volunteers reported issues receiving reimbursements in a timely manner, five of those issues were related to medical or travel reimbursements. During fieldwork, the director of management and operations implemented new processes to ensure that Volunteers received those reimbursements in a timely manner.

All Volunteers received a monthly stipend to cover their housing, utilities, and living allowance.⁷ According to OIG's survey, 89 percent of Volunteers felt that their housing allotment was adequate and 82 percent felt that their settling-in allowance was adequate. Although 23 percent of Volunteers felt that their living allowance was inadequate, the two most recent living allowance surveys both showed that Volunteers were receiving a sufficient allowance. Furthermore, the Kosovo price index and staff's market basket survey both indicated that the living allowance throughout the country was adequate.

The Country Director Exhibited Effective Leadership. Sixty-eight percent of Volunteers interviewed rated the country director's supportiveness favorably. OIG noted that some Volunteers were frustrated as a result of a change in post leadership that occurred when a new country director replaced the previous one in November 2015 and instituted some policies affecting Volunteers. However, OIG concluded that the transition would likely lead to more positive working relationships between staff and Volunteers going forward.

The evaluation uncovered some areas that required management attention. Specifically, we found that the new regional medical unit was not fully prepared to respond to a medical emergency, and Volunteers lacked confidence in the unit's ability to provide them adequate medical care. The remainder of this section provides more information about these topics.

⁷ As discussed above, some Volunteers were not provided heating which was supposed to be part of the housing allotment. As necessary, Volunteers were given additional funds to pay for heating.

The regional medical unit had not yet complied with Peace Corps medical preparedness requirements.

Due to challenges in hiring a local medical officer and the existence of superior medical facilities in neighboring Macedonia, the Peace Corps announced in September 2016 that it would establish a regional medical unit in Skopje, Macedonia to provide care to Volunteers in both Kosovo and Macedonia. According to the former director of the Office of Medical Services, the regional medical unit was expected to operate as one single health unit and fulfill all the expectations of a normal health unit. However, since the combination of the two medical units, the Peace Corps medical officers had not yet developed a regional medical action plan, held a medical emergency drill for Kosovo, conducted Volunteer site visits, or visited medical facilities in Kosovo.

Medical Action Plan. Technical Guideline 385 states:

Every post must develop, document and regularly update post-specific plans to properly handle potential urgent or emergent medical needs of its Volunteers. This requires an ongoing process of identifying, documenting and updating transportation, communication, logistical and medical resources in a way that it is clear who needs to be contacted in the event that a Volunteer's health or safety is in jeopardy.

The former director of the Office of Medical Services expressed that the regional medical unit should develop one medical action plan to encompass both posts. The medical action plan for Kosovo, although complete, did not address the unique challenges of managing a medical emergency in Kosovo from another country. The three Peace Corps medical officers acknowledged the importance of completing a medical action plan and intended to complete the plan by early 2017.

Emergency Medical Drill. MS 264 Procedures states that the country director should hold periodic drills to ensure that staff are able to respond appropriately to a medical emergency.⁸ Peace Corps medical officers reported that, due to time constraints, they had not yet conducted a medical emergency drill, but planned to do so once they had visited Volunteers and medical facilities in Kosovo. Though Peace Corps medical officers were able to describe the steps necessary to respond to a medical emergency in Kosovo, an emergency in another country may present logistical challenges that staff would discover during a drill which they may not otherwise anticipate. As one staff member said, "A medical emergency—that does keep me awake. Have we figured out all the possibilities? All the contingencies haven't been planned out."

Medical Site Visits and Facility Assessments. Technical Guidance 204 requires that post medical staff visit medical facilities that provide care to Volunteers at least once every three years, and that staff visit Volunteers to assess their health and well-being at least once per service. While the first input of Volunteers in Kosovo received medical site visits, none of the subsequent Volunteers had received a visit from a Peace Corps medical officer. According to senior post leadership, the lack of medical site visits was a source of complaint for Kosovo Volunteers. Furthermore, while Peace Corps/Kosovo had a few medical facilities that were

⁸ Peace Corps Technical Guidance 385 provides posts with a drill scenario for each post to complete.

vetted when the post was first established, two of the three Peace Corps medical officers had a limited understanding of the local medical resources. During fieldwork interviews, medical staff reported that since the implementation of the regional medical unit they had been busy with Volunteer conferences, but planned to conduct Volunteer site visits and facility assessments in Kosovo in early 2017. One Peace Corps medical officer acknowledged that they did not have good historical knowledge of Kosovo’s medical facilities. Understanding a Volunteer’s site and local medical facilities is important to providing medical care in an emergency or over the phone. In addition, Volunteers noted that medical site visits were a way to help them and their family with advice to maintain their health at site.

We recommend:

- 22. That the Peace Corps medical officers complete a medical action plan for the new regional medical unit.**
- 23. That the appropriate staff from both Peace Corps/Macedonia and Peace Corps/Kosovo participate in medical emergency drills, as required by policy.**
- 24. That the Peace Corps medical officers collectively visit all Kosovo Volunteers according to agency guidance.**
- 25. That the Peace Corps medical officers conduct assessments of the local facilities throughout Kosovo, as required by agency guidance.**

Volunteers lacked confidence in the regional medical unit’s ability to provide them with timely and adequate medical care.

According to MS 262, “Peace Corps Medical Services Program,” Volunteers and trainees “will be provided with all necessary and appropriate medical care during the course of their Peace Corps service. A comprehensive health care program for [Volunteers and trainees] is managed and implemented in-country by the post PCMO.” As discussed above, in September 2016, OHS announced its decision to combine Macedonia and Kosovo’s health units to form a regional medical unit based out of Skopje, Macedonia and managed by three Peace Corps medical officers. At the time of fieldwork, the regional medical unit had been in place for less than 3 months. Although MS 262 requires the agency to provide an “in-country” medical unit, the agency’s plan to provide medical care for Kosovo Volunteers from nearby Macedonia was a reasonable solution to the challenges in Kosovo. The distance Volunteers in Kosovo must travel to reach medical officers in neighboring Macedonia was similar to distances Volunteers in Macedonia must travel, and the quality of health care available in Kosovo was lower. Nevertheless OIG determined that the arrangement required robust communication and planning with Volunteers in Kosovo, as discussed below.

While all of the Volunteers we interviewed were satisfied with the support of at least one of the Peace Corps medical officers, Volunteers raised concerns about the regional medical unit’s

ability to provide them with adequate medical care in a timely manner. Many felt stressed by the new medical arrangement and complained about relatively minor inconveniences. For example, Volunteers were frustrated that they did not receive per diem despite the trip potentially taking the entire day. They were also anxious about having to cross an international border to get to the medical unit. Furthermore, Volunteers were concerned because Macedonia used a different currency, people there spoke a different language, and Volunteers were unable to use their phones in Macedonia. One Volunteer commented:

“If I needed emergency medical help—I would hate to think of me surviving it. You have to go through a border, to a different country, with a different language, and a different monetary system. If you get lost on your way to Skopje, who are you going to ask? You can’t assume that people speak English. If I was hit by a car or had a broken leg—I would have concerns. Not [about the Peace Corps medical officer], but by the logistics.”

As a result of the new regional medical unit, Volunteers reported that they were reluctant to report a medical concern unless it was an emergency. In OIG’s survey, only 84 percent of Volunteers felt comfortable contacting the health unit when they had a concern about their physical health. As stated above, all Volunteers reported being satisfied with the support of at least one medical provider, so these survey results were surprising.

Both Peace Corps/Kosovo and headquarters staff demonstrated an awareness of the concerns the Volunteers had with the new unit, expressing a worry that Volunteers felt that they received second-rate care. Staff has put procedures in place to mitigate concerns related to the expense of long-distance phone calls and travel to the new unit. Staff also noted that they had minimal concerns about the border since it is rarely closed and Kosovars often cross the border to receive medical care in Macedonia. In addition, travel distance is considered manageable compared to other Peace Corps posts.

OIG acknowledges that the new regional health unit was in transition at the time of fieldwork, and so some transition-related stress and uncertainty among Volunteers may be normal. Even though Volunteers understood why the Peace Corps had decided to provide medical care from the hub in nearby Macedonia, they lacked an understanding of how the agency was prepared to respond to a medical emergency. Multiple Volunteers were under the impression that they would have to travel on public transportation to Skopje when seriously sick or injured, but PCMOs told OIG that a driver or ambulance would pick them up in an emergency. Other Volunteers worried about what would happen if they needed immediate medical attention and did not have their passports. Informing Volunteers about the resources available to Peace Corps in the event of an emergency would help ease anxiety related to the regional medical unit’s ability to provide timely and adequate medical care.

We recommend:

- 26. That the country director clearly communicate to Volunteers the resources available and plan in place to respond to Volunteer medical emergencies in Kosovo.**

27. That the director of programming and training familiarize trainees with the health unit in Macedonia and the logistics of getting there.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The final key objective of our country program evaluation was to assess the extent to which the post's resources and management practices were adequate for effective post operations. To address this question, we assessed a number of factors, including staffing; staff development; office work environment; collecting and reporting performance data; and the post's strategic planning and budgeting.

In reviewing staff performance appraisals, coordination with headquarters, and the post's strategic planning and budgeting, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post.

Staff Performance Was Appraised According to Standards. During our evaluation, we requested and received ten randomly selected post staff performance appraisals. The staff performance appraisals were all complete, up-to-date, and contained constructive feedback to staff.

Coordination and Communication Between Post and Headquarters Was Effective. In general we found good coordination between the post and headquarters offices. In the past year, the post experienced a number of staffing gaps and staff appreciated the staff assistance sent from headquarters.

The Post's Strategic Planning and Budgeting Was Well Focused. In general the post was effective at strategic planning and budgeting. A number of the issues that are addressed in this report were identified in the post's IPBS as priorities for FY 2017. The post identified the following priorities which are identified in this report as well:

- Strengthening the health unit.
- Developing a PAC for both projects.
- Revising the project frameworks.
- Improving staff development.

Furthermore, both the post and headquarters staff agreed that the post received sufficient funding and resources from headquarters to achieve its goals.

OTHER AREAS OF NOTE: NEW COUNTRY ENTRY

Peace Corps/Kosovo did not have an adequate amount of time to open the post and prepare for Volunteers.

In 2014, OIG published the report, "[Lessons Learned: New Country Entries Report](#)," highlighting lessons learned from 33 OIG reports issued between 1990 and 2013 on newly opened or re-opened posts. The report highlighted that "adequate preparation time is essential for a successful post opening." Several headquarters staff members reported that although the opening of Peace Corps/Kosovo was fast-paced, the new country entry process in Kosovo had been very successful. However, local staff expressed that the timeline had been rushed and overwhelming.

Key factors that headquarters staff said contributed to the Peace Corps' successful entry included:

- The Government of Kosovo's appreciation of Americans.
- The significant presence of international development agencies.
- A monetary contribution from the U.S. Agency for International Development, which was used to implement systems that allowed strong connectivity between the post and headquarters.
- The temporary office space provided by the Justice Department, providing the staff with a comfortable and safe place to work during the initial new country entry phase.

The Peace Corps "New Country Entry Guide" states that the program manager and training manager should be hired as early as possible: no less than 3 months before pre-service training, and earlier if the local staff member needs training. Furthermore, "A strong emphasis should be placed on transferring knowledge from experienced to new local staff."

Multiple staff members reported that there was not sufficient time between onboarding staff and the arrival of the first input of trainees. For example, the first regional manager was hired in March 2014, 3 months prior to the arrival of the first input in June. The training manager was hired at the very end of February, only a little longer than 3 months prior to pre-service training. While the initial staff had experience working with development agencies, none had experience working with the Peace Corps. They required training, but there was insufficient time to address their training needs before the arrival of trainees. One staff member commented, "It was very difficult the first year. I had no idea about Peace Corps. It was starting from the very scratch. I had to learn what a Volunteer is, as well as all the Peace Corps policies and procedures."

As a result of the shortened timeline of the hiring of key programming and training staff, the U.S. direct hires did the majority of the programming and training preparation for the first input, while the local staff filled in other positions. The local staff were not included in key programming and training decisions and missed critical opportunities for training.

PEACE CORPS OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

According to OIG's report on new country entries, an inadequate time frame for opening a post can result in a number of problems, including inadequate Volunteer training, poorly developed sites, and an uneven quality in staff hiring or training—all of which OIG observed in Peace Corps/Kosovo. As the Peace Corps considers opening new posts in the future, OIG encourages senior leadership to review these lessons learned and endeavor to avoid repeating common missteps during the new country entry process.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

WE RECOMMEND:

1. That the post, with the support of the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region, postpone the second input of community development Volunteers until it has addressed the weaknesses with the project's design and related training for Volunteers, and staff are better equipped to manage and support it.
2. That the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, in consultation with the post, identify alternative placement opportunities for Volunteers already invited to the community development project in Kosovo.
3. That the country director, with the support and guidance of the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region as well as the Office of Programming and Training Support, develop a plan with clear benchmarks that outlines how Peace Corps/Kosovo will improve the programming and training of the community development project, and support the current input of community development Volunteers.
4. That the country director review the post's staffing model to ensure that it has qualified full-time staff with sufficient technical expertise to fulfill the programming and training requirements for both projects.
5. That the director of programming and training improve preparation and oversight of Volunteers who co-facilitate training so that trainees receive consistent and accurate information.
6. That the director of programming and training use the training design and evaluation process to tailor technical training to align with the project frameworks.
7. That the director of programming and training implement the global learning standards and use the trainee assessment portfolio to provide formative assessments to trainees and document the assessment process.
8. That program managers interview and do housing checks with more than one host family, where feasible, for each Volunteer in order to choose the best possible fit.
9. That programming staff, in consultation with the Peace Corps medical officer and safety and security manager, review and update the housing and homestay criteria to include additional known risks and hazards to Volunteer health and safety.
10. That the director of programming and training work with the safety and security manager and Peace Corps medical officer to improve site development in Kosovo so that staff involved in identifying sites and host families are trained in how to identify

and select an appropriate host family to ensure the basic elements are in place before Volunteers arrive.

11. That the Peace Corps medical officers receive a list of target work sites for their approval, as is outlined in their site development procedure.
12. That the director of programming and training develop and implement a plan to increase programming staff capacity in the area of TEFL and CD technical expertise.
13. That the director of programming and training develop a plan to improve and monitor the quality of site visits by program managers.
14. That the post develop a memorandum of understanding for the teaching English as a foreign language project with the appropriate Kosovar ministry.
15. That the post develop a memorandum of understanding for the community development project with the appropriate Kosovar ministry.
16. That the post develop a project advisory committee for the teaching English as a foreign language project.
17. That the post develop a project advisory committee for the community development project.
18. That the director of programming and training train all trainees and Volunteers on all of the major ethnic groups and provide cross-cultural training for trainees whose sites are in ethnic minority communities.
19. That the director of programming and training develop a strategy and plan to prepare trainees and Volunteers for post-conflict-related challenges.
20. That the director of programming and training assess and implement different strategies to improve the timing and quality of counterpart training.
21. That the programming and training team complete a supervisor/counterpart handbook and take steps to educate supervisors and counterparts on the contents of the handbook.
22. That the Peace Corps medical officers complete a medical action plan for the new regional medical unit.
23. That the appropriate staff from both Peace Corps/Macedonia and Peace Corps/Kosovo participate in medical emergency drills, as required by policy.
24. That the Peace Corps medical officers collectively visit all Kosovo Volunteers according to agency guidance.

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25. That the Peace Corps medical officers conduct assessments of the local facilities throughout Kosovo, as required by agency guidance.
26. That the country director clearly communicate to Volunteers the resources available and plan in place to respond to Volunteer medical emergencies in Kosovo.
27. That the director of programming and training familiarize trainees with the health unit in Macedonia and the logistics of getting there.

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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

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

The Evaluation Unit announced its intent to conduct an evaluation of the post on October 3, 2016. For post evaluations, we use the following researchable questions to guide our work:

- To what extent has post developed and implemented programs to increase host country communities' capacity?
- Does training prepare Volunteers for Peace Corps service?
- Has the post provided adequate support and oversight to Volunteers?
- Are post resources and management practices adequate for effective post operations?

The evaluator conducted the preliminary research portion of the evaluation October 3 to November 23, 2016. This research included review of agency documents provided by headquarters and post staff; interviews with management staff representing the Europe, Mediterranean and Asia region, the Office of Gifts and Grants Management, the Office of Health Services, the Office of Safety and Security, the Office of Victim Advocacy, the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Overseas Programming and Training Support, and Peace Corps Response. In addition, the evaluator conducted an online survey of all Volunteers in Kosovo. We received 56 responses out of a possible 63, resulting in an 89 percent response rate. The survey gathered Volunteers' opinions on commentary on Volunteer support, programming, and training.

In-country fieldwork occurred from November 28 to December 15, 2016, and included interviews with post senior staff in charge of programming, training, and support; the U.S. Ambassador and deputy chief of mission; the U.S. Embassy's regional security officer; and host country government ministry officials. In addition, we interviewed a stratified judgmental sample of 20 Volunteers (33 percent of Volunteers serving at the time of our visit⁹) based on their length of service, site location, project focus, program manager, gender, age, ethnicity, and whether they live and work in a minority community.

⁹ Two Volunteers ended their service between the time the Peace Corps survey was launched and the evaluator arrived at post, bring the number of Volunteers at post during fieldwork down to 61.

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

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

As part of this post evaluation, interviews were conducted with 21 Volunteers,¹⁰ 14 staff in-country or in Macedonia, and 30 representatives from Peace Corps headquarters in Washington D.C., the U.S. Embassy in Kosovo, and Kosovar ministries. Volunteer interviews were conducted using a standardized interview questionnaire, and Volunteers were asked to rate many items on a four-point scale (1 = not effective, 4 = very effective). The analysis of these ratings provided a quantitative supplement to Volunteer comments, which were also analyzed. For the purposes of the data analysis, Volunteer ratings of “2” and above are considered favorable. In addition, 20 out of 21 Volunteer interviews occurred at the Volunteers’ homes, and we inspected 19 of these homes using post-defined site selection criteria. The period of review for a post evaluation is one full Volunteer cycle (typically 27 months).

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

Table 1: Volunteer Demographic Data

Project	Percentage of Volunteers
Community Development	16%
Teaching English as a Foreign Language	84%
Gender	Percentage of Volunteers
Female	67%
Male	33%
Age	Percentage of Volunteers
25 or younger	43%
26-29	36%
30-49	16%
50 and over	5%

Source: Peace Corps Volunteer roster as of November 28, 2016.

Note: Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

At the time of our field visit, the post had 20 staff positions plus 3 Peace Corps medical officers in Macedonia. The post also employs temporary staff to assist with pre-service training. Given the time of our visit, these positions were not staffed. We interviewed 14 staff in Kosovo and Macedonia. The staffing configuration of posts often varies and staff may hold additional

¹⁰ An additional request for an interview from a Volunteer not in the sample was accommodated; thereby increasing the total number of Volunteers interviewed to 21.

responsibilities relevant to the evaluation in addition to their official job title. We conduct interviews with sexual assault response liaisons; grants coordinators; monitoring, reporting, and evaluation champions; and Peace Corps Response coordinators as necessary and when appropriate for the post.

Table 2: Interviews Conducted with Post Staff in Kosovo and Macedonia

Position	Status	Interviewed
Cashier	PSC*	
Country Director in Kosovo	USDH	X
Country Director in Macedonia	USDH	X
Director of Management and Operations	USDH	X
Director of Programming and Training	USDH	X
Driver (3)	PSC	
Financial Specialist	PSC	
General Services Assistant	PSC	
General Services Manager	PSC	
Information Technology Specialist	PSC	
Janitor/Maintenance	PSC	
Language and Cross-Cultural Coordinator	PSC	X
Medical Secretary	PSC	X
Peace Corps Medical Officer (3)	PSC	X
Program Manager (2)	PSC	X
Programming and Training Assistant	PSC	X
Safety and Security Manager	PSC	X
Training Manager	PSC	X

Data as of October 2016. "PSC" stands for is personal services contractor; "USDH" stands for U.S. direct hire.

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

Table 3: Interviews Conducted with Peace Corps Headquarters Staff, Embassy Officials and Key Ministry Officials

Position	Organization
Minister of Education	Ministry of Education
Senior Advisor to the Minister of Education	Ministry of Education
Minister of Labor	Ministry of Labor
Ministry of Labor Representative	Ministry of Labor
Acting Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	PC Headquarters/Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Region
Chief Administrative Officer	PC Headquarters/Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Region
Chief of Operations/Acting Regional Director	PC Headquarters/Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Region
Chief of Programming and Training	PC Headquarters/Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Region

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Country Desk Officer	PC Headquarters/Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Region
Former Country Desk Officer	PC Headquarters/Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Region
Programming and Training Specialist	PC Headquarters/Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Region
Regional Security Advisor	PC Headquarters/Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Region
PCPP Program Manager	PC Headquarters/External Affairs/Office of Gifts and Grants Management
SPA Program Manager	PC Headquarters/External Affairs/Office of Gifts and Grants Management
Chief of Quality Improvement	PC Headquarters/Office of Health Services
Director, Counselling and Outreach Unit	PC Headquarters/Office of Health Services
Director, Office of Medical Services	PC Headquarters/Office of Health Services
Manager, Quality Improvement	PC Headquarters/Office of Health Services
Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer	PC Headquarters/Office of Safety and Security
Director	PC Headquarters/Office of Victim Advocacy
Victim Advocate (2)	PC Headquarters/Office of Victim Advocacy
Community Economic Development Specialist	PC Headquarters/Overseas Programming and Training Support
Education Specialist	PC Headquarters/Overseas Programming and Training Support
Chief of Operations	PC Headquarters/Peace Corps Response
Former Volunteer Placement and Assessment Specialist	PC Headquarters/Volunteer Recruitment and Selection
Volunteer Placement and Assessment Specialist	PC Headquarters/Volunteer Recruitment and Selection
Ambassador	US Embassy/Kosovo
Deputy Chief of Mission	US Embassy/Kosovo
Regional Security Officer	US Embassy/Kosovo

Data as of December 2016.

APPENDIX C: LIST OF ACRONYMS

CD	Community Development
EMA	Europe, Mediterranean and Asia
FY	Fiscal Year
IPBS	Integrated Planning and Budgeting System
IST	In-Service Training
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Manual Section
NCE	New Country Entry
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
PC	Peace Corps
PCMO	Peace Corps Medical Officer
PST	Pre-Service Training
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language

APPENDIX D: OIG MEMO - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN PEACE CORPS/KOSOVO



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To: Darlene Grant, Country Director, Peace Corps/Kosovo
Kris Besch, Acting Regional Director, EMA
Jean Seigle, Chief of Operations, EMA
Karla Wesley, Chief of Programming and Training, EMA
Erin Gibbs, Acting Associate Director, VRS
Anne Hughes, Chief Compliance Officer

From: Kathy A. Buller, Inspector General 

Date: January 25, 2017

Subject: OIG Memo - Community Development Project in Peace Corps/Kosovo

The Office of Inspector General recently conducted an evaluation of Peace Corps/Kosovo and is developing a preliminary evaluation report which we expect to issue in March, followed by the final report shortly thereafter. The purpose of this memo is to present time-sensitive observations and concerns we have about the community development (CD) project in the country and to recommend that the agency postpone the second input of CD Volunteers, currently scheduled to arrive in Kosovo in June 2017, in order to address these concerns. Also, our issuing this memo now (several weeks ahead of the release of our preliminary report) may allow the agency to find alternative placements for the individuals invited to serve in the CD project in Kosovo.

The first input of CD Volunteers arrived in country in June 2016. During the course of the evaluation, we learned that key building blocks for the CD project were not in place:

1. Though a project framework had been drafted, the objectives of the CD project were not well understood by staff or Volunteers.
2. Ownership and governance of the project was lacking and confused. Roles and responsibilities for management of the CD project were shared between program staff, neither of whom had been hired to manage the project, nor been involved in its design, nor had a sense of ownership of it. The program manager responsible for the CD project had been hired to be a regional manager, and both program managers continued to share duties for the project (such as site development) based on the location of Volunteers in the country.
3. No one on the staff had relevant experience or expertise in community development in Kosovo.

4. The post was unable to train Volunteers effectively because technical learning objectives had not been articulated or built into the training program. Only 55 percent of the 2016 input of Volunteers felt that their technical training was effective, and multiple Volunteers observed that the technical training did not align with, or prepare them to carry out, their diverse primary assignments.

Under these circumstances we believe it to be highly unlikely that Peace Corps/Kosovo can provide adequate training and support for Volunteers to serve effectively in the CD project in Kosovo.

We recommend:

1. That the post, with the support of the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region, postpone the second input of community development Volunteers until it has addressed the weaknesses with the project's design and related training for Volunteers and staff are better equipped to manage and support it.
2. That the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, in consultation with the post, identify alternative placement opportunities for Volunteers already invited to the community development project in Kosovo.

These issues and recommendations will be presented in final form in our country program evaluation report, which will make additional recommendations to improve aspects of the CD project and support to currently serving CD Volunteers, and other recommendations about Peace Corps/Kosovo. However, given the time-sensitive nature of these issues we ask that the agency respond to these concerns within 30 days of receiving this memorandum.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation in this matter.

CC: IGChron
IG

APPENDIX E: AGENCY RESPONSE TO OIG MEMO - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN PEACE CORPS/KOSOVO



MEMORANDUM

To: Kathy Buller, Inspector General

Through: Angela Kissel, Acting Chief Compliance Officer 

From: Jean Seigle, Acting EMA Regional Director/EMA Chief of Operations 
Darlene Grant, Country Director Peace Corps/Kosovo

Date: February 24, 2017

CC: Shelia Crowley, Acting Director
Carl Sosebee, Acting Chief of Staff
Kathy Stroker, Acting Deputy Director
Kristin Besch, Acting Director of Global Operations
Joaquin Ferrao, Deputy Inspector General
Jerry Black, AIG/Evaluations
Karla Wesley, Chief of Programming and Training, EMA
Erin Gibbs, Acting Associate Director, VRS
Anne Hughes, Senior Advisor to the Chief of Staff

Subject: Agency Response to OIG Memo – Community Development Project in Peace Corps/Kosovo

Enclosed please find the agency's response to the recommendations made by the Inspector General for Peace Corps/Kosovo as outlined in the OIG Memo – Community Development Project in Peace Corps/Kosovo sent to the agency on January 25, 2017.

The Region and the Post have addressed both recommendations and provided supporting documentation for one of the recommendations in this memo.

Recommendation 1

That the post, with the support of the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region, postpone the second input of community development Volunteers until it has addressed the weaknesses with the project’s design and related training for Volunteers, and staff are better equipped to manage and support it.

Concur

Response:

We aspire to programmatic excellence and believe there is a need for a strongly conceived/built Community Development project in Kosovo. Thus, we concur with the recommendation to postpone the second input of Community Development Volunteers to assess the project design and related training to better equip staff ability to manage and support the program.

Region and Post agree to the attached staffing structure that will allow for the introduction of a staff member with technical expertise so that Regional Managers can focus on site development, cross-cultural site management and maintenance, rather than serving as technical program support for TEFL and CD. We anticipate the introduction of technical experts will address the gaps that the Regional Managers are unable to cover under the current structure.

The Community Development Project Reset was announced to currently serving CD Volunteers and they were assured full attention to their ongoing training and programming needs for the duration of their service. The new DPT will begin learning about the CD environment and needs in Kosovo upon arrival in country. They will subsequently lead a new country analysis including meeting with Ministry partners and other host country agency stakeholders, and currently serving PCVs and their counterparts. Post will provide ongoing technical support to currently serving CED volunteers through experts in the Balkan (Albania and Macedonia) and Caucasus regions (Armenia and Georgia), and headquarters.

To address the needs for technical expertise in both the TEFL and CD projects, Post will advertise for the TEFL Program Manager and the CD Program Manager. This will eliminate the need for temporary PST tech trainers each year. Once the above changes have been implemented Region and Post will resume the CD project in Kosovo.

Documents to be Submitted:

1. Post Proposed Staffing Model
2. Position Description for new staff member(s)

Status and Timeline for Completion:

Expected Completion: March, 2018

Recommendation 2

That the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, in consultation with the post, identify alternative placement opportunities for Volunteers already invited to the community development project in Kosovo.

Concur

Response:

Region and the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection concur that second invitations be issued to the Invitees who applied to the Community Development program in Kosovo. To achieve this, Region conferred with Post on supporting their decision to cancel the second input of Community Development Volunteers. Region, with the support of the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, strategized to inform the Community Development Volunteers of the postponement of the second input and identify alternative placement opportunities. Region called Invitees to inform them the input has been postponed and inform them to expect a call from the Placement Office to discuss alternative placement opportunities. After Region completed all calls to Invitees, Region notified Placement and they reached out to each Invitee and offered an alternative placement.

Documents Submitted:

3. Region Talking Points for Kosovo CED Cancellation FY17Q3
4. Region KOS-4 CED Cancellation Call Sheet
5. Placement Email to Invitees
6. Placement Second Invitation Example
7. Placement Tracking Sheet for Second Invitations

Status and Timeline for Completion:

Date of Completion: February, 2017

APPENDIX F: AGENCY RESPONSE TO THE PRELIMINARY REPORT



MEMORANDUM

To: Kathy Buller, Inspector General

Through: Angela Kissel, Acting Chief Compliance Officer *AK*

From: Jean Seigle, Acting EMA Regional Director/EMA Chief of Operations *JSS*
Darlene Grant, Country Director Peace Corps/Kosovo

Date: May 1, 2017

CC: Shelia Crowley, Acting Director
Carl Sosebee, Acting Chief of Staff
Kathy Stroker, Acting Deputy Director
Kristin Besch, Acting Director of Global Operations
Joaquin Ferrao, Deputy Inspector General
Jerry Black, AIG/Evaluations
Karla Wesley, Chief of Programming and Training, EMA
Erin Gibbs, Acting Associate Director, VRS
Anne Hughes, Senior Advisor to the Chief of Staff

Subject: Agency Response to the Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Kosovo (Project No. 16-EVAL-05)

Enclosed please find the agency's response to the recommendations made by the Inspector General for Peace Corps/Kosovo as outlined in the Preliminary Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Kosovo (Project No. 16-EVAL-05) given to the agency on March 17th, 2017.

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

Recommendation 1

That the post, with the support of the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region, postpone the second input of community development Volunteers until it has addressed the weaknesses with the project's design and related training for Volunteers, and staff are better equipped to manage and support it.

Concur

Response:

We aspire to programmatic excellence and believe there is a need for a strongly conceived/built Community Development project in Kosovo. Thus, we concur with the recommendation to postpone the second input of Community Development Volunteers to assess the project design and related training to better equip staff ability to manage and support the program.

Region and Post agree to the attached staffing structure that will allow for the introduction of a staff member with technical expertise so that Regional Managers can focus on site development, cross-cultural site management and maintenance, rather than serving as technical program support for TEFL and CD. We anticipate the introduction of technical experts will address the gaps that the Regional Managers are unable to cover under the current structure.

The Community Development Project Reset was announced to currently serving CD Volunteers and they were assured full attention to their ongoing training and programming needs for the duration of their service. The new DPT will begin learning about the CD environment and needs in Kosovo upon arrival in country. They will subsequently lead a new country analysis including meeting with Ministry partners and other host country agency stakeholders, and currently serving PCVs and their counterparts. Post will provide ongoing technical support to currently serving CED volunteers through experts in the Balkan (Albania and Macedonia) and Caucasus regions (Armenia and Georgia), and headquarters.

To address the needs for technical expertise in both the TEFL and CD projects, Post will advertise for the TEFL Program Manager and the CD Program Manager. This will eliminate the need for temporary PST tech trainers each year. Once the above changes have been implemented Region and Post will resume the CD project in Kosovo.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Post Proposed Staffing Model
- Position Description for new staff member(s)

Status and Timeline for Completion: March, 2018

Recommendation 2

That the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, in consultation with the post, identify alternative placement opportunities for Volunteers already invited to the community development project in Kosovo.

Concur

Response:

Region and the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection concur that second invitations be issued to the Invitees who applied to the Community Development program in Kosovo. To achieve this, Region conferred with Post on supporting their decision to cancel the second input of Community Development Volunteers. Region, with the support of the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, strategized to inform the Community Development Volunteers of the postponement of the second input and identify alternative placement opportunities. Region called Invitees to inform them the input has been postponed and inform them to expect a call from the Placement Office to discuss alternative placement opportunities. After Region completed all calls to Invitees, Region notified Placement and they reached out to each Invitee and offered an alternative placement.

Documents Submitted:

- Region Talking Points for Kosovo CED Cancellation FY17Q3
- Region KOS-4 CED Cancellation Call Sheet
- Placement Email to Invitees
- Placement Second Invitation Example
- Placement Tracking Sheet for Second Invitations

Status and Timeline for Completion: February, 2017

Recommendation 3

That the country director, with the support and guidance of the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region as well as the Office of Programming and Training Support, develop a plan with clear benchmarks that outlines how Peace Corps/Kosovo will improve the programming and training of the community development project, and support the current input of community development Volunteers.

Concur

Response:

Post will hire a temporary specialist consultant to conduct a thorough needs assessment to assist in developing a plan with clear benchmarks to improve programming and training of the CD project. The needs assessment process will include interviews with key stakeholders and focus groups with Volunteers. Post will also organize a Project Advisory Committee with key stakeholders to inform the design process for a logical project framework. Additionally, post will hire a Community Development Program Manager and that person will work with the

Community Development Specialist in the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support on a Logical Project Framework and project plan and that information will be used to create the training bridge.

In order to continue to support the current input of community development Volunteers, the Director of Programming and Training will do site visits with all CD Volunteers and will develop a support plan for them based on these visits. Post will document and respond to all suggestions for technical support needs from the Volunteers and encourage cross-functional collaboration between projects at all upcoming in-service training events. The Program Managers will involve CD Volunteers as resource volunteers for in-service trainings focusing on cross-sector programming priorities and project, design and management. Post will also provide additional technical training and support for CD Volunteers through a variety of learning opportunities including but not limited to, a Professional Development IST with PC/Albania and/or PC/Macedonia, meetings with representatives from USAID, NGOs, and other relevant organizations operating in Kosovo and professional development training focusing on Youth Employability and Soft Skills.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Community Development Needs Assessment for Peace Corps Kosovo
- Community Development Logical Project Framework
- Community Development Program Manager Position Description
- Listing of Project Advisory Committee members
- Description of all Community Development In-Service Training Events, 2017-2018
- Community Development Volunteer Support Plan

Status and Timeline for Completion: December, 2018

Recommendation 4

That the country director review the post's staffing model to ensure that it has qualified full-time staff with sufficient technical expertise to fulfill the programming and training requirements for both projects.

Concur

Response:

The TEFL Program Manager (PM) position was posted on March 27, 2017 and applications are currently being reviewed. At the Feb. 2017 *All Staff Retreat*, a new organization chart was presented as the proposed strategy for mitigating challenges in technical training and site development. Additionally, a TEFL Tech trainer was hired for pre-service training and will be benefiting from one week of staff exchange with the TEFL Tech trainer from Armenia.

Documents Submitted:

- TEFL PM Position Description
- TEFL Tech trainer Position Description
- Outline of topics covered during staff exchange

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed, May, 2017.

Recommendation 5

That the director of programming and training improve preparation and oversight of Volunteers who co-facilitate training so that trainees receive consistent and accurate information.

Concur

Response:

An enhanced Resource Volunteer selection process was initiated on March 31, 2017 with transparency around selection criteria. The Programming and Training (P&T) team conducted a transparent review of all applicants in April. All selected Resource Volunteers will be required to participate in a Training of Trainers even in May 2017 and agree to sign a code of conduct. The Director of Programming and Training (DPT) and Training Manager will develop an assessment tool for co-facilitators to provide session feedback for all sessions. Resource Volunteers will be evaluated as co-facilitators during pre-service trainings (PSTs) and in-service trainings (ISTs) by staff that is co-facilitating the session. Resource Volunteers will be asked to provide suggestions for future improvement of training that they have co-facilitated. Peace Corps Volunteer Leaders (PCVLs) will actively be involved in co-facilitation and will participate in PST and IST debriefs. When applicable, the respective committee members will be invited to present on topics such as Monitoring and Evaluation, SPA, gender, language and culture. All debriefing information will be used to further enhance the process of selection and utilization of Resource Volunteers.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Resource Volunteer Applications
- Resource Volunteer Guidelines
- Resource Volunteer TOT agenda
- Assessment tool for co-facilitators

Status and Timeline for Completion: June, 2017.

Recommendation 6

That the director of programming and training use the training design and evaluation process to tailor technical training to align with the project frameworks.

Concur

Response:

As of March, 2017, The Director of Programming and Training (DPT) has consulted with the Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS) Education Specialist regarding the calendar of training events (COTE) and link to the project framework. DPT, Training Manager

(TM) and Program Managers (PMs) will consult with OPATS Technical Training specialists to discuss the latest guidance from OPATS regarding Training Design and Evaluation (TDE) and the Training Bridge process as part of the Logical Project Framework. In May, the TEFL Tech trainer will be receiving one additional week of training of trainers (TOT) to develop TDE in collaboration with the TEFL Technical Specialist at PC/Armenia. The DPT will ensure that PC/Kosovo is following Region and OPATS guidance regarding the Programming, Training, Evaluation Alignment (PTE Alignment). Once the TEFL Program Manager is hired, PC/Kosovo will host a staff development workshop to learn the TDE or Training Bridge process with support from the OPATS Technical Training Specialist.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Email correspondence with OPATS Education Specialist
- TEFL Technical Sessions Calendar of Training Events (COTE)
- Training Bridge Staff development workshop agenda

Status and Timeline for Completion: To be completed by March, 2018.

Recommendation 7

That the director of programming and training implement the global learning standards and use the trainee assessment portfolio to provide formative assessments to trainees and document the assessment process.

Concur

Response:

During the June 2017 Pre-Service Training (PST), the Director of Programming and Training (DPT) and Training Manager (TM) will implement the Trainee Assessment Portfolio provided by Peace Corps Headquarters. DPT, TM and TEFL Tech trainer will adapt PC/Armenia's Region Approved TEFL Assessment tools to the Kosovo context. The PC/Kosovo TM has and will continue to consult with OPATS Training Specialist to discuss TAP tools and best practices. Post staff will also participate in two round table discussions reviewing trainee performance during PST. The DPT and TM will ensure that global learning standards and terminal learning objectives are, when applicable, incorporated into all future learning events.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Trainee Assessment Portfolio Documents
- Adapted TEFL Assessment Tools

Status and Timeline for Completion: August, 2017.

Recommendation 8

That program managers interview and do housing checks with more than one host family, where possible, for each Volunteer in order to choose the best possible fit.

Concur

Response:

The Program Managers (PMs) with the support of the Safety and Security Manager (SSM) developed a Site Development Manual that outlines the process including a thorough vetting of site placement and host families. Post staff will use the Site Development Manual procedures to conduct common housing checks for both Pre-Service Training housing and permanent site housing. PMs and TMs train host families during Pre-Service Training Host Family Orientation and the Host Family Conference about appropriate housing requirements and safety and medical issues. Host Families also receive a Host Family handbook at this training to promote training sustainability.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Site Development Manual
- Host Family Handbook
- Volunteer Application Form

Status and Timeline for Completion: August, 2017.

Recommendation 9

That programming staff, in consultation with the Peace Corps medical officer and safety and security manager, review and update the housing and homestay criteria to include additional known risks and hazards to Volunteer health and safety.

Concur

Response:

The Director of Programming and Training (DPT) will meet with Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMO) to discuss effective ways to involve PCMOs in the site selection process. Post developed a Site Development Manual that outlines the process including a thorough vetting of site placement and host families. Program Managers (PMs) revised forms to provide space for PCMOs to approve housing and homestay criteria. Post will establish protocols for ensuring Volunteer health and safety within new regional medical model. The Regional Medical Unit (RMU) was officially announced to Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) in both countries (Kosovo and Macedonia) in September of 2016. Post staff from both countries will meet quarterly, via Business SKYPE and at the RMU to discuss process developments and progress, and opportunities to make adjustments based on PCV feedback.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Housing and Homestay Selection Criteria
- Email announcement to Volunteers.
- RMU Offsite Retreat Action Plan and Outcomes Report.

Status and Timeline for Completion: May, 2017.

Recommendation 10

That the director of programming and training work with the safety and security manager and Peace Corps medical officer to improve site development in Kosovo so that staff involved in identifying sites and host families are trained in how to identify and select an appropriate host family to ensure the basic elements are in place before Volunteers arrive.

Concur

Response:

Program Managers (PM) in coordination with the Safety and Security Manager (SSM) developed a Site Development Manual that outlines the process including a thorough vetting of site placement and host families. The PMs revised the forms to provide space for the Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMO) to approve housing and homestay criteria. The Director of Programming and Training (DPT) will convene regular meetings with the SSM and PCMOs to ensure site development is adhering to appropriate standards as outlined in the post's site development manual. The DPT will ensure that all Programming and Training staff are trained up on these standards and appropriate protocols in ensuring safe and healthy site development at post.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Revised Site Selection Criteria and Checklist Form
- Site Development Manual

Status and Timeline for Completion: May, 2017

Recommendation 11

That the Peace Corps medical officers receive a list of target work sites for their approval, as is outlined in their site development procedure.

Concur

Response:

Moving forward, the Program Managers (PM) will provide a list of target work sites for the Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMO) approval, as is outlined in the site development procedures. The PC/Kosovo Medical Secretary (and Safety and Security Manager as needed) will research and submit to PCMOs up-to-date statistical health data reports for Kosovo, from the Ministry of Health and related entities.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Examples of Target Worksites submitted to the Peace Corps Medical Officers
- Example Statistical Health Data Report

Status and Timeline for Completion: June, 2017.

Recommendation 12

That the director of programming and training develop and implement a plan to increase programming staff capacity in the area of TEFL and CD technical expertise.

Concur

Response:

The Director of Programming and Training (DPT) will work with TEFL and Community Development (CD) Program Managers (PM) to ensure they benefit from regular professional development that aligns with sector best practices and Program and Training Evaluation (PTE) guidance. The DPT will designate regular Professional Development days focusing on respective technical expertise so that PMs have opportunity to learn and grow in their technical expertise. The DPT and PMs will collaborate to incorporate these clear and measureable expectations into their yearly Performance Evaluation and Individual Development Plans. The DPT will also work with the Education and Community Economic Development Specialists in the Overseas Programming and Training Support Unit (OPATS) to ensure that TEFL and CD PMs are receiving current and relevant programming materials and resources, and benefiting from the Peace Corps' Community of Practices. DPT will use the OPATS' Training Competency for the Overseas PTE Staff Learning Continuum to determine appropriate staff development professional benchmarks, and work with PMs to support them in developing in those areas.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Training Competency for the Overseas PTE Staff Learning Continuum
- Individual Development Plans for TEFL and CD PMs

Status and Timeline for Completion: December, 2018.

Recommendation 13

That the director of programming and training develop a plan to improve and monitor the quality of site visits by program managers.

Concur

Response: The DPT will monitor site visits by PMs to assess their quality and to find opportunities for improvement. By accompanying PMs on site visits, the DPT will provide guidance and support in improving the site visit process. In addition, the P&T team will request support from OPATS and Region in helping staff develop their coaching skills. The DPT will collect and share best practices and lessons learned about how to conduct quality site visits from other EMA posts. The P&T team will continue to document and archive all site visits by using common protocols and procedures.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Site Visit Protocols

Status and Timeline for Completion: December, 2017

Recommendation 14

That the post develop a memorandum of understanding for the teaching English as a foreign language project with the appropriate Kosovar ministry.

Concur

Response:

In collaboration with the Peace Corps Office of General Counsel (OGC), the Country Director (CD) and Director of Programming and Training (DPT) will meet with ministry stakeholders and work to establish a TEFL memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the appropriate Kosovar ministry.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Memorandum of Understanding with the appropriate Kosovar ministry for TEFL.

Status and Timeline for Completion: March, 2018

Recommendation 15

That the post develops a memorandum of understanding for the community development project with the appropriate Kosovar ministry.

Concur

Response:

After a thorough assessment of the Community Development (CD) project, the Country Director (CD) and Director of Programming and Training (DPT), In collaboration with the Peace Corps Office of General Counsel (OGC), will meet with ministry stakeholders and work to establish a CD memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the appropriate Kosovar ministry.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Memorandum of Understanding with the appropriate Kosovar ministry for Community Development.

Status and Timeline for Completion: December, 2018.

Recommendation 16

That the post develop a project advisory committee for the teaching English as a foreign language project.

Concur

Response:

By FY2018, the TEFL Program Manager (PM) will lead the development of a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) in line with post strategic plan. The TEFL PM and Director of Programming and Training will refer to the PTE Guidance to develop specific guidance for the PC/Kosovo TEFL PAC.

Documents to be Submitted:

- TEFL Project Advisory Committee listing
- Project Advisory Guidance document
- Example of PAC meeting minutes

Status and Timeline for Completion: December, 2018.

Recommendation 17

That the post develop a project advisory committee for the community development project.

Concur

Response:

By the end of FY 2018, The Community Development (CD) Program Manager (PM) will lead the development of a Project Advisory Committee (PAC). See Post strategic plan. The CD, PM, and DPT will refer to the PTE Guidance to develop specific guidance for the PC/Kosovo CD PAC.

Documents to be Submitted:

- CD Project Advisory Committee listing
- Project Advisory Committee Guidance document
- Example of CD PAC meeting minutes

Status and Timeline for Completion: December, 2018.

Recommendation 18

That the director of programming and training train all trainees and Volunteers on all of the major ethnic groups and provide cross-cultural training for trainees whose sites are in ethnic minority communities.

Concur

Response:

The Director of Programming and Training (DPT), Training Manager (TM) and Language and Cultural Coordinator (LCC) will develop additional training about the ethnic minorities of Kosovo. The Volunteer-Led Culture and Language Committee is also developing a Cultural Handbook for Volunteers that includes information on different ethnic minorities. The LCC and the Peace Corps Volunteer Leader (PCVL) will train the Language and Culture Facilitators on how to use content from the Cultural Handbook in their language and culture sessions with trainees and resource volunteers that will be used to represent different Volunteer experiences working in ethnic minority communities. Additionally, post will identify opportunities through collaboration with the US embassy and relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide additional support to trainees who have expressed interest in learning about ethnic minority communities.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Cultural Handbook
- PST Calendar of Learning Events with relevant sessions highlighted
- PST session plans focusing on minority communities
- List of additional relevant resources that will be shared with trainees/Volunteers

Status and Timeline for Completion: August, 2017

Recommendation 19

That the director of programming and training develop a strategy and plan to prepare trainees and Volunteers for post-conflict-related challenges.

Concur

Response:

Within the context of training from staff, the focus will be on engaging Trainees and Volunteers in building purposeful plans for self-directed learning based on the materials provided. Post will ensure training helps Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) distinguish between information about post-conflict vs the effects of trauma on the community and ways to frame and address these challenges. The Director of Programming and Training (DPT) will consult with the Counseling and Outreach Unit (COU) to develop a strategy and plan to prepare trainees and Volunteers for post-conflict related challenges. The DPT and Training Manager (TM) will identify local Kosovar experts to participate in Pre-Service Training and Mid-Service Training on how to best prepare American Volunteers for working in the Kosovar context.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Post-conflict session plans
- Post conflict resources provided to staff by the Counseling and Outreach Unit
- Calendar of Training Events with relevant sessions highlighted throughout learning continuum

Status and Timeline for Completion: August, 2017.

Recommendation 20

That the director of programming and training assess and implement different strategies to improve the timing and quality of counterpart training.

Concur

Response:

Post staff will examine the timing of the counterpart conference to see if there is a more appropriate time to host the conference. The Program Managers (PM) and TEFL Technical Trainer will revise the communication to counterparts about the objectives and content of the workshop to help manage their expectations. Additionally, the team will draw best practices from other posts about counterpart conferences. Counterpart conference evaluations will be developed to incorporate improvements into each subsequent conference.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Counterpart Conference Evaluations
- Counterpart Conference Agenda

Status and Timeline for Completion: August, 2017.

Recommendation 21

That the programming and training team complete a supervisor/counterpart handbook and take steps to educate supervisors and counterparts on the contents of the handbook.

Concur

Response:

The Program Managers (PM) will consult regional best practices and examples of counterpart handbooks to develop the supervisor/counterpart handbook. PMs with support from the Director of Programming and Training (DPT) will develop and translate a counterpart handbook for the counterpart conference and involve select Resource Volunteers in the development. The counterpart/supervisor handbook will be reassessed each year based on the feedback and experiences of counterparts.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Supervisor/Counterpart handbook

Status and Timeline for Completion: July, 2017.

Recommendation 22

That the Peace Corps medical officers complete a medical action plan for the new regional medical unit.

Concur

Response: On January 31, 2017, the Regional Medical Unit met with PC/Kosovo senior leadership in an off-site retreat to develop an action plan and establish a common calendar of events. An action plan will be developed and submitted to the Office of Health Services and the Office of Medical Services for review and completion.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Minutes from RMU offsite retreat Action Plan meeting
- Regional Medical Unit Action Plan

Status and Timeline for Completion: December, 2017.

Recommendation 23

That the appropriate staff from both Peace Corps/Macedonia and Peace Corps/Kosovo participate in medical emergency drills, as required by policy.

Concur

Response:

As part of the medical action plan, the RMU will facilitate the requisite medical emergency drills.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Regional Medical Unit Action Plan

Status and Timeline for Completion: December, 2017.

Recommendation 24

That the Peace Corps medical officers collectively visit all Kosovo Volunteers according to agency guidance.

Concur

Response:

PC/Kosovo all Volunteer medical provider site visits began Feb. 2, 2017 and will conclude May 2017. This practice will be continued with future cohorts.

Documents to be Submitted:

- A schedule of all site visits made by Peace Corps Medical Officers.

Status and Timeline for Completion: June, 2017.

Recommendation 25

That the Peace Corps medical officers conduct assessments of the local facilities throughout Kosovo, as required by agency guidance.

Concur

Response:

The RMU will begin the process of conducting assessments of local facilities in August 2017. This practice will be continued on a regular basis as determined by the Medical Action Plan.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Listing and schedule of all local facilities visited and assessed
- Facilities Assessment checklist

Status and Timeline for Completion: December, 2017.

Recommendation 26

That the country director clearly communicate to Volunteers the resources available and plan in place to respond to Volunteer medical emergencies in Kosovo.

Concur

Response:

Beginning in September of 2016, the Country Directors (CD) and Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMO) of both countries (Kosovo and Macedonia) have collaborated on a series of messages sent out to (Peace Corps Volunteers) PCVs on the topic of resources, processes and procedures. Along with who to go to for non-emergency and emergency Medical care. PCMOs also added this topic to their one-on-one site visit conversations with PCVs giving space for questions and feedback/recommendations for improvement from each PCV.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Communication Emails to Volunteers
- Relevant PCV Newsletter communications

Status and Timeline for Completion: May, 2017

Recommendation 27

That the director of programming and training familiarize trainees with the health unit and the process of getting there.

Concur

Response:

Post staff will collaborate in developing a training activity to familiarize trainees with the health unit and the process for getting to the medical unit. The Language and Cultural Facilitators will also facilitate a Regional medical unit (RMU) familiarization activity with small groups of Volunteers.

Continuing with the process implemented in 2016 with the Kos2 and Kos3 Volunteer cohorts, newly Sworn-In Volunteers will travel together with continuing Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) in regional groups to obtain their flu immunizations which will reinforce familiarization of the medical unit and travel from site.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Calendar of Training Events with activity highlighted
- PCMO Familiarization Activity Supporting documents (instructions, maps, etc.)

Status and Timeline for Completion: December, 2017.

APPENDIX G: OIG COMMENTS

Management concurred with all 27 recommendations, which remain open. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities. However, when we feel it is warranted, we may conduct a follow-up review to confirm that action has been taken and to evaluate the impact.

OIG will review and consider closing recommendations 1, 2, 5, 9-12, 14-17, 19, 22, and 24-27 when the documentation reflected in the OIG's comments and the agency's response to the preliminary report is received. For recommendations 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 13, 18, 20, 21, and 23 additional documentation is required.

These recommendations remain open pending confirmation from the chief compliance officer that the documentation reflected in our analysis below is received.

3. That the country director, with the support and guidance of the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region as well as the Office of Programming and Training Support, develop a plan with clear benchmarks that outlines how Peace Corps/Kosovo will improve the programming and training of the community development project, and support the current input of community development Volunteers.

Concur

Response: Post will hire a temporary specialist consultant to conduct a thorough needs assessment to assist in developing a plan with clear benchmarks to improve programming and training of the CD project. The needs assessment process will include interviews with key stakeholders and focus groups with Volunteers. Post will also organize a Project Advisory Committee with key stakeholders to inform the design process for a logical project framework. Additionally, post will hire a Community Development Program Manager and that person will work with the Community Development Specialist in the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support on a Logical Project Framework and project plan and that information will be used to create the training bridge.

In order to continue to support the current input of community development Volunteers, the Director of Programming and Training will do site visits with all CD Volunteers and will develop a support plan for them based on these visits. Post will document and respond to all suggestions for technical support needs from the Volunteers and encourage cross-functional collaboration between projects at all upcoming in-service training events. The Program Managers will involve CD Volunteers as resource volunteers for in-service trainings focusing on cross-sector programming priorities and project, design and management. Post will also provide additional technical training and support for CD Volunteers through a variety of learning opportunities including but not limited to, a Professional Development IST with PC/Albania and/or PC/Macedonia, meetings with

representatives from USAID, NGOs, and other relevant organizations operating in Kosovo and professional development training focusing on Youth Employability and Soft Skills.

Documents to be Submitted:

- *Community Development Needs Assessment for Peace Corps Kosovo*
- *Community Development Logical Project Framework*
- *Community Development Program Manager Position Description*
- *Listing of Project Advisory Committee members*
- *Description of all Community Development In-Service Training Events, 2017-2018*
- *Community Development Volunteer Support Plan*

Status and Timeline for Completion: December, 2018

OIG Analysis: In responding to recommendation # 3, please include documentation that demonstrates how training is tailored to the project framework for the community development Volunteers, including:

- the training bridge or task analysis;
- technical training sessions plans for the community development project.

4. That the country director review the post's staffing model to ensure that it has qualified full-time staff with sufficient technical expertise to fulfill the programming and training requirements for both projects.

Concur

Response: The TEFL Program Manager (PM) position was posted on March 27, 2017 and applications are currently being reviewed. At the Feb. 2017 All Staff Retreat, a new organization chart was presented as the proposed strategy for mitigating challenges in technical training and site development. Additionally, a TEFL Tech trainer was hired for pre-service training and will be benefiting from one week of staff exchange with the TEFL Tech trainer from Armenia.

Documents Submitted:

- TEFL PM Position Description
- TEFL Tech trainer Position Description
- Outline of topics covered during staff exchange

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed, May, 2017.

OIG Analysis: In addition to the documents listed, please provide the OIG with the new organization chart, and the position description(s) for staff involved in providing technical or programmatic training and support to Volunteers in the community development project.

6. That the director of programming and training use the training design and evaluation process to tailor technical training to align with the project frameworks.

Concur

Response: As of March, 2017, The Director of Programming and Training (DPT) has consulted with the Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS) Education Specialist regarding the calendar of training events (COTE) and link to the project framework. DPT, Training Manager (TM) and Program Managers (PMs) will consult with OPATS Technical Training specialists to discuss the latest guidance from OPATS regarding Training Design and Evaluation (TDE) and the Training Bridge process as part of the Logical Project Framework. In May, the TEFL Tech trainer will be receiving one additional week of training of trainers (TOT) to develop TDE in collaboration with the TEFL Technical Specialist at PC/Armenia. The DPT will ensure that PC/Kosovo is following Region and OPATS guidance regarding the Programming, Training, Evaluation Alignment (PTE Alignment). Once the TEFL Program Manager is hired, PC/Kosovo will host a staff development workshop to learn the TDE or Training Bridge process with support from the OPATS Technical Training Specialist.

Documents to be Submitted:

- *Email correspondence with OPATS Education Specialist*
- *TEFL Technical Sessions Calendar of Training Events (COTE)*
- *Training Bridge Staff development workshop agenda*

Status and Timeline for Completion: To be completed by March 2018

OIG Analysis: In the response to recommendation # 6, the agency's list of documents to be submitted does not include specific documentation that demonstrates how the technical sessions will be tailored to the project framework. In addition to the documents listed in the response to recommendation # 6, please provide the following:

- Training bridge document or task analysis for the TEFL project
- Technical training session plans that have been tailored to the TEFL project framework

7. That the director of programming and training implement the global learning standards and use the trainee assessment portfolio to provide formative assessments to trainees and document the assessment process.

Concur

Response: During the June 2017 Pre-Service Training (PST), the Director of Programming and Training (DPT) and Training Manager (TM) will implement the Trainee Assessment Portfolio provided by Peace Corps Headquarters. DPT, TM and TEFL Tech trainer will adapt PC/Armenia's Region Approved TEFL Assessment tools to the Kosovo context. The PC/Kosovo TM has and will continue to consult with OPATS Training Specialist to discuss TAP tools and best practices. Post staff will also participate in two round table discussions reviewing trainee performance during PST. The DPT and

TM will ensure that global learning standards and terminal learning objectives are, when applicable, incorporated into all future learning events.

Documents to be Submitted:

- *Trainee Assessment Portfolio Documents*
- *Adapted TEFL Assessment Tools*

Status and Timeline for Completion: August 2017

OIG Analysis: In the list of documents to be submitted, the agency lists “Trainee Assessment Portfolio Documents”, but it is unclear which documents will be provided. Also, the agency’s response does not reference the community development project. In responding to recommendation # 7, please provide the following trainee assessment portfolio (TAP) documents in addition to the adapted TEFL assessment tools:

- The TAP guides or templates that have been tailored to PC/Kosovo training and are used to assess TEFL and CD Volunteers
- Documentation demonstrating how the readiness to serve assessment is performed
- Documentation of TAP learning results after pre-service training has been completed

8. That program managers interview and do housing checks with more than one host family, where feasible, for each Volunteer in order to choose the best possible fit.

Concur

Response: The Program Managers (PMs) with the support of the Safety and Security Manager (SSM) developed a Site Development Manual that outlines the process including a thorough vetting of site placement and host families. Post staff will use the Site Development Manual procedures to conduct common housing checks for both Pre-Service Training housing and permanent site housing. PMs and TMs train host families during Pre-Service Training Host Family Orientation and the Host Family Conference about appropriate housing requirements and safety and medical issues. Host Families also receive a Host Family handbook at this training to promote training sustainability.

Documents to be Submitted:

- *Site Development Manual*
- *Host Family Handbook*
- *Volunteer Application Form*

Status and Timeline for Completion: August 2017

OIG Analysis: In the agency’s response to recommendation #8, the list of documents to be submitted would not appear to allow OIG to know that post has vetted more than one possible host family for each permanent site (after applicants take the oath), where it is feasible. In addition to the documents to be submitted, please provide the criteria or standards staff use to decide which sites have more than one potential host family and to ensure that housing checks for each potential host family have been conducted.

13. That the director of programming and training develop a plan to improve and monitor the quality of site visits by program managers.

Concur

Response: The DPT will monitor site visits by PMs to assess their quality and to find opportunities for improvement. By accompanying PMs on site visits, the DPT will provide guidance and support in improving the site visit process. In addition, the P&T team will request support from OPATS and Region in helping staff develop their coaching skills. The DPT will collect and share best practices and lessons learned about how to conduct quality site visits from other EMA posts. The P&T team will continue to document and archive all site visits by using common protocols and procedures.

Documents to be Submitted:

- *Site Visit Protocols*

Status and Timeline for Completion: December 2017

OIG Analysis: It is unclear in the agency's response to recommendation # 13 how the post will continue to monitor the quality of site visits in the long term after the DPT has provided guidance, including how the post will collect Volunteer feedback on the usefulness of site visits. In the response to recommendation # 13, please provide documentation that demonstrates how the post plans to monitor quality of site visits over time.

18. That the director of programming and training train all trainees and Volunteers on all of the major ethnic groups and provide cross-cultural training for trainees whose sites are in ethnic minority communities.

Concur

Response: The Director of Programming and Training (DPT), Training Manager (TM) and Language and Cultural Coordinator (LCC) will develop additional training about the ethnic minorities of Kosovo. The Volunteer-Led Culture and Language Committee is also developing a Cultural Handbook for Volunteers that includes information on different ethnic minorities. The LCC and the Peace Corps Volunteer Leader (PCVL) will train the Language and Culture Facilitators on how to use content from the Cultural Handbook in their language and culture sessions with trainees and resource volunteers that will be used to represent different Volunteer experiences working in ethnic minority communities. Additionally, post will identify opportunities through collaboration with the US embassy and relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide additional support to trainees who have expressed interest in learning about ethnic minority communities.

Documents to be Submitted:

- *Cultural Handbook*
- *PST Calendar of Learning Events with relevant sessions highlighted*
- *PST session plans focusing on minority communities*

- *List of additional relevant resources that will be shared with trainees/Volunteers*

Status and Timeline for Completion: August 2017

OIG Analysis: It is unclear from the agency's response to recommendation # 18 how the post will prepare Volunteers being placed in ethnic minority communities to integrate into their communities. While OIG assessed that training provided to Volunteers placed in ethnic Serbian communities was adequate, the post has placed Volunteers in other minority communities for which there is not a language and culture facilitator (LCF). In addition to the documents to be submitted listed above, please provide documentation for recommendation # 18 that demonstrates how Volunteers placed in ethnic minority communities other than ethnic Serbian will receive sufficient training to support their cross-cultural integration.

20. That the director of programming and training assess and implement different strategies to improve the timing and quality of counterpart training.

Concur

Response: Post staff will examine the timing of the counterpart conference to see if there is a more appropriate time to host the conference. The Program Managers (PM) and TEFL Technical Trainer will revise the communication to counterparts about the objectives and content of the workshop to help manage their expectations. Additionally, the team will draw best practices from other posts about counterpart conferences. Counterpart conference evaluations will be developed to incorporate improvements into each subsequent conference.

Documents to be Submitted:

- *Counterpart Conference Evaluations*
- *Counterpart Conference Agenda*

Status and Timeline for Completion: August 2017

OIG Analysis: In the response to recommendation #20, the agency states that "post staff will examine the timing of the counterpart conference." In addition to the documents to be submitted listed in the response, please provide documentation that shows what steps post has taken to improve the timing and quality of training for counterparts.

21. That the programming and training team complete a supervisor/counterpart handbook and take steps to educate supervisors and counterparts on the contents of the handbook.

Concur

Response: The Program Managers (PM) will consult regional best practices and examples of counterpart handbooks to develop the supervisor/counterpart handbook. PMs with support from the Director of Programming and Training (DPT) will develop and translate a counterpart handbook for the counterpart conference and involve select

Resource Volunteers in the development. The counterpart/supervisor handbook will be reassessed each year based on the feedback and experiences of counterparts.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Supervisor/Counterpart handbook

Status and Timeline for Completion: July 2017

OIG Analysis: In addition to the document listed in the agency's response to recommendation #21, please describe steps staff plan to take to educate supervisors and counterparts on the contents of the handbook. Include in the plan steps staff can take to orient potential supervisors and counterparts to the role of the Volunteer early in the Volunteer's service.

23. That the appropriate staff from both Peace Corps/Macedonia and Peace Corps/Kosovo participate in medical emergency drills, as required by policy.

Concur

Response: As part of the medical action plan, the RMU will facilitate the requisite medical emergency drills.

Documents to be Submitted:

- *Regional Medical Unit Action Plan*

Status and Timeline for Completion: December 2017

OIG Analysis: In addition to the document listed in the agency's response to recommendation #23, please provide documentation of the results of at least one emergency drill conducted.

APPENDIX H: PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION AND OIG CONTACT

PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION

This program evaluation was conducted under the direction of Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Jerry Black, by Evaluator Kaitlyn Large and Evaluations Apprentice Alexandra Miller.



OIG CONTACT

Following issuance of the final report, a stakeholder satisfaction survey will be distributed to agency stakeholders. If you wish to comment on the quality or usefulness of this report to help us improve our products, please contact Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Jerry Black at jblack@peacecorpsig.gov or 202.692.2912.

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