

THE PEACE CORPS' STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2000 – 2005

UNDER THE

**GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND
RESULTS ACT**



September 29, 2000

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The Peace Corps is pleased to provide its revised Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) strategic plan reflecting the agency's long-standing commitment to the unique role that its Volunteers perform to further the three goals set forth in the Peace Corps Act:

- ❑ To work at the grassroots level with people of the host countries in sustainable development activities that will improve the conditions of their lives; and
- ❑ To foster improved mutual understanding and build links between the American people and the people of host countries;
- ❑ To demonstrate, through the personal commitment of the Volunteers, the interest and involvement of American citizens in the welfare of people of other countries that is distinct and separate from the official relations and policies of governments.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of the Peace Corps. Through their various individual efforts the agency is able to provide direct assistance to those most in need at the community level. Each Volunteer is challenged to learn the local language; to adapt to local customs; and to become an active participant in the life of the community in which they serve. In so doing, the Volunteer is better able to transfer skills directly to those who have the greatest need for them – whether it be in education, the environment, health, agriculture, economic development or information technology.

Despite the differences in their work assignments, each Volunteer serves a similar role in contributing to a host community's understanding of the American people. Volunteers also may provide more direct opportunities for their communities to learn about the United States by facilitating cross-cultural links through the Coverdell World Wise Schools program or other partnership programs. The benefits from these activities prove as valuable and lasting as the technical skills that Volunteers share. Volunteers also carry back home with them knowledge of other cultures, other peoples and other countries, gathered in communities rarely seen by Americans. Therefore, they add a unique contribution to American understanding of the reality of life in other countries.

Given this context, it should be noted that the Peace Corps, its mission, and the work of its Volunteers do not easily lend themselves to precise GPRA measurements. The Peace Corps' mission is to foster world peace and friendship with all the myriad nuances that those words evoke. The agency fulfills this mission in part by recruiting, training, and supporting thousands of Volunteers who provide technical assistance in many of the

world's poorest countries. At the same time, Peace Corps Volunteers build mutual understanding between Americans and the people of the countries they serve. Peace Corps will begin to capture the capacity building aspects of this technical assistance based upon new efforts to monitor and evaluate Volunteer activities. While it is possible to measure some aspects of the agency's success in providing technical assistance to developing countries, it is less obvious how to gauge the intangible outcomes that benefit our host countries and our own nation based upon the cross-cultural exchanges and heightened mutual understanding that are an essential part of Volunteer service. It is also no simple task to measure the specific impacts of a Volunteer's efforts, many of which play out during the lives of their students, counterparts, and community leaders.

In spite of this unique dilemma, the Peace Corps has a specific framework to carry out its planning, evaluation, and budget processes by means of its Integrated Planning and Budget System (IPBS) which is consistent with the goals of GPRA. The IPBS is the Peace Corps' principal strategic planning mechanism. IPBS is based on a three-year planning cycle, and every Peace Corps office and overseas post is required to define its goals and objectives and develop a strategic plan and budget that will enable the office to meet them. IPBS begins with an evaluation of the previous year's plans and projects, identifies lessons learned, potential improvements, and plans for the future.

The Peace Corps Director and the agency's senior staff review IPBS submissions annually in the spring. The Director also holds a series of open forums during the summer where each major office presents its plans to the rest of the agency. These forums are designed to stimulate agency-wide discussion and provide an opportunity to communicate plans that depend on the involvement and support of many Peace Corps offices. Once these review activities are concluded, the Peace Corps Director makes planning decisions and related resource allocations in September. Each overseas post, sub-office, and major office then assembles its performance plan for the coming three-year period so that operations can begin on October 1st of the new fiscal year.

In concert with the IPBS process, the Peace Corps also requires every overseas post to develop plans for their Volunteer projects that describe the goals, objectives, and life span of the project. The status of each project is reviewed annually. Each project's strengths and weaknesses are assessed, and the plan is reaffirmed or altered based on lessons learned in an iterative planning process.

The Peace Corps' current planning system is consistent with the objectives of GPRA in several respects. It features a multi-level strategic planning process that requires each Peace Corps office and sub-office to set goals, measurable objectives, and specific tasks - in essence, a performance plan - with related timelines. The process has been successful in providing strategic planning objectives for each major Peace Corps office.

The Peace Corps' Strategic Plan for GPRA FY 2000 - 2005

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Peace Corps is to promote world peace and friendship by providing Volunteers who contribute to the social and economic development of interested countries; promote a better understanding of Americans among the people whom Volunteers serve; and strengthen Americans' understanding about the world and its peoples.

The Peace Corps fulfills its mission by making it possible for American citizens to serve as Volunteers in developing countries and participate in the development efforts of their host communities. Based on 39 years of experience, the Peace Corps follows certain guiding principles to fulfill this mission:

- **The Peace Corps provides as many opportunities as possible for Americans to serve as Volunteers and seeks to maintain a global presence.**

The presence of Volunteers in 134 countries over the course of 39 years has been central to the Peace Corps' ability to contribute to the social and economic development of many of the world's poorest countries. Maintaining a presence in a diverse group of countries also has enabled more than 161,000 Americans to engage in successful cross-cultural exchanges with the people of the developing world.

- **The Peace Corps ensures, to the greatest extent possible, the health, safety and security of its Volunteers.**

The Peace Corps staff, both in the United States and at overseas posts, work to ensure at all times that Volunteers are safe and secure in their assignments, have access to medical support to keep them healthy, and have adequate financial support.

- **The Peace Corps responds to development needs identified by host country partners.**

Peace Corps' collaboration with host countries during the project development and planning processes ensures that Volunteers can contribute to projects that most directly address the local community's priority development needs. Peace Corps Volunteers work with individuals and communities to improve education of students, expand human capacity building to improve basic health, encourage economic development, protect and restore the environment, and increase the

agricultural capabilities of farming communities, and in the process, contribute to poverty reduction.

- ❑ **The Peace Corps provides the technical, language, and cross-cultural training that Volunteers require to be successful in their assignments.**

Excellent technical and language training are essential to Volunteers' success during their two-year tours overseas. The Peace Corps devotes considerable resources to providing Volunteers and Trainees with a solid understanding of the languages and cultural norms of the communities where they live and work. The training is designed to ensure that Volunteers can accomplish their project goals and enjoy an enriching cross-cultural experience.

- ❑ **The Peace Corps strives for a Volunteer force that reflects the diversity of the American people.**

Efforts to recruit, train, and place a Volunteer Corps abroad that reflects the diversity and richness of America continue to be a high priority for the agency.

- ❑ **The Peace Corps encourages and supports returned Volunteers in their efforts to increase international understanding in their communities.**

The Peace Corps continues to share the Volunteer experience with Americans here at home through its domestic programs: Coverdell World Wise Schools program and the Peace Corps Fellows/USA program. The Coverdell World Wise Schools program is the Peace Corps' ongoing global education effort that broadens the geographical and cultural horizons of U.S. students through specific classroom linkages designed to share the overseas experiences of currently serving and returned Volunteers. The Peace Corps Fellows/USA program is a public-private partnership that brings together returned Peace Corps Volunteers, institutions of higher education, community organizations, foundations, and corporate supporters to use the experience and skills of returned Volunteers to help address some of the most pressing problems in communities across America.

THE PEACE CORPS' GPRA GOALS

Over the years covered by this Strategic Plan (FY 2000 through FY 2005), the Peace Corps will work to meet the following agency-wide general goals and objectives:

General Goal One: The Peace Corps ensures, to the greatest extent possible, the health, safety, and security of its Volunteers and staff.

The health, safety, and security of our Volunteers are the Peace Corps' highest priority. If these critical issues cannot be assured, Peace Corps will be unable to recruit and retain qualified Americans to serve in its programs. Furthermore, this goal directly relates to the ability of Volunteers to carry out their work effectively. Volunteers working under difficult circumstances in remote areas of the world need the assurance that they will be able to perform the assignments they have undertaken without worrying unduly about their health, safety and security.

Means and Strategies for Achieving General Goal One:

The Peace Corps' Office of Volunteer Support and the three Peace Corps Regions have the primary operational responsibility for accomplishing this goal. The means and strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- ❑ Identifying Volunteer sites in communities that are stable and secure;
- ❑ Identifying and facilitating the safest modes of transportation for Volunteers;
- ❑ Upgrading communication systems to enhance Volunteer safety;
- ❑ Monitoring local situations on a regular basis and addressing potential threats immediately;
- ❑ Updating emergency action plans at each overseas post and testing them on an annual basis in anticipation of threats to Volunteer safety or security;
- ❑ Conducting sub-regional safety and security workshops for overseas staff and Volunteers;
- ❑ Conducting country assessments on safety and security concerns utilizing Regional Safety and Security Officers in the field;
- ❑ Providing safety training in all pre-service training of Volunteers and throughout their period of service;
- ❑ Continuing the implementation and monitoring of a managed care system for Volunteers who need medical treatment in the United States;
- ❑ Streamlining the management of medical support systems;
- ❑ Ensuring appropriate levels of care for Volunteers;
- ❑ Providing prevention and treatment services for health issues; and
- ❑ Conducting the proper selection, training, and support of Peace Corps' local, in-country medical officers.

Each overseas post has the day-to-day responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of Volunteers, for the provision of appropriate pre-service and in-service training that

addresses these issues, and for the selection of sites that are safe and secure for Volunteers. Furthermore, three Regional Safety and Security Officers are currently in place overseas in each Region where Volunteers serve to provide technical assistance and support to posts in addressing safety and security concerns. The Peace Corps has clearly articulated its policy in relation to this goal by issuance of a manual section on Volunteer/Trainee Safety and Security that lays the foundation for establishing and maintaining a Volunteer safety support system at each post. The three Peace Corps Regions also have articulated specific plans that require increased training of overseas staff in safety and security issues as they relate to Volunteer support. Their efforts will be coordinated with those of the agency's Volunteer Safety Council, which is specifically tasked with oversight responsibility for these issues.

In regard to Volunteer health issues, the Office of Medical Services (OMS) in conjunction with the three Regions provides prevention and treatment services for Volunteers and Trainees through qualified medical officers at overseas posts and through medical evacuation services for those who cannot be treated appropriately in-country. OMS will continue to provide all overseas medical officers with comprehensive annual training to enhance their knowledge and skills in treating Volunteers. OMS will conduct an independent external review in FY2002 to ensure the quality and accountability of the Volunteer health delivery system. They also will create a coordinated, integrated, mainframe-based record of each Volunteer's interaction with the healthcare system and will assess the feasibility of utilizing an automated computer-based field reporting system for medical officers and headquarters support. Finally, OMS will establish and maintain a country health information database to document the level of locally available health care, to monitor the qualification and service record of medical officers, and to define relevant local health risks that can assist in the placement of Volunteers with special health needs.

Performance Goals for General Goal One:

The performance goals which follow clearly articulate the manner in which the Peace Corps anticipates accomplishing the general goal on maintaining the health, safety and security of our Volunteers and staff overseas. Some of the performance goals reflect the need of the agency to systematically review and assess specific trends and practices based upon the continually changing environments in the countries in which Peace Corps operates. Other performance goals are directly related to systems improvements that can be measured and assessed readily over the planning period. They include:

- A. The Peace Corps will ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that Volunteers live and work in a safe and secure environment and receive cross-cultural and personal safety training to enhance their awareness and skills in dealing with such issues. The Peace Corps will work closely with the Department of State's Regional Security Officers at U.S. embassies and with other safety experts to ensure that Volunteer site selections are as safe as possible. The Peace Corps also will ensure that its offices overseas are located in areas that maximize safety and

are equipped with adequate guard services, warning systems, and other protection to keep Volunteers and staff safe.

B. The Peace Corps will continue to provide prevention and treatment services for trainees and Volunteers through qualified medical officers at Peace Corps posts. Posts are staffed with medical officers who meet the agency's requirements and standards as determined by the Office of Medical Services in conjunction with the Peace Corps' Regional Directors.

C. For trainees and Volunteers who cannot be appropriately treated in country, the Peace Corps will provide responsive, quality medical evacuation services to countries with appropriate medical facilities.

D. The Peace Corps will continue to strengthen and improve its health care delivery system through the development of a fully integrated health information system by 2002 that takes advantage of modern technology. The system will link information on applicant screening, in-service medical care, health surveillance, and post-service health benefits. This fully integrated system will provide critical information regarding the health of the applicant, trainee, Volunteer, and returned Volunteer along a continuum of health care services within the Peace Corps. In addition the system will assist the timely identification of problem areas and improve the Office of Medical Services' ability to monitor the impact of strategies designed to improve the health care system for Peace Corps.

E. The Peace Corps will continue to monitor, analyze, and address ongoing concerns and emerging trends related to Volunteer safety and security issues through the agency's Volunteer Safety Council in collaboration with overseas staff. Specific efforts will be undertaken to identify and facilitate the safest modes of transportation for Volunteers during their service.

Key Factors Affecting Achievement of General Goal One:

The Peace Corps operates throughout the world in countries where the economic, political, and social environments can be unstable. The very nature of this general goal indicates the potential for disruption and the external factors that can provoke change. In recent years Peace Corps has had to suspend or terminate its programs in several countries due to political instability, social unrest, and situations that threaten the safety and security of Volunteers and staff. Recent examples include the Solomon Islands, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Guinea Bissau. The goal reflects Peace Corps' continuing concern that every effort is undertaken to anticipate and plan for any contingency of this type.

Another external factor that will be monitored constantly is the cost associated with the provision of medical services, particularly relating to medical evacuations and delivery of services under a managed care contract. Peace Corps vigorously pursues cost

containment strategies and has constantly endeavored to control medical costs per Volunteer in real terms while maintaining the highest quality of medical care.

Evaluation Criteria for General Goal One:

The Peace Corps will track selected parameters to gauge the health and safety of its Volunteers. To measure the overall health of Volunteers, the agency will monitor the incidence of service-related medical conditions among Volunteers closing service, measure Volunteer satisfaction with the health program, and track specific causes of preventable health conditions among currently serving Volunteers. In FY 2002, the Office of Medical Services will conduct an external evaluation of its operations under the auspices of a nationally recognized accrediting body such as the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

To measure the safety enhancements that are being implemented at overseas posts, the agency will ensure that all emergency evacuation plans are reviewed and tested on an annual basis. The Regional Safety and Security Officers overseas will be charged with assessing safety and security issues for at least three posts in each Region on an annual basis and providing support to post management in implementing recommended improvements. The Peace Corps also will assess responses to the Volunteer survey that relate to safety and security concerns in order to make appropriate adjustments as required.

General Goal Two: The Peace Corps will work to provide to as many Americans as possible the opportunity to serve as Peace Corps Volunteers.

Over the six years covered by this plan, the agency will work within available resources to provide the opportunity for as many interested Americans as possible to become Peace Corps Volunteers. The Volunteers identified for service will reflect, to the greatest extent possible, the diversity of the American people. Methods of attracting new recruits to the Peace Corps will reflect current information technology advancements with a greater emphasis upon Internet applications.

Means and Strategies for Achieving General Goal Two:

The Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection and its eleven regional recruitment offices have primary organizational responsibility within the Peace Corps for accomplishing this goal with substantial support from the Office of Communications, which has particular responsibility for national media, marketing, and advertising efforts. Specific means and strategies for achieving this goal include:

- ❑ Institutionalizing and enhancing of web-based application procedures for prospective recruits;
- ❑ Piloting by each regional recruitment office of a variety of innovative Internet outreach, visibility, recruitment, and retention activities including those oriented toward minority audiences;
- ❑ Augmenting the use of targeted recruitment and communications strategies to attract recruits requested by overseas posts, particularly those with scarce skills, minorities, and older Americans;
- ❑ Refining recruitment business processes to make it easier for potential applicants to enter Peace Corps service;
- ❑ Implementing recruitment techniques and materials that are specifically designed to attract greater numbers of minorities;
- ❑ Coordinating the increased use of returned Peace Corps Volunteers in awareness, recruitment, and retention activities during events surrounding the 40th anniversary of the Peace Corps in FY 2001;
- ❑ Conducting annual public service announcement campaigns for radio, print, and television distribution; and
- ❑ Conducting traditional recruitment and media campaigns designed to cast a wide net for prospective Volunteer candidates at communities and campuses throughout the United States.

Performance Goals for General Goal Two:

The performance goals directly correlate to the annual performance plan for the Peace Corps in that they are all readily measured based upon specific performance indicators. These indicators include annual trainee input production, annual minority recruitment production results, and the number of candidates generated by means of specific

technological enhancements such as Internet marketing and on-line application completion. The performance goals follow:

A. Consistent with the bipartisan legislation to field 10,000 Volunteers early in the new century, the Peace Corps plans to recruit, place, train, and support as many Volunteers as possible within existing resources with the following trainee goals for the period covered by this plan:

- FY 2000: 4,026
- FY 2001: 4,216
- FY 2002: 4,716
- FY 2003: 5,216
- FY 2004: 5,516
- FY 2005: 5,616

B. To ensure that the Volunteer force reflects the diversity of the American people, the Peace Corps will work to increase the number of minorities serving as Peace Corps Volunteers by pursuing outreach and recruitment strategies specifically aimed to attract minority candidates for Volunteer service.

C. The Peace Corps will continue to develop and enhance information technology systems and practices that will allow a greater number of Americans to learn about Volunteer opportunities and apply for Volunteer service electronically.

Key Factors Affecting Achievement of General Goal Two:

The primary factor affecting achievement of this goal over the period of this plan is uncertainty regarding the level of appropriations for the Peace Corps. The plan assumes that the bipartisan initiative to increase the number of Volunteers serving abroad will be followed by appropriations that support such growth. Achievement of the goal also assumes a relatively stable international environment where suitable assignments for Volunteers can be planned and implemented in accordance with appropriate global presence criteria.

Another major factor affecting goal achievement is the continuation of the robust domestic economy and low unemployment rates that can inhibit the number of prospective applicants for Peace Corps service due to the many other employment opportunities available to them. This may be particularly true of minority candidates and those who possess skills in agriculture, health, information technology, and business. Increasing demands for highly skilled Volunteers emanating from many of the host countries in which the Peace Corps operates compound the problem.

One final external factor that may inhibit goal achievement is a noticeable lack of awareness and knowledge about certain geographical regions and countries on the part of the American public that makes it difficult to fill certain training classes. Concerted

action to target recruitment and marketing messages to educate the public about these countries and regions has begun, but the problem may persist in the future.

Evaluation Criteria for General Goal Two:

The primary evaluation criteria used to measure accomplishment of this goal are the actual production numbers relating to trainee input during a given fiscal year; the number of minority recruits attracted to the Peace Corps; and the number of applicants who complete their Volunteer applications over the Internet. All of these measures will be tabulated and assessed in comparison to performance over past years. Media activities, which support these efforts, also are clearly tabulated and monitored. Public service announcement airings and advertising placements are closely monitored to evaluate their effectiveness.

General Goal Three: The Peace Corps will work within available resources to respond to requests for assistance from developing countries that need Volunteers.

The Peace Corps will continue to consider new opportunities from the many interested countries that request the assistance of Volunteers and will respond, where possible, within the limits of the agency's budget. The Peace Corps will continue to address compelling program opportunities and global initiatives that respond to specific development needs. The Peace Corps also will work with those host countries that are interested in beginning their own volunteer corps.

Means and Strategies for Achieving General Goal Three:

In responding to the needs of developing countries the Peace Corps will continue to direct its Volunteer resources toward projects that are central to the development success of our host countries in the areas of education, health, environment, economic development and agriculture. Over the course of this strategic plan there will be an added emphasis on the following specific development issues:

- ❑ Information Technology for Development -- The Peace Corps is uniquely placed to help harness information technology to reduce poverty and inequity in developing countries. To address this challenge, the Peace Corps will apply its Volunteer talent and experience to identify approaches to build capacity in information technology in a manner consistent with the agency's development philosophy. Efforts will focus on activities in existing and new Volunteer projects that build the capacity of communities and counterparts to develop strategies and plans for greater access to information technology.
- ❑ Response to the HIV/AIDS Global Crisis -- The Peace Corps will expand its efforts to address the devastating effects of this global pandemic by means of a multifaceted initiative that broadly addresses the education and training opportunities that Peace Corps Volunteers can bring to their local communities. The initiative relies upon the presence of our Volunteers in the most remote areas of the developing world with their knowledge of local customs, language and grassroots development strategies to mobilize against this crisis.
- ❑ Girls' Education -- The education of girls is one of the most influential contributions that can be made in development. Volunteers are in a unique position to serve as role models and to increase non-formal, informal and formal education opportunities for girls and women worldwide.
- ❑ Municipal Development -- Decentralization is increasingly recognized as a tool for enhancing the effectiveness of social and economic development and governmental accountability. Where local government and community participants come together, Volunteers can contribute to strengthening development and democratic institutions.

- Environmental Protection and Biodiversity -- Activities related to protecting the environment and preserving biodiversity are important to individual countries' development as well as to the global community. The Peace Corps will seek opportunities to support host government efforts at the local level to preserve and protect natural resources by incorporating indigenous communities in that effort and, thereby, contributing to poverty reduction.
- Support for local NGO development -- the Peace Corps will continue to support efforts of indigenous volunteer organizations requesting technical assistance in establishing their organizations.

Performance Goals for General Goal Three:

The following performance goals directly correlate to the annual performance plan in that they outline the primary programmatic focus of the Peace Corps over the duration of the strategic plan. All Peace Corps projects are developed utilizing specific project planning criteria that outline specific goals, objectives, milestones and tasks. These project plans allow the Peace Corps to track progress toward attaining programmatic objectives. The performance goals follow:

A. The Peace Corps fulfills its mission by responding to requests from other countries needing assistance in meeting their development goals. Peace Corps plans to focus its resources upon addressing critical global challenges in the areas of information technology for development, HIV/AIDS education and training, and expanded programmatic responses to girls' education, municipal development, and environmental protection/biodiversity.

B. The Peace Corps will continue to focus on efforts to promote and support local non-government organizations, especially indigenous Volunteer organizations.

Key Factors Affecting Achievement of General Goal Three:

One of the principal factors affecting achievement of this goal is the very environment in which Peace Corps operates in the developing world, frequently in poor communities where unreliable or non-existent host country infrastructure and support systems necessitate operational flexibility and adaptation. This environment also can be characterized by a marked growth in civil society, evidenced by an explosion of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are encouraging greater citizen participation in determining national priorities. Consequently, the Peace Corps must be responsive to changing national priorities in the countries in which it operates. Democratic transitions underway in many countries also present opportunities for local governments to become more directly involved in responding to citizen needs, but often without providing adequate training, resources, or administrative capacity.

Additionally, the emergence of issues affecting the entire global community including HIV/AIDS, the Internet and information technology, and environmental degradation pose opportunities and challenges for the Peace Corps in addressing them strategically. These global issues demand strong and coordinated responses that often may not be immediately accepted as national priorities or may conflict with local opinions.

Evaluation Criteria for General Goal Three:

Progress in achieving goal three will be monitored and evaluated on an annual basis by means of specific Project Status Reviews (PSRs) submitted by each overseas post. These reports are reviewed and critiqued by the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research and the three Regions to assess progress toward specific project goals and objectives. Feedback is provided to each post to provide them the opportunity to refine specific projects prior to the next submission of their annual strategic plans. Peace Corps will collect this data in a global array to report upon and evaluate efforts within the specific initiative areas mentioned in the performance goals.

General Goal Four: Drawing upon its pool of well-trained and experienced Volunteers and returned Volunteers, the Peace Corps will work to assist with disaster relief and humanitarian response efforts.

The Peace Corps will continue to identify and act on opportunities for experienced Volunteers and returned Volunteers to assist with disaster relief and humanitarian response efforts. Peace Corps Volunteers and returned Volunteers are particularly qualified to provide assistance in many of these situations because of their cross-cultural experience, their language proficiency, and their technical skills. Their efforts frequently lead to innovative models of training and program development that break new ground in responding to such crises and which can be adapted readily to the Peace Corps' core operations overseas.

Means and Strategies for Achieving General Goal Four:

The Crisis Corps is the operational unit within the Peace Corps most responsible for achieving this goal. The principal means and strategies for its achievement include:

- Responding to natural disasters and the needs of refugees: The Crisis Corps will continue to respond to requests for assistance in the aftermath of natural disasters and will participate in refugee assistance programs whenever security conditions permit.
- Meeting needs in post-conflict countries: Assuming a successful start-up in Bosnia in FY 2001, the Crisis Corps will look to expand the number of Volunteers in Bosnia as the need and resources permit. Depending upon local conditions, there may be an opportunity for the Crisis Corps to work in East Timor, Ethiopia, and Eritrea.
- Participating in the fight against HIV/AIDS: With the incidence of HIV/AIDS at crisis levels in a number of countries, experienced Crisis Corps Volunteers could make valuable contributions in education and prevention efforts against this disease.
- Serving in countries without a traditional Peace Corps program: Experienced Crisis Corps Volunteers can provide Peace Corps with opportunities to respond to needs in countries where, for a variety of reasons, there is not a traditional program.
- Contributing to disaster preparedness and mitigation training: Comprehensive community-based disaster preparedness and mitigation training materials have been prepared and tested in countries affected by hurricanes Georges and Mitch. The materials will be used to design a generic disaster management training kit for all Peace Corps posts particularly vulnerable to natural hazards.

- Strengthening the systems of the Crisis Corps program: The Crisis Corps will continue to improve recruitment efforts and will revamp its database of 3,600 former Volunteers so that it is linked to other databases in the agency.

Performance Goals for General Goal Four:

The very nature of the Crisis Corps program does not allow for ready predictability of annual performance measures other than a budgeted Volunteer input number. Resource levels will directly determine the scope of the Crisis Corps' response to specific situations. The performance goals follow:

- A. The Peace Corps will continue to field as many Crisis Corps Volunteers as circumstances and resources allow and to provide meaningful and productive assignments that address critical relief, reconstruction and humanitarian needs.
- B. The Peace Corps will ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide the necessary support to Volunteers and Peace Corps posts and will conduct a vigorous outreach program to ensure an adequate pool of recruits.

Key Factors Affecting Achievement of General Goal Four:

The primary factor affecting achievement of this goal is the level of appropriations for the Peace Corps that will have a direct impact upon the number of Crisis Corps Volunteers that can be fielded in a given year during the course of this strategic plan. Furthermore, the number and nature of events that are appropriate for response by the Crisis Corps will vary in a given year depending upon the nature and severity of critical situations that occur.

Evaluation Criteria for General Goal Four:

Peace Corps will survey Volunteers that participate in Crisis Corps projects and activities to ascertain their perception of their effectiveness in providing humanitarian assistance and relief to those in need. Program modifications will be evaluated in light of the feedback from posts, Crisis Corps Volunteers, and partner organizations in host countries.

General Goal Five: To help Volunteers fulfill their technical and cross-cultural responsibilities, the Peace Corps will provide thorough training and support for Volunteers and will continue to strengthen its programming efforts.

The Peace Corps will continue to ensure that Volunteers have the support and resources necessary to be effective in their assignments overseas. This responsibility includes identifying Volunteer assignments that support host country development and cross-cultural learning, and providing adequate training and technical support to accomplish the assignment.

Effective programming is an especially important ingredient in ensuring a successful experience for Volunteers and host country participants. The Peace Corps is committed to the consistent planning, monitoring, and evaluation of individual Volunteer projects so they can be strengthened and modified as appropriate. Peace Corps will continue to identify opportunities to encourage broader participation with host country nationals in project design, implementation, and evaluation, and will continue agency efforts to improve programming and training practices and procedures.

Means and Strategies for Achieving General Goal Five:

The Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research and the three Peace Corps Regions have primary operational responsibility for achievement of this goal. The principal means and strategies for accomplishing the goal include:

- ❑ Developing systems to identify, collect and disseminate promising practices in programming and training from posts and other sources;
- ❑ Promoting and supporting the exchange of resources for enhancing programming and training effectiveness;
- ❑ Developing manuals, tools and resources, based on promising practices collected from the field, and responding to needs expressed by posts;
- ❑ Developing materials and resources that address and integrate agency priorities;
- ❑ Developing an Intranet-based system to collect and disseminate data generated by Peace Corps projects and training;
- ❑ Recruiting and fielding qualified trainers to respond to specific field requests for assistance;
- ❑ Improving systems for monitoring and evaluating Peace Corps training and programming effectiveness;
- ❑ Building staff capacity to monitor and evaluate projects and training programs;
- ❑ Developing systems for online data collection from the field;
- ❑ Refining and expanding inter-agency agreements and initiatives; and
- ❑ Developing and implementing a long-term strategy for field staff development.

Performance Goals for General Goal Five:

The following performance goals reflect an ongoing effort to provide support, resources and technical assistance to the program and training efforts of overseas posts:

- A. The Peace Corps will continue to identify and disseminate best practices in programming and training from both internal and external sources for use by overseas posts.

- B. The Peace Corps will collect, analyze, and disseminate data generated by Peace Corps projects to communicate accomplishments to diverse audiences and to provide feedback to overseas posts.

- C. The Peace Corps will select and apply technological advances to the promotion of innovation and learning throughout the agency in support of Volunteers' efforts.

- D. The Peace Corps will cultivate and manage partnerships and concomitant resources that are consistent with the development philosophy of the Peace Corps to enhance the quality of program and training efforts at posts.

- E. The Peace Corps will provide training and development opportunities to overseas field staff to increase their effectiveness in supporting Volunteers.

Key Factors Affecting Achievement of General Goal Five:

The key variable affecting achievement of this goal lies in the Peace Corps' ability to attract and retain key staff that are technically capable of addressing the training and program support needs of Peace Corps posts. Highly skilled technical staff provide innovative approaches that can appropriately address the training and technical needs of Volunteers in the field. Quality control measures are also required to ensure that the support given is appropriate and effective from the perspective of both the Volunteer and the host country.

Evaluation Criteria for General Goal Five:

Numerous mechanisms exist for monitoring and evaluating progress in achieving this goal. These include Project Status Reports, Training Status Reports and language testing scores. Data are reviewed and assessed with feedback provided directly to overseas posts on an annual basis. A new project framework that measures the results of projects in terms of local capacity building was integrated into the Project Status Report for FY 2001. This information will provide the Peace Corps with more precise data to assess the effectiveness of Volunteer projects.

The Peace Corps also evaluates virtually all of its training activities by means of integrated evaluative tools that provide direct feedback to staff on the effectiveness of a

given training event. The Training Status Reports also provide specific feedback to posts on the efficacy of pre-service and in-service training activities. Finally, the Volunteer survey provides extensive evaluative material on all aspects of a Volunteer's experience and interaction with the Peace Corps. Posts use the survey results to improve operations.

General Goal Six: The Peace Corps will continue to fulfill its mandate to increase understanding of other peoples on the part of the American people.

This goal is an integral part of the agency's mission. By living and working at the grass-roots level for two years, Peace Corps Volunteers acquire an in-depth understanding of the cultures, languages, and customs of other countries. When they complete their service overseas, Volunteers bring those experiences and skills home, strengthening their own and their communities' abilities to understand and interact with the people of other countries. They also bring new insight into understanding America's own multicultural society.

Means and Strategies for Achieving General Goal Six:

There are four primary means and strategies by which this goal is accomplished by the Peace Corps:

- Coverdell World Wise Schools Program: Established in 1989 under the leadership of former Peace Corps Director Paul Coverdell, the World Wise Schools program seeks to give American school children an opportunity to learn first-hand about the world from current and returned Peace Corps Volunteers. Volunteers share their experiences while overseas by partnering with schools in the United States by means of the Internet, printed materials, video conferences, educational broadcasting, and correspondence exchanges.
- Peace Corps Fellows/USA Program: Established in 1985, the program is a public-private partnership that utilizes the skills and experiences of returned Volunteers to help address some of the most pressing problems in communities across America. It brings together returned Volunteers, institutions of higher learning, community organizations, foundations and corporate supporters by applying the skills and talents of Volunteers to the needs of communities in the United States. Colleges and universities offer scholarships or reduced tuition to returned Volunteers (Peace Corps Fellows) who enroll in master's degree programs. Each Fellow, in return, makes a two-year commitment to work in a local, underserved community to teach in schools or to address public health, community development or economic development issues.
- Peace Corps Day: Several thousand returned Volunteers celebrate Peace Corps Day in America's schools on an annual basis. They make classroom presentations and organize other community activities that promote the third goal of the Peace Corps nationwide.

- Special Events: The 40th Anniversary of the Peace Corps will be celebrated during FY 2001 with various events scheduled to increase public awareness of the agency and its programs. Events such as this also are extremely useful for marketing and direct recruitment purposes.

Performance Goals for General Goal Six:

Specific annual performance targets will be determined by the Office of Domestic Programs of the Peace Corps to accomplish the following performance goals:

- A. The Peace Corps will continue to expand, to the fullest extent possible, the number of participating Coverdell World Wise School classrooms in proportion to the growth of the Volunteer population.
- B. The Peace Corps will continue its efforts at public-private collaboration and outreach to colleges and universities that are potential participants in the Peace Corps Fellows/USA program.
- C. The Peace Corps will continue to encourage the returned Volunteer community to share experiences with all Americans by providing a variety of special events that assist with increasing public awareness of development issues and with recruitment efforts.

Key Factors Affecting Achievement of General Goal Six:

The principal factor that could affect the achievement of this goal concerns the expiration of both the DeWitt Wallace Reader's Digest and Knight Foundation grants that heavily support the Peace Corps Fellows/USA program. The Peace Corps will pursue additional program funding from both corporate and foundation sources, but since there is no guarantee that funds will be forthcoming, goal attainment may be jeopardized.

Evaluation Criteria for General Goal Six:

No formal evaluation of this goal is planned. However, the Peace Corps will monitor and report the number of participating schools, classrooms, and Peace Corps Fellows annually through the Integrated Planning and Budget System reviews.

General Goal Seven: The Peace Corps will pursue efforts to cut costs and improve agency productivity.

The Peace Corps maintains a sound and efficient business operation to maximize the resources available for the direct support of Volunteers. Consistent with this goal, the Peace Corps will improve and simplify its administrative functions, and will undertake a long-range project designed to improve the agency's financial management system. In addition, the Peace Corps is working to ensure the best use of available technology in domestic offices and overseas posts by supporting a number of Information Resources Management initiatives.

Means and Strategies for Achieving General Goal Seven:

The primary means and strategies for accomplishing this goal include:

- ❑ Acquiring and implementing a new financial management system that will meet the needs of the Peace Corps for the coming years;
- ❑ Institutionalizing standardized financial policies, procedures and administrative systems both domestically and overseas;
- ❑ Streamlining internal procedures for obtaining goods and services from the private sector by taking full advantage of changes in the Federal procurement and acquisition processes;
- ❑ Enhancing customer service to internal and external clients of the Peace Corps;
- ❑ Defining an agency-wide information technology strategic planning process;
- ❑ Implementing security practices to protect the Peace Corps' information technology assets, privacy and sensitive information;
- ❑ Developing standards, policies and guidelines to simplify management of overseas information technology systems; and
- ❑ Completing the agency's conversion from Macintosh computers to IBM compatible technology.

Performance Goals for General Goal Seven:

The underlying assumption behind all of the following performance goals is that improved business processes and financial management systems will lead to greater productivity and cost savings to the agency:

- A. The Peace Corps will begin implementation of a new financial management system that will serve the agency's need for modern, efficient technology throughout Peace Corps' operations, both domestic and overseas.
- B. The Peace Corps will align information technology systems with core business processes to ensure that agency priorities are achieved.

C. The Peace Corps will implement an agency-wide information technology architecture and establish a framework to maximize efficiencies, interoperability, and sound business decisions.

D. The Peace Corps will institutionalize a process to ensure continued availability of personnel with essential information technology skills.

Key Factors Affecting Achievement of General Goal Seven:

Rapid technological changes continue to challenge well-informed, cost effective and timely decision making about technologies that have a profound impact upon the Peace Corps, its mission and Volunteers. Proactive assessment and incorporation of new technologies will allow the Peace Corps to better plan and allocate resources for innovative business processes.

These rapid technological changes, increasing applications of computer connectivity, and expanding Internet usage are providing unparalleled opportunities for improvements in mission-related operations. However, these same advances also challenge the Peace Corps to effectively protect the integrity, privacy and availability of the systems and data upon which they rely. Security issues will continue to be an area of risk and concern in achieving this goal.

One final factor that may affect goal achievement relates to the myriad demands placed upon small agencies by legislative mandate, government regulation and inter-agency agreements. The limited absorptive capacity of a small agency to respond to these demands can reduce or eliminate cost efficiencies that may be garnered through better business processes and technological improvements.

Evaluation Criteria for General Goal Seven:

While there is no specific evaluation plan for the achievement of the goal, certain events will occur over the coming years that will have an extensive evaluative impact. Specifically, in regard to the implementation of the Peace Corps' financial management system, the true evaluation of the system will occur as the system goes "live" for domestic offices in FY 2002, and for all overseas posts in FY 2003.

With the implementation of a seat management contract, the contractor and Peace Corps have jointly created service level agreements that detail performance metrics in areas such as enterprise servers, LAN servers, desktop clients, laptop clients, network printers, and communication devices. The contractor reports actual performance for each of these metrics monthly and reviews performance trends and recommendations with the Peace Corps. This plan will be reviewed at least every six months over the duration of the contract with modifications made as needed to reflect changes in the Peace Corps' priorities and information technology environment.