

GAO

Fact Sheet for the Chairman, Legislation
and National Security Subcommittee,
Committee on Government Operations,
House of Representatives

July 1989

PEACE CORPS

A Statistical Profile



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United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

National Security and
International Affairs Division

B-235775

July 14, 1989

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Chairman, Legislation and National
Security Subcommittee
Committee on Government Operations
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

You requested that we assist the Subcommittee in its oversight responsibilities for the Peace Corps by initiating a survey of the agency's operations and activities. As a first step, we are providing you background information on the Peace Corps' budget, Peace Corps volunteers and trainees, and the countries in which the agency has operated. (See appendices I, II, and III.)

The Peace Corps' budget in nominal dollars grew steadily during its early years, from \$30 million in fiscal year 1962 to a high of \$114 million in fiscal year 1966, but declined rapidly in the late-1960s and early-1970s, reaching a low of \$72.5 million by fiscal year 1972. Since 1972, the Peace Corps' budget once again began to grow, reaching a high of \$146.2 million in fiscal year 1988.¹ The Peace Corps' budget in constant 1962 dollars steadily decreased from a high of \$104.8 million in fiscal year 1966 to a low of \$36.1 million in fiscal year 1982, at which time it began to show a modest improvement. From fiscal years 1974 to 1988, the portion of the agency's overseas budget devoted to the Africa² region has increased from 35.7 percent of obligations to 48.4 percent of obligations, while the portions devoted to the Inter-America region (including Latin America and the Caribbean) and the North Africa, Near East, Asia and Pacific region have decreased.

The number of Peace Corps volunteers and trainees decreased from a high of 15,556 in fiscal year 1966 to a low of 5,219 in fiscal year 1987. The number of applications for Peace Corps service also decreased from a high of 45,653 in 1964 to a low of 10,279 in 1987. At the end of 1988, the Peace Corps had 5,909 volunteers and trainees, about 42.7 percent of whom were serving in the Peace Corps' Africa region, 33.1 percent in

¹Peace Corps appropriations for fiscal year 1989 are estimated at \$153.5 million. Actual figures are not yet available.

²The Peace Corps' Africa region excludes African countries north of the continent's Sahel region, as well as the countries of Comoros, the Seychelles, the Somali Republic, and Sudan.

the Inter-America region, and 24.2 percent in the North Africa, Near East, Asia and Pacific region. Volunteers currently provide assistance primarily in education, agriculture, health, and forestry.

Volunteers and trainees are largely from ethnic groups whose backgrounds are of European origin.³ As of January 5, 1989, 7.3 percent were of African-, Hispanic-, Asian-, or Native-American backgrounds. During fiscal year 1988, slightly more than one-half of the volunteers were female. Approximately 41 percent of Peace Corps volunteers who entered duty during 1961 through 1986 left before the end of their 2-year assignments. The rate of early terminations has decreased from about 42 percent for volunteers who entered duty during the 1960s and 1970s to about 33 percent for those who entered duty during 1980-86.

The educational and professional backgrounds of Peace Corps volunteers have evolved over the years. According to Peace Corps officials, as governments of beneficiary countries developed a more sophisticated understanding of their countries' development needs, they increased their requests for volunteers with more specialized skills. During most of the 1960s, more than one-half of Peace Corps volunteers were "generalists" with liberal arts backgrounds. Generalists performed a number of services not requiring highly specialized skills, including teaching English as a second language; promoting the use of appropriate technologies, such as solar devices for grain storage and water heating, and water pump mechanisms to transport water; and working with small businesses and cooperatives.

During the 1970s, while volunteers with generalist backgrounds began to decrease, volunteers with backgrounds in education became more prevalent. In addition to English, these volunteers taught science and mathematics, provided vocational training, and trained other teachers. During the 1980s, the Peace Corps began increasing the placement of volunteers with specialized skills in such professions as business, engineering, health, and social work. In fiscal year 1988, 22.6 percent of volunteers and trainees were generalists, 24.6 percent were educators, 27.5 percent had specialized professional skills, 11.6 percent had backgrounds in agriculture, 3 percent had backgrounds in skilled trades, and 10.7 percent had other skills.

³The Peace Corps also includes in this category Americans from North African and Middle Eastern backgrounds and those not wishing to disclose their ethnic backgrounds.

This evolution mirrors a change in the age of volunteers. The percentage of volunteers and trainees under 26 years of age has decreased substantially, from a high of about 88 percent in fiscal year 1969 to about 52 percent in fiscal year 1988. During fiscal year 1988, volunteers in the 26 to 50 age group, who often have the professional skills sought by the Peace Corps, constituted nearly 39 percent of all volunteers and trainees.

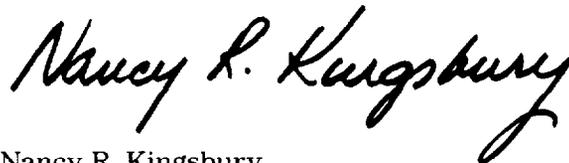
The Peace Corps during 1961-88 provided volunteers, at one time or another, to 98 countries—33 in the Africa region, 30 in the Inter-America region, and 35 in the North Africa, Near East, Asia and Pacific region. Countries with the longest uninterrupted relationship with the Peace Corps include the African countries of Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Sierra Leone, and Togo; the Inter-American countries of Belize, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Jamaica, and St. Lucia; and the North Africa, Near East, Asia and Pacific region countries of Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand, and Tunisia. As of January 1989, the Peace Corps had volunteers in 65 countries around the world.

We compiled this information during April 1989 to June 1989 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. As requested, we did not obtain official agency comments on this fact sheet.

As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, no further distribution of this fact sheet will be made until 7 days from its issue date. At that time, copies will be sent to the Director of the Peace Corps and other interested parties.

GAO staff members who made major contributions to this fact sheet are listed in Appendix IV. If you have questions or need additional information, please call me on 275-5790.

Sincerely Yours,



Nancy R. Kingsbury
Director,
Foreign Economic Assistance Issues

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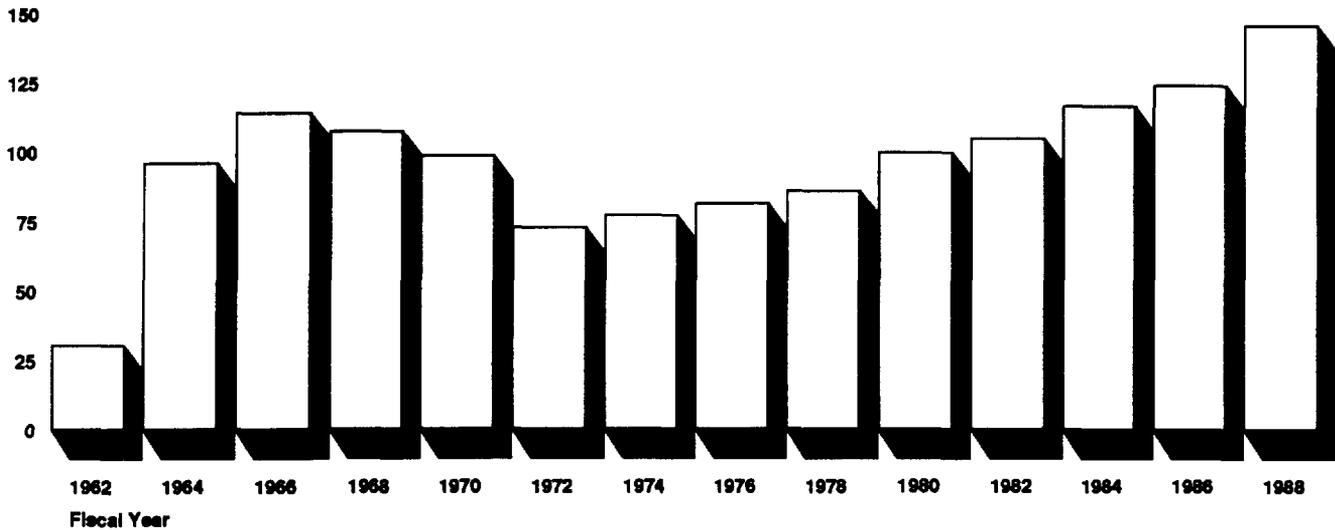
Figure III.1: Countries With Peace Corps Volunteers,
1961-1988

20

Peace Corps Budget

Figure I.1: Annual Appropriations

175 Dollars in Millions



Notes:

Figure for fiscal year 1964 includes \$17 million in reappropriated funds.

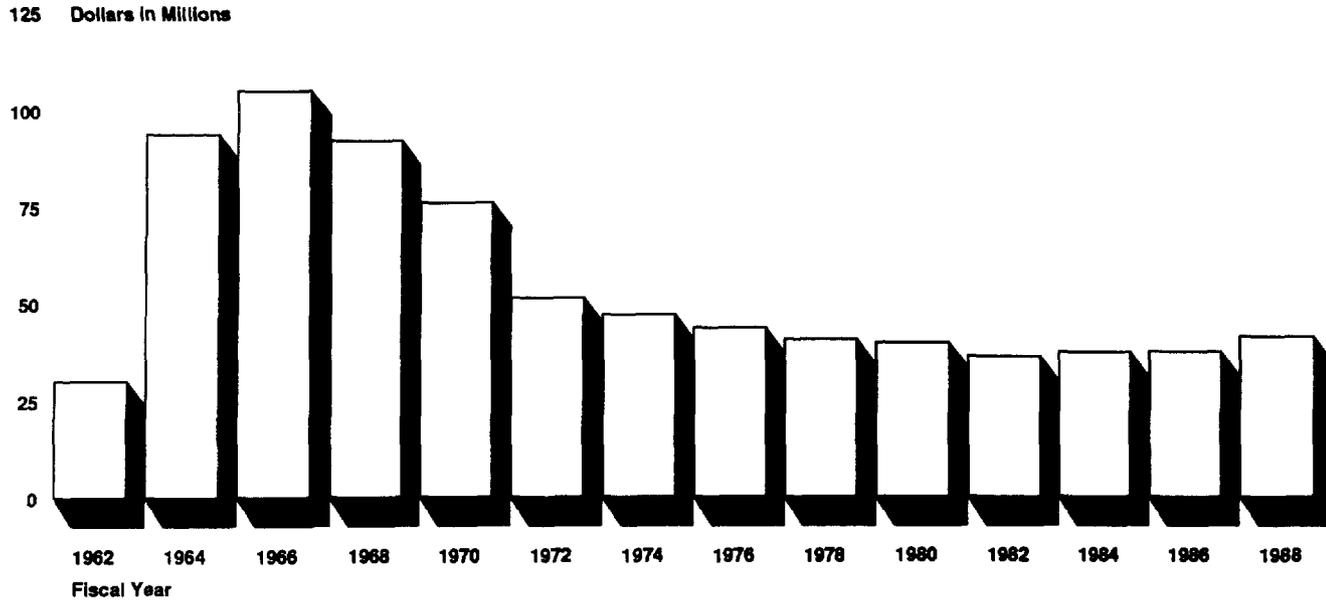
Figure for fiscal year 1976 excludes \$24.1 million transition quarter appropriations.

Figure for fiscal year 1984 includes a \$2 million supplemental appropriation.

Figure for fiscal year 1986 does not include \$5.5 million that was sequestered under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-177).

Appendix I
Peace Corps Budget

Figure I.2: Appropriations in Constant Dollars



Notes:

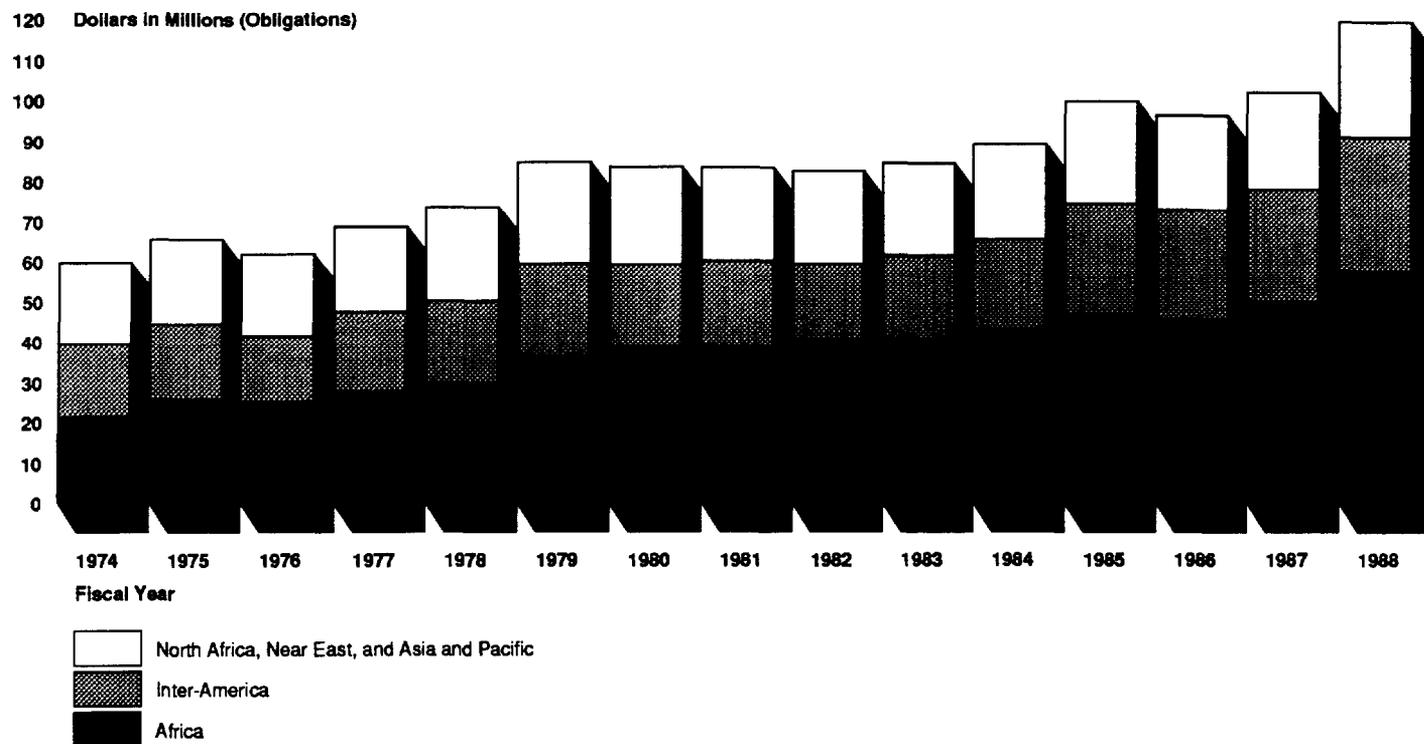
Figure for fiscal year 1976 excludes transition quarter appropriation of \$24.1 million (\$12.9 million in constant dollars).

Figure for fiscal year 1984 includes a \$2 million (\$638,000 in constant dollars) supplemental appropriation.

Figure for fiscal year 1986 does not include \$5.5 million (\$1.6 million in constant dollars) that was sequestered under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (P. L. 99-177).

Appendix I
Peace Corps Budget

Figure I.3: Budget by Region, Fiscal Years 1974-1988



Notes:

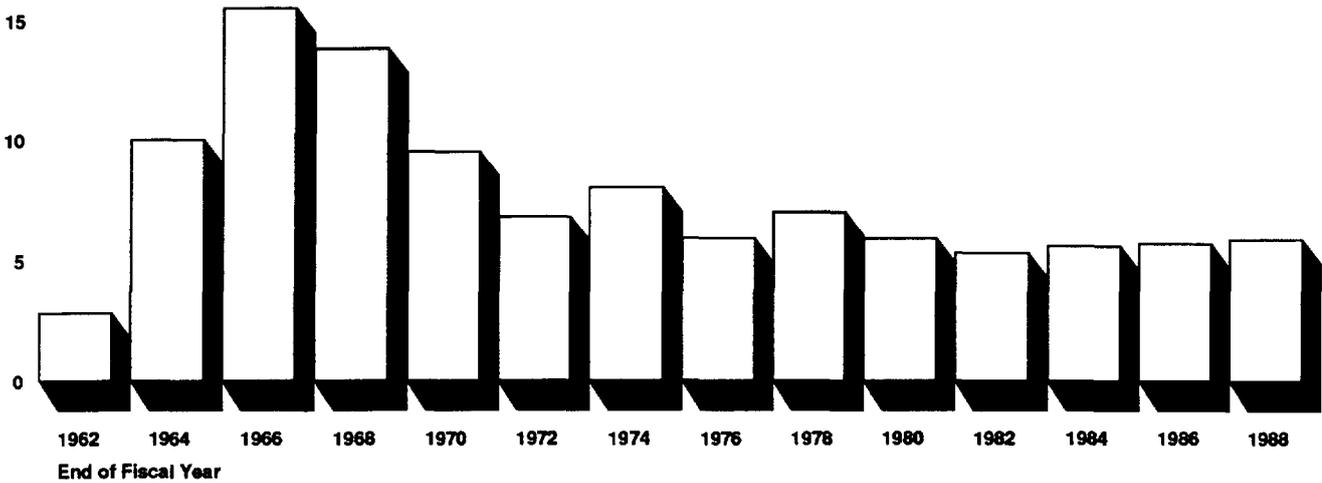
Information unavailable prior to fiscal year 1973.

Figures for fiscal year 1976 exclude transition quarter obligations of \$7.6 million for the Africa region, \$4.8 million for the Inter-America region, and \$6.4 million for the North Africa, Near East, Asia and Pacific region.

Peace Corps Volunteers and Trainees

Figure II.1: Volunteers and Trainees

20 Thousands of Individuals



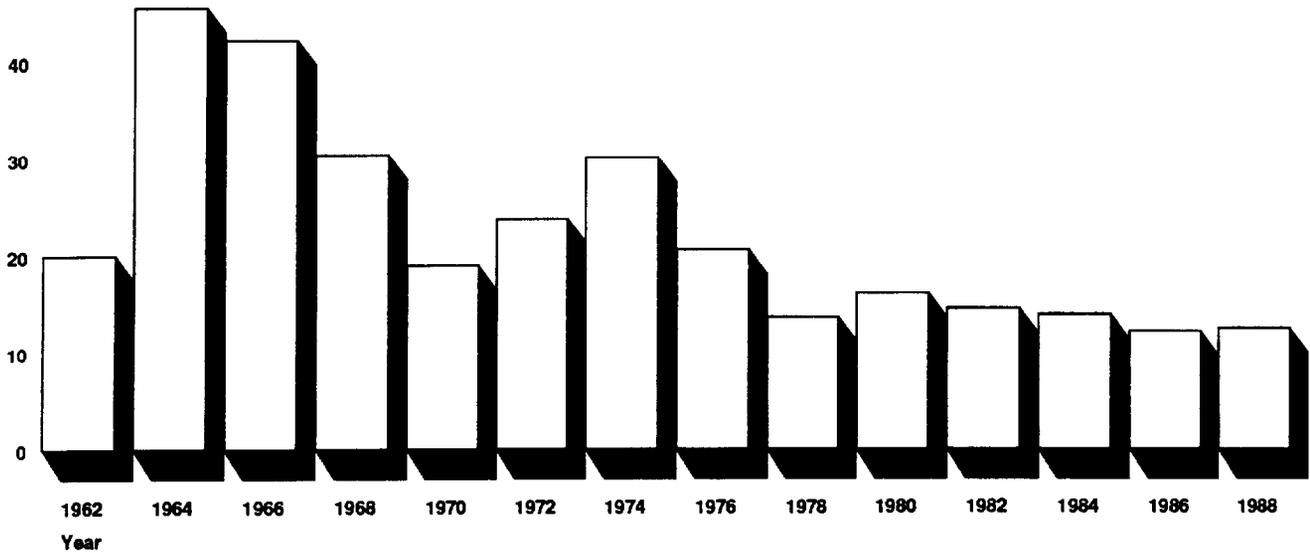
Note

The Peace Corps had 5,219 volunteers and trainees in 1987, which represents the fewest number of volunteers and trainees since 1962.

Appendix II
Peace Corps Volunteers and Trainees

Figure II.2: Volunteer Applications

50 Thousands of Applications



Notes:

Figures include individuals who applied through the Peace Corps to serve with the United Nations Volunteer Program.

Figures for 1962-1970 are on a program year basis, which ran from September 1 through August 31. Subsequent figures are on a fiscal year basis.

Figure for 1976 includes 2,452 applications received during the transition quarter.

The Peace Corps received 10,279 applications in fiscal year 1987, which represents the lowest total in the agency's history.

Figure II.3: Early Terminations

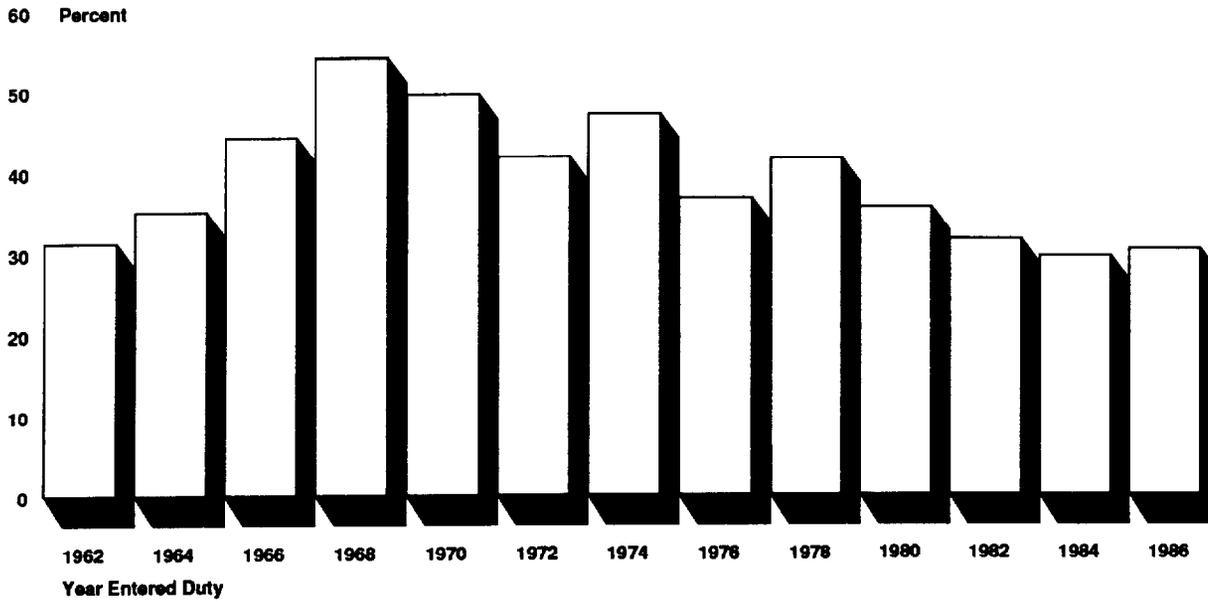
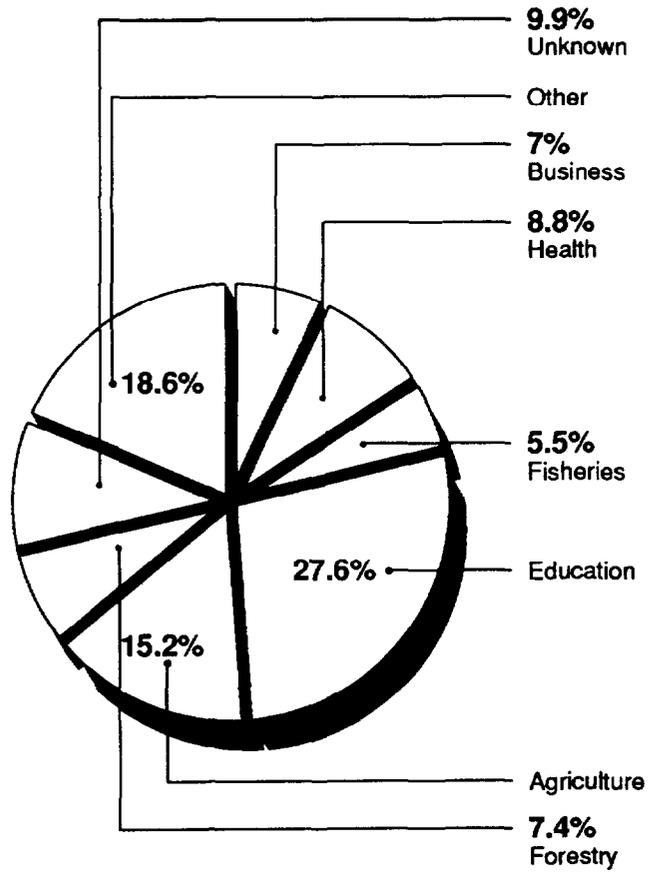


Figure II.4: Volunteers by Program, Fiscal Year 1988



Note:

The "Other" category includes Community Development (5.1%), Sanitation (4.3%), Appropriate Technology (1.6%), and Miscellaneous (7.6%).

Figure II.5: Volunteers and Trainees by
Region, Fiscal Year 1988

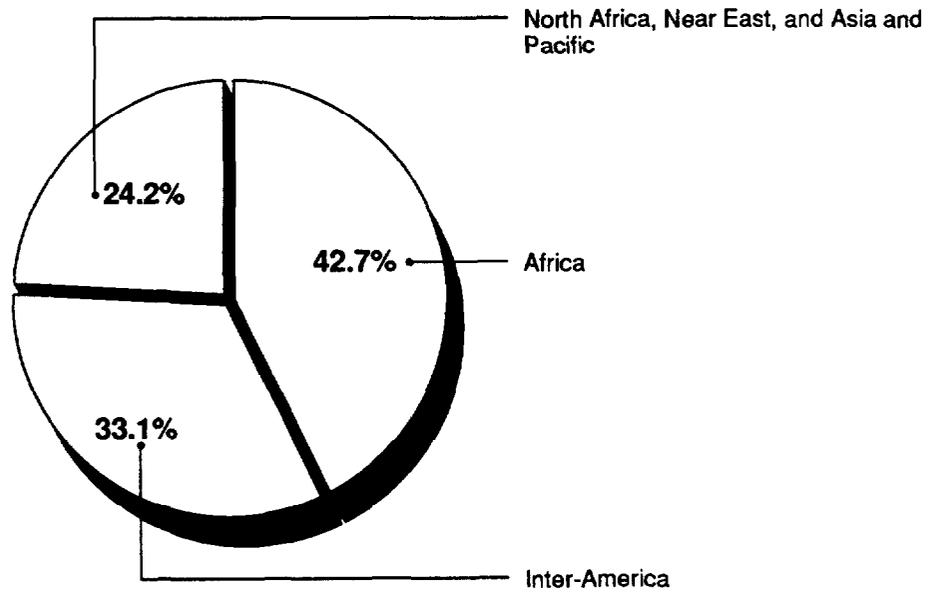
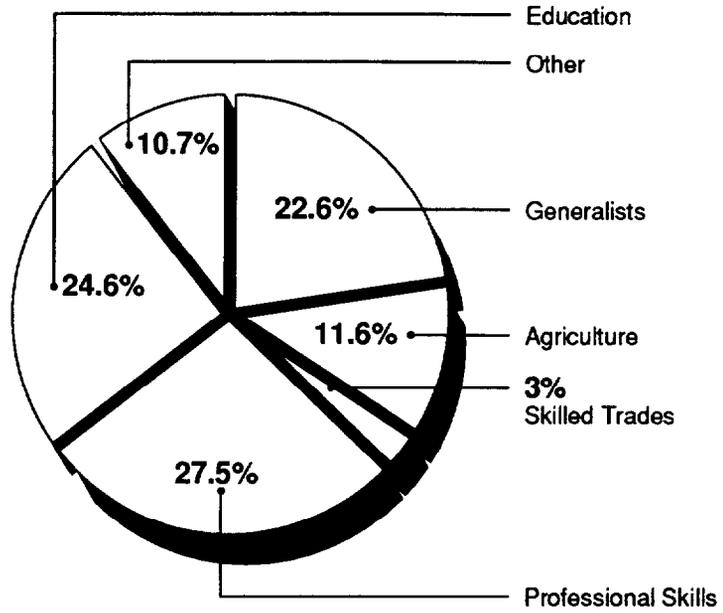


Figure II.6: Volunteers and Trainees by Skill, Fiscal Year 1988

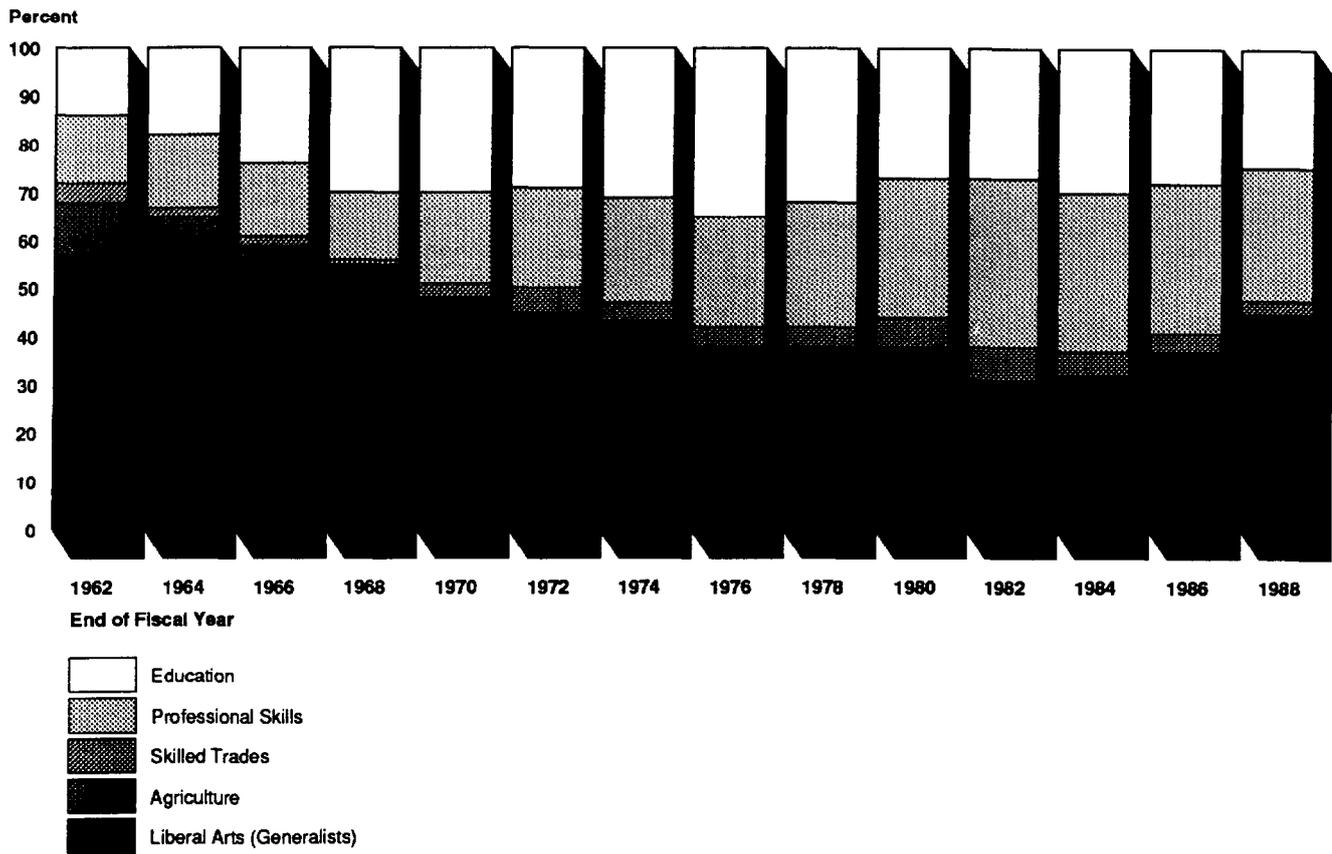


Note:

The "Professional Skills" category includes business, engineering, health, and social work.

Appendix II
Peace Corps Volunteers and Trainees

Figure II.7: Volunteers and Trainees by Skill

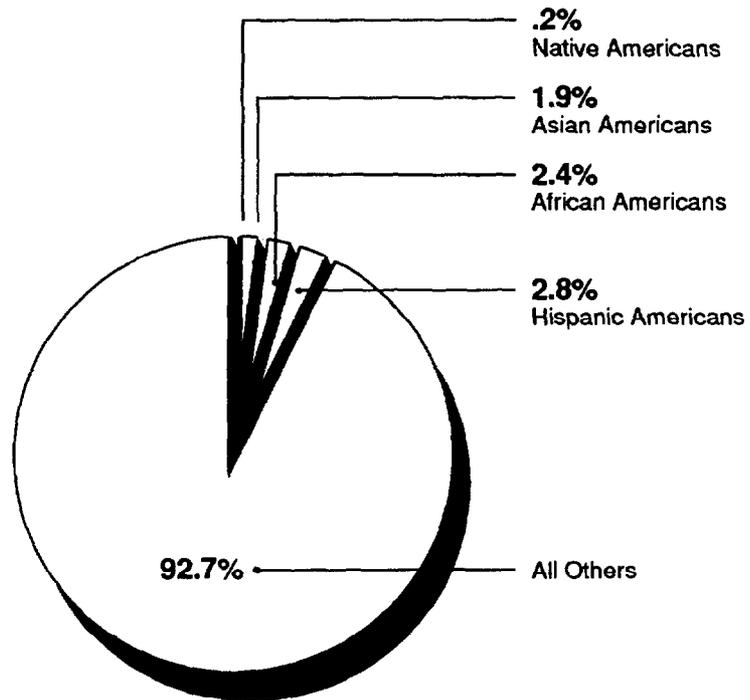


Notes:

The "Professional Skills" category includes business, engineering, health, and social work.

The "Liberal Arts" category for 1988 includes 10.7% unspecified skills.

Figure II.8: Volunteers by Ethnic Background, January 5, 1989

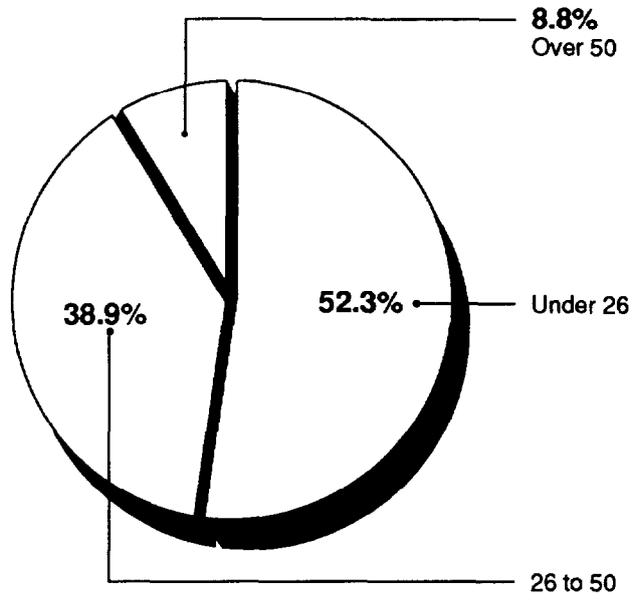


Note:

The "All Others" category includes Americans from European, North African, or Middle Eastern backgrounds and those not wishing to disclose their backgrounds.

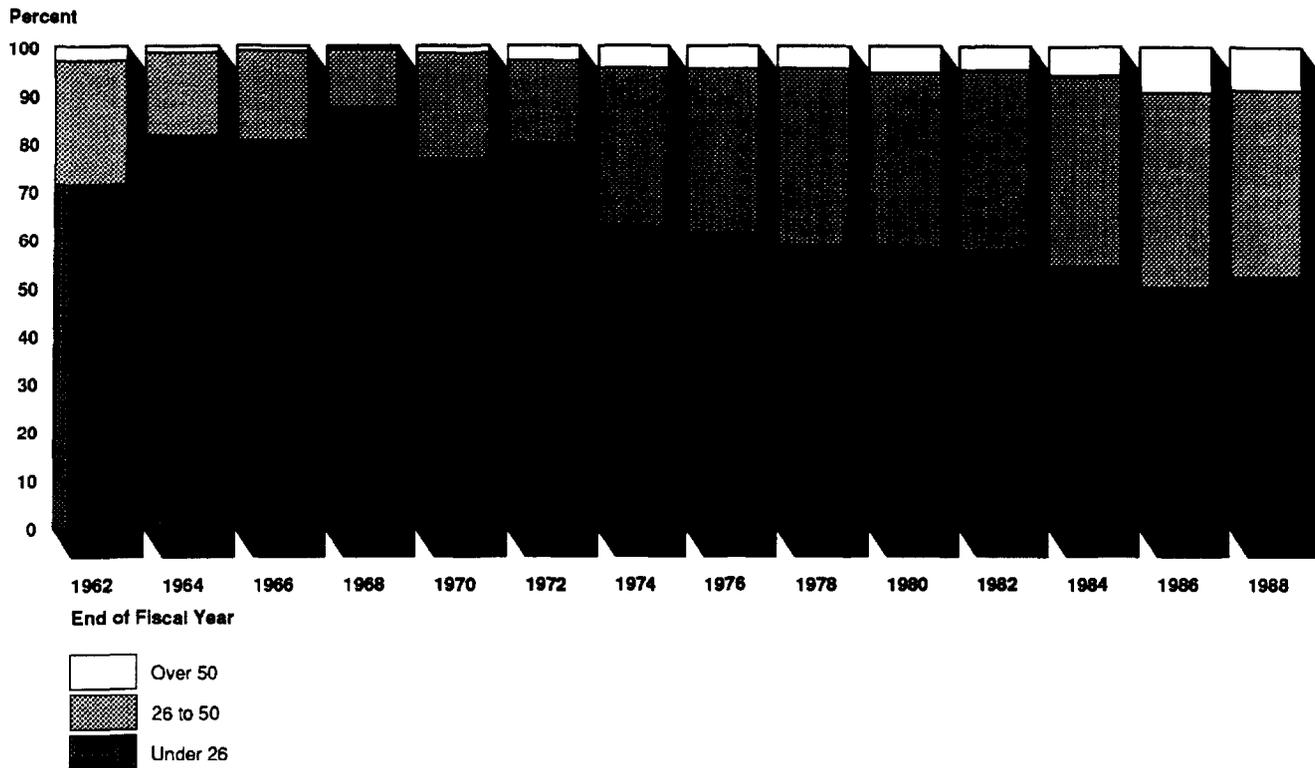
Appendix II
Peace Corps Volunteers and Trainees

Figure II.9: Volunteers and Trainees by
Age Group, Fiscal Year 1988



Appendix II
Peace Corps Volunteers and Trainees

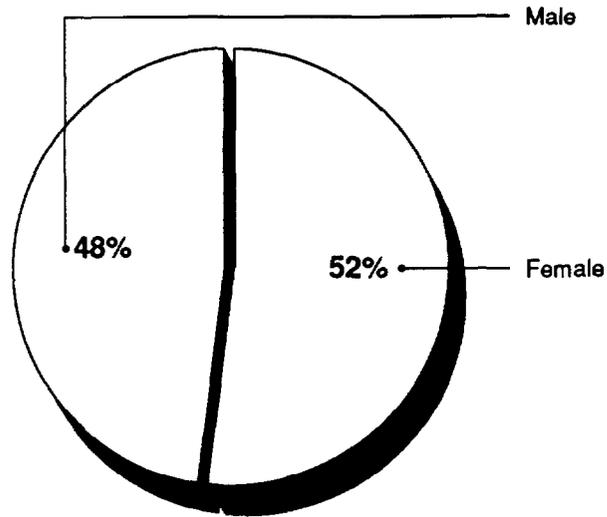
Figure II.10: Volunteers and Trainees by Age Group



Note:

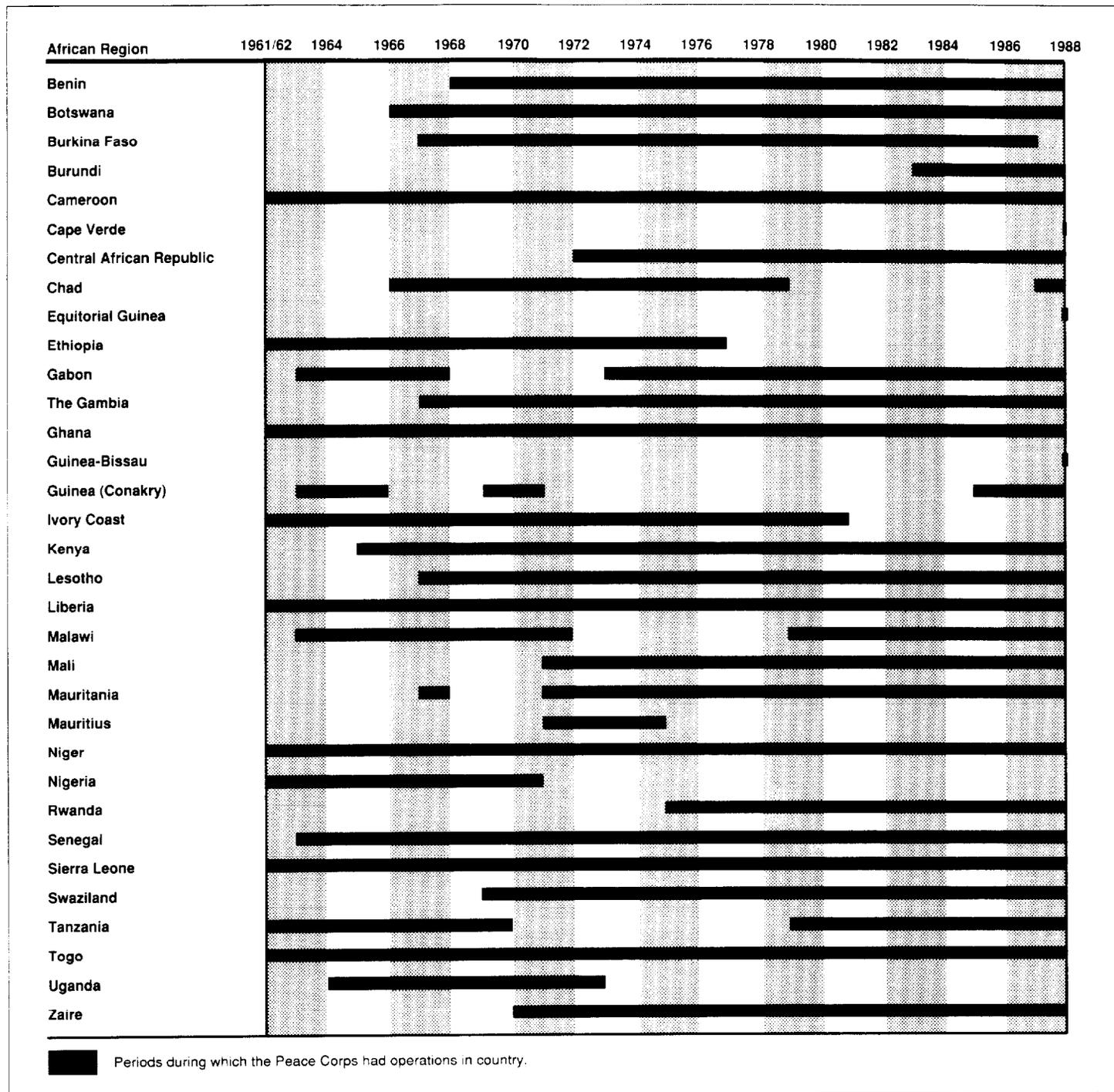
In fiscal year 1969, about 88.1 percent of Peace Corps volunteers and trainees were under 26 years of age, representing the largest proportion of volunteers and trainees in that age group in the agency's history.

Figure II.11: Volunteers by Sex, Fiscal Year 1988



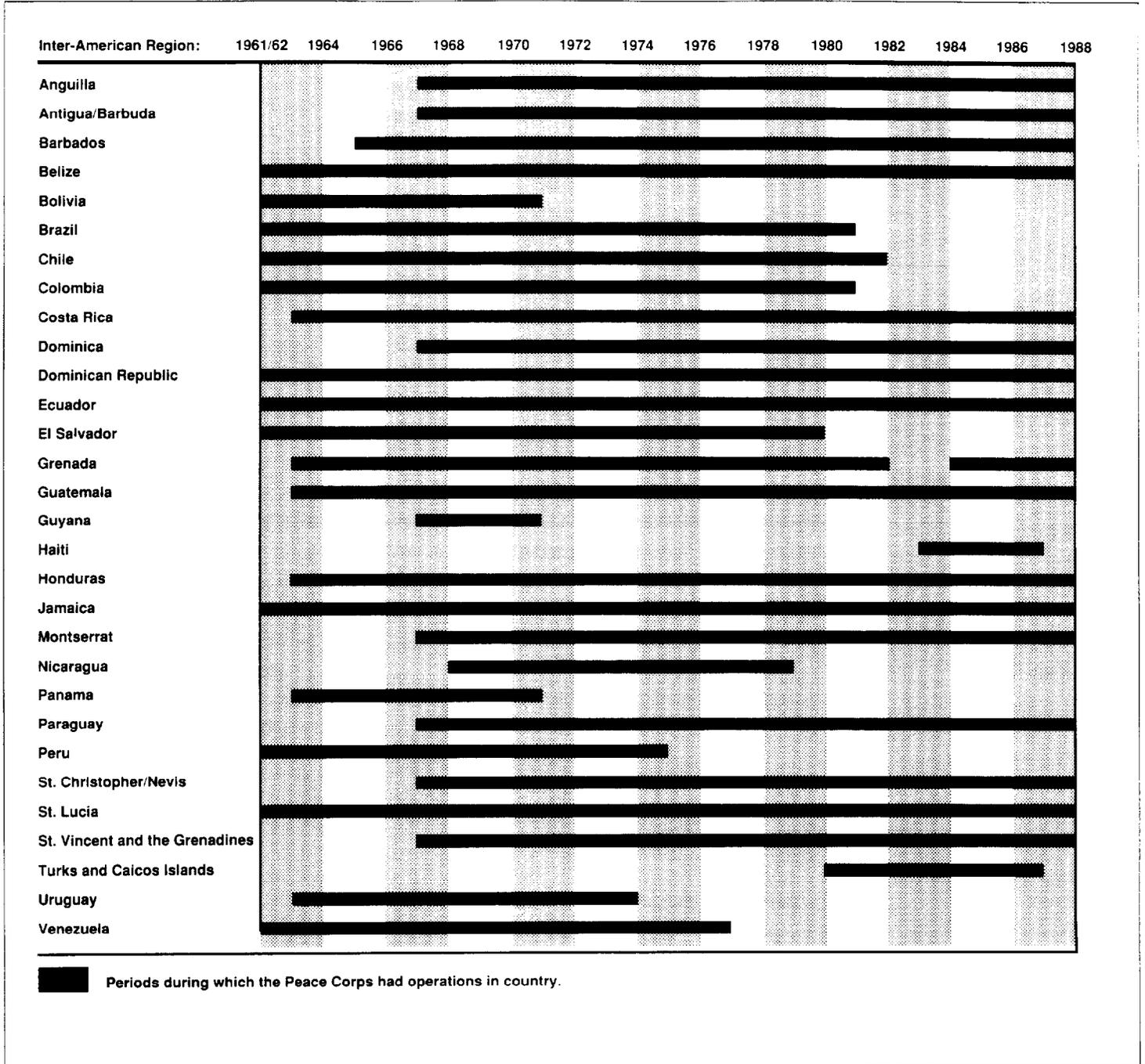
Countries With Peace Corps Volunteers

Figure III.1: Countries With Peace Corps Volunteers, 1961-1988



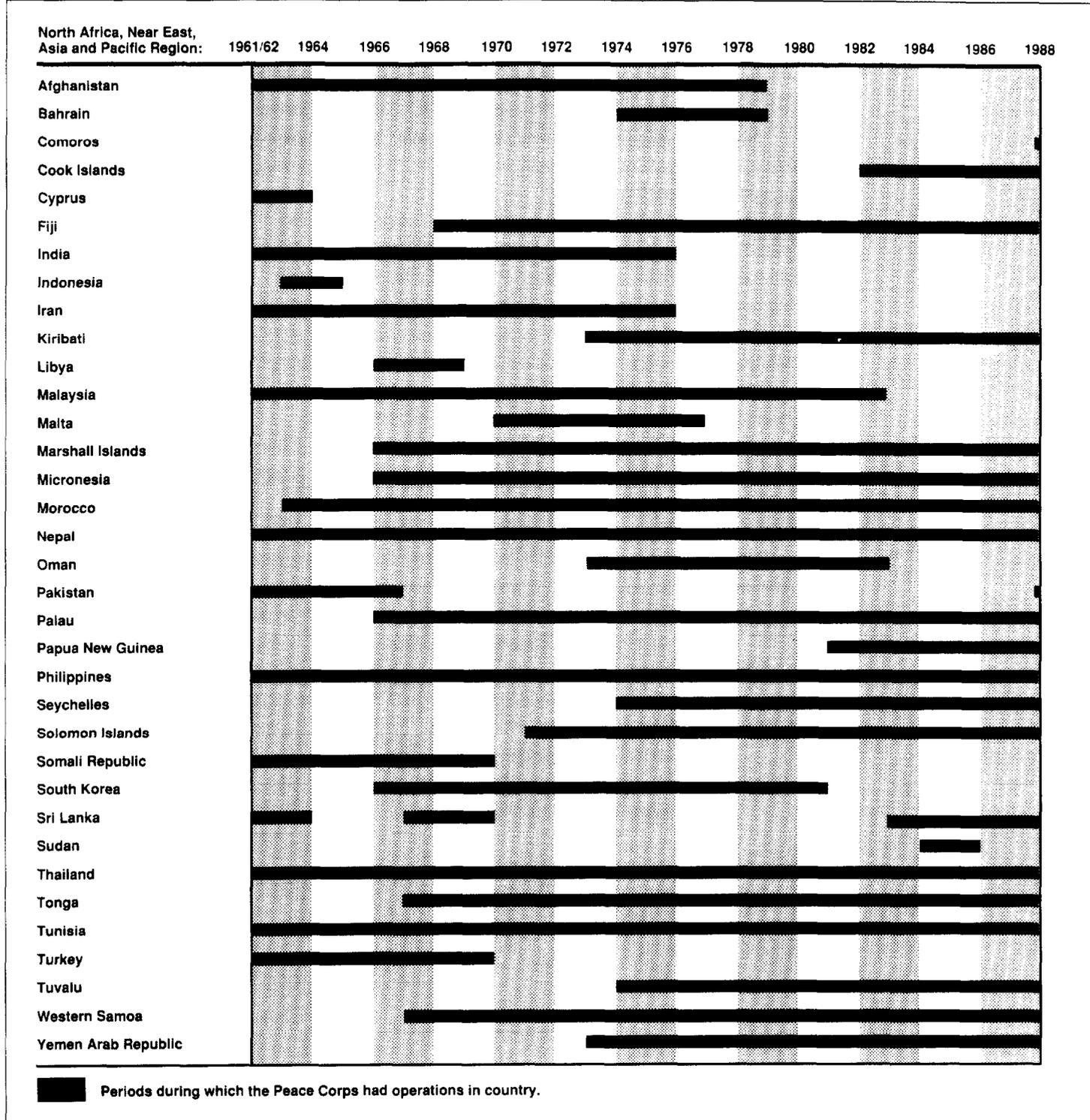
Appendix III
Countries With Peace Corps Volunteers

Figure III.1: Countries With Peace Corps Volunteers, 1961-1988 (Continued)



Appendix III
Countries With Peace Corps Volunteers

Figure III.1: Countries With Peace Corps Volunteers, 1961-1988 (Continued)



Major Contributors to This Fact Sheet

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