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Improvements Needed In The Management Of Peace Corps Training Activities

B-161724

ACTION

UNITED STATES
GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

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JUNE 15, 1972



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

INTERNATIONAL DIVISION

B-161724

Dear Mr. Blatchford:

This is our report on improvements needed in the management of Peace Corps training activities. Our findings, conclusions, and recommendations are summarized in the digest of the report.

Your attention is invited to section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 which requires that you submit written statements of any action taken with respect to the recommendations. The statements are to be sent to the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations not later than 60 days after the date of this report and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations in connection with the first request for appropriations submitted by your agency more than 60 days after the date of this report. We shall appreciate being advised of the actions taken or planned concerning the matters discussed in this report.

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Copies of this report are being sent to the Chairmen, House and Senate Committees on Government Operations, and to the Chairmen, House and Senate Committees on Appropriations. Copies are also being sent to the Secretary of State and to the Director, Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. J. ...", written in black ink.

Director, International Division

The Honorable Joseph H. Blatchford
/ Director, ACTION 349

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WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

Since its start in 1961, the Peace Corps has spent from 20 to 25 percent its annual appropriations to train volunteers. Before 1967 training activities were conducted primarily at contractors' facilities. In recent years however, the Peace Corps has changed its approach and now also uses its own training facilities, host country training facilities, and a combination of these.

On July 1, 1971, the Peace Corps became a part of ACTION, a new agency created on that date under Reorganization Plan 1 of 1971.

To evaluate the manner in which the Peace Corps has managed its resources in the training of volunteers, the General Accounting Office (GAO) reviewed various activities associated with the training of volunteers to assess (1) the ability of Peace Corps staff to formulate objectives for the host country and to translate these objectives into meaningful project descriptions for use by the trainer, (2) the ability of the Peace Corps to select individuals having the skills and background necessary for specific jobs to be performed in the host country, and (3) the use of training facilities to prepare volunteers for service overseas.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Although the Peace Corps generally has been successful in training approximately 51,000 volunteers for service overseas, certain improvements should be made which, in GAO's opinion, would benefit the overall Peace Corps program. (See p. 5.)

Programming documents supporting individual projects were not, in all cases, adequately descriptive of the jobs that the volunteers would be performing which deterred the development of meaningful training programs. (See p. 6.)

The Peace Corps has experienced difficulty in recruiting a sufficient number of applicants having the qualifications, background, or experience necessary for the program. (See p. 13.)

Applicants lacking the necessary qualifications, background, or experience were terminated more frequently, which increased the cost of training in relation to the benefits derived. (See p. 14.)

Sufficient lead time was not given to applicants to become fully acquainted with the program, and in-depth reviews were not always made to determine

reason for a trainee's termination from a program before an invitation was extended to him to join a subsequent program. (See pp. 11 and 17.)

The Peace Corps does not have a system for the evaluation of the effectiveness of its training programs on a continuous basis or for using these evaluations to improve subsequent programs. (See p. 20.)

The Peace Corps has not made full use of its training center in Puerto Rico. Fuller use of this center would lower the high per person cost of training at in-house training centers. (See p. 23.)

RECOMMENDATIONS OR SUGGESTIONS

The Director of ACTION should:

- See to it that individual volunteer job assignments are surveyed and justified prior to requesting volunteers. (See p. 10.)
- Determine that specific information on individual volunteer jobs is included in the project description. (See p. 10.)
- Provide for sufficient lead time for applicants to become acquainted with the goals of the project and the Peace Corps before reporting to the training program. (See p. 18.)
- Establish selection criteria that will provide trainees with qualifications, background, and experience essential to the project. (See p. 18.)
- Require that an in-depth review be made to determine the reason a trainee terminates from one training program before extending him an invitation to join a subsequent program. (See p. 19.)
- Establish procedures for the systematic evaluation of volunteer training programs and for using these evaluations in designing subsequent programs. (See p. 22.)
- Establish procedures for disseminating information on training evaluations to training staffs. (See p. 22.)
- Take the steps necessary to ensure that the Puerto Rico Training Center is used to the fullest extent possible on a year-round basis or to provide other methods of training for volunteers destined for Spanish-speaking Latin America. (See p. 26.)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Peace Corps was created in 1961 to promote world peace and friendship by making available to interested countries and areas men and women of the United States qualified for service abroad and willing to serve, under conditions of hardship if necessary, to help the peoples of such countries and areas meet their needs for trained manpower and to help promote a better understanding of the American people on the part of the peoples served and of other peoples on the part of the American people.

Under the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2503), the Director of the Peace Corps was responsible, under the general guidance of the Secretary of State, for the control, supervision, and implementation of all Peace Corps programs. On July 1, 1971, the responsibility for Peace Corps programs was transferred to the Director of ACTION, the new agency created on that date pursuant to Reorganization Plan 1 of 1971.

ACTION is a citizens' service corps comprising the Peace Corps, VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), the Service Corps of Retired Executives, the Active Corps of Executives, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, and Foster Grandparents. Within ACTION the Office of International Operations has assumed all program functions relating to Peace Corps volunteer programs, except for the recruitment and selection of volunteers.

There are three Peace Corps regional offices in the Office of International Operations, each headed by a Regional Director who is responsible for all training, overseas volunteers, and staff activities for that region. Country Directors are appointed to assist the Regional Directors in carrying out these responsibilities in the various countries. Training activities generally consume from 20 to 25 percent of the Peace Corps' annual appropriations, which amounted to about \$100 million annually from 1965 through 1970 and \$90 million for fiscal year 1971.

Since it was created in 1961, the Peace Corps has enrolled about 68,000 persons into Peace Corps training programs and has sent abroad approximately 51,000 volunteers to serve in 71 foreign countries. On December 31, 1971, there were 6,985 volunteers serving in 57 countries and 818 persons in training. Appendix I shows the number of volunteers serving in the various countries from 1961 through 1971.

Before 1967 training activities were conducted primarily in the United States by universities and other contractors. Since 1966, when the Peace Corps opened its own in-house training facility in Puerto Rico, the Peace Corps has changed its training approach by utilizing its own training facilities, host country training facilities, and a combination of U.S. and host country training facilities. The most recent trend has been to train more volunteers in the country in which they will be serving. During the period of training, the prospective Peace Corps volunteers are referred to as trainees. Upon completion of the training, whether it be in the United States or in the host country, the trainees are sworn in as Peace Corps volunteers.

A Peace Corps training program originates from the request of the host country government for a specific project. A project description is prepared by the Country Director who has the assistance and cooperation of the host country. The project description describes the project in detail and includes the number of volunteers desired, language proficiency required, technical background and training needed, and desired dates for arrival in country and/or training. The project description is used as the basis for the training program.

The cognizant Regional Director determines the type of training program (contract, in-country, or Peace Corps training center) after the project description is approved. Peace Corps training curriculum and methods vary from program to program. As each individual project has its own characteristics, depending on the specific goals and standards established for it, the training program for the project must be adapted or "tailor made" to meet these goals. There are, however, component parts, such as language and technical studies, that appear in every training program, but even these differ because of the emphasis put on each

by the project requirements, needs of the host country, and individuals involved in developing and conducting the training program.

Each training program usually includes, as a minimum, the following specific areas of study.

1. Cultural environment--lectures and discussions on host country religion, politics, and history.
2. Language training--can range from 300 hours of Spanish to 450 hours of Korean, depending on the difficulty of the language and the level of proficiency required.
3. Technical skills--basic rudiments in crop growing, animal husbandry, teaching, and community development, depending on the specific objective of the project.
4. Practical application--field experience through practice teaching and living with urban or rural non-English families.

Our review, which was completed in August 1971, included work at Peace Corps headquarters, three Peace Corps in-house training centers, two contractor's training facilities, and three Peace Corps sites overseas.

Our review of the various activities associated with the training of Peace Corps volunteers showed that, although the Peace Corps generally was successful in training volunteers for service overseas, certain improvements should be made which would benefit the overall Peace Corps program. Our review showed that improvements should be made in the areas of project development, selection of individuals to train for volunteer service, evaluation of the training provided, and the utilization of training facilities. These matters are discussed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2

PREPARATION OF PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Our review of the documentation prepared in support of selected individual Peace Corps volunteer projects showed that the project descriptions did not always contain sufficient specific information concerning individual volunteer jobs. Since the project description serves as the basic document to the training staffs for preparing and conducting the training program, we believe that a more meaningful training program could be attained if specific information concerning individual volunteer jobs was contained in the project description.

The Peace Corps Manual states that in the development of volunteer projects the objectives should be clearly defined and understood by volunteers and staff and by host country government and people. The manual requires that the project descriptions supporting individual volunteer projects contain information relating to individual volunteer job sites. The manual instructions require the project description to identify the criteria for selecting sites for the project and to describe how volunteers will be assigned, typical sites, and the environment in which the volunteers will be living. Previous manual instructions, which were in effect at the time of our fieldwork, also required that the project description list the number of sites that had been surveyed or visited and who would visit the sites prior to the volunteers' arrival and requested that a sample site-survey form be attached to the project description.

It is essential in developing individual volunteer job assignments that the Peace Corps staff in the host country visit the site where the volunteer will be assigned to ensure that the nature and objectives of the volunteer job are clear to all and that a definite need exists for a volunteer having the capabilities requested and to alert the local host country officials that a Peace Corps volunteer is forthcoming. Specifically the manual states that:

"Thorough site surveys are essential, based on predetermined criteria for Volunteers assignment and acquainting job supervisors and counterparts

with the nature, skills, and goals of the Volunteers."

Our review of 36 project descriptions prepared for 1970 summer training programs showed that 11 project descriptions contained no information relating to the volunteer job sites. We found that only six of the project descriptions contained the job site information requested in the manual instructions in effect at the time the project descriptions were prepared. We found that none of the 19 project descriptions which contained a portion of the information on the individual volunteer job sites stated how many site surveys had been completed or would be completed before the volunteers' arrivals. None of the 26 project descriptions had a sample site-survey form attached.

We also noted instances in which the lack of site surveys had resulted in volunteers in Latin America arriving at their assigned villages to find no job awaiting them and no one expecting them, as was the case with a group of Chile fisheries volunteers and a group of Venezuela community recreation volunteers. The problems encountered by the fisheries volunteers developed because communication concerning the program and the volunteers' role was carried out only at top agency levels within the host country. Consequently, when the volunteers arrived at the site, they found that jobs were nonexistent because local host country officials did not know that the volunteers were coming or what they were to do.

We believe that, in addition to the problems encountered by the volunteers arriving at a site in-country unexpected, the lack of information on individual job assignments impairs the training staff in preparing and conducting the training program. This lack of information also significantly hinders the trainees in adequately preparing themselves for their overseas assignment and may be considered a factor in the termination of volunteers overseas.

If the goals of the project and the specific duties to be performed by the volunteers are not known, meaningful training programs are, at best, difficult to achieve. One Peace Corps training coordinator reported that the information contained in the project description for a health

project in Latin America was inadequate to devise a training program. He stated further that there was insufficient information on what the volunteers would be doing on the job on a day-to-day basis, how skilled the volunteers had to be, and what the day-to-day relationship with the host country personnel would be.

During our fieldwork in the Philippines, we found that the failure of the Peace Corps in-country staff to adequately plan for the replacement of volunteers at the various job sites resulted in a significant number of these volunteers having to be retrained in language. We found that the project description did not provide for any volunteers to be trained in the Waray language. The training plan prepared for the in-country portion of training did state that seven or eight of the Cubano speaking volunteers would be switched to the Waray language during the in-country portion of training.

We were advised by the Peace Corps/Philippines Training Officer that he was not sure when the job assignments in the Waray speaking areas were developed but that he knew it was toward the end of the U.S. portion of the training. He stated that about 10 volunteers had been assigned to Waray speaking areas and that, had these assignments been identified prior to the start of the U.S. portion of training, an attempt would have been made to provide training in this language.

In addition to the volunteers who had to be retrained in the Waray language, 13 volunteers in this same program had to be retrained in another language.

We believe that the following situations are attributable, in part, to insufficient information being provided on individual volunteer jobs overseas.

- Nine of the 10 volunteers in one project in India informed us that they considered their technical training in well drilling irrelevant because their jobs were in surveying and water-resource evaluation.
- One chemist received training on very simple laboratory equipment, although complex equipment was used

in the laboratory in India where he worked, which made it necessary for him to learn to use the equipment after arrival in-country and which thereby impeded his job performance.

- Emphasis was placed on artificial insemination during training, but the dairy development corporation with which the volunteers worked in India did not utilize artificial insemination.
- Volunteers interviewed in India informed us that they had received training in land leveling, corn production, and tractor driving but that, in the district in which they were serving, the land did not require leveling, corn was not grown, and few tractors were used.
- Another group of volunteers from two different training programs stated that they had spent about 1 week of their training in the United States building wooden chicken houses. The volunteers considered this effort to be a waste of time as chicken houses in that area of India where they were serving were made of mud, straw, and thatch.

CONCLUSIONS

We believe that the project description should include specific information on each volunteer site and on each job. This information should be developed through site visits and in-country staff research. Detailed information concerning specific job assignments is of the utmost importance to enable the training staffs to better prepare the trainee for his job both in the technical skills and in the language proficiency needed. Such information would also assist the trainee in determining his commitment and capability to perform such an assignment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Director of ACTION take the necessary steps to:

- See to it that individual volunteer job assignments are surveyed and justified prior to requesting volunteers.
- Determine that specific information on individual volunteer jobs is included in the project description.

CHAPTER 3

SELECTION OF INDIVIDUALS TO JOIN

PEACE CORPS TRAINING PROGRAMS

Our review showed that improvements could be made in the selection of applicants for Peace Corps training programs. The nature of Peace Corps programs makes it imperative that the individuals selected to carry out the project possess the necessary qualifications (technical, communicative, and personal) to accomplish the objectives of the project.

We found that the practices followed by the Peace Corps for selecting individuals to train for specific projects did not always ensure that the applicant (1) was provided with sufficient lead time to become fully informed of the program, (2) possessed the necessary qualifications, background, and experience relevant to the project, and (3) was sufficiently motivated and qualified to participate after terminating from a prior program. We believe that these practices contribute to a higher termination rate than may otherwise be experienced and therefore increase the cost of training in relation to the benefits received.

INADEQUATE LEAD TIME ALLOWED SELECTED APPLICANTS

The selection of individuals to train for Peace Corps projects is an extended process from the receipt of the application until the start of training. Upon receipt of responses from the references listed on the application form, the application is categorized by skill of the applicant and by preferences for geographical area of assignment. The invitation to train is made, and a background investigation is initiated, when applicable, upon selection of suitable applicants for the individual project. The normal selection process allows the applicant time to take care of personal matters and to prepare himself for Peace Corps service.

To facilitate the screening of individuals joining training programs, the Peace Corps in 1967 initiated a procedure for holding orientation sessions called stagings. These stagings are held prior to the start of the training program to orient the applicants to specific information about the training program, the Peace Corps' objectives, and the specific project and country in which the project will be undertaken.

In 1970 the Peace Corps initiated preinvitational staging; this staging is held prior to the time that Peace Corps extends the invitation to train for a specific project. Preinvitational staging enables the applicants to determine, on the basis of information provided by the Peace Corps, whether they would accept an invitation to a specific training project; it also enables the Peace Corps to determine which applicants, on the basis of their backgrounds, skills, and interests, should be invited to train for the specific project.

Although these procedures have been established, we found that the Peace Corps' search for suitable applicants for specific projects at times continued until a few days before the training started. For example, we noted that many of the 19 trainees in a Central America fisheries program were invited only 4 to 6 days before the training started at the Puerto Rico Training Center. This last minute effort, in our opinion, precludes the Peace Corps from becoming fully informed as to the capabilities of the prospective volunteers. Similarly the volunteers do not have the opportunity to become fully informed as to the exact nature of the project and the individual jobs for which they will be trained.

A result of this practice is illustrated by the situation wherein the Peace Corps called an applicant 2 days before the training started for an agriculture program for Dahomey. Upon arrival at the Virgin Islands Training Center, the individual found that the project was in tropical agriculture in which he had no interest and, as a result, resigned and returned to his home in California.

INDIVIDUALS LACKING RELATED BACKGROUND
AND EXPERIENCE SELECTED FOR TRAINING

Because the requirements for each Peace Corps project vary from those for other Peace Corps projects, the criteria for the selection of applicants to train are arbitrary. Applications for Peace Corps service are reviewed, screened, and categorized as to the background, education, experience, skills, and preferences of each applicant. An individual is selected to train for a project on the basis of what is contained in the application and what is requested in the project description.

We found that, when the Peace Corps was unable to attract sufficient applicants with the qualifications requested in the project description, the standards were lowered to obtain the required number of volunteers. As a result, some applicants known to have, at best, minimal qualifications were invited to train for certain projects. For example, we noted that an agricultural project in India called for 15 trainees.

--Seven trainees with degrees in horticulture or agriculture or 2 years of college in these areas and a minimum of 2 years experience in crop production were required.

--Eight trainees with crop experience were preferred, but generalists were acceptable.

None of the 15 trainees entering in-country training had degrees or college work in agriculture or horticulture, and only two trainees had prior experience in agriculture.

In addition, we found that the project description for a Peru normal school program requested volunteers with backgrounds in math, physics, chemistry, or biology. The project description also provided that persons with M.A.s or Ph. D.s in education were acceptable. Before the training started the training center and in-country staffs decided that the individuals selected for training should have a high degree of competence in at least one of the requested academic subject fields. Peace Corps headquarters in Washington was advised that any person already invited for

training in this program who did not possess academic expertise in one of the required areas should be disinvented from the program. However, 13 of the 40 trainees reporting to training did not possess the necessary qualifications. Although five of the 13 unqualified Peru trainees terminated during training, the remainder continued on to the project in-country.

We found that trainees lacking the necessary background specified in the project description generally had a higher termination rate than those trainees who had the requested qualifications. The termination rate for the Peru normal school trainees possessing the qualifications requested was about 29 percent, whereas the termination rate for the unqualified trainees was about 38 percent. We also noted a higher termination rate among unqualified trainees in an India mechanics program where the project description requested 30 volunteers--six qualified mechanics and 24 generalists having backgrounds in internal combustion engines. Of the 36 trainees in the program, only 18 possessed some mechanical ability. The termination rate for those mechanically inclined was about 39 percent, whereas the termination rate for those not mechanically inclined was about 55 percent.

We believe that the Peace Corps, in selecting individuals to train for volunteer projects, should consider not only the qualifications requested in the project description but also the background and experience of the individual applicants and that only those individuals who possess the background and/or experience relating to the assignment overseas should be invited to participate in the program.

Our review showed that individuals who entered training and who lacked the background and/or experience relating to the volunteer project had a higher termination rate during training, as well as during volunteer service, than individuals who possessed the desired qualifications. We reviewed the backgrounds of the 149 trainees who had received training in the United States and who were entering the in-country portion of training for six agricultural projects in India. We found that only 98 of the 149 actually became volunteers. Of the 51 trainees who terminated, 36 had no agricultural experience and 11 had only limited agricultural experience.

We also analyzed the backgrounds of the trainees in two agricultural programs who had received all their training in India. Only 35 of the 52 trainees entering training became volunteers. Of the 17 who terminated, 15 had no agricultural experience and two had only limited agricultural experience.

For the eight programs reviewed, the following schedule shows the number of individuals who terminated during training in India by background of the individuals.

	<u>Agricultural background</u>			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Expe- rienced</u>	<u>Limited (note a)</u>	<u>None</u>
Trainees entering in-country training	201	54	37	110
Terminated during training	68	4	13	51
Completed training	133	50	24	59
Termination rate	34%	7%	35%	46%

^aSummer work on farms, etc.

For each person attending in-country training, the Peace Corps expends funds for conducting the training and incurs expenses for background investigations, health examinations, medical support, and travel to the training site. We computed that the Peace Corps had incurred costs of approximately \$250,000 for the 51 trainees who lacked agricultural experience and who terminated from the eight training programs in India.

We found that the termination rate for individuals lacking the required background and/or experience continued to be higher during the period of volunteer service than for individuals possessing the necessary qualifications. We obtained statistics on five agriculture programs, involving 83 volunteers, in which the volunteers had been working in India over 1 year. Of the 26 volunteers who terminated during the first year of service, 17 had no agricultural experience and four had limited experience.

	<u>Agricultural background</u>			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Expe- rienced</u>	<u>Limited</u>	<u>None</u>
Volunteers completed training	83	28	13	42
Volunteers terminated during first year	26	5	4	17
Termination rate	31%	18%	31%	40%

SELECTION OF TERMINATED
TRAINEES FOR SUBSEQUENT PROGRAMS

During our review we found that trainees who terminated from one Peace Corps training program joined a subsequent program apparently without any in-depth review by the Peace Corps to determine the reasons for the individuals' terminating from the first program.

We believe that an analysis of the reasons for a trainee's terminating from a previous program is necessary to ascertain if the trainee is suitable for further Peace Corps service. Such an analysis would reveal the reason for the individual's termination, the individual's motivation, and other factors relating to the individual's experience and qualifications.

The significance of this lack of adequate review is illustrated by a situation which developed in a training program for a rural electric cooperative project in Brazil. Four of the trainees terminated from the program after receiving 6 weeks of training in the Virgin Islands and 6 weeks of training in Brazil. Reportedly the trainees terminated because of a lack of commitment toward either the Peace Corps or the individual project. These four trainees had also terminated from previous Peace Corps training programs, one of which was also for Brazil. Had an in-depth review been made, we believe that pertinent information would have been obtained regarding these trainees which could have been used in determining their suitability for participation in the second training program.

Another example of a problem area which may have been disclosed by an in-depth review of terminated trainees involved a 73-year-old man who had been a trainee in a Micronesia training program and had terminated for medical reasons. The individual informed us during our review that he also had problems learning the language spoken in Micronesia. Notwithstanding these problems, the individual was subsequently invited to train for a municipal management project for Venezuela. During training for this project, his language teachers agreed that he was not learning, and probably would not be able to learn, the Spanish necessary to qualify for the project in Venezuela. As a result, the

individual resigned after three weeks training. We believe that, had it been known that this individual had a low language-learning capability, it is unlikely that he would have been invited to train for a second program.

CONCLUSIONS

From our review of the practices utilized in the selection of individuals for specific Peace Corps volunteer projects, we concluded that the Peace Corps, at times, had lowered its criteria when unable to recruit sufficient trainees having the qualifications requested in the project description. The Peace Corps has not always been successful in recruiting qualified individuals because the applicants are not given sufficient time to become acquainted with the program.

The Peace Corps should strive to obtain the volunteers requested for a project overseas; however, applicants not having the related background and/or experience should not be invited, as their participation in the programs contributes to a higher termination rate and increases the cost of training in relation to the benefits received. If the Peace Corps is unable to recruit enough trainees possessing the necessary qualifications, it should cancel or reduce the scope of the planned project. The reasons for a trainee's termination from a previous program should receive an in-depth review before an invitation is extended to that individual to train for a subsequent program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that the most qualified individuals available are selected to participate in Peace Corps training programs, we recommend that the Director of ACTION:

- Provide for sufficient lead time for applicants to become acquainted with the goals of the project and the Peace Corps before reporting to the training program.
- Establish selection criteria that will provide trainees with the qualifications, background, and experience essential to the project.

--Require that an in-depth review be made to determine the reason a trainee terminates from one training program before extending to him an invitation to join a subsequent program.

CHAPTER 4

EVALUATION OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Our review showed that the Peace Corps had not established a system which would provide for the collection and dissemination of information on the results of volunteer training. Therefore training staffs continue to design training programs independently, without receiving information about prior training experiences or volunteer performance in similar programs. Even though some evaluations have been made of individual programs and activities, full utilization has not been made of these evaluations to improve overall training procedures or subsequent individual training programs. Consequently subsequent training programs have not benefited from experiences gained from prior programs.

No methods have been developed by which Peace Corps training staffs can determine if the training programs succeeded or failed to satisfy the volunteer's needs. For example, we were informed by representatives of a contractor who had conducted more than 40 Peace Corps training programs that the contractor was not normally furnished reports or substantive information relating to the performance of the volunteers it had trained.

Some of the volunteers interviewed in India during our field review were critical of the contents of the training programs conducted in the United States because of the lack of relevance to their jobs in India. These criticisms came from volunteers from several programs trained at different times. This indicates that, although one training program lacked job relevance, no system has been established to improve subsequent training programs by providing adequate feedback on the training of prior groups.

On the basis of our discussions with a limited number of volunteers in Micronesia, we found instances in which the training they received was not compatible with their job assignments. In the absence of a reporting system which provides this information, however, the overall magnitude of the problem could not be determined.

In some instances the Peace Corps has contracted for independent reviewers to evaluate certain training programs and to prepare written reports on their findings. Although we found that these reports were provided to Peace Corps headquarters, we could not ascertain what distribution, if any, was made to contractors or training staffs engaged in conducting similar training programs. One evaluator of a group of volunteers serving overseas stated that his evaluation could easily have been written by substituting a previously written evaluation of a program in another country, because the same mistakes (lack of program definition, planning and communication at top agency levels only, and the departure of key personnel during the program's development) recurred and because the Peace Corps failed to take corrective actions suggested by the evaluators.

Although the Peace Corps has conducted mid-service and completion-of-service conferences with volunteers, the training staffs generally do not participate in the conferences nor do they receive reports or information about the results of these conferences. We believe that these conferences could be used as one method of obtaining information from the volunteers as to the effectiveness of the training in regard to their job performance. This information, coupled with reports from in-country staffs and occasionally from independent reviewers, could be used as a basis for evaluating the results of the training programs.

CONCLUSIONS

The Peace Corps needs to establish procedures for the systematic evaluation of training in relation to volunteer performance. Such evaluations, whether obtained through independent reviewers or by feedback from in-service volunteers or in-country staffs, is a prerequisite to determining (1) the amount of training required for project success, (2) those training components which are more important and under what conditions, (3) whether the training objectives are realistically attainable, and (4) which are the best methods, techniques, and approaches to be used. Such evaluations, properly disseminated, also could assist recruiters, trainee-selection personnel, and the training staffs in determining the best possible individuals to be invited to train for a particular program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that subsequent training programs benefit from experiences gained from previous programs, we recommend that the Director of ACTION:

- Establish procedures for the systematic evaluation of volunteer training programs and for using these evaluations in designing subsequent programs.

- Establish procedures for disseminating information on training evaluations to training staffs.

CHAPTER 5

UTILIZATION OF THE PUERTO RICO TRAINING CENTER

Our review revealed that the Peace Corps was not fully utilizing its Puerto Rico Training Center on a year-round basis. The Center has the capacity for training from 180 to 250 trainees at any one time. For the 12-month period reviewed, 163 trainees was the largest number at the Center and 30 trainees was the smallest number at the Center at monthend. Fuller utilization of this Center would have reduced the per trainee cost of training conducted at in-house training facilities.

During the first years of the Peace Corps' existence, training was performed exclusively at contractor training facilities. In 1966 the Peace Corps established its first in-house training facility and subsequently opened more in-house facilities. In recent years the trend has been to have more in-country training and to reduce the utilization of both contractor and Peace Corps training facilities in the United States.

The present Puerto Rico Training Center in Ponce, Puerto Rico, is situated on approximately two acres of land in an old convent, which has been remodeled for Peace Corps training. The Center was leased for \$50,000 a year in August 1969 to replace two Peace Corps camps near Arecibo, Puerto Rico, which were closed at the start of 1970.

The original camp, Camp Crozier, was opened late in 1961, and Camp Radley, 3 miles west of Camp Crozier, was opened several months later. These remote sites were used for programs of vigorous physical conditioning for all volunteers en route to assignments in Africa and Latin America. In 1966, physical training was gradually phased out and the camps became the first in-house training centers. The purpose was ostensibly to give the Peace Corps an opportunity to experiment with new training methods and to have more flexibility than was available from university contractors which had been training Peace Corps volunteers.

The Puerto Rico Training Center consists of classrooms, offices, and workshops. The trainees are usually housed in commercial guesthouses for the first week. Then, after a week's training, the trainees go into the local community to live with Spanish-speaking families.

We made an analysis of the utilization of the Puerto Rico Training Center for the 12-month period ended April 30, 1971. For our analysis we prepared a schedule of the number of trainees in training for service in Spanish-speaking Latin America at monthend and of the number of trainees at the Puerto Rico Training Center for the 12-month period ended April 30, 1971. As shown by the schedule on the following page, a large number of trainees could have been trained at the Center. The largest number of trainees at the Center during the period was 163 on July 31, 1970. The number of trainees at the Center was near this number on August 31 and September 30, 1970, but was significantly lower for the other 9 months of the 12-month period. The schedule also shows the number of Spanish-speaking trainees that were in training at monthend at the Escondido Development and Training Center and at other training sites and the additional trainees who conceivably could have been trained at the Puerto Rico Training Center.

When the Escondido Center--which also trained volunteers for Spanish-speaking Latin America--closed on February 1, 1971, the Peace Corps could have trained more of its Spanish-speaking volunteers at the Puerto Rico Center, especially since training at the Escondido Center was being curtailed prior to its actual closing.

The contract for the operation of the Puerto Rico Training Center stipulates that the contractor will supply a full-time staff of key personnel to plan and participate in carrying out the requirements of the contract. The contract also provides for the hiring of instructional staff to train volunteers for specific projects. For the contract period June 1, 1970, through May 31, 1971, the basic contract provided for a core staff of 42, consisting of 16 administrative positions and 26 professional and program support positions,

Schedule of Spanish-Speaking Trainees
for Service in Latin America
by Training Site
May 1970 to April 1971

<u>Date</u>	<u>Escondido Development and Training Center</u>	<u>Contractor and in-country training sites</u>	<u>Puerto Rico Training Center</u>	<u>Total Spanish- speaking trainees</u>	<u>Potential additional trainees (note a)</u>
5-31-70	68	1	30	99	-
6-30-70	102	263	90	455	90
7-31-70	143	376	163	682	17
8-31-70	158	403	161	722	19
9-30-70	36	234	147	417	33
10-31-70	148	95	86	329	94
11-30-70	150	125	70	345	110
12-31-70	76	39	104	219	39
1-31-71	-	38	63	101	38
2-28-71	-	51	31	82	51
3-31-71	-	93	32	125	93
4-30-71	-	80	58	138	80

^aNumber of trainees at contractor or in-country training sites which could have been trained at the Puerto Rico Training Center.

at an estimated cost of approximately \$572,000. The contract subsequently was amended to provide two additional program support positions at an additional cost of approximately \$12,000.

The contract provided for the training of about 425 trainees for an average period of 10 weeks each. The basic contract also provided that approximately 202 trainees would be trained during the 1970 summer training cycle at an estimated cost of \$204,000. The contract subsequently was amended for the 1970 fall and 1971 spring training cycles and provided an additional \$147,000 for the training, which increased the total estimated cost of the contract to about \$935,000.

During fiscal years 1969, 1970, and 1971, training at Peace Corps in-house training centers was the most expensive type of volunteer training. During fiscal year 1971, it cost the Peace Corps \$3,793 for each trainee trained at an in-house center, \$3,585 for each trainee trained at a

contractor's site, and \$2,651 for each trainee trained in the host country. The cost of a split training program, at an in-house center and in the host country, was \$4,147 for each trainee. The higher per trainee cost for training conducted at in-house centers during fiscal year 1971 was, in our opinion, higher than it would have been if the Puerto Rico Center had been utilized more fully.

We computed that the cost of maintaining the Center, exclusive of costs for the actual training, was approximately \$634,000 (\$584,000 for administrative and program support and \$50,000 for lease payment), or an average cost of \$1,492 for each of the 425 trainees. Our computations showed that the per trainee cost of training at the Puerto Rico Training Center would have been reduced by \$157 if 50 additional trainees had been trained at the Center and by \$284 if 100 additional trainees had been trained at the Center.

CONCLUSIONS

We recognize that the current Peace Corps philosophy is to train more volunteers in the country in which they will be serving instead of at contractors' sites or at in-house facilities. Notwithstanding this policy, if the Peace Corps is to maintain an in-house center for training volunteers for service in Spanish-speaking Latin America, the facility should be utilized to the maximum extent possible on a year-round basis. If the Puerto Rico Training Center cannot be utilized more fully on a year-round basis, other less expensive methods of training should be employed.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Director of ACTION take the steps necessary to ensure that the Puerto Rico Training Center is used to the fullest extent possible on a year-round basis or to provide other methods of training for volunteers destined for Spanish-speaking Latin America.

TWELVE-YEAR SUMMARY: VOLUNTEERS IN COUNTRY AT END OF CALENDAR YEAR

	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	Estimated 1972
AFRICA:												
Ghana	51	114	140	128	109	130	252	207	212	285	317	269
Nigeria	104	189	473	559	621	742	328	111	66	-	-	-
Sierra Leone	37	125	130	148	198	219	289	285	286	211	182	207
Tanzania/Tanganyika	35	62	97	292	335	330	166	41	-	-	-	-
Cameroon	-	40	90	105	101	84	55	45	50	64	78	98
Ethiopia	-	276	415	434	587	465	420	458	318	156	171	199
Ivory Coast	-	31	56	56	60	75	82	98	110	108	112	116
Liberia	-	89	283	350	347	295	222	261	256	147	277	283
Niger	-	7	14	43	81	114	122	84	71	71	86	78
Senegal	-	5	66	68	78	91	121	129	95	93	103	124
Somali Republic	-	44	29	58	86	99	96	74	42	-	-	-
Togo	-	46	37	63	75	77	104	89	77	88	87	90
Gabon	-	-	72	36	52	62	57	-	-	-	-	-
Malawi/Nyasaland	-	-	43	205	254	218	117	138	140	50	20	38
Guinea	-	-	54	70	66	-	-	19	22	-	-	-
Kenya	-	-	-	75	123	197	225	198	243	295	301	236
Uganda	-	-	-	38	35	33	114	91	72	70	82	114
Botswana	-	-	-	-	-	58	54	74	53	60	80	76
Chad	-	-	-	-	-	33	30	41	52	45	51	56
Mauritania	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	6	6
Gambia	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	14	18	39	55	75
Upper Volta	-	-	-	-	-	-	47	44	56	49	65	75
Lesotho	-	-	-	-	-	-	71	59	50	27	22	33
Dahomey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	32	43	38	61
Swaziland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	41	24	92	111
Mali	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16	13
Mauritius	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	20	18
Zaire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	75	116
Total	227	1,028	1,999	2,728	3,208	3,334	2,989	2,597	2,359	1,980	2,336	2,492
LATIN AMERICA:												
Chile	45	100	107	268	383	389	317	236	201	109	42	82
Colombia	62	166	429	610	512	636	687	632	276	132	185	218
Eastern Caribbean	15	15	17	15	47	41	133	163	163	168	171	143
Brazil	-	145	214	489	652	664	616	538	405	334	256	277
El Salvador	-	23	44	45	60	132	124	104	58	67	62	85
Jamaica	-	34	38	50	85	109	128	121	159	199	170	191
Venezuela	-	91	99	250	326	334	359	195	164	129	199	224
Bolivia	-	70	121	237	306	308	278	236	133	130	-	-
British Honduras	-	33	27	28	48	45	46	40	28	42	38	39
Dominican Republic	-	62	173	114	105	157	151	161	68	40	56	79
Ecuador	-	167	236	308	258	243	297	267	112	114	194	208
Honduras	-	25	61	106	118	128	179	152	106	117	137	145
Peru	-	202	366	404	417	391	329	194	101	220	194	119
Costa Rica	-	-	68	54	85	171	134	86	57	102	92	108
Guatemala	-	-	112	113	70	98	110	111	75	77	104	112
Panama	-	-	57	155	140	131	186	154	84	107	-	-
Uruguay	-	-	18	19	51	66	23	4	22	14	8	16
Guyana	-	-	-	-	-	43	53	44	55	24	-	-
Paraguay	-	-	-	-	-	1	34	51	66	70	56	75
Nicaragua	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	28	50	67	84
Total	122	1,133	2,187	3,265	3,663	4,087	4,184	3,498	2,361	2,245	2,031	2,205
NORTH AFRICA, NEAR EAST, ASIA, AND PACIFIC:												
Philippines	182	573	548	335	569	706	758	730	410	347	274	178
Pakistan	57	120	195	179	47	13	-	-	-	-	-	-
India	26	74	123	275	590	1,264	977	561	452	433	318	302
Tunisia	-	64	92	165	218	238	239	201	136	84	109	118
Afghanistan	-	9	35	112	186	176	197	205	137	112	130	149
Ceylon	-	39	34	-	-	-	58	39	14	-	-	-
Cyprus	-	22	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Iran	-	43	45	160	255	331	328	245	200	153	127	166
Nepal	-	69	101	118	134	201	239	188	126	143	147	179
Turkey	-	39	142	319	527	447	220	236	164	1	-	-
Malaysia	-	-	-	119	466	549	588	519	313	403	363	343
Malaya	-	114	143	171	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sabah/Sarawak	-	62	85	114	57	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thailand	-	99	243	278	311	422	308	253	231	216	267	229
Morocco	-	-	103	104	103	109	84	101	106	132	157	183
Indonesia	-	-	17	45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Libya	-	-	-	-	-	18	13	177	-	-	-	-
Korea	-	-	-	-	-	96	266	196	118	174	228	245
Micronesia	-	-	-	-	-	316	663	546	390	286	295	314
Western Samoa	-	-	-	-	-	-	76	117	35	46	51	86
Tonga	-	-	-	-	-	-	41	103	31	40	47	68
Fiji	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	48	109	98	92	117
Malta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	6	8
Solomon Islands	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6
So. Pacific Comm.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total	265	1,327	1,928	2,494	3,509	4,892	5,055	4,465	2,972	2,675	2,618	2,692