

THE DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C.
April 14, 2017

The Honorable Carolyn N. Lerner
The Special Counsel
U.S. Office of the Special Counsel
1730 M Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036-4505

Re: OSC File No. DI-16-0254

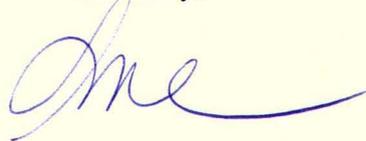
Dear Ms. Lerner:

In your letter dated March 31, 2016, you referred whistleblower disclosures to the Peace Corps for investigation and submission of a report pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 1213(c)(1). Former Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet referred the allegations to the Peace Corps' Office of the Inspector General (OIG) o/a April 7, 2016, for investigation and a report. The same week Peace Corps' General Counsel and members of the Office of the General Counsel, together with the Deputy Inspector General of the Peace Corps and members of the OIG staff met at the Office of the Special Counsel with members of your staff to clarify what was required and how best to accomplish your referral and the completion of the §1213 investigation and report. OIG investigator Joseph G. Bodensteiner and Assistant Inspector General John S. Warren conducted the investigation.

Initially, let me convey my thanks for the assistance and guidance provided by your office throughout the past year. Your staff has been most helpful in advising the Peace Corps with respect to your referral. I am grateful in particular for your office's understanding of the work undertaken by the OIG in conducting an investigation and preparing a biennial report which was presented to the Congress in November 2016, in accordance with section 8E(d) of the Kate Puzey Act, and how that report tied in with your referral.

Attached please find the Peace Corps' Report prepared by the OIG, as mentioned above. I have reviewed the report and in particular the summary of findings with respect to each of the eight allegations set forth at pages 53-58. The Peace Corps is committed to working to improve the protections and assistance offered to Peace Corps Volunteers overseas in any of the areas identified by the OIG as needing additional attention. Please do not hesitate to contact the Peace Corps if further clarification or information is desired.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sheila', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sheila Crowley
Acting Director

Enclosure

Peace Corps
Office of Inspector General



REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

REVIEW OF WHISTLEBLOWER DISCLOSURES BY MS.
KELLIE GREENE IN THE MATTER OF OSC FILE No. 16-
0254

I-16-030 ♦ April 2017

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SYNOPSIS

By letter dated March 31, 2016, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) informed the Peace Corps that it had received whistleblower allegations that the agency had violated laws, rules, or regulations; engaged in gross mismanagement; and created a substantial and specific danger to public health and safety.

The concerns outlined in the OSC letter were raised by former Director of the Peace Corps Office of Victim Advocacy (OVA) Kellie Greene, who alleged that the Peace Corps failed to take sufficient action to protect the safety of its Volunteers and did not provide adequate services to Volunteers who were sexually assaulted during their Peace Corps service. OSC characterized the allegations to be investigated as follows:

- The Peace Corps has placed volunteers, employees, and local country nationals at risk by failing to take appropriate action against volunteers found to have engaged in sexual misconduct.
- The Peace Corps has failed to provide appropriate training to protect the safety of Peace Corps volunteers who are living with host families and working with host country nationals.
- The Peace Corps has failed to take adequate action to protect the safety of Peace Corps volunteers who are traveling in countries of service.
- The Peace Corps does not provide adequate counseling services to Peace Corps Volunteers who are sexually assaulted during their service with the Peace Corps.

OSC directed the agency to conduct an investigation into the allegations and report back its findings. In doing so, OSC requested that the agency respond to the following questions:¹

1. Has the Peace Corps taken appropriate action against each volunteer found to have engaged in sexual misconduct? If so, describe the action taken.
2. Has the Peace Corps provided appropriate training to host families and host country coworkers to protect the safety of Peace Corps volunteers who are living with host families and working with host country nationals? If so, describe the training.
3. Has the Peace Corps taken adequate steps to protect the safety of Peace Corps volunteers who are traveling in countries of service where public transportation is inadequate? If so, describe the steps taken.
4. Has the Peace Corps provided adequate counseling services to Peace Corps volunteers who have been victims of sexual assault during their service? If so, describe the nature and duration of services available to volunteers and the process by which the services are provided.

¹ The questions were directed to be answered for the time period February 2012 to present. OIG generally used the time period of February 2012 through March 2016.

5. Has the Peace Corps failed to inform OVA when volunteers receive requested counseling services, when volunteers who have been victims of sexual assault leave service, and when there are updates on criminal proceedings related to crimes against volunteers? If so, please specify the number of times and year(s) in which the Peace Corps failed to provide this information.
6. Did any Peace Corps employee violate the Kate Puzey Act² with respect to Ms. Greene's allegations? If so, please identify the individual(s) and specify what provision was violated.
7. Has the Peace Corps appropriately managed its response to instances of sexual assault against volunteers?
8. Has the Peace Corps' failure to provide training to individuals who regularly interact with volunteers and to take steps to protect volunteers in transit presented a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety?

On April 7, 2016, Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet requested that the Peace Corps Office of Inspector General (OIG) conduct a review of the relevant facts and circumstances in the OSC letter and produce a report. The agency requested that the report be sent to the Office of General Counsel (OGC) so that OGC could review OIG's report for inclusion in the agency's response to the OSC letter.

OIG examined 18 cases involving Volunteers allegedly engaged in sexual misconduct. None of the offenders were administratively separated. In 4 out of 18 cases Volunteers resigned in lieu of separation. If a Volunteer is administratively separated from the Peace Corps or resigns in lieu of separation, the "Considering Administrative Separation" memo setting forth the grounds—which in cases involving sexual misconduct would include the relevant facts and circumstances—becomes part of the Volunteer's record. In 6 of 18 cases reviewed the Volunteers resigned without any adverse information being included in their files. In two instances the agency provided 'interrupted service' status to Volunteers who had been accused of sexual misconduct, rather than using the sexual assault misconduct adjudication process. In one incident a Volunteer subject of a sexual misconduct allegation was subsequently hired by the Peace Corps as a Federal employee. Because a Volunteer can resign essentially at any time, many Volunteers who have allegedly violated the sexual misconduct policy resign before the agency can substantiate the misconduct. Peace Corps policy allows Volunteers to resign up to 24 hours after a determination has been made to administratively separate them.

The law does not require the agency to provide training to host families or counterparts on establishing appropriate relationship boundaries. However, agency policy requires overseas staff to provide a range of training to host families and counterparts including "appropriate orientation in order to promote more welcoming communities, more supportive counterparts and authorities, and better-defined roles." In reviewing OIG country program evaluations, the adequacy of the agency's training for host families and

² The Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011

counterparts on how to set an appropriate relationship boundary with Volunteers has not been identified as an issue requiring management's attention or corrective action.

Further, although Ms. Greene alleged that the Peace Corps did not involve OVA in developing or revising sexual assault risk reduction and response (SARRR) training, our evaluation reports on the implementation and effectiveness of the SARRR program have found that recommendations from OVA were incorporated into revisions to the SARRR training sessions in 2014. OIG interviews and agency records provided in response to OIG requests confirm that Ms. Greene played an integral role in developing and giving a variety of sexual assault risk reduction trainings.

Safety and security risks to Volunteers using public transportation are unique in each country, as are the means to reduce or mitigate those risks. OIG's post evaluations have examined the safety and security environment and the support provided to Volunteers to deal with safety and security issues. When the agency has determined that the risks of travelling on public transportation in a particular country are unacceptably high, it has at times taken aggressive steps to mitigate the risk by using methods like directly providing a secure mode of transportation for all Volunteers (e.g. Guatemala). Where we have seen gaps or opportunities for improvement, we have made recommendations to which management has generally been responsive.³

OIG issued a final evaluation report on the [Peace Corps' Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response Program \(IG-17-01-E\)](#) in November 2016. OIG's evaluation included an analysis of whether the agency provided counseling when requested. While the OIG did not assess the effectiveness of the counseling, we did find that the Peace Corps' policy on counseling used evidence-based, trauma-informed care based on established clinical practice guidelines. Our evaluation identified two deficiencies related to the health services provided to Volunteers who had been victims of sexual assault and made the following recommendations, both of which the agency concurred with:

That the Director develop and implement mental health access to care timeliness standards for victims of sexual assault with a mechanism to notify management when these standards are not met.

That the Director develop specific guidance to Peace Corps medical officers to clarify the standards and expectations for the provision of counseling services, and communicate that guidance to Volunteers.

In 2016, the agency implemented an electronic case management system. While OIG has not yet assessed the effectiveness of this system, its purpose and design are directly related to addressing the need for staff involved in sexual assault case management, including OVA, to have information and awareness regarding the status of all required and requested services. The new system provides OVA staff with up-to-date information related to the status of counseling services provided to victims, the status of a victims'

³ See [Final Report on Recurring Issues: Common Challenges Facing Peace Corps Posts, Fiscal Years 2012-2015 \(IG-16-04-SR\), September 2016.](#)

Peace Corps service, and the status of in-country criminal prosecutions. The new system should improve communication between OVA, the Office of Health Services, OGC, and the Office of Safety and Security, helping ensure that relevant information related to a victim's case is shared in a timely manner with all involved staff.

As described below, the Kate Puzey Act required the agency to implement a number of policies and programs, and broadly outlines requirements for those policies and programs. For example, the agency's policy on sexual assault response must provide for counseling and psychiatric medication, if necessary. As part of a 2016 OIG evaluation, we reviewed 138 cases to determine if the eight services required by the Kate Puzey Act were offered to Peace Corps Volunteers who were victims of sexual assault. While this review was not conducted explicitly to identify if any Peace Corps employee had violated the requirements of the Kate Puzey Act, the evaluators were looking for evidence that the Peace Corps had responded to victims according to the Act's requirements, and were alert to evidence of possible sexual assault mismanagement, in accordance with the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency guidelines. As a result, 1 of the 138 cases reviewed was referred for investigation, which determined that no laws had been violated.

OIG found no evidence of systemic failures to offer or provide services required by the Act or agency policy. OIG's SARRR program evaluation found that the Peace Corps offered all the required services to nearly every Volunteer who reported having been sexually assaulted, and did so in a timely manner. However, OIG did find individual instances where the Peace Corps did not meet its standard to "respond effectively and compassionately to Volunteers who have been victims of sexual assault." Examples of such cases include those where Volunteers were unable to begin counseling in a timely manner. While these cases represented a departure from the standard set out in Peace Corps policy implementing the Kate Puzey Act, such cases did not evidence a violation of the law.

Additionally, between October 1, 2012 and September 30, 2016, OIG received approximately 17 complaints from Volunteers that alleged the agency mismanaged its response to a sexual assault.⁴ We reviewed the cases for instances where (1) OIG found evidence and relevant facts that may substantiate serious misconduct or mismanagement in a sexual assault response or (2) the agency informed us of action taken in response to an alleged sexual assault response mismanagement which we had referred to them. We found four such cases, which are detailed in this report.

In some cases OIG conducted an investigation of alleged mismanagement within the agency's SARRR program. For example, OIG highlighted four cases summarized in our semiannual reports to Congress. Generally, we did not identify facts that indicated a systemic weakness. In the instances where systemic issues were discovered, they were referred to agency management or the OIG Evaluation Unit for their consideration action.

⁴ While a preliminary inquiry was opened for each allegation, not every allegation resulted in a full investigation and many complaints were referred to the agency. (See Appendix B for a summary of OIG's investigative process for assessing complaints and allegations.)

In one instance, these concerns resulted in a management advisory report to the Peace Corps Director.

OIG is not aware of any condition within the Peace Corps either related to a failure to provide training to individuals who regularly interact with Volunteers, or to a failure to protect Volunteers in transit, that presents a substantial and specific health or safety danger to Volunteers.

RELEVANT LAW, REGULATION, OR AGENCY POLICY

Summary of the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act

Important to these issues is an understanding of the Kate Puzey Act, named in honor of a Peace Corps Volunteer who was killed while serving in Benin in 2009. It required the Peace Corps to undertake a series of reforms, including:

- Providing sexual assault risk-reduction and response training for Volunteers
- Developing a sexual assault policy and training for staff
- Establishing an Office of Victim Advocacy
- Establishing a Sexual Assault Advisory Council
- Implementing monitoring and evaluation plans for all Peace Corps programs
- Creating policies on stalking and confidentiality protection
- Removing a Volunteer from a site determined to be unsafe

The Kate Puzey Act required the Peace Corps to provide a range of information and training to applicants and Volunteers. This included providing each applicant with the contact information for:

- The Peace Corps Inspector General
- A 24-hour sexual assault hotline for Volunteers
- The Peace Corps Office of Victim Advocacy
- The country of service's sexual assault response liaison

The Act also mandated that the Peace Corps provide all applicants with information regarding crimes and risks in their proposed country of service, including an overview of past crimes committed against Volunteers in the country.

In addition, the Act required the Peace Corps to develop and provide comprehensive sexual assault risk reduction and response training to all Volunteers, using best practices and consulting with experts in the sexual assault field. It specified that this comprehensive training be tailored to the country of service, and include:

- Cultural training on gender relations
- Risk reduction strategies

- Availability of medical treatment (such as post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV, pregnancy testing, and sexually transmitted illness testing)
- Medical evacuation procedures
- Legal/law enforcement processes and an explanation of the victim's right to pursue legal action

There are eight services for victims of a sexual assault that the Peace Corps policy must include, as required by the Kate Puzey Act:

1. The option of pursuing either restricted or unrestricted reporting of an assault
2. Provision of a sexual assault response liaison (SARL) and victim's advocate to the Volunteer
3. At a Volunteer's discretion, provision of a sexual assault forensic exam in accordance with applicable host country law
4. If necessary, the provision of emergency health care, including a mechanism for such Volunteer to evaluate such provider
5. If necessary, the provision of counseling and psychiatric medication
6. Completion of a safety and treatment plan with the Volunteer, if necessary
7. Evacuation of such Volunteer for medical treatment, accompanied by a Peace Corps staffer at the request of such Volunteer. When evacuated to the United States, such Volunteer shall be provided, to the extent practicable, a choice of medical providers including a mechanism for such Volunteers to evaluate the provider
8. An explanation to the Volunteer of available law enforcement and prosecutorial options, and legal representation

Title 22, U.S. Code § 2507a, "Sexual assault risk-reduction and response training"

(a) In General – As part of the training provided to all volunteers under section 2507(a) of this title, the President shall develop and implement comprehensive sexual assault risk-reduction and response training that, to the extent practicable, conforms to best practices in the sexual assault field.

(b) Development and Consultation with Experts – In developing the sexual assault risk-reduction and response training under subsection (a), the President shall consult with and incorporate, as appropriate, the recommendations and views of experts in the sexual assault field.

(c) Subsequent Training – Once a volunteer has arrived in his or her country of service, the President shall provide the volunteer with training tailored to the country of service that includes cultural training relating to gender relations, risk-reduction strategies, treatment available in such country (including sexual assault forensic exams, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV exposure, screening for sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy testing), MedEvac procedures, and information regarding a victim's right to pursue legal action against a perpetrator.

(d) Information Regarding Crimes and Risks – Each applicant for enrollment as a volunteer shall be provided with information regarding crimes against and risks to volunteers in the country in which the applicant has been invited to serve, including an overview of past crimes against volunteers in the country.

(e) Contact Information -- The President shall provide each applicant, before the applicant enrolls as a volunteer, with—

(1) the contact information of the Inspector General of the Peace Corps for purposes of reporting sexual assault mismanagement or any other mismanagement, misconduct, wrongdoing, or violations of law or policy whenever it involves a Peace Corps employee, volunteer, contractor, or outside party that receives funds from the Peace Corps;

(2) clear, written guidelines regarding whom to contact, including the direct telephone number for the designated Sexual Assault Response Liaison (SARL) and the Office of Victim Advocacy and what steps to take in the event of a sexual assault or other crime; and

(3) contact information for a 24-hour sexual assault hotline to be established for the purpose of providing volunteers a mechanism to anonymously—

(A) report sexual assault;

(B) receive crisis counseling in the event of a sexual assault; and

(C) seek information about Peace Corps sexual assault reporting and response procedures.

(f) Definitions – In this section and sections 2507b through 2507g of this title:

(1) Personally Identifying Information – The term “personally identifying information” means individually identifying information for or about a volunteer who is a victim of sexual assault, including information likely to disclose the location of such victim, including the following:

(A) A first and last name.

(B) A home or other physical address.

(C) Contact information (including a postal, email, or Internet protocol address, or telephone or facsimile number).

(D) A social security number.

(E) Any other information, including date of birth, racial or ethnic background, or religious affiliation, that, in combination with information described in subparagraphs (A) through (D), would serve to identify the victim.

(2) Restricted Reporting

(A) In General – The term “restricted reporting” means a system of reporting that allows a volunteer who is sexually assaulted to confidentially disclose the details of his or her assault to specified individuals and receive the services outlined in section 2507b(c) of this title without the dissemination of his or her personally identifying information except as necessary for the provision of such services, and without automatically triggering an official investigative process.

(B) Exceptions – In cases in which volunteers elect restricted reporting, disclosure of their personally identifying information is authorized to the following persons or organizations when disclosure would be for the following reasons:

(i) Peace Corps staff or law enforcement when authorized by the victim in writing.

(ii) Peace Corps staff or law enforcement to prevent or lessen a serious or imminent threat to the health or safety of the victim or another person.

(iii) SARLs, victim advocates or healthcare providers when required for the provision of victim services.

(iv) State and Federal courts when ordered, or if disclosure is required by Federal or State statute.

(C) Notice of disclosure and privacy protection - In cases in which information is disclosed pursuant to subparagraph (B), the President shall –

- (i) make reasonable attempts to provide notice to the volunteer with respect to whom such information is being released; and
- (ii) take such action as is necessary to protect the privacy and safety of the volunteer.

(3) Sexual assault – The term “sexual assault” means any conduct prescribed by chapter 109A of title 18, whether or not the conduct occurs in the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, and includes both assaults committed by offenders who are strangers to the victim and assaults committed by offenders who are known or related by blood or marriage to the victim.

(4) Stalking – The term “stalking” means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to –

- (A) fear for his or her safety or the safety of others; or
- (B) suffer substantial emotional distress.

Title 5, U.S. Code § 1213, “Provisions relating to disclosures of violations of law, gross mismanagement, and certain other matters” states:

(a) This section applies with respect to—

(2) any disclosure by an employee, former employee, or applicant for employment to the Special Counsel or to the Inspector General of an agency or another employee designated by the head of the agency to receive such disclosures of information which the employee, former employee, or applicant reasonably believes evidences—

- (A) a violation of any law, rule, or regulation; or
- (B) gross mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.

Peace Corps Interim Policy Statement (IPS) 1-12, “Volunteer/Trainee Sexual Misconduct”

4.0 Sexual Misconduct Policy

Sexual Misconduct by a V/T violates Peace Corps policy. A V/T who is found to have engaged in Sexual Misconduct may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including administrative separation.

5.4 Criminal and Other Investigations

(a) Sexual Misconduct may violate both Peace Corps policy and criminal and other laws of the U.S. or the local jurisdiction in which the Sexual Misconduct took place. The bringing of a complaint of Sexual Misconduct and the handling of such complaint under the IPS 1-12 Procedures for Handling Complaints of Volunteer/Trainee Sexual Misconduct are independent of any criminal investigation or proceeding or any complaint brought under MS 293 Applicant, Trainee, Volunteer Discrimination Complaint Procedure.

(b) A V/T is entitled to report Sexual Misconduct directly to OIG, to the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCD) and to relevant law enforcement agencies regardless of whether that V/T has brought a complaint of Sexual Misconduct under this policy.

(c) Because the standards for finding a violation of criminal law are different from the standards for finding a violation of this policy, criminal investigations or reports are not determinative of whether Sexual Misconduct has occurred for purposes of this policy. Conduct may constitute Sexual Misconduct under this policy even if OIG, law enforcement agencies or other relevant authorities lack sufficient evidence of a crime and therefore do not move forward with a criminal prosecution or there is an acquittal of the accused in criminal proceedings.

Peace Corps Manual section 204, “Volunteer Conduct”

3.14 Sexual Behavior

While the matter of V/T sexual behavior is a highly personal one, V/Ts are required to follow certain legal and policy requirements and failure to do so may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including administrative separation.

3.16 Prevention and Elimination of Harassment, including Sexual Harassment

V/Ts are subject to the Peace Corps harassment policy in MS 645 Prevention and Elimination of Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment.

Peace Corps Manual section 270, “Volunteer/Trainee Safety and Security”

6.5 Community Orientation

Each post must provide host communities, host families, counterparts, and local officials with an appropriate orientation in order to promote more welcoming communities, more supportive counterparts and authorities, and better-defined roles.

Peace Corps Manual section 284, “Early Termination of Service”

2.1 Resignation of Volunteer/Trainee Overseas

When a Peace Corps staff member becomes aware that a V/T is considering resignation from Peace Corps service, the staff member should advise the V/T that it is his or her right to resign from service at any time, for any reason....

2.3 Resignation in Lieu of Administrative Separation

A V/T may choose to resign instead of being administratively separated (see Section 4.0)

4.0 Administrative Separation

Pursuant to the Peace Corps Act, 22 U.S.C. 2504(i), the service of a V/T may be terminated at any time at the pleasure of the President. The authority of the President to terminate service has been delegated to the Director of the Peace Corps. Accordingly, the Director, or anyone to whom the Director delegates such authority, may separate a V/T at any time purely at the discretion of the deciding official and as otherwise expressly provided herein.

5.0 Interrupted Service

A V/T may be separated with interrupted service status if the Country Director determines that circumstances beyond the control of the V/T make it necessary for the V/T to leave his or her

present assignment. Because the nature of circumstances leading to interrupted service are beyond the V/T's control, interrupted service should not be used in lieu of administrative separation.

Peace Corps Manual section 220, “Leave for Volunteers/Trainees”

3.3.1 In-Country Travel

A Country Director has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management and execution of safety and security programs at the post and, in performance of that duty, may determine that certain parts of the country in which the post is located are off-limits for purposes of travel by V/Ts. The Country Director is responsible for informing V/Ts if any parts of the country of their assignment are off-limits for travel and V/Ts are responsible for complying with the restrictions at all times, including when they are on time away from their community or on leave.

Peace Corps Manual section 450, “Volunteer and Trainee Transportation”

3.0 Policies

3.1 Transportation policies apply to the safety and security of modes of travel, travel times, and travel conditions. (See MS 220 Leave for Volunteers/Trainees for policies on travel destinations.)

3.2 Due to the substantial safety and security risks that are posed to Volunteers during overland and sea travel, Peace Corps posts are required to have a written post-specific transportation policy for the Volunteers. The Country Director, in consultation with post staff, the appropriate Regional Director, and the Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer (PCSSO), is responsible for establishing the policy and communicating the policy to Volunteers.

3.4 Posts should adopt a transportation policy that promotes use of the most reliable and safe transportation modes and the best travel times and conditions.

4.3 The policy must be communicated to the Volunteers and be included in the post specific Volunteer Handbook. As part of the post specific Volunteer Handbook, the policy will be reviewed yearly as part of the MS 270 Volunteer/Trainee Safety and Security review process.

Peace Corps Manual section 243, “Responding to Sexual Assault”

The policy is lengthy for inclusion in this report; the complete document can be found [here](#).

METHODOLOGY

OIG used a multi-disciplinary approach to respond to OSC’s questions and concerns, relying upon multiple agency-wide and post-specific evaluations performed by OIG since 2011, augmented by investigative inquiries into specific matters as appropriate.

The Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011 required OIG to evaluate the effectiveness and implementation of the sexual assault risk reduction and response (SARRR) training and policy, and to review a statistically significant number of sexual assault cases. Our first evaluation was published in November 2013 and our second was

published in November 2016. When applicable, work conducted for these evaluations was used to address the whistleblower allegations.

OIG announced the most recent evaluation of the agency's SARRR program in November 2015, and conducted interviews and site visits through August 2016. OIG personnel conducted 58 interviews with agency managers in at least eight different headquarters offices. We visited six overseas posts (Guatemala, Morocco, Mozambique, Paraguay, Peru, and South Africa) and interviewed 69 staff and 72 Volunteers. As part of this evaluation, OIG randomly selected 138 sexual assault cases from 513 reported cases between September 3, 2013 and September 29, 2015. We identified 64 data elements per case, such as date of report and date of medical care, for a total of 8,832 distinct data elements.

Additionally, the OIG Evaluation Unit routinely conducts overseas country program evaluations. These evaluations examine safety and security, site development, and other aspects of Peace Corps operations. When appropriate, we utilized findings and recommendations from evaluation reports issued from 2012 to 2015 to address aspects of the whistleblower allegations (see Appendix A for a list of the reports).

From an investigative standpoint, OIG interviewed a number of senior Peace Corps staff, various program managers, and, of course, Ms. Greene. OIG also reviewed voluminous records, including OIG complaints, investigative reports, staff emails, training records, and safety data to ensure that we could properly respond to the important issues raised by OSC.

INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY

By letter dated March 31, 2016, OSC informed the Peace Corps that it had received whistleblower allegations that the agency had violated laws, rules, or regulations; engaged in gross mismanagement; and created a substantial and specific danger to public health and safety.

The concerns were raised by former OVA Director Greene, who alleged that the Peace Corps failed to take sufficient action to protect the safety of its Volunteers and did not provide adequate services to Volunteers who are sexually assaulted during their Peace Corps service, in violation of the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011,⁵ commonly referred to as the Kate Puzey Act.

OSC requested that the agency respond to the following eight questions:

⁵ Title 22, U.S. Code § 2507a, "Sexual assault risk-reduction and response training."

QUESTION 1: ACTION TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Has the Peace Corps taken appropriate action against each volunteer found to have engaged in sexual misconduct? If so, describe the action taken.

Ms. Greene's Allegation

The OSC letter contained the following details related to this concern:

Ms. Greene alleged to OSC that the Peace Corps was not taking appropriate action against Peace Corps volunteers who are found to have engaged in sexual assault or misconduct. According to the sexual misconduct policy implemented as a result of the Kate Puzey Act, a volunteer who is found to have engaged in sexual misconduct "may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including administrative separation." See Interim Policy Statements (IPS) 1-12. An "administrative separation" allows the Peace Corps not only to remove the volunteer from Peace Corps service, but it also allows the agency to document the misconduct, ensuring that the agency is on notice of the offense should the volunteer apply for another position at the Peace Corps. Ms. Greene described at least ten cases in the last five years in which the Peace Corps Office of Inspector General (OIG) found that a volunteer violated the sexual misconduct policy. In each case, the Peace Corps allowed the volunteer to resign or interrupt service rather than subjecting the volunteer to an administrative separation. If a volunteer resigns or interrupts service, he or she could return as a volunteer or employee without any record reflecting his or her misconduct. This practice could place volunteers, employees, or members of the public at risk of being victimized by an individual who is known to have sexually assaulted others in the past.

OIG interviewed Ms. Greene on April 22, 2016. During that interview Ms. Greene identified 11 specific cases wherein she stated that a Volunteer violated the sexual misconduct policy and the agency allowed the Volunteer to resign or interrupt service rather than subjecting the Volunteer to an administrative separation.

Summary of Investigative/Evaluative Steps Taken

A review of relevant information determined that one of the eleven cases cited did not involve an alleged violation of the Volunteer sexual misconduct policy, but rather other misconduct. OIG reviewed the other 10 cases identified by Ms. Greene, and below is a synopsis of each. OIG identified an additional eight relevant cases which are discussed further below.

As the entity charged with investigating criminal wrongdoing or administrative misconduct involving Peace Corps Volunteers, OIG investigated the aforementioned cases. Peace Corps OIG investigations do not contain recommendations for discipline nor do they generally contain formal findings. Rather, investigations gather evidence and relevant facts that may provide substantiation to decision makers considering whether misconduct or wrongdoing have occurred. Decision makers also determine whether to take administrative action, and the nature of such action.

The outcomes of these 18 cases are summarized in Table 1. The table below is a compilation of the 10 cases identified by Ms. Greene as well as the additional cases identified by OIG.

Table 1: Volunteer Sexual Misconduct Case Dispositions

Outcome for Alleged Offender	Cases
Administratively separated	0
Resigned in lieu of administrative separation ⁶	3
Resigned	6
Provided interrupted service ⁷	2
Continued serving, but was denied a request for an extension of service	1
Continued serving, but was placed on a behavioral modification plan	2
Agency took no action	4
Total	18

Summary of Cases

Central America; 2011 (CIRS 520-2011518-20638)

Reported in OIG's [Semiannual Report to Congress, 04/2011 – 09/2011](#)

A female Volunteer reported she had been sexually assaulted by a male Volunteer. OIG investigated the allegation, obtaining witness statements and evidence at the post. After reviewing OIG's investigation report, the agency separated the male Volunteer and gave him interrupted service status, which does not preclude him from future Peace Corps service.⁸ The female Volunteer was transferred to another post after a period of medical leave at her home of record.

⁶ Peace Corps Manual Section 284, *Early Termination of Service*, provides that a Volunteer may be administratively separated for unsatisfactory conduct or performance; violation of any Peace Corps policy, including those in the Peace Corps Manual, whether agency-wide or post-specific; or other grounds that diminish the effectiveness of the Volunteer or the Peace Corps program, as determined in the sole discretion of the Peace Corps. A Volunteer has the option to resign in lieu of administrative separation up to 24 hours after a final administrative separation decision is made.

⁷ Peace Corps Manual Section 284, *Early Termination of Service*, provides that a Volunteer may be separated with interrupted service status if the Country Director determines that circumstances beyond the control of the Volunteer make it necessary for the Volunteer to leave his or her present assignment. It also states that "Because the nature of circumstances leading to interrupted service are beyond the Volunteer's control, interrupted service should not be used in lieu of administrative separation."

⁸ The "circumstances beyond the control of the Volunteer" was described in a draft memorandum to the accused as "the very divisive environment that has arisen in country because of widespread and conflicting rumors and loyalties in relation to your interaction with another Volunteer has created circumstances that will prevent you from continuing to serve effectively as a Peace Corps Volunteer."

South America; 2011 (CIRS 568-2011919-1218241; 568-2011919-1218242)
Reported in OIG's [Semiannual Report to Congress, 10/2011 – 03/2012](#)

OIG received a report that a male Volunteer had sexually assaulted two female Volunteers. OIG's investigation disclosed that the male Volunteer had inappropriately touched one of the female Volunteers after she had asked him to stop. The male Volunteer also sexually fondled a second female Volunteer while she was asleep. The male Volunteer resigned in lieu of administrative separation.

Central Africa; 2013 (CIRS 611-201393-174618)
Reported in OIG's [Semiannual Report to Congress, 10/2013 – 03/2014](#)

OIG received an allegation that a male Volunteer had sexual relations with a female Volunteer while she was intoxicated. When OIG interviewed the male Volunteer, he stated that he knew the victim was intoxicated, and conceded that he may not have had her consent. Based upon guidance received by the General Counsel, management took no action against the accused.

Pacific Islands; 2013 (CIRS 411-2013125-184011)
Reported in OIG's [Semiannual Report to Congress, 10/2013 – 03/2014](#)

OIG received an allegation that a female Volunteer reported being sexually assaulted by a male Volunteer. OIG interviewed the subject of the allegation who acknowledged that he engaged in sexual contact with the victim without her consent. The subject resigned from the Peace Corps the day after the interview.

Caribbean; 2013 (CIRS 538-201378-10610)
Reported in OIG's [Semiannual Report to Congress, 10/2013 – 03/2014](#)

OIG received an allegation that a female Volunteer was sexually assaulted by another female Volunteer in spite of the victim's repeated verbal objections. The subject of the allegation admitted to knowing that the victim was very intoxicated at the time of the sexual contact. The matter was referred to the U.S. Department of Justice, which declined to prosecute in lieu of administrative remedies. The subject resigned from the Peace Corps immediately after learning that DOJ declined to prosecute.

Southern Africa; 2014 (CIRS 637-2014214-171645)
Reported in OIG's [Semiannual Report to Congress, 04/2014 – 09/2014](#)

OIG investigated an alleged Volunteer on Volunteer sexual assault. A female Volunteer told OIG that she awoke one night to find the accused male Volunteer kissing her midsection while his hand was inside her shirt. She told OIG that she told the accused to stop three times before he disengaged. The male Volunteer acknowledged kissing the female Volunteer's midsection and touching her breasts, but said he awoke the female Volunteer before doing so, and that he

disengaged when she told him to stop. The male Volunteer said he knew the female Volunteer had been drinking earlier and was intoxicated at the time of the incident. The OIG concluded its investigations and referred the case to the agency for administrative action. The country director, in consultation with the regional director determined that there was a “lack of a clear outcome given conflicting statement and no corroboration.” The agency denied the male Volunteer’s request for an extension of service, but allowed him to complete his service as scheduled. In explaining the nature of the action against the Volunteer, the General Counsel of the Peace Corps stated that the sexual assault misconduct policy did not apply to actions committed before adoption of the sexual assault misconduct policy. Despite being apprised of this matter by OIG, the returned Volunteer was subsequently hired to work at Peace Corps headquarters.

Caribbean; 2014 (CIRS 517-201437-08591)

Reported in OIG’s [Semiannual Report to Congress, 04/2014 – 09/2014](#)

OIG investigated an alleged Volunteer-on-Volunteer sexual assault. The investigation determined that the victim and the accused engaged in sexual intercourse at the accused’s residence after a day of heavy drinking. The victim asserted that she had no memory of the evening, and learned of the sexual encounter from another Volunteer who walked in on her having sex with the male Volunteer. The accused asserted that the victim consented to having sex. Using quantities of the specific alcoholic beverages they consumed, OIG reconstructed the blood alcohol content levels of the victim and the accused to be very high, and witness testimony corroborated the victim’s intoxication. At issue in this case was whether the accused attempted to take advantage of the incapacitation of another. The matter was presented to the agency’s sexual assault hearing panel, which determined that the accused had not violated agency policy.

Central America; 2014 (CIRS 525-20141029-1563)

Reported in OIG’s [Semiannual Report to Congress, 10/2014 – 03/2015](#)

A Volunteer restricted report was submitted to the agency’s Critical Incident Report System concerning non-consensual sexual contact of the Volunteer by another Volunteer. The agency was sufficiently concerned that the alleged assailant posed a serious or imminent threat to others, so it converted the Volunteer’s restricted report to a standard report and referred it to OIG. OIG initiated an investigation. OIG interviewed the subject, who reported not remembering what transpired due to intoxication. The victim alleged to have been sexually assaulted. Witness interviews were contradictory and did not yield specific information on the allegation. The male Volunteer said he was intoxicated and did not remember the events. The agency provided the subject

interrupted service,⁹ meaning the subject was separated from service but can reapply to serve in the Peace Corps at a later date.

Central America; 2015 (CIRS 525-2015211-163816)

Reported in OIG's [Semiannual Report to Congress, 04/2015 – 09/2015](#)

OIG received a report that a male Volunteer had sexually assaulted a female Volunteer by shoving her head into the groin of a second male Volunteer. OIG conducted an investigation. The accused Volunteer admitted the alleged misconduct. Management informed OIG that the accused Volunteer would be placed on a behavioral modification agreement, which highlighted expectations for Volunteer behavior and often limit a Volunteer's authorization to participate in certain activities and events.¹⁰

Western Africa; 2015 (CIRS 641-2015717-123146)

Reported in OIG's [Semiannual Report to Congress, 10/2015 – 03/2016](#)

OIG received an allegation of a sexual assault of a Volunteer by another Volunteer. The investigation determined that several Volunteers were sharing a room, when a male Volunteer allegedly touched the inner thigh of a female Volunteer while she slept. The female Volunteer was unable to positively identify her assailant, but opined it was a specific male Volunteer. The matter was presented to the agency's sexual assault hearing panel, which determined that the accused had not violated the agency's sexual misconduct policy.

As mentioned above, OIG identified an additional eight cases involving allegations of Volunteer-on-Volunteer sexual misconduct from February 2012 through March 2016 that had not been identified by Ms. Greene. Below is a synopsis of each case:

Central Africa; 2012 (CIRS 614-2012227-121559)

Reported in OIG's [Semiannual Report to Congress, 10/2011 – 03/2012](#)

OIG initially received an allegation that a male Volunteer had inappropriately touched a female Volunteer who was sleeping. OIG's investigation uncovered that the male Volunteer engaged in conduct that qualified as rape under Peace Corps definitions. The rape occurred outside U.S. jurisdiction and the victim did

⁹ The "circumstances beyond the control of the Volunteer" was described in a draft memorandum to the accused as, "you were placed on administrative hold pending the completion of the report of an investigation by the Peace Corps' Office of Inspector General. You have been away from your assignment for more than 10 weeks. This extensive absence has prevented you from carrying out your assignment and damaged your effectiveness in your Peace Corps assignment. Nor is there another viable assignment for you in country. Your admission that you drank enough alcohol that you have no memory of certain actions creates sufficient concern about your ability to maintain your safety that giving you another assignment is not appropriate."

¹⁰ No specific information related to the "behavior contract" was available. The accused Volunteer closed service in May 2016.

not wish to pursue charges in the host country. The accused Volunteer resigned in lieu of administrative separation.

Eastern Europe; 2014 (CIRS 261-2014226-181431)

Reported in OIG's [Semiannual Report to Congress, 04/2014 – 09/2014](#)

OIG received a report that a male Volunteer sexually assaulted a female Volunteer. The female Volunteer stated that while dancing at a nightclub with another Volunteer, the accused Volunteer approached her from behind, put his hand under her skirt, and touched her genitals without consent. During an OIG interview, the accused Volunteer said he placed his hand under the victim's skirt and touched her mid and lower right buttocks, an area he described as "very personal and private." The matter was presented to the agency's sexual misconduct hearing panel, which determined that the accused had violated agency policy. The accused was restricted from participating in several activities for the remainder of his service.¹¹

South America; 2014 (CIRS 526-2014523-155031)

OIG received a report that a male Volunteer sexually assaulted a female Volunteer late one evening while both Volunteers were poolside at a hostel. The female Volunteer stated that the male Volunteer made in excess of ten attempts to kiss her on the lips after having been informed that she was not sexually interested in him. Additionally, she asserted that he later approached her from behind, put his hand between her legs and touched her genitals over her clothing. The male Volunteer stated that he made two to three attempts to kiss the female Volunteer during the evening, but stopped when he was told that she had a partner. He denied that he groped or touched the female Volunteer. The matter was referred to the agency's sexual misconduct hearing panel. However, prior to reaching a decision as to whether the male Volunteer had violated agency policy, the female Volunteer withdrew the complaint and the panel did not hear the case.

Western Asia; 2014 (Not available in CIRS)

Reported in OIG's [Semiannual Report to Congress, 10/2014 – 03/2015](#)

OIG received a report that a male Volunteer had sexually assaulted a male Volunteer. It was alleged that the male Volunteer groped another Volunteer in a bar in the presence of a third Volunteer, who also alleged to have been groped

¹¹ The hearing panel recommended the following, which was approved by management: 1. Removed from the TOBE/GLOW group and cannot participate in any associated events; 2. Cannot participate in any Peace Corps leadership groups; 3. Not allowed to give any official Peace Corps training (e.g., PST, IST); 4. For the remainder of service, travel to and stay in [Capital] is limited to mandatory Peace Corps activities (e.g., medical checks, required trainings) and other occasions that may require transit in [Capital] (e.g., airport). All travel to and stay in [Capital] must be pre-approved by the Country Director at least one week in advance; and 5. Cannot accrue 12 days of Annual Leave and will not receive Annual Leave Allowance for the deducted Annual Leave. Instead the [Volunteer] will donate this amount totaling \$144 USD to [Peace Corps post] Country Fund (ideally to be used for the TOBE/GLOW camps).

months earlier by the same male Volunteer. OIG identified two additional Volunteers who each would have been a victim of sexual assault by the accused were it not for the quick intervention of bystanders. All four of the incidents involved improper sexual contact. OIG also developed substantial information related to accused's possession, use, manufacturing, and distribution of marijuana, and of his possession, use, and distribution of Adderall (a controlled substance) without a prescription. The accused resigned before being interviewed by OIG.

Pacific Islands; 2014 (CIRS 411-2014721-122243)

Will be included in OIG's Semiannual Report to Congress, 09/2016 – 03/2017

OIG received a report that a male Volunteer sexually assaulted a female Volunteer. The investigation determined that a female Volunteer was anally raped by a male Volunteer while staying at the residence of a third Volunteer. During an OIG interview, the accused Volunteer either denied that he forcibly penetrated the victim without consent or stated that he had done so "accidentally." The accused was medically evacuated from the post on the day of OIG's interview, purportedly because he was having suicidal thoughts. He resigned shortly thereafter. DOJ declined to prosecute in August 2016.

South America; 2015 (Not available in CIRS)

Reported in OIG's [Semiannual Report to Congress, 10/2015 – 03/2016](#)

OIG received anonymous information that on two unrelated occasions, a Volunteer raped another Volunteer and an individual unaffiliated with the Peace Corps. The alleged Volunteer victim denied having been raped, and the other individual declined to cooperate with the investigation. No further action was taken for lack of evidence and legal jurisdiction. During the course of the investigation OIG also developed substantial information related to the subject's drug use. The Volunteer resigned in lieu of administrative separation based upon his drug involvement.

Southern Africa; 2015 (CIRS 611-2015724-135058)

Reported in OIG's [Semiannual Report to Congress, 04/2015 – 09/2015](#)

OIG received four reports of sexual harassment by a male Volunteer. During the course of the investigation, OIG identified additional individuals that had been sexually harassed by male Volunteer. Because of repeated harassment of fellow Volunteers during the investigation, the male Volunteer was directed to cease all further communication with other Volunteers pending the resolution of the OIG investigation. The OIG investigation identified at least seven Volunteers that had been sexually harassed by the accused. The accused admitted to OIG that he communicated with other Volunteers in such a way that they could reasonably perceive it as harassing. The accused resigned following the interview.

South America; 2015 (CIRS 518-20151123-164846)

Will be included in OIG's Semiannual Report to Congress, 09/2016 – 03/2017

OIG was informed that two female Volunteers filed independent reports that they had been sexually assaulted by a male Volunteer. OIG conducted an investigation. One female Volunteer reported that the accused forced his way into the bedroom of her residence despite her repeated demands that he leave. She stated that he then grabbed her arm and forced her onto the bed. She said he sat on her bed stating, "When you say 'no' to sex, you really mean 'yes.'" The female Volunteer continued to physically and verbally resist the male Volunteer's advances, and he left the residence without further incident. The second female Volunteer reported that she was socializing with several Volunteers at a beach location, and she went to bed early. She said the accused entered her room, laid down in her bed, wrapped his leg around hers and placed his hands on her breast. The victim stated that it took her about one minute to figure out how to resolve the situation, and she asked the accused to stop, and the accused got up and left the room. Approximately fifteen minutes later, the accused reentered the bedroom and got into bed with the victim, at which time the victim got out of bed, left the room and slept on the couch. The following morning, the accused saw the victim and stated, "I guess I owe you an apology." The accused resigned from the Peace Corps before the case could be addressed by the sexual misconduct hearing panel. DOJ declined to prosecute. The case was closed in June 2016.

Relevant Agency Policy and Procedure

Peace Corps IPS-1-12 defines "sexual misconduct" as:

"Non-Consensual Sexual Activity, Non-Consensual Sexual Contact, Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Harassment or Stalking. Sexual Misconduct can occur between strangers or acquaintances (including people involved in an intimate or sexual relationship and people related by blood or marriage)."

IPS 1-12 defines "effective consent" as:

"...words or actions that show a knowing and voluntary agreement to engage in mutually agreed-upon activity. The policy makes clear that "Effective Consent" cannot be gained by Force, by ignoring or acting in spite of the objections of another (unless those objections have been knowingly and voluntarily withdrawn) or by taking advantage of the Incapacitation of another if the accused knows, or a sober, reasonable person in position of the accused should have known, of such Incapacitation. Effective Consent is also absent when the activity in question exceeds the scope of Effective Consent previously given or when Effective Consent previously given for the activity in question has been withdrawn."

IPS 1-12 defines "incapacitation" and "incapacitated" as:

"...the physical or mental inability to make informed, rational judgments. States of Incapacitation include, without limitation, sleep and blackouts. If alcohol or drug use is involved, a person does not have to be intoxicated or drunk to be considered Incapacitated. Rather, Incapacitation is determined by how the alcohol or drug consumed impacts a person's decision-making capacity,

awareness of consequences and ability to make informed judgments. Because Incapacitation may be difficult to discern, Volunteers and Trainees are strongly encouraged, when in doubt, to assume that another person is Incapacitated and therefore unable to give Effective Consent. Being intoxicated, drunk or under the influence of drugs is not a defense to a complaint of Sexual Misconduct under this policy.”

Peace Corps Manual section (MS) 284, “Early Termination of Service” provides that a Volunteer may be administratively separated for:

- Unsatisfactory conduct or performance;
- Violation of any Peace Corps policy, including those in the Peace Corps Manual, whether agency-wide or post-specific; or
- Other grounds that diminish the effectiveness of the Volunteer or the Peace Corps program, as determined in the sole discretion of the Peace Corps.

However, MS 284 also provides that a Volunteer has the right to resign from service *at any time, for any reason* (emphasis added).

While agency policy explicitly reserves the right to administratively terminate a Volunteer at any time at the pleasure of the President, agency policy and practice sets forth a series of requirements and parameters to take action. Moreover such decision must be taken in consultation with the Office of General Counsel.

Agency policy requires that when considering administrative separation for a Volunteer, the country director shall, in consultation with OGC, complete a brief “Consideration of Administrative Separation” memo stating the grounds for the separation and the information in support of those grounds. In cases where the agency has proposed administrative separation of a Volunteer based upon his/her conduct, the Volunteer has the option to *resign in lieu of administrative separation* up to 24 hours after a final administrative separation decision is made. Under agency procedures put in place in December 2015, the memo is forwarded to the director of placement and attaches to the separated Volunteer’s “talent record” for potential future candidacy purposes.

Adjudication decisions related to sexual misconduct of Volunteer/trainees (hereafter collectively referred to as Volunteers) is addressed in Peace Corps Interim Policy Statement (IPS) 1-12 and the implementing procedures. The policy provides that a Volunteer who is found to have engaged in sexual misconduct may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including administrative separation. In cases where the accused admits to all of the essential elements of sexual misconduct, the country director is authorized to take appropriate disciplinary action without the need to refer the case to a

hearing panel.^{12 13} In cases where the accused Volunteer has denied one or more of the essential elements of sexual misconduct and the matter will not be criminally prosecuted in the United States, the country director must refer the complaint to a hearing panel for resolution.

If the hearing panel finds under the preponderance of the evidence standard that the accused Volunteer engaged in sexual misconduct, the hearing panel will consider the appropriate disciplinary or other action to recommend. The hearing panel may recommend disciplinary action it finds to be fair and proportionate to the violation, and may recommend non-disciplinary actions such as changes to the site, work assignment, or housing arrangements of the accused Volunteer, and the imposition of a “no contact” order under which the accused is required to stay away from the complainant and refrain from having any form of contact with the complainant.

The hearing panel issues a report to the regional director after the hearing. The hearing panel’s report contains its findings as to whether the accused Volunteer engaged in sexual misconduct or otherwise violated IPS 1-12, and if so, its recommendation for disciplinary or other action. The regional director is bound by the hearing panel’s findings as to whether the accused engaged in sexual misconduct. However, if the regional director is not satisfied with the hearing panel’s findings on those issues, the regional director may request in writing that the hearing panel carry out additional hearings, setting out the reasons for that request. The regional director is not bound to accept the hearing panel’s recommendation, and may take different disciplinary or other action, or take no action.

Conclusion

During the relevant period, sexual assaults reported to the Peace Corps allegedly committed by Volunteers constituted approximately 5 percent of the overall sexual assaults reported.¹⁴ Such incidents are governed by agency’s sexual misconduct policy and other policies addressing separation and discipline of Volunteers. If the sexual assault occurs in the Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction (SMTJ) of the United States, the assault can be criminally prosecuted in the United States.¹⁵ The Peace Corps OIG makes such criminal referrals to the Department of Justice when appropriate.

¹² Additionally, in appropriate cases, the regional director may determine, in consultation with OGC, that the regional director or the region’s chief of operations should take the place of the hearing panel. The regional director may only make such a determination if the regional director or the region’s chief of operations, as the case may be, has received the same specialized training in the handling of complaints of sexual misconduct and in sexual assault awareness and victim sensitivity as is received by members of the hearing panel.

¹³ A hearing panel is composed of, for each region, a standing panel of three members (at least two of whom shall be returned Peace Corps Volunteers) selected by the regional director from a group of Peace Corps headquarters staff who have received specialized training in the handling of complaints of Sexual Misconduct and in sexual assault awareness and victim sensitivity.

¹⁴ See Figure 1 below.

¹⁵ See 18 USC §7(9). While a full discussion of the SMTJ is beyond the scope of this report, we note that a number of U.S. criminal laws apply outside of the United States. In some cases these laws are meant to apply to U.S. nationals who become a victim of crime abroad, or who are perpetrators of crimes abroad

The Peace Corps has numerous policies and procedures in place to address sexual misconduct between Volunteers, to include termination and a range of lesser penalties if such misconduct is substantiated. However, a Volunteer can and frequently does resign from the Peace Corps during the investigation, prior to the Peace Corps having an opportunity to substantiate the allegation and propose discipline or administrative separation. In 6 of 18 cases reviewed, Volunteers resigned without any adverse information being included in their files.

If a Volunteer is administratively separated from the Peace Corps or resigns in lieu of separation, the “Considering Administrative Separation” memo setting forth the grounds—which in cases involving sexual misconduct would include the relevant facts and circumstances—becomes part of the Volunteer’s record. In 4 out of 18 cases, Volunteers resigned in lieu of separation. OIG notes that the current process was revised in December 2015. During a 2014 audit of the Volunteer screening process, OIG found that the Peace Corps lacked a centralized or formal process for storing unfavorable Volunteer separations, including administrative separations or situations where the Volunteer resigned in lieu of separation. OIG made a series of recommendations for corrective action in the audit report.¹⁶

In reviewing the cases we also found two instances wherein the agency provided ‘interrupted service’ status to Volunteers who had been accused of sexual misconduct, rather than utilizing the sexual assault misconduct adjudication process. OIG is aware of at least one incident wherein a Volunteer subject of a sexual misconduct allegation was subsequently hired by the Peace Corps as a federal employee. As the result of information developed during an OIG investigation, the individual was not administratively separated, but rather the Volunteer’s request for an extension was denied. After closing service with an unblemished record, the individual was hired at Peace Corps headquarters.

QUESTION 2: TRAINING FOR HOST FAMILIES AND COWORKERS

Has the Peace Corps provided appropriate training to host families and host country coworkers to protect the safety of Peace Corps volunteers who are living with host families and working with host country nationals? If so, describe the training.

Ms. Greene’s Allegation

The OSC letter contained the following details related to this concern:

under certain conditions. Examples include when the crime is committed in a property owned, leased, or used for a government purpose such as at a Peace Corps post, training office, or similar site. Another circumstance relates to crimes occurring in residences used by the Peace Corps or its personnel, which may include residences where Volunteers or staff permanently reside.

¹⁶ See [Final Report on the Audit of Peace Corps Applicant Screening Process \(IG-14-04-A\)](#).

Specifically, Ms. Greene alleged that the Peace Corps has failed to provide adequate training to host families, coworkers, and supervisors regarding appropriate relationship boundaries. According to the whistleblower, many volunteers have reported being sexually harassed and sexually assaulted by members of their host families and by non-Peace Corps coworkers and supervisors. She described several cases in which members of host families, coworkers, and supervisors inappropriately touched volunteers and propositioned volunteers for sex. Ms. Greene was also aware of cases in which a member of a host family, coworker, or supervisor has raped or sexually assaulted a volunteer. She asserted that the first step in protecting Peace Corps volunteers from this kind of assault is conducting adequate training for the necessary parties, and said the Peace Corps has failed to do so.

Ms. Greene alleges generally that the Peace Corps does not involve OVA in developing training related to sexual assault even though the Kate Puzey Act provides that OVA "shall help develop and update the sexual assault risk-reduction and response training." 22 U.S.C. § 2507c(b)(1). Thus, OVA is not able to advise the Peace Corps on how to improve and implement training.

Ms. Greene, in providing additional details related to this question, said during an interview that the agency was aware of the magnitude of this problem through the Consolidated Incident Reporting System (CIRS), an automated system allowing users to review crime trends. She stated that despite the availability of this information, the agency has not developed training that specifically addresses appropriate relationship boundaries.

Summary of Investigative/Evaluative Steps Taken

OIG reviewed the agency's crime statistics related to sexual offenses by host families and counterparts to better understand the magnitude of the problem. OIG reviewed over a dozen OIG country program evaluations for findings or recommendations noting any related deficiencies in agency practice (see Appendix A for list of reports). OIG also reviewed agency policies and implementing procedures addressing the relevant aspects of the training provided to host family members and counterparts. Then, OIG evaluated whether Peace Corps policy adequately addressed the problem of Volunteer sexual assault by host families and counterparts, and if so, whether those policies and procedures were adequately implemented.

OIG interviews related to this topic included Ms. Greene, personnel from OVA, and personnel from the Office of Safety and Security.

Agency Reports Regarding Subject Matter

According to Peace Corps crime data, the agency received 781 reports of Volunteer sexual assault from January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2014. Sixteen percent were allegedly committed by a host family member, co-worker, or counterpart (see Figure 1).

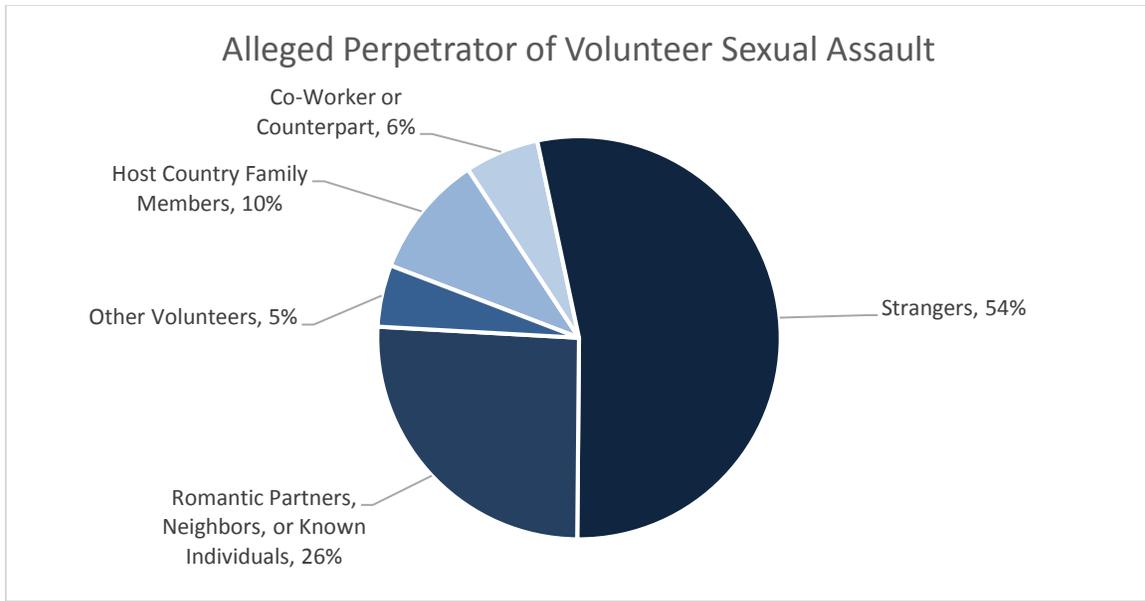


Figure 1: Alleged Perpetrator of Volunteer Sexual Assault. The percentages may not add to 100 due to multiple offenders in some cases. N = 781. *Source: Peace Corps Crime Data from January 2011 to December 2014.*

Relevant Agency Policy and Procedure

Concerning site development and monitoring, MS 270, “Volunteer/Trainee Safety and Security” requires each post to provide the Volunteer host community, host family, counterpart, and local officials with an “appropriate orientation in order to promote more welcoming communities, more supportive counterparts and authorities, and better-defined roles.” In addition, the agency has circulated site development and monitoring standards and procedures to which posts must adhere. These standards and procedures stipulate that “during the site selection process or pre-service training, Peace Corps must provide all designated host country counterparts with a Counterpart Orientation and all host families with a Host Family Orientation.”

The agency assigns the post’s safety and security staff the responsibility of ensuring that the briefings provided by Peace Corps overseas staff are conducted with counterparts and host families prior to a Volunteer’s arrival. From “Standard Operating Procedure: Counterpart and Host Family Briefings”:

- At a minimum, the briefings should include:
 - Cultural differences (dress, food, personal space, *gender relations*, etc.) [emphasis added]
 - What to do in event of an emergency (medical, crime, natural disaster, etc.)
 - Peace Corps contact information
 - Housing and sanitation standards
 - People the counterpart and host family should introduce to the Volunteer (local law enforcement, leaders in the community, etc.)
 - Peace Corps policy regarding medical treatment (Peace Corps approved medical facilities, etc.)
 - The important role of the counterpart in counseling the PCV on security issues such as adaptive conduct, appropriate dress, unsafe locations, and preferred transportation.

- An assessment of the hosts' and community's interest in supporting the Volunteer.
- The SSM will periodically review briefing material and make updates based on the Annual Crimes Trends Analysis, Volunteer Surveys, and post's Annual Risk Assessment.

Relevant OIG Post Evaluation Reports

OIG issued more than a dozen country program evaluation reports from 2012 to 2015.¹⁷ Our evaluations have not been designed to assess the sufficiency of training for host families, coworkers, and supervisors on how to set “appropriate relationship boundaries” with Volunteers. However, all OIG country program evaluations address relationships between Volunteers and their host families and counterparts, and make recommendations as needed to improve their selection and orientation to the Peace Corps and the role of the Volunteer. OIG evaluators ask several open-ended questions to Volunteers concerning these relationships. For example, we ask Volunteers if they have a counterpart, and if that counterpart was assigned to them by Peace Corps. We ask Volunteers to describe how well their counterparts support them to achieve their project objectives and integrate into their community. We ask for and analyze any comments Volunteers have about their counterpart relationships. We ask Volunteers to rate and comment on their satisfaction with their host family arrangement, and to provide any comments or suggestions related to their host family. We ask Volunteers if they have ever requested that the Peace Corps change their host family or site for safety and security reasons. In addition, we ask Volunteers a range of questions about any crimes or incidents that have affected them, including if they reported such incidents to the Peace Corps and how well the agency responded to them following their report.

In the context of these in-depth interviews Volunteers had several opportunities to express concerns they had about their relationships with counterparts, host family members, or others, which could have included concerns about how the Peace Corps selects and orients or trains these individuals. Volunteers and staff we interviewed in the context of these post evaluations did not express concerns regarding the agency's failure to train host family members, counterparts, or others about setting appropriate relationship boundaries. As a result, OIG did not issue any recommendations that the agency provide such training.

In addition, during country program evaluations, OIG assesses if overseas staff respond appropriately to Volunteer requests to move sites or host families due to security concerns. OIG did not identify systemic problems in this area or find the need to make recommendations in these evaluation reports to improve overseas staff handling of such concerns.

OVA Involvement in Developing Training

Ms. Greene specifically alleged that the Peace Corps did not involve the Office of Victim Advocacy in the process of developing or updating the agency's sexual assault risk

¹⁷ See Appendix A for a full list. OIG conducts in-depth interviews with a representative sample of twenty percent of all Volunteers in each country.

reduction and response training or policy, and that as a consequence she was not able to advise the Peace Corps on how to improve and implement training. OIG reported in its [Final Evaluation Report: The Peace Corps' Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response Program \(IG-17-01-E\)](#) that the Peace Corps had involved OVA in the initial development of SARRR training, as required by the Kate Puzey Act, and that recommendations from the office had been incorporated into revisions to the SARRR training sessions in 2014. OIG interviews and agency records provided in response to OIG request confirm that Ms. Greene played an integral role in formulating and giving a variety of sexual assault risk reduction trainings.

OIG interviewed David Fleisig, the chief of overseas operations for the Peace Corps Office of Safety and Security, who has held various positions within the office. He had an integral role in the agency's SARRR program and has served on numerous working groups to develop the programs and procedures related to Volunteer sexual assault. With respect to training of host families and counterparts, Chief Fleisig stated:

“While we do have some sexual assaults perpetrated by counterparts and in some rare cases, host family members, the vast majority of our sexual assaults are not committed by people that Peace Corps frequently interacts or works with. We do training with host country nationals – our counterparts – and we do training with host families that range on a number of topics, part of which is culture. Part of it is dealing with respect for cultural differences to include, in many cases, the American cultural perspective on gender relations and sex.

From that angle, I'm not really clear what more I could do, or the agency in this regards, to provide training to host country nationals that would lessen our volunteers' exposure to sexual assault.”

Chief Fleisig stated that training managers, who are often host country nationals themselves, are primarily responsible for providing training to host family members and counterparts on their responsibilities to Volunteers, and that training includes information related to cultural boundaries. That training is conducted in the local language and includes support from both headquarters and other staff at post.

The Peace Corps has not developed agency-wide training curriculum for staff to provide host families and counterparts, thus explaining why OVA has not yet contributed to the development of such training.

Conclusion

The law does not require the agency to provide training to host families or counterparts on establishing appropriate relationship boundaries. However, agency policy requires overseas staff to provide a range of training to host families and counterparts including “appropriate orientation in order to promote more welcoming communities, more supportive counterparts and authorities, and better-defined roles.” In reviewing OIG country program evaluations, the adequacy of the agency's training for host families and counterparts on how to set an appropriate relationship boundary with Volunteers has not

been identified as an issue that required management's attention or required corrective action.

Further, although Ms. Greene alleged that the Peace Corps had not involved OVA in developing or revising SARRR training, our evaluation reports on the implementation and effectiveness of the SARRR program have found that recommendations from OVA were incorporated into revisions to the SARRR training sessions in 2014. OIG interviews and agency records provided in response to OIG requests confirm that Ms. Greene played an integral role in a variety of sexual assault risk reduction trainings.

QUESTION 3: PROTECTING TRAVELING VOLUNTEERS

Has the Peace Corps taken adequate steps to protect the safety of Peace Corps volunteers who are traveling in countries of service where public transportation is inadequate? If so, describe the steps taken.

Ms. Greene's Allegation

Ms. Greene alleged through OSC that:

“Peace Corps has failed to take sufficient measures to protect Volunteers while they are traveling in their country of service. Peace Corps Volunteers are required to travel using the same form of transportation as host country nationals, including public buses or taxis. In locations that lack public transportation, sometimes a Volunteer's only option is to hitchhike.”

According to Ms. Greene, there have been many incidents of sexual assault, harassment, and other crimes against Volunteers while in transit, but the Peace Corps has not modified its policy. Ms. Greene asserted that the Peace Corps must update its policy to require that the Peace Corps provide transportation for Volunteers in areas where inadequate public transportation puts Volunteers at risk.

OIG interviewed Ms. Greene on April 22, 2016. During that interview Ms. Greene acknowledged that it was impractical to expect that the Peace Corps was capable of changing the behavior of host country nationals who come into contact with Volunteers while traveling in-country. Ms. Greene said her focus was on Volunteer site placement, explaining that on several occasions she told Peace Corps management that Volunteers should not be placed in sites where they would be required to use unsafe modes of transportation.

Summary of Investigative/Evaluative Steps Taken

First, OIG reviewed existing agency policy and procedures to determine whether they provided adequate internal controls or management supervision of Volunteer in-country transportation with respect to identifying, evaluating, or mitigating safety risks to Volunteers. Next, as mentioned above, OIG interviewed Ms. Greene to obtain additional details related to her allegation that the agency was not taking adequate steps to protect

the safety of Volunteers when traveling in country. OIG inquired into any specific instance of a failure on the part of the agency raised by Ms. Greene. Then, OIG reviewed our previous country program evaluations of individual post policies and operations to determine whether past OIG work had identified instances where posts had failed to consider transportation risks when placing Volunteers or had failed to take adequate steps to protect Volunteers during in-country travel. OIG also incorporated into this review relevant information from studies performed by either the agency or other entities on the agency's behalf. Finally, OIG reviewed whether such specific instances were representative of systemic issues that needed to be addressed on an agency-wide basis, as might be evidenced by the inclusion of the issues in a capstone report.¹⁸

In answering this question, OIG first evaluated whether agency policies and procedures cover the assessment and mitigation of transportation risks to the extent practicable. OIG assumes in its response to this question that by "inadequate public transportation" the concern is specifically about public transportation options that the agency has determined to be too unsafe for Volunteers to use. Because the Peace Corps operates in diverse environments throughout more than 60 developing countries, OIG could not evaluate each mode of transportation available in every country where the agency operates. However, OIG did review previous country program evaluations to determine whether and to what extent Volunteers or staff identified modes of transportation as being unsafe and whether the agency acted in accordance with its own policies and procedures.

Peace Corps Context

Much of the public transportation available in the countries where the Peace Corps operates could be considered generally inadequate on the basis of comfort, frequency, and convenience if the standard of comparison were to public transportation options available to travelers in the United States. Chief Fleisig noted that very few countries that welcome Peace Corps Volunteers have public transportation modes available that are as safe as those in the United States.

The Peace Corps Act of 1961 declared that it is the policy of the United States to promote world peace and friendship by sending "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 in meeting their needs..." An inherent risk of sending Volunteers abroad under conditions of hardship is exposure to less-developed public infrastructure and transportation. The Peace Corps tells applicants that "Volunteer sites can be susceptible to natural disasters, transportation accidents, and civil and political unrest. The Peace Corps provides extensive training and support to minimize these risks but they cannot be eliminated completely."¹⁹ The Peace Corps website

¹⁸ For example, such information may be included in (1) OIG's recurring issues reports, which were issued in 2012 and 2016 and discuss the most common recommendations OIG has made with respect to post operations; (2) OIG's management challenges, which are included in the agency's annual Agency Financial Report; or (3) a Management Advisory Report alerting management to systematic deficiencies [e.g., OIG's August 2016 "Management Advisory Report: Site History Files (IG-16-02-SR)].

¹⁹ Peace Corps Safety and Security website as of 4/1/2017 <https://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/health-and-safety/safety-and-security/>

includes documents to orient applicants to some of these risks, the agency's approach to safety and security, and the Volunteer's responsibilities related to safely utilizing public transportation.

Relevant Agency Policy and Procedure

Agency and post policies and procedures generally cover management's identification and evaluation of risks to Volunteer transportation, and the steps relevant staff are expected to take to mitigate those risks. Senior agency officials also provided OIG the rationale behind the policies and procedures.

Peace Corps MS 450, "Volunteer and Trainee Transportation," requires all overseas posts to have "written, post-specific transportation policy" for Volunteers, and to communicate those policies to Volunteers. This policy requires posts to promote the most reliable and safest transportation modes, times, and conditions. It further requires Volunteers to adhere to the post-specific travel policies, including when on official travel or personal leave to another post. MS 450 provides that a Volunteer's failure to comply with their post's transportation policies can be grounds for separation.

Related procedures to guide how overseas posts implement this policy provide that, in developing their post-specific transportation policy, each country director must consider several factors, including:

- The safest transportation option that is within the Volunteer living allowance
- Limiting Volunteer travel to daylight hours only
- Identifying transportation modes that Volunteers may not take due to inherent risk (such as motorcycle taxis)
- Safety equipment that Volunteers must use when travelling
- Specific guidance for travelling to the capital city or other urban areas that require precautions
- Ensuring that the post's time away from community policy is consistent with its travel policy
- Identifying areas of the country where Volunteers may not travel, and
- Designating responsibility to an individual staff member (usually the safety and security manager) for monitoring transportation issues in the country and providing recommendations

According to MS 450, each post must get concurrence of their regional director for any new or revised travel policies, and must communicate their transportation policy to Volunteers. Further, each post's transportation policy and procedures are periodically reviewed by Peace Corps safety and security officers as part of their Volunteer safety and security reviews at the post pursuant to MS 270, "Volunteer/Trainee Safety and Security."

In addition to MS 450, Peace Corps policy governing leave for Volunteers (MS 220, "Leave for Volunteers/Trainees") assigns responsibility to the country director for

determining that certain parts of the country may be designated as off-limits for purposes of Volunteer travel. Country directors must inform Volunteers if any parts of the country are off-limits for travel and Volunteers have to adhere to those restrictions at all times, including when they are on leave.

Further, MS 220 lays out policy related to Volunteer travel outside their country of service when on leave. The agency’s “out-of-country travel” policy states that a Volunteer must request approval from the country director for travel outside the country and get approval for such travel before departing. MS 220 gives the country director the authority to deny a Volunteer’s travel request to a particular destination if the agency has restricted travel there due to a serious safety and security risk. A country director may also deny a Volunteer’s travel request based on significant political or unique security considerations, and must deny a Volunteer’s request to travel to an area in another Peace Corps country which has been made off-limits for Volunteers by the country director in that country. MS 220 requires country directors to deny Volunteer travel to places designated as serious health risks by a Peace Corps medical officer, as well as to places that have been restricted by the Department of State for U.S. citizens.

The Scope of the Issue

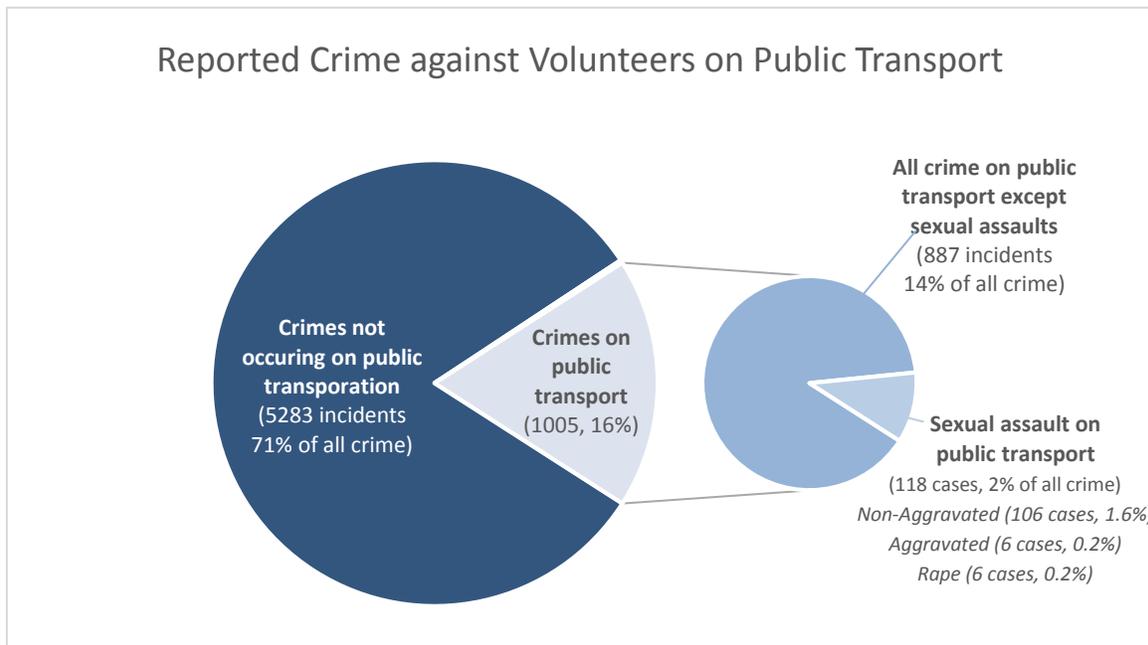


Figure 2: Reported Crime against Volunteers on Public Transport. Public transportation includes airplanes or air vehicle; boat or water vehicle; bus or minibus; subway/metro; transport station or stop; train; and taxi. Percentages are in relation to all crime in all locations. N = 6288. *Source: Peace Corps Crime Data from April 2012 to March 2016.*

OIG reviewed agency statistics on the nature of crime against Volunteers on public transportation. Approximately 16 percent of all crime reported to the Peace Corps occurred on public transportation, including taxis (see Figure 2). The most frequently

reported crime occurring on public transport was theft (77 percent) followed by non-aggravated sexual assault (11 percent) and robbery (6 percent). See Figure 3 below for a breakdown of crimes reported on public transportation. Approximately 13 percent of all reported sexual assaults occurred on public transportation (118 of 935 total incidents).

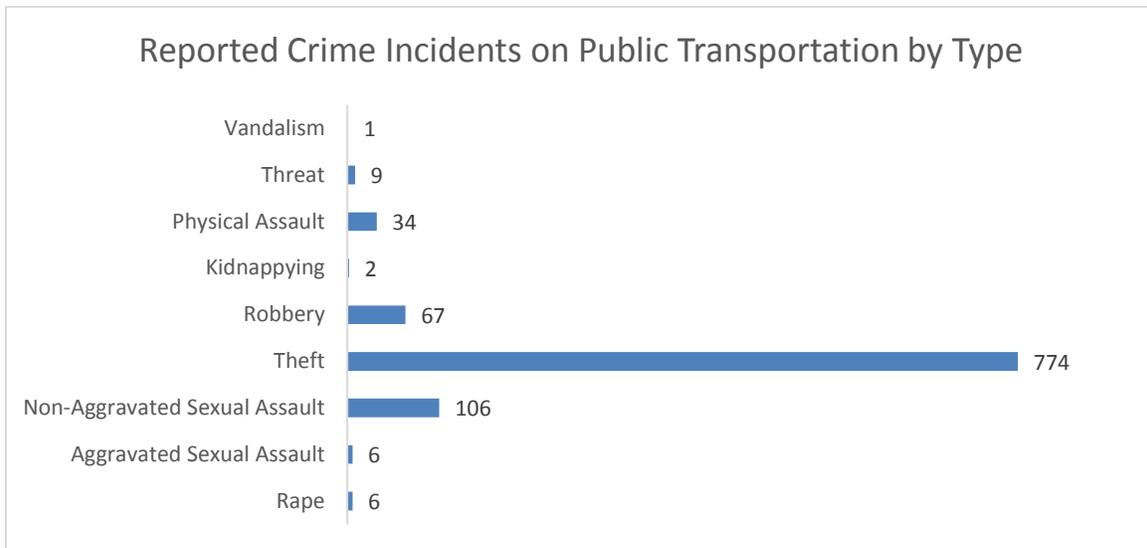


Figure 3: Public transportation includes airplanes or air vehicle; boat or water vehicle; bus or minibus; subway/metro; transport station or stop; train; and taxi. N = 1005. *Source: Peace Corps Crime Data from April 2012 to March 2016.*

Relevant OIG Post Evaluation Reports

OIG conducts routine country program evaluations of Peace Corps overseas operations. As part of those reviews, OIG evaluators assess aspects of the local Volunteer safety and security program, including the post’s transportation and Volunteer leave policies and procedures (including MS 270, MS 450, and MS 220). OIG has made a few specific recommendations specifically related to enhancing Volunteer safety and security while traveling, based on our country-specific evaluations.

Some examples are provided below (including examples from evaluation reports that we issued before 2012) to illustrate safety and security-related findings and recommendations about Volunteer transportation that OIG has brought to Peace Corps management’s attention through our evaluations:

- In our 2011 evaluation of **Peace Corps/Peru**,²⁰ OIG found that there were some Volunteer sites that could only be accessed by dirt roads which were impassable for long periods of time during the rainy season. We did not find evidence that Peace Corps/Peru had considered these heightened seasonal road risks during its site development process. Because these conditions posed a potential safety or security risk to those Volunteers, OIG recommended that Peace Corps/Peru immediately assess the year-round accessibility of all

²⁰ Final Report on the Country Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Peru (IG-12-03-E).

Volunteers (over 240 at the time), paying particular attention to those Volunteers whose site could only be accessed by driving through mountainous regions along narrow dirt roads with sharp turns and steep cliffs. We requested that Peace Corps/Peru identify measures to mitigate risks associated with traveling along the most treacherous roads to and from Volunteer sites. Peace Corps/Peru responded to those recommendations in a comprehensive and effective manner and took a range of steps to address the risks we had identified. The recommendations were closed.

- In our 2012 evaluation of **Peace Corps/Uganda**,²¹ OIG found that some Volunteers had been placed in sites that did not have reliable access to Peace Corps-approved transportation and were instead using motorcycle taxis. OIG recommended that Peace Corps/Uganda review and adjust its Volunteer transportation policy, confirm that Volunteers had post-approved transportation options for work-related or other necessary travel, and ensure that Volunteer transportation options were assessed during site development. Peace Corps/Uganda responded to these recommendations in a manner that allowed OIG to close them.
- In our 2013 evaluation of **Peace Corps/Namibia**,²² OIG found that Volunteers were hitchhiking as a primary mode of transportation, and recommended that the post review its Volunteer transportation policy and make adjustments as necessary to clearly articulate to Volunteers what forms of transportation were authorized for their use. Peace Corps/Namibia's response allowed OIG to close the recommendation related to transportation.
- In our 2015 evaluation of **Peace Corps/Sierra Leone**,²³ OIG found that Volunteers used motorcycle taxis in violation of the post's transportation policy. We recommended that the country director examine the transportation needs of Volunteers and, if necessary, seek approvals for proposed changes and update the transportation policy to include safe, accessible, and feasible options at all Volunteer sites. In addition, OIG recommended that the post ensure that staff follow site assessment procedures to accurately assess Volunteer transportation options. Peace Corps/Sierra Leone's responses allowed OIG to close the recommendations related to transportation.
- In addition, in our 2015 evaluation of **Peace Corps/Guatemala**,²⁴ OIG described actions that Peace Corps management took in 2011 to improve Volunteer safety in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras after identifying those three posts as having very high crime rates. OIG analyzed the steps the agency had taken which included suspending and eventually closing

²¹ Final Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Uganda (IG-12-06-E).

²² Final Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Namibia (IG-13-01-E).

²³ Final Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Sierra Leone (IG-15-01-E).

²⁴ Final Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Guatemala (IG-15-03-E).

operations in Honduras and establishing extra risk management resources, policies, and practices in both El Salvador and Guatemala.

To protect the safety of Volunteers traveling in Guatemala, the agency took several extraordinary risk mitigation steps. After determining that the public transportation options available to Volunteers along certain corridors and between certain cities were too unsafe due to the risk of serious crime, the Peace Corps provided an agency-operated shuttle service. Volunteers were prohibited from taking public buses along those routes, and were required to use the Peace Corps shuttle service instead.

The agency also instituted a stricter whereabouts reporting policy that required Volunteers in Guatemala to notify the Peace Corps when leaving their sites for the night “at all times without exception.” It required that Volunteers plan and seek approval from staff for events where groups of Volunteers would convene. It instituted a rule prohibiting actively serving Volunteers in other countries from visiting Guatemala, and a set of travel restrictions requiring Volunteers to obtain staff authorization to travel to areas of the country where no Volunteers were placed. The post’s 12-page transportation policy identified many towns and roads that were to be off-limits, and specified which departments of the country Volunteers could only visit with prior approval, and which they were prohibited from visiting. The transportation policy also limited Volunteers to specific modes of transportation in certain areas of the country.

OIG’s post evaluations have examined the safety and security environment and the support provided to Volunteers to deal with safety and security issues. Every post has a different safety and security environment and their own transportation policies to address these risks. When the agency has determined that the risks of travelling on public transportation in country are unacceptably high, the agency has at times taken aggressive steps to mitigate the risk such as directly providing a secure mode of transportation for all Volunteers (such as in Guatemala). Where we have seen gaps or opportunities for improvement, we have made recommendations to which management has generally been responsive.²⁵

Deputy Director Comments on Volunteers and Transportation Safety

Former Peace Corps Deputy Director Carlos Torres (DD Torres) told OIG that the issue of transportation safety is not limited to protecting Volunteers from being victims of sexual assault. The broader issue of transportation safety considers vehicle accident data and all crime data with the goal of identifying reasonably appropriate means for Volunteers to travel within country. Because many countries have unique challenges related to transportation, each post has developed its own transportation policy tailored to its needs. DD Torres said the agency looks to its country directors and post staff to

²⁵ See [Final Report on Recurring Issues: Common Challenges Facing Peace Corps Posts, Fiscal Years 2012-2015 \(IG-16-04-SR\), September 2016.](#)

monitor what's going on in their countries and respond with appropriate travel rules. He said post staff must consider transportation matters during site development and placement in order to minimize the likelihood that a Volunteer will be required to use unsafe transportation modes. He noted that country directors are assisted at the regional level by the regional security advisor, regional director, staff, and the Office of Safety and Security, all of whom are available to review crime statistics and transportation issues.

Conclusion

Crime occurring on public transportation, while a serious issue, overall possess less risk than crimes outside of public transportation. Only 16 percent of all crimes against Volunteers occurred on public transportation (see Figure 2 above).

Our post evaluations examined the safety and security environment and the support provided to Volunteers to deal with safety and security issues. Every post has a different safety and security environment and their own transportation policies to address these risks. However, the Peace Corps provides posts with policy and procedural guidance on incorporating key considerations into their country-specific transportation policies. In countries where the risks of travelling on public transportation are found to be unacceptably high, the agency has taken aggressive steps to mitigate the risk such as directly providing a secure mode of transportation for all Volunteers (as was done in Guatemala). Where we have seen gaps or opportunities for improvement, we have made recommendations to which management has generally management been responsive.²⁶

QUESTION 4: PROVISION OF COUNSELING SERVICES

Has the Peace Corps provided adequate counseling services to Peace Corps volunteers who have been victims of sexual assault during their service? If so, describe the nature and duration of services available to volunteers and the process by which the services are provided.

Ms. Greene's Allegation

Ms. Greene alleged that the Peace Corps denies victims of sexual assault prompt access to services and also artificially caps the number of services victims are permitted to receive. More specifically, Ms. Greene alleged that Peace Corps procedure requires victims who request counseling to wait days before they are contacted. When a victim contacts OVA directly to seek counseling, the Peace Corps' Office of Health Services requires OVA to refer Volunteers to the Peace Corps medical officer (PCMO). The medical officer then sends a consult for services for the Volunteer to the Counseling and Outreach Unit. The Counseling and Outreach Unit will not contact the Volunteer to arrange for counseling services unless the PCMO makes the request, even if OVA has

²⁶ See [Final Report on Recurring Issues: Common Challenges Facing Peace Corps Posts, Fiscal Years 2012-2015 \(IG-16-04-SR\), September 2016.](#)

already notified the Counseling and Outreach Unit of the Volunteer's stated need for counseling services.

OIG interviewed Ms. Greene on April 22, 2016. During that interview Ms. Greene stated that victims of sexual assault can only obtain counseling services by directly contacting a Peace Corps medical officer, even if they have already informed OVA or the headquarters Counseling and Outreach Unit. Ms. Greene stated that not only is this requirement impractical because of time zones and related delays, this requirement is not in keeping with a victim-centered, trauma-informed response.

Summary of Investigative/Evaluative Steps Taken

OIG reviewed the agency's policies and procedures with respect to the delivery of counseling services to Volunteer victims of sexual assault. Additionally, OIG reviewed information related to systems implemented to ensure that the agency met its obligations. Further, OIG interviewed Ms. Greene, current personnel assigned to OVA, and personnel from the Office of Safety and Security.

Finally, because counseling services are explicitly required under the Kate Puzey Act, OIG's evaluation of the agency's sexual assault program included an analysis of whether the agency had provided counseling when it was requested by the victim, and how long it took victims to receive the requested counseling support. OIG measured the time between the request for counseling services and the first counseling appointment. As described below, in performing work for our final evaluation report on the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response Program (IG-17-01-E) OIG conducted an extensive case review, and also interviewed Volunteers and staff (including staff from OHS and COU).

Relevant Agency Policy and Procedure

Counseling is among the eight services for victims of a sexual assault that the Kate Puzey Act requires the Peace Corps to address in its policy. The Peace Corps implements this policy through MS 243, "Responding to Sexual Assault," the implementing procedures for MS 243, and medical technical guideline (TG) 545, "Sexual Assault Mental Health Assessment and Care."

Specifically, TG 545 provides for evidence-based, trauma-informed care that meets the emotional needs of Volunteers who have been sexually assaulted. Section 6, "Psychological treatment in the immediate aftermath of a trauma," states that "psychotherapy in the immediate post-trauma period (i.e., first days up to one-month post-trauma) may be helpful for some assault survivors."

OIG interviews with OVA staff confirmed that the agency's process for delivering counseling services requires a victim to discuss the counseling request with the post PCMO first. However, the staff explained that the PCMO is best positioned to determine the nature and urgency of the counseling needed, and can pre-brief the assigned

counselor. OVA staff stated that in unique situations wherein the victim expressed a strong desire not to involve the PCMO, OVA was able to arrange counselling for the victim directly with the Counselling and Outreach Unit.

Relevant OIG Evaluation Reports

OIG issued a final evaluation report on the [Peace Corps Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response Program \(IG-17-01-E\)](#) in November 2016. We found that the Peace Corps' policy on counseling used evidence-based, trauma informed care based on established clinical practice guidelines.

We performed a representative review of sexual assault cases and found that the Peace Corps offered counseling to 100 percent of the Volunteers in our review (138 Volunteers). Fifty-seven percent requested counseling (79 cases), and 58 percent received counseling (80 cases).

We identified that some Volunteers had difficulty accessing counseling in a timely manner. Eighty-six percent of the Volunteers who requested counseling began treatment within four weeks. However, 14 percent of the Volunteers waited more than four weeks. OIG was not able to determine the date of counseling in 14 of the 79 cases. Based on the documents provided to OIG, it was difficult to determine the reasons for these delays and no trends were identified.

There were six cases where psychiatric medications were prescribed to the Volunteer as part of the treatment plan (four percent). We did not identify any cases where psychiatric medications were denied to a Volunteer.

In addition to the case review, we conducted in-depth interviews with 11 current or former Volunteers who were willing to give their perspective on their experience. Two of the 11 Volunteers mentioned the difficulty they had in receiving timely, quality counseling at their home of record in the U.S. during a medical evacuation.

Other Volunteers we interviewed were treated by the Counseling and Outreach Unit and were satisfied with the care they received. This included two Volunteers whose care was provided in the Washington, D.C. office and one Volunteer who used tele-counseling in their country of service.

However, one Volunteer who received care from the Counseling and Outreach Unit noted difficulty reaching the unit by phone because of host country communications limitations, and also commented that the final counseling session ended abruptly without closure.

Five of the 11 Volunteers interviewed received counseling services from someone in their country of service. Two of these Volunteers mentioned that they were very satisfied with the quality of care they received.

Our evaluation found that the agency lacked “access to care” standards for mental health treatment. In discussions with the 11 current and former Volunteers, some noted they had experienced delays receiving their counseling services. One Volunteer expressed that although they reported a sexual assault to the post’s safety and security office in August, they were not able to start in-country counseling until December. The counselor commented on the psychological impact of this delay in their treatment summary note. As a result of the delay, the Volunteer was distressed, frustrated, and disappointed by the Peace Corps’ apparent lack of support.

The delays in victims receiving timely counseling services was also impacted by the Peace Corps not having a timeliness standard for when a victim should receive mental health treatment following a sexual assault. While TG 545 states that counseling can be most helpful when started within a month after trauma, the guidelines do not specify a requirement for how quickly counseling should be provided after a victim has requested this service. Furthermore, there are no guidelines for Volunteers or staff on how to notify management if counseling services are not being provided in a timely manner.

We noted that without timely mental health care, the Peace Corps did not provide compassionate support to some victims who have requested counseling support. This frustrated those victims, delayed the victims’ recovery, and may have undermined the credibility of the Peace Corps’ SARRR program. To address this issue, OIG recommended:

That the Director develop and implement mental health access to care timeliness standards for victims of sexual assault with a mechanism to notify management when these standards are not met.

In addition, OIG identified an area of confusion concerning the policy governing the number of counseling sessions available to Volunteers following a sexual assault. OIG found that staff and Volunteers had a mistaken belief that they were limited to six or fewer counseling sessions after a sexual assault. The Peace Corps had several medical guidance documents related to the provision of counseling for Volunteers. One specified a limit for in-country counseling sessions for adjustment disorders (TG 510). Another document, which specifically addressed mental health counseling following a sexual assault, outlined a case-by-case approach that may take two to three months (TG 545).

As a result, some PCMOs were providing incorrect information to Volunteers about the availability of counseling. We concluded that some Volunteer sexual assault survivors could have been deterred from reporting their need for counseling for fear of exceeding a perceived limit of authorized counseling sessions, and facing the prospect of separation from the Peace Corps as a result. To address this issue, OIG recommended:

That the Director develop specific guidance to Peace Corps medical officers to clarify the standards and expectations for the provision of counseling services, and communicate that guidance to Volunteers.

The agency concurred with both recommendations, which remain open.

Conclusion

The Peace Corps offered counseling to 100 percent of the Volunteers in our review (138 Volunteers). Fifty-seven percent requested counseling (79 cases), and 58 percent received counseling (80 cases). Eighty-six percent of the Volunteers who requested counseling began treatment within four weeks. However, 14 percent of the Volunteers waited more than four weeks. Based on the documents provided to OIG, it was difficult to determine the reasons for these delays and no trends were identified.

As noted above, OIG issued a recommendation addressing the confusion concerning the policy governing the number of counseling sessions available to Volunteers following a sexual assault. The agency concurred with the recommendation. OIG also identified that the agency lacked a timeliness standard related to Volunteers' access to counseling services and issued a recommendation to address that deficiency. The agency concurred with OIG recommendations in this area and is formulating its plan to address them.

QUESTION 5: FAILURE TO INFORM OVA

Has the Peace Corps failed to inform OVA when volunteers receive requested counseling services, when volunteers who have been victims of sexual assault leave service, and when there are updates on criminal proceedings related to crimes against volunteers? If so, please specify the number of times and year(s) in which the Peace Corps failed to provide this information.

Ms. Greene's Allegation

Ms. Greene stated that there was no mechanism in place to ensure that information related to the status of in-country criminal court proceedings was getting to OVA, so that OVA was able to keep a Volunteer victim informed, as mandated in the Kate Puzey Act.

Summary of Investigative/Evaluative Steps Taken

OIG interviewed senior staff within OVA, Office of General Counsel, and OSS to determine the frequency of the concern and, if it existed, whether it has been resolved.

Relevant Agency Policy and Procedure

The Kate Puzey Act provides:

- (1) VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT.—The Office of Victim Advocacy shall help develop and update the sexual assault risk-reduction and response training described in section 8A and the sexual assault policy described in section 8B, ensure that volunteers who are victims of sexual assault receive services specified in section 8B(c), and facilitate their access to such services.
- (2) OTHER CRIMES.—In addition to assisting victims of sexual assault in accordance with paragraph (1), the Office of Victim Advocacy shall assist volunteers who are victims of crime by

making such victims aware of the services available to them and facilitating their access to such services.

(3) PRIORITY.—The Office of Victim Advocacy shall give priority to cases involving serious crimes, including sexual assault and stalking.

(c) STATUS UPDATES.—The Office of Victim Advocacy shall provide to volunteers who are victims regular updates on the status of their cases if such volunteers have opted to pursue prosecution.

Before March 2016, the agency did not have a centralized case management system that would allow designated staff or others involved in providing or overseeing the provision of services to a Volunteer victim to easily share information about the status of any particular case. On March 1, 2016, the Coordinated Agency Response System Case Management System (CARS CMS) was launched agency-wide. While OIG has not yet assessed the effectiveness of CARS CMS, its purpose and design are directly related to addressing the need for staff involved in sexual assault case management, including OVA, to have information and awareness regarding the status of all required and requested services to the victim. The agency's CARS CMS user guide provides this description of the system:

In accordance with Manual Section 243 (MS 243) and the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011, Peace Corps has developed a comprehensive, compliant and coordinated response to incidences of sexual assault called the Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response (SARRR). This coordinated response involves the cooperation of a network of stakeholders, all focused on the offer and delivery of services to support Volunteers. To enhance this response and care process, and be compliant with Federal law, Peace Corps has developed CARS CMS – a centralized, electronic, standardized, and authoritative process for documenting agency responses to crimes of this nature.

The Coordinated Agency Response System (CARS) Case Management System (CMS) serves as the centralized case management system to manage incidents in which Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) are victims of crime. CARS CMS enables the agency to effectively respond to victims of crime, communicate across offices to provide timely support services, track the overall progress of cases, monitor & evaluate the response program, and support evidence-based decision making.

CARS CMS serves as a case management system focused on centralizing and standardizing the documentation of three core areas that support the dynamic and complex SARRR process: 1) Case communications, 2) the offer and provision of support services, and 3) compliance with Federal law and MS 243. These three core areas are documented in CARS CMS according to the Three C's:

1. Compliance: Documentation of the offering, acceptance or rejection, and delivery of services to Volunteers in response to incidences of sexual assault.
2. Communications: Details from CARS calls (a central tenet of the SARRR), as well as related email and phone communications that bring key stakeholders together and keep information current about cases.
3. Collaboration: CARS CMS provides a secure platform where users can record and choose to share case information across offices.

Chief Fleisig stated that before the implementation of CARS CMS there may have been specific cases in which Ms. Greene was not provided with updated information related to a case, but he was not aware of any willful intent on anyone's part to withhold information from her or OVA. He stated that only recently did the agency implement a

centralized case management system, and until then, there was the possibility that on rare occasion someone was not provided necessary information. He said established procedures sometimes broke down, and those breakdowns were dealt with as a performance issue.

An Office of General Counsel attorney told OIG that in some instances the victim's in-country attorney has information related to the victim's in-country trial that is not shared with Peace Corps staff because of attorney-client privilege. The attorney explained that the hired attorney is precluded from sharing the information with staff, to include OVA, absent a specific waiver of privilege.

According to the current OVA Director Da Shawwna Townsend, the CARS CMS now provides OVA staff with up-to-date information related to the statuses of counseling services provided to victims, their Peace Corps service, and in-country criminal prosecutions. Additionally, improved communication between OVA, the Office of Health Services, OGC, and the Office of Safety and Security help ensure that information related to a victim's case is shared in a timely manner with all involved staff. OVA Director Townsend replaced Ms. Greene in April 2016, and stated that she was unaware of any situation since her arrival wherein OVA staff was not provided up-to-date information by other staff offices.

Conclusion

Before March 2016, the agency did not have a centralized case management system that would allow designated staff or others involved in providing or overseeing the provision of services to a Volunteer victim to easily share information about the status of any particular case.

Putting in place a case management system had long been a concern of OIG. In a 2012 evaluation report²⁷ OIG found that:

The agency did not use a centralized case management system to verify sexual assault response requirements had been fulfilled and to assess performance and provide feedback to responders to make process improvements. The lack of a centralized system makes it difficult to confirm the quality or consistency of victim care provided or to identify and correct lapses in services or response to victims.

As a result, we recommended the agency implement a centralized sexual assault case management system encompassing Volunteer sexual assault response, care, and support activities, and use the case management system to assess staff performance and identify any needed adjustments in its policies and procedures. We noted in our "2013 Final Evaluation Report: Peace Corps Volunteer Sexual Assault Policy" that at the time, with the exception of the Office of Health Services medical case management systems, "the

²⁷ [Final Report: Review of the Peace Corps' Implementation of Guidelines Related to Volunteer Victims of Rape and Sexual Assault \(IG-12-08-E\)](#)

agency does not have a centralized system or method whereby staff can document the services that were offered to Volunteers, the information provided regarding those services, and whether Volunteers chose to avail themselves of applicable services.”²⁸

While OIG has not yet assessed the effectiveness of the agency’s case management system, its purpose and design are directly related to addressing the need for staff involved in sexual assault case management, including OVA, to have information and awareness regarding the status of all required and requested services to the victim. The new system provides OVA staff with up-to-date information related to the statuses of counseling services provided to victims, their Peace Corps service, and in-country criminal prosecutions. Additionally, staff from offices involved in the response to Volunteers who were victims of sexual assault reported improved communication between OVA, the Office of Health Services, OGC, and the Office of Safety and Security, which help ensure that relevant information related to a victim’s case is shared in a timely manner with all involved staff.

QUESTION 6: KATE PUZEY ACT VIOLATIONS

Did any Peace Corps employee violate the Kate Puzey Act with respect to Ms. Greene's allegations? If so, please identify the individual(s) and specify what provision was violated.

Ms. Greene’s Allegation

Ms. Greene did not specifically allege that individual Peace Corps staff violated the Kate Puzey Act. Her allegations were rather focused on the agency as a whole.

Summary of Investigative/Evaluative Steps Taken

OIG interviewed several Peace Corps senior staff and conducted numerous program evaluations that addressed the overall concerns raised by Ms. Greene. As is described in this report, the Kate Puzey Act generally requires the agency to implement a number of policies and programs, and broadly outlines requirements for those policies and programs.

Although Ms. Greene’s complaint and interview responses lack specificity with respect to individuals, we reviewed work outlined in Peace Corps OIG Semiannual Reports to Congress from 2012 to the present and in Peace Corps OIG Biennial Reports to Congress²⁹ from 2012 to 2016 regarding instances where Volunteers alleged that agency staff had mishandled or mismanaged a sexual assault response. A summary of the cases published in our semiannual report is provided in our response to Question 7. Summaries of the cases in the biennial reports are included below. A description of OIG’s process for assessing and resolving allegations is included in Appendix B.

²⁸ 2013 Final Evaluation Report: Peace Corps Volunteer Sexual Assault Policy (IG-14-02-E).

²⁹ See Section 2, §(d)(1)(A) of the Kate Puzey Volunteer Protection Act of 2011.

As part of the evaluation of sexual assault training and policy, OIG also reviewed 138 cases to determine if the eight services required by the Kate Puzey Act were offered to Peace Corps Volunteers who were victims of sexual assaults. The Kate Puzey Act also requires the Peace Corps to remove Volunteers from a site if there is a risk of imminent bodily harm. For the purpose of the case review, site change was treated as another service that the Peace Corps offered to Volunteers. OIG attempted to assess, based on available documentation as well as the interviews with sexual assault survivors, if the agency's response had been in keeping with its commitment to provide "a compassionate and supportive response to all Volunteers who have been sexually assaulted."³⁰ OIG did find limited cases where the agency did not meet that standard. An example of such cases include cases where Volunteers were unable to begin counseling in a timely manner. See OIG response to Question 7 for additional detail. While these cases represented a departure from a standard set out in Peace Corps policy implementing the Kate Puzey Act, such cases did not evidence a violation of the law.

Additionally, while this review was not conducted explicitly to identify if any Peace Corps employee had violated the requirements of the Kate Puzey Act, the evaluators were looking for evidence that the Peace Corps had responded to victims according to the Act's requirements, and were alert to evidence of possible sexual assault mismanagement (as required by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's Quality Standards for Inspections and Evaluations). As a result, 1 of the 138 cases was referred for investigation, which determined that no laws had been violated.

Summary of Peace Corps OIG Biennial Reports to Congress from 2012 – 2016

In accordance with section 8E(d)(1)(A) of the Peace Corps Act, OIG must provide a report compiling, among other things, complaints and allegations we have received from Volunteers about staff misconduct or mismanagement.³¹ The biennial reports are not limited strictly to allegations of sexual assault response mismanagement or allegations associated with sexual assaults; however, those allegations are the most similar to Ms. Greene's general allegations. In these biennial reports, OIG reviewed hundreds of allegations by Volunteers, individuals who are likely to be the ones to report that a sexual assault response is being mismanaged.

Between October 1, 2012, and September 30, 2016, OIG received approximately 338 complaints from Volunteers that alleged agency staff had committed misconduct or mismanagement. Of those complaints, 17 alleged the agency mismanaged or mishandled

³⁰ This standard is a requirement under Peace Corps Manual Section MS 243, *Procedures for Responding to Sexual Assault*.

³¹ While there is no clear definition for either term, "mismanagement" allegations generally involve poor or uninformed performance on the part of an employee, whereas "misconduct" allegations generally involve behavior that violates a law, regulation, policy, or is otherwise unacceptable. Cases involving allegations of both types were reviewed for this report.

a response to a sexual assault.³² While a preliminary inquiry was opened for each allegation, not every allegation resulted in a full investigation and many complaints were referred to the agency. (See Appendix B for a summary of OIG’s investigative process for assessing complaints and allegations.)

We reviewed the cases in the biennial reports for instances where (1) OIG found evidence and relevant facts that may substantiate serious misconduct or mismanagement in a sexual assault response or (2) the agency informed us of action taken in response to an alleged sexual assault response mismanagement which we had referred to them. Note that in some cases, the agency may have taken action as a result of an OIG referral without informing OIG. The four cases are outlined below:³³

Allegation # 1 [2014 Report Allegation #96]

OIG received an allegation from a Volunteer regarding the mismanagement of a fellow Volunteer’s sexual assault. The informant claimed that the victim’s assailant (also a Volunteer) should have been administratively separated following the sexual assault allegations. The informant further alleged that two additional Volunteers were subsequently assaulted by the assailant, and that those attacks could have been prevented had the post administratively separated the Volunteer after the initial assault. The victim also reported the incident and OIG conducted a full investigation. The investigation determined that the assailant did engage in sexual activity with the victim while the victim was intoxicated—a violation of the Peace Corps “Interim Policy Statement 1-12 Volunteer/Trainee Sexual Misconduct.” However due to “lack of clear outcome given conflicting statements and no corroboration,” the post decided not to administratively separate the assailant, but took measures to ensure the accused and victim did not come into contact with one another. The allegation was referred to the OIG Evaluation Unit.

Allegation #2 [2016 Report Allegation #104]

OIG received a hotline complaint from a Volunteer alleging a high rate of sexual assault at the post and generally alleging a feeble and ineffective response by the Peace Corps. OIG reviewed sexual assault cases from this post during its congressionally mandated review of the Peace Corps’ response to sexual assaults. This allegation was referred to Peace Corps management and an internal management consultancy team was sent to the post. Peace Corps management prepared a report documenting their findings and, subsequently, OIG closed its inquiry.

³² Not all allegations involving a sexual assault were necessarily related to a mismanaged response to a sexual assault. For example, a Volunteer may allege that an employee improperly disclosed information related to a sexual assault in an incident unrelated to the agency response to the sexual assault itself.

³³ For some allegations, the OIG Investigation Unit, in addition to referring matters to agency management, also referred allegations to the attention of the OIG Evaluation Unit for consideration. Those referred allegations were given due consideration and informed further OIG evaluation work, as appropriate.

Allegation #3 [2016 Report Allegation #108]

OIG received a hotline complaint from a Volunteer concerning the Office of Victim Advocacy mistakenly sending a survey for Volunteers who reported sexual assaults to the Volunteer's parent. This allegation was referred to the Peace Corps Safety and Security Office, which implemented a new process of manually checking Volunteer contact information to ensure a similar mistake would not occur again in the future.

Allegation #4 [2016 Report Allegations #148, 150]

OIG received hotline complaints from a Volunteer alleging that, among other allegations, a post staff member breached confidentiality, acted unprofessionally, and did not take sexual assault allegations seriously. The Volunteer also alleged that key post staff engaged in victim blaming after the Volunteer experienced numerous instances of harassment and an aggravated sexual assault. OIG subsequently reviewed the allegations and determined that the correct course of action was to refer those matters raised to agency management. While OIG did not substantiate serious misconduct or mismanagement on the part of staff, the post country director reported that the safety and security manager was counseled to ensure compliance with relevant agency policy on confidentiality. The matter was also referred to the OIG Evaluation Unit.

Conclusion

As is described previously, the Kate Puzey Act required the agency to implement a number of policies and programs, and broadly outlines requirements for those policies and programs.

An OIG evaluation did find limited cases where the agency did not meet its commitment to provide "a compassionate and supportive response to all Volunteers who have been sexually assaulted." As part of a 2016 OIG evaluation, we reviewed 138 cases to determine if the 8 services required by the Kate Puzey Act were offered to Peace Corps Volunteers who were victims of sexual assaults. While this review was not conducted explicitly to identify if any Peace Corps employee had violated the requirements of the Kate Puzey Act, the evaluators were looking for evidence that the Peace Corps had responded to victims according to the Act's requirements, and were alert to evidence of possible sexual assault mismanagement. As a result, 1 of the 138 cases reviewed was referred for investigation, which determined that no laws had been violated.

While these cases represented a departure from a standard set out in Peace Corps policy implementing the Kate Puzey Act, except for the case referred to investigations, such cases did not evidence a violations of the law.

Additionally, between October 1, 2012, and September 30, 2016, OIG received approximately 17 complaints from Volunteers that alleged the agency mismanaged its

response to a sexual assault. While preliminary inquiries were opened for each complaint, there were 4 cases in the OIG biennial reports where OIG substantiated serious misconduct or mismanagement involving a response to a sexual assault or where the agency informed OIG that it had taken action to respond to an allegation of sexual assault response mismanagement that OIG had referred to agency management.

QUESTION 7: RESPONSE TO SEXUAL ASSAULT AGAINST VOLUNTEERS

Has the Peace Corps appropriately managed its response to instances of sexual assault against volunteers?

Ms. Greene's Allegation

Ms. Greene provided OIG several examples of the agency's failure to appropriately respond to Volunteer victims of sexual assault. She said victims were not provided clear information related to counseling options or updated information related to the status of criminal prosecutions, that staff engaged in victim blaming behavior, and that staff was reluctant to take steps that harmed the reputation of Volunteer assailants.

Summary of Investigative/Evaluative Steps Taken

During the relevant timeframe, OIG has conducted a number of agency-wide evaluations and investigations that address this question. Please see below:

- [Review of the Peace Corps' Implementation of Guidelines Related to Volunteer Victims of Rape and Sexual Assault](#)
This September 2012 report assessed the Peace Corps' response to victims of sexual assault.
- [Management Advisory Report: Agency Policies Related to Volunteer Sexual Assault Allegations](#)
This November 2014 report advises the Peace Corps of concerns the OIG identified during an investigation of a Volunteer on Volunteer sexual assault.
- [Peace Corps Volunteer Sexual Assault Policy](#)
This November 2013 report assessed the progress the Peace Corps had made toward instituting a sexual assault policy.
- [Peace Corps Sexual Assault Risk-Reduction and Response Training](#)
This November 2013 report assessed the progress the Peace Corps had made in training Volunteers about sexual assault risk reduction and response.
- [The Peace Corps' Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response Program](#)
This November 2016 report contains OIG's evaluation of the effectiveness and implementation of the training and policy, in addition to a review of a statistically significant number of sexual assault cases.

Additionally, during the relevant time frame the OIG Investigation Unit conducted numerous investigations focused on sexual assault mismanagement allegations. By way

of example, four of these investigations are provided below and were summarized in our Semiannual Reports to Congress.

Concerns Related to Staff Handling of Sexual Assault Allegation at a Post in Eastern Europe/Central Asia³⁴

Senior management notified OIG that a post in Eastern Europe/Central Asia had received a second third-party allegation that a Volunteer had been sexually assaulted by another Volunteer at a bar. The senior manager informed OIG that the post had received a similar complaint a week earlier, but had not reported the matter to OIG. During the course of OIG's investigation into the alleged assault, the accused Volunteer resigned. Because of concerns related to the Peace Corps' handling of the third-party allegations of Volunteer sexual misconduct, OIG initiated this related investigation. OIG learned that the initial sexual assault complaint was not reported to the Office of Victim Advocacy, OIG, or the U.S. embassy regional security officer because of staff's confusion over agency reporting requirements. OIG also identified a concern expressed by several Volunteers about their inability to report sexual assaults directly to an American assigned at the post, rather than having to report to host country staff who may have different cultural views that inhibit disclosure of sensitive information. OIG issued "Management Advisory Report: Agency Policies Related to Volunteer Sexual Assault Allegations," that addressed these issues (see the Advice and Assistance section of this report).

Conflict of Interest, Breach of Confidentiality, Retaliation, and Sexual Harassment³⁵

Allegation at a Post in the Pacific OIG received a complaint containing several allegations that staff at a post in the Pacific breached a Volunteer's confidentiality and retaliated against a Volunteer for filing a complaint. This occurred among other alleged violations. The investigative findings did not support that a staff member had breached the Volunteer's confidentiality or that staff had retaliated against the Volunteer for filing a complaint. However, the investigation uncovered facts that would support several violations of the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch by the staff member. The matter was referred to the agency.

Staff Handling of a Sexual Assault Allegation at a Post in the Caribbean³⁶

³⁴ Peace Corps Office of Inspector General Semiannual Report to Congress, October 1, 2014-March 31, 2015, p. 30.

³⁵ Peace Corps Office of Inspector General Semiannual Report to Congress, April 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015, p. 41.

³⁶ Peace Corps Office of Inspector General Semiannual Report to Congress, April 1, 2014-September 30, 2014, p. 41

As reported above, a Volunteer alleged being sexually assaulted by another Volunteer at the accused Volunteer's residence. OIG found that a staff member at the post failed to provide the victim with required information related to prosecutorial options for cases involving assaults by Volunteers or staff, as required by agency policy and procedures. OIG also determined that post staff failed to properly input the alleged offense into the agency's crime reporting database and, in doing so, delayed the notification of law enforcement personnel and security personnel at the U.S. embassy. Furthermore, a staff member at post received a legal opinion from the victim's in country attorney via email that was to be translated into English for the victim. After translating the legal opinion for the victim, the staff member then improperly shared the confidential report via email with six Peace Corps staff she believed had "a need to know." OIG identified additional concerns related to the hiring of two attorneys representing the victim to provide her with information related to prosecutorial and legal options; one attorney was located in the host country, and the second was located in Washington, D.C. First, OIG could not identify a statutory authority for the Peace Corps to hire legal counsel to represent the victim in circumstances where a victim is weighing whether to convert his/her restricted report into a standard report. The Kate Puzey Act provides for retention of counsel in cases limited to supporting Volunteers "who are parties, complaining witnesses, or otherwise participating in the prosecution of crimes committed against such volunteers." Second, while the report remained restricted, the host country attorney representing the victim interviewed two Volunteer witnesses. The witnesses were interviewed with the knowledge of post and headquarters staff, and were transported from their sites to the capital for interviews at the government's expense. The interviews conducted by the attorney negatively impacted OIG's subsequent criminal investigation. The victim was not informed about the possible consequences of such interviews and it is not clear that the interviews are consistent with the agency's restricted reporting policies. Third, while Peace Corps staff also retained an attorney in Washington, D.C., to advise the victim on law enforcement and prosecutorial options available in the U.S., a review of the attorney's résumé indicated that the attorney did not have prior experience as a prosecutor (federal, state, or local) or extensive experience handling sexual assault cases. Finally, the agency's procedures for responding to sexual assaults in effect at that time did not authorize the hiring of a U.S.-based attorney, so the agency subsequently changed the procedures without a review or comment by all affected stakeholders. For example, OIG was not given an opportunity to make comments even though this change impacted cases OIG investigates (i.e. potential criminal cases occurring in the Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction of the U.S.).

In response to the report, the agency committed to providing enhanced training to Peace Corps medical officers highlighting their responsibility to provide victims with the required information sheet on prosecutorial options when the alleged perpetrator is another Volunteer or staff member. The agency advised OIG that it intends to continue its practice of retaining attorneys to provide victims with information on law enforcement and prosecutorial options, including the merits of

their case. The agency stated that providing such information constitutes “legal advice,” and that its Office of General Counsel is prohibited from providing legal advice to Volunteers. Even if it were not prohibited, the agency asserts it lacks the expertise to advise Volunteers on prosecutorial options. The agency asserted it will continue supporting private attorneys interviewing witnesses, dismissing OIG’s concerns that doing so may interfere or damage OIG criminal investigations or U.S. prosecutions of sexual assault crimes against Volunteers. Additionally, the agency confirmed there is no required time frame for converting a restricted report to a standard report in the agency’s crime reporting database and that, as a result, the Office of Safety and Security will begin a review of the matter in November 2014 with the aim of establishing a time frame. The agency also reports it has modified the statement of work for the attorneys it intends to retain on behalf of Volunteers to include strengthened provisions on attorney-client communications. Furthermore, the agency stated it will revise its procedures to remind staff responsible for communicating with Volunteers’ attorneys that the attorney-client relationship is between the attorney and the Volunteer and not between the attorney and the Peace Corps and that any written communications from the Volunteer’s attorney to staff (e.g., for the purpose of translation) should be distributed only to the Volunteer and not to other staff members.

Sexual Assault Mismanagement at a Post in Central America³⁷

OIG received an allegation that the country director continually failed to adequately report sexual assaults. OIG initiated an investigation into the country director’s compliance with sexual assault reporting requirements. It was discovered that although the country director had previously been counseled by management regarding the failure to adequately report two assaults, there were three additional incidents of sexual assaults not appropriately reported within the reporting requirements. The results of the investigation were forwarded to the agency for administrative action as appropriate. The country director received a written letter of counselling from agency management for failing to generate the reports.

Moreover, as outlined in Question 6, the Kate Puzey Act mandates that every two years, OIG provide compiled reports on, among other matters, complaints and allegations we have received from Volunteers about staff misconduct or mismanagement. The scope of these reports cover matters well beyond complaints regarding sexual assaults or sexual assault mismanagement/mishandling but include any allegations reported to OIG by a

³⁷ Peace Corps Office of Inspector General Semiannual Report to Congress, October 1, 2011-March 31, 2012, p. 31

Volunteer regarding Peace Corps staff. These reports provide an understanding of how Peace Corps handles complaints.³⁸

Taken together the reports address the concerns outlined by Ms. Greene.

Relevant Agency Policy and Procedure

The Kate Puzey Act, enacted in 2011, requires that the Peace Corps ensure quality response and support for victims of sexual assault and other crimes. The Peace Corps established agency-wide policy and procedures for responding to Volunteer sexual assaults in 2013. The agency's implementing policy and procedures are in MS 243, "Procedures for Responding to Sexual Assault." MS 271 also addresses the Volunteer's right to report violations of law and policy free from retribution.

Relevant OIG Evaluation Reports

As noted previously, OIG issued a final evaluation report on the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response Program (IG-17-01-E) in November 2016. As previously noted, for that report OIG reviewed 138 reported cases (a statistically significant sample of the 513 reported sexual assaults between September 3, 2013 and September 29, 2015) of sexual assault to determine if the services required by the Kate Puzey Act had been offered to Volunteers.

The OIG also interviewed victims in 11 of these 138 cases to gain the Volunteers' perspective on the Peace Corps' response. The information provided by these Volunteers supplemented the information gained by reviewing the documents provided by the Peace Corps.

In general, the required services were offered to almost every Volunteer who reported a sexual assault to the Peace Corps. OIG assessed that the documentation of the provision of most services usually showed that staff had offered and provided the requested services in a timely manner, and we found no evidence of systemic failures to offer or provide services required by the Act or agency policy.

However, OIG found individual instances in the case review where the Peace Corps did not meet its standard to "respond effectively and compassionately to Volunteers who have been victims of sexual assault."³⁹ Examples of such instances include:

³⁸ See [Biennial reports to Congress on Volunteer allegations about staff](#). Please note that the November 2016 Biennial Report has not been made public because a number of the allegations contain information that is the subject of ongoing investigations.

³⁹ Peace Corps Manual Section 243, *Procedures for Responding to Sexual Assault* (Introduction page 4).

- A case where post staff allegedly failed to respond to several reported sexual assaults from one Volunteer.
- Several Volunteers who believed they were disenfranchised from discussions related to their continuation of service.
- Volunteers who were unable to begin counseling in a timely manner.
- Several cases where non-designated staff members were provided unnecessary details of a sexual assault.
- Volunteers who believed that post staff had engaged in victim blaming behavior.

In addition, compared to the case review OIG conducted for its 2013 evaluation report to Congress on the agency's implementation of the Kate Puzey Act, the Peace Corps had markedly improved in documenting that the required services were offered, requested, and provided to Volunteers who had reported being sexually assaulted. In 2013, we noted that the lack of documentation and the need to rely on staff recollections created uncertainty and "made it difficult to determine whether the services had been offered." The 2016 case review largely relied on standardized processes and forms to determine what services were offered, requested, and provided. While there were some missing documents in the 2016 case review, the amount of uncertainty decreased compared to the 2013 case reviews.

Conclusion

An OIG evaluation found that in general, the Peace Corps offered the required services to nearly every Volunteer who reported having been a sexually assaulted and did so in a timely manner. OIG found no evidence of systemic failures to offer or provide services required by the Act or agency policy. However, OIG did find individual instances where the Peace Corps did not meet its standard to "respond effectively and compassionately to Volunteers who have been victims of sexual assault."

OIG found the agency's implementation of the Kate Puzey Act to be markedly improved from our 2013 evaluation of the same program. While there were some missing documents in the 2016 case review, the amount of uncertainty decreased compared to the 2013 case reviews. OIG determined that the standardization put in place through MS 243, "Procedures for Responding to Sexual Assault" had improved the consistency with which the agency responded to sexual assault victims.

OIG investigations related to alleged mismanagement within the agency's SARRR program were focused upon individual failures to comply with agency policy. In general OIG did not identify facts that indicated a systemic weakness. In the instances where systemic issues were discovered they were referred to agency management or the evaluations unit for their consideration action. In one instance, these concerns resulted in a management advisory report to the Peace Corps Director.

QUESTION 8: FAILURES RESULTING IN A DANGER TO HEALTH OR SAFETY

Has the Peace Corps' failure to provide training to individuals who regularly interact with volunteers and to take steps to protect volunteers in transit presented a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety?

Ms. Greene's Allegation

Ms. Greene's concerns related to providing training to individuals who regularly interact with Volunteers is addressed in Question 2, and Ms. Greene's concern related to steps taken to protect Volunteers in transit is addressed in Question 3. In this matter, she asserted that the Peace Corps' failures have resulted in substantial and specific danger to Volunteer health and safety.

Summary of Investigative/Evaluative Steps Taken

As noted in earlier responses, OIG has conducted a number of evaluations that assess the agency's training programs and those that affect Volunteer health and safety. See response to Questions 2, 3, and 7.

Conclusion

Based on our work, OIG is not aware of any condition within Peace Corps related to the alleged failure to provide training to individuals who regularly interact with Volunteers, or alleged failure to take steps to protect Volunteers in transit, that presents a substantial and specific health or safety danger to Volunteers.

Individuals who regularly interact with Volunteers include post staff. OIG conducted two agency-wide reports that addressed this question and issued numerous recommendations for improvement. The agency has concurred with all recommendations, and has either implemented or is working to implement them.⁴⁰ As noted in earlier responses, OIG has conducted a number of evaluations that assess the agency's training programs and those that affect Volunteer health and safety. Our reports address training of Peace Corps staff and Volunteers. The topic of training provided to host families and counterparts is part of each post's site selection process and is addressed in MS 270, "Volunteer/Trainee Safety and Security" and was addressed earlier in the report.

With approximately 7,085 Volunteers serving in 65 countries, the safety and security of Volunteers is no doubt a challenge for the agency. For at least the last five years, OIG has reported Volunteer safety, security, and healthcare to the Peace Corps Director as a significant management and performance challenge to be included in the agency's financial report. However, the topic of crime in public transportation has not been one of the underlying causes or matters underpinning OIG's determination. In our most recent management and performance challenge letter we outlined issues relating to Volunteer healthcare, site selection and approval, and emergency preparedness. In years past we

⁴⁰ See the Peace Corps' Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response Program (IG-17-01-E), p. 55-65 and Evaluation Reports: Peace Corps Volunteer Sexual Assault Policy (IG-14-02-E), p. 22-25.

addressed concerns over how the Peace Corps and the Department of State Diplomatic Security Service work together to address serious crime incidents against Volunteers.

Safety and security risks on public transportation would be addressed by each post policy in accordance with MS 450, “Volunteer and Trainee Transportation.” Where OIG has seen gaps or opportunities for improvement it has made recommendations to management, which has generally been responsive. This issue has not been identified by OIG as a recurring agency-wide issue in our most recent report of recurring findings and recommendations.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

OIG addressed the following eight questions posed by OSC, and made the assessments set forth below.

1. Has the Peace Corps taken appropriate action against each volunteer found to have engaged in sexual misconduct? If so, describe the action taken.

During the relevant period, sexual assaults reported to the Peace Corps allegedly committed by Volunteers constituted approximately 5 percent of the overall sexual assaults reported. Such incidents are governed by agency’s sexual misconduct policy and other policies addressing separation and discipline of Volunteers. If the sexual assault occurs in the Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction (SMTJ) of the United States, the assault can be criminally prosecuted in the United States. The Peace Corps OIG makes such criminal referrals to the Department of Justice when appropriate.

The Peace Corps has numerous policies and procedures in place to address sexual misconduct between Volunteers, to include termination and a range of lesser penalties if such misconduct is substantiated. However, a Volunteer can and frequently does resign from the Peace Corps during the investigation, prior to the Peace Corps having an opportunity to substantiate the allegation and propose discipline or administrative separation. In 6 of 18 cases reviewed, Volunteers resigned without any adverse information being included in their files.

If a Volunteer is administratively separated from the Peace Corps or resigns in lieu of separation, the “Considering Administrative Separation” memo setting forth the grounds—which in cases involving sexual misconduct would include the relevant facts and circumstances—becomes part of the Volunteer’s record. In 4 out of 18 cases, Volunteers resigned in lieu of separation. OIG notes that the current process was revised in December 2015. During a 2014 audit of the Volunteer screening process, OIG found that the Peace Corps lacked a centralized or formal process for storing unfavorable Volunteer separations, including administrative separations or situations where the

Volunteer resigned in lieu of separation. OIG made a series of recommendations for corrective action in the audit report.

In reviewing the cases we also found two instances wherein the agency provided ‘interrupted service’ status to Volunteers who had been accused of sexual misconduct, rather than utilizing the sexual assault misconduct adjudication process. OIG is aware of at least one incident wherein a Volunteer subject of a sexual misconduct allegation was subsequently hired by the Peace Corps as a federal employee. As the result of information developed during an OIG investigation, the individual was not administratively separated, but rather the Volunteer’s request for an extension was denied. After closing service with an unblemished record, the individual was hired at Peace Corps headquarters.

2. Has the Peace Corps provided appropriate training to host families and host country coworkers to protect the safety of Peace Corps volunteers who are living with host families and working with host country nationals? If so, describe the training.

The law does not require the agency to provide training to host families or counterparts on establishing appropriate relationship boundaries. However, agency policy requires overseas staff to provide a range of training to host families and counterparts including “appropriate orientation in order to promote more welcoming communities, more supportive counterparts and authorities, and better-defined roles.” In reviewing OIG country program evaluations, the adequacy of the agency’s training for host families and counterparts on how to set an appropriate relationship boundary with Volunteers has not been identified as an issue that required management’s attention or required corrective action.

Further, although Ms. Greene alleged that the Peace Corps had not involved OVA in developing or revising SARRR training, our evaluation reports on the implementation and effectiveness of the SARRR program have found that recommendations from OVA were incorporated into revisions to the SARRR training sessions in 2014. OIG interviews and agency records provided in response to OIG requests confirm that Ms. Greene played an integral role in a variety of sexual assault risk reduction trainings.

3. Has the Peace Corps taken adequate steps to protect the safety of Peace Corps volunteers who are traveling in countries of service where public transportation is inadequate? If so, describe the steps taken.

Our post evaluations examined the safety and security environment and the support provided to Volunteers to deal with safety and security issues. Every post has a different safety and security environment and their own transportation policies to address these risks. However, the Peace Corps provides posts with policy and procedural guidance on incorporating key considerations into their country-specific transportation policies. In countries where the risks of travelling on public transportation are found to be unacceptably high, the agency has taken aggressive steps to mitigate the risk such as

directly providing a secure mode of transportation for all Volunteers (as was done in Guatemala). Where we have seen gaps or opportunities for improvement, we have made recommendations to which management has generally management been responsive.

4. Has the Peace Corps provided adequate counseling services to Peace Corps volunteers who have been victims of sexual assault during their service? If so, describe the nature and duration of services available to volunteers and the process by which the services are provided.

The Peace Corps offered counseling to 100 percent of the Volunteers in our review (138 Volunteers). Fifty-seven percent requested counseling (79 cases), and 58 percent received counseling (80 cases). Eighty-six percent of the Volunteers who requested counseling began treatment within four weeks. However, 14 percent of the Volunteers waited more than four weeks. Based on the documents provided to OIG, it was difficult to determine the reasons for these delays and no trends were identified.

As noted above, OIG issued a recommendation addressing the confusion concerning the policy governing the number of counseling sessions available to Volunteers following a sexual assault. The agency concurred with the recommendation. OIG also identified that the agency lacked a timeliness standard related to Volunteers' access to counseling services and issued a recommendation to address that deficiency. The agency concurred with OIG recommendations in this area and is formulating its plan to address them.

5. Has the Peace Corps failed to inform OVA when volunteers receive requested counseling services, when volunteers who have been victims of sexual assault leave service, and when there are updates on criminal proceedings related to crimes against volunteers? If so, please specify the number of times and year(s) in which the Peace Corps failed to provide this information.

Before March 2016, the agency did not have a centralized case management system that would allow designated staff or others involved in providing or overseeing the provision of services to a Volunteer victim to easily share information about the status of any particular case.

Putting in place a case management system had long been a concern of OIG. In a 2012 evaluation report OIG found that:

The agency did not use a centralized case management system to verify sexual assault response requirements had been fulfilled and to assess performance and provide feedback to responders to make process improvements. The lack of a centralized system makes it difficult to confirm the quality or consistency of victim care provided or to identify and correct lapses in services or response to victims.

As a result, we recommended the agency implement a centralized sexual assault case management system encompassing Volunteer sexual assault response, care, and support activities, and use the case management system to assess staff performance and identify

any needed adjustments in its policies and procedures. We noted in our “2013 Final Evaluation Report: Peace Corps Volunteer Sexual Assault Policy” that at the time, with the exception of the Office of Health Services medical case management systems, “the agency does not have a centralized system or method whereby staff can document the services that were offered to Volunteers, the information provided regarding those services, and whether Volunteers chose to avail themselves of applicable services.”⁴¹

While OIG has not yet assessed the effectiveness of the agency’s case management system, its purpose and design are directly related to addressing the need for staff involved in sexual assault case management, including OVA, to have information and awareness regarding the status of all required and requested services to the victim. The new system provides OVA staff with up-to-date information related to the statuses of counseling services provided to victims, their Peace Corps service, and in-country criminal prosecutions. Additionally, staff from offices involved in the response to Volunteers who were victims of sexual assault reported improved communication between OVA, the Office of Health Services, OGC, and the Office of Safety and Security, which help ensure that relevant information related to a victim’s case is shared in a timely manner with all involved staff.

6. Did any Peace Corps employee violate the Kate Puzey Act with respect to Ms. Greene's allegations? If so, please identify the individual(s) and specify what provision was violated.

As is described previously, the Kate Puzey Act required the agency to implement a number of policies and programs, and broadly outlines requirements for those policies and programs.

An OIG evaluation did find limited cases where the agency did not meet its commitment to provide “a compassionate and supportive response to all Volunteers who have been sexually assaulted.” As part of a 2016 OIG evaluation, we reviewed 138 cases to determine if the 8 services required by the Kate Puzey Act were offered to Peace Corps Volunteers who were victims of sexual assaults. While this review was not conducted explicitly to identify if any Peace Corps employee had violated the requirements of the Kate Puzey Act, the evaluators were looking for evidence that the Peace Corps had responded to victims according to the Act’s requirements, and were alert to evidence of possible sexual assault mismanagement. As a result, 1 of the 138 cases reviewed was referred for investigation, which determined that no laws had been violated.

While these cases represented a departure from a standard set out in Peace Corps policy implementing the Kate Puzey Act, except for the case referred to investigations, such cases did not evidence a violations of the law.

Additionally, between October 1, 2012, and September 30, 2016, OIG received approximately 17 complaints from Volunteers that alleged the agency mismanaged its

⁴¹ 2013 Final Evaluation Report: Peace Corps Volunteer Sexual Assault Policy (IG-14-02-E).

response to a sexual assault. While preliminary inquiries were opened for each complaint, there were 4 cases in the OIG biennial reports where OIG substantiated serious misconduct or mismanagement involving a response to a sexual assault or where the agency informed OIG that it had taken action to respond to an allegation of sexual assault response mismanagement that OIG had referred to agency management.

7. Has the Peace Corps appropriately managed its response to instances of sexual assault against volunteers?

An OIG evaluation found that in general, the Peace Corps offered the required services to nearly every Volunteer who reported having been a sexually assaulted and did so in a timely manner. OIG found no evidence of systemic failures to offer or provide services required by the Act or agency policy. However, OIG did find individual instances where the Peace Corps did not meet its standard to “respond effectively and compassionately to Volunteers who have been victims of sexual assault.”

OIG found the agency’s implementation of the Kate Puzey Act to be markedly improved from our 2013 evaluation of the same program. While there were some missing documents in the 2016 case review, the amount of uncertainty decreased compared to the 2013 case reviews. OIG determined that the standardization put in place through MS 243, “Procedures for Responding to Sexual Assault” had improved the consistency with which the agency responded to sexual assault victims.

OIG investigations related to alleged mismanagement within the agency’s SARRR program were focused upon individual failures to comply with agency policy. In general OIG did not identify facts that indicated a systemic weakness. In the instances where systemic issues were discovered they were referred to agency management or the evaluations unit for their consideration action. In one instance, these concerns resulted in a management advisory report to the Peace Corps Director.

8. Has the Peace Corps' failure to provide training to individuals who regularly interact with volunteers and to take steps to protect volunteers in transit presented a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety?

Based on our work, OIG is not aware of any condition within Peace Corps related to the alleged failure to provide training to individuals who regularly interact with Volunteers, or alleged failure to take steps to protect Volunteers in transit, that presents a substantial and specific health or safety danger to Volunteers.

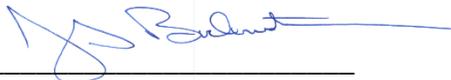
Individuals who regularly interact with Volunteers include post staff. OIG conducted two agency-wide reports that addressed this question and issued numerous recommendations for improvement. The agency has concurred with all recommendations, and has either implemented or is working to implement them.⁴² As noted in earlier responses, OIG has conducted a number of evaluations that assess the agency’s training programs and those

⁴² See the Peace Corps’ Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response Program (IG-17-01-E), p. 55-65 and Evaluation Reports: Peace Corps Volunteer Sexual Assault Policy (IG-14-02-E), p. 22-25.

that that affect Volunteer health and safety. Our reports address training of Peace Corps staff and Volunteers. The topic of training provided to host families and counterparts is part of each post's site selection process and is addressed in MS 270, "Volunteer/Trainee Safety and Security" and was addressed earlier in the report.

With approximately 7,085 Volunteers serving in 65 countries, the safety and security of Volunteers is no doubt a challenge for the agency. For at least the last five years, OIG has reported Volunteer safety, security, and healthcare to the Peace Corps Director as a significant management and performance challenge to be included in the agency's financial report. However, the topic of crime in public transportation has not been one of the underlying causes or matters underpinning OIG's determination. In our most recent management and performance challenge letter we outlined issues relating to Volunteer healthcare, site selection and approval, and emergency preparedness. In years past we addressed concerns over how the Peace Corps and the Department of State Diplomatic Security Service work together to address serious crime incidents against Volunteers.

Safety and security risks on public transportation would be addressed by each post policy in accordance with MS 450, "Volunteer and Trainee Transportation." Where OIG has seen gaps or opportunities for improvement it has made recommendations to management, which has generally been responsive. This issue has not been identified by OIG as a recurring agency-wide issue in our most recent report of recurring findings and recommendations.



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Appendices

- Appendix A – Relevant OIG Reports
- Appendix B – Summary of OIG's Investigative Process for Assessing Complaints and Allegations
- Appendix C – Status of OIG Recommendations Related to Sexual Assault

APPENDIX A: RELEVANT OIG REPORTS

Post Program Evaluations Included in this Report	
Issued	Topic
03/2011	Peru (IG-12-03-E)
11/2011	Fiji (IG-12-01-E)
12/2011	Kyrgyz Republic (IG-12-02-E)
05/2012	China (IG-12-04-E)
07/2012	Uganda (IG-12-06-E)
09/2012	Indonesia (IG-12-07-E)
03/2013	Namibia (IG-13-01-E)
03/2013	Malawi (IG-13-02-E)
04/2013	Colombia (IG-13-03-E)
09/2013	Moldova (IG-13-04-E)
05/2014	Ecuador (IG-14-03-E)
06/2014	Mexico (IG-14-04-E)
08/2014	Armenia (IG-14-05-E)
09/2014	Philippines (IG-14-06-E)
01/2015	Sierra Leone (IG-15-01-E)
03/2015	Lesotho (IG-15-02-E)
05/2015	Guatemala (IG-15-03-E)

Other Work Included in this Report		
Issued	Report Type	Topic
04/2012	Special Report	Recurring Issues, FYs 2009 – 2011
09/2012	Evaluation	Implementation of Guidelines Related to Volunteer Victims of Rape and Sexual Assault (IG-12-08-E)
11/2012	Special Report	Biennial Report to Congress
11/2013	Evaluation	Sexual Assault Risk-Reduction and Response Training (IG-14-01-E)
11/2013	Evaluation	Volunteer Sexual Assault Policy (IG-14-02-E)
11/2013	Audit	Overseas Staffing (IG-14-01-A)
06/2014	Audit	Applicant Screening Process (IG-14-04-A)
09/2014	Special Report	Lessons Learned: New Country Entries Report
09/2014	Evaluation	Training of Overseas Staff (IG-14-07-E)
11/2014	Special Report	Biennial Report to Congress
11/2014	Management Advisory Report	Agency Policies Related to Volunteer Sexual Assault Allegations
09/2016	Special Report	Recurring Issues, FYs 2012 – 2015 (IG-16-04-SR)
11/2016	Evaluation	Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response Program (IG-17-01-E)

OIG Semiannual Reports to Congress		
FY 2011	October 1, 2010 – March 31, 2011	April 1 – September 30, 2011
FY 2012	October 1, 2011 – March 31, 2012	April 1 – September 30, 2012
FY 2013	October 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013	April 1 – September 30, 2013
FY 2014	October 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014	April 1 – September 30, 2014
FY 2015	October 1, 2013 – March 31, 2015	April 1 – September 30, 2015
FY 2016	October 1, 2013 – March 31, 2016	April 1 – September 30, 2016

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF OIG'S INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS FOR ASSESSING COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

The investigation process may begin with the receipt of a complaint, allegation, or information alleging suspected fraud, waste, abuse or mismanagement related to Peace Corps programs and operations, including criminal wrongdoing or serious administrative misconduct. Such information may be general or specific in nature. It may identify individual staff, contractors, or other entities engaged in allegedly illegal activities. The information comes to OIG from various sources: Peace Corps Volunteers, staff, contractors, other government agencies, private sector agencies, and members of the public not connected with the Peace Corps, a U.S. Embassy, the news media, or confidential or anonymous sources.

The Investigation Unit reviews all complaints with a focus on those which (1) were submitted by a Peace Corps source (e.g., staff, Volunteer, contractor) or (2) relate to a matter within the jurisdiction of OIG. The Unit conducts a preliminary inquiry for all credible complaints, which is limited in scope to the verification of information in a complaint and confirmation that the complaint falls within OIG's jurisdiction. Upon completion of the preliminary inquiry, the assistant inspector general for investigations (AIG/I), with input from the assigned OIG agent, evaluates the merits of the complaint and the anticipated investigatory action to be taken. In doing so the AIG/I considers whether information indicates the possibility of:

- Criminal activity involving Peace Corps programs or operations (e.g., Volunteers, employees, funds, contracts, assets, or other Peace Corps property) that could result in criminal prosecution
- Serious mismanagement or misconduct involving Peace Corps policy or programs that could result in civil or administrative action
- Misconduct by senior Peace Corps staff

If the nature of the allegation indicates that the matter does not involve serious mismanagement or misconduct, the AIG/I considers whether referring the complaint to the appropriate agency manager (with the complainant's consent) is the best way to resolve the issue.

Where significant information exists related to possible criminality, violations of law, or serious mismanagement or misconduct, OIG assigns an agent to fully investigate the matter. As described above, OIG may refer other matters to agency management for appropriate action. OIG remains available to provide management with investigative support as needed.

APPENDIX C: STATUS OF OIG RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Report: <u>Review of the Peace Corps' Implementation of Guidelines Related to Volunteer Victims of Rape and Sexual Assault</u>	
Issued: September 27, 2012	
Recommendation	Status
2. That the agency develop sexual assault policy and guidance for other sexual assault (OSA) incidents including procedures for taking reports and responding to the care or support needs of OSA victims, and that it incorporate this guidance into its Response Guidelines.	Closed
3. That the agency incorporate the following topics into its Response Guidelines and staff training modules: the role of the victim advocate, the role of the safety and security coordinator, and the role of the Office of Inspector General for investigating Volunteer sexual assault.	Closed
4. That the agency clarify notification requirements and align instructions in the Response Guidelines and Medical Technical Guideline 540 to ensure clear and specific instructions for notification of headquarters offices in the aftermath of a Volunteer rape or sexual assault.	Closed
5. That the agency ensure that all country directors, Peace Corps medical officers and staff with a sexual assault response and care role attend annual Response Guidelines training sessions, and that staff participation in training be tracked and documented.	Open
6. That the agency provide Volunteer sexual assault response training for staff members who will serve as acting country director, and include the duties for managing sexual assault response in overseas staff training modules.	Closed
7. That, for those staff who will serve as acting country director, the agency include the duties and responsibilities for managing Volunteer sexual assault response in position descriptions and performance plans.	Closed
8. That the agency provide annual Response Guidelines training to all headquarters staff members responsible for supporting victims or training staff in the response to Volunteer sexual assault incidents.	Closed
9. That the agency establish policy to require that post staff who have response roles annually review the "Survey of the Local Legal Environment" (LES) to familiarize themselves with information contained in the LES and to determine if updates are required.	Closed

10. That the agency review all posts' "Survey of the Local Legal Environment" to ensure information has been fully and accurately collected.	Closed
11. That country directors provide the U.S. Embassy's regional security officer with a copy of the "Survey of the Local Legal Environment" and meet to review the support services that may be Final Report: Review of the Peace Corps' Implementation of Guidelines Related to Volunteer Victims of Rape and Sexual Assault provided under the Peace Corps-Department of State Memorandum of Understanding in an initial meeting and when new country directors or regional security officers arrive at post.	Closed
12. That the agency implement a centralized sexual assault case management system that encompasses Volunteer sexual assault response, care, and support activities, and use the case management system to assess staff performance and identify any needed adjustments in its policies and procedures.	Closed

Report: Final Evaluation Report: Peace Corps Volunteer Sexual Assault Policy (IG-14-02-E)	
Issued: November 21, 2013	
Recommendation	Status
1. That the agency clarify the procedures for obtaining a sexual assault forensic exam for a Volunteer who has filed a restricted report if the forensic exam does not trigger an official investigation, and revise policies accordingly.	Closed
2. That the associate director for Safety and Security revise agency policy to provide clear guidance on when a safety plan is needed, the essential elements of such a plan, and how the plan should be documented and distributed.	Closed
3. That the agency revise all relevant procedures to direct staff to provide a choice of medical providers to victims of sexual assault who are medically evacuated to the United States.	Closed
4. That the agency clarify what documents constitute its official comprehensive sexual assault policy and make those documents easily identifiable and accessible to staff.	Closed
5. That the agency develop a process for the systematic review of all sexual assault advisory council recommendations, outlining clearly the offices responsible for implementing each recommendation with which the agency concurs.	Closed
6. That the agency train all overseas staff on the sexual assault policy per the Kate Puzey Act.	Closed
7. That the agency develop and communicate expectations for training newly hired overseas staff, including training methods and deadlines.	Open

8. That the agency develop and implement a method to track training records to verify that it is meeting the requirements of the Kate Puzey Act.	Open
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Report: <u>Final Evaluation Report: Peace Corps Sexual Assault Risk-Reduction and Response Training (IG-14-01-E)</u>	
Issued: November 21, 2013	
Recommendation	Status
1. That the associate director for the Office of Safety and Security put procedures in place to ensure that at the time applicants receive their invitation for service, all have received the most recent information on crimes and risks specific to their country of service.	Closed
2. That the associate director for safety and security and the director of Peace Corps Response establish minimum sexual assault training requirements that conform to the Kate Puzey Act for all Volunteers placed through Peace Corps Response.	Closed
3. That the Director ensure that the agency has in place the systems and support required to evaluate the effectiveness of sexual assault training.	Closed

Report: <u>Final Evaluation Report: The Peace Corps' Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response Program (IG-17-01-E)</u>	
Issued: November 28, 2016	
Recommendation	Status
1. That the Director prioritize closing Recommendation 1 in the Office of Inspector General's 2013 evaluation report (IG-14-01-E) related to ensuring that all applicants have received the most recent information on crimes and risks specific to their country of service.	Open
2. That the Director improve the presentation of crimes and risks information (including qualitative information on the risk of sexual harassment) for applicants by making this information more accessible to all applicants and easier to understand.	Open
3. That the Director clarify and support the process of tailoring training to the country of service, with a particular emphasis on incorporating culturally-specific information and expertise on gender and interpersonal relationships.	Open
4. That the Director develop guidance for posts on integrating sexual assault risk reduction and response training into the pre-service training curriculum and 27-month Volunteer learning continuum.	Open
5. That the Director clarify and support the process of customizing training specifically to address sexual assault risks for male and LGBTQ Volunteers.	Open

6. That the Director define how the agency should address the problem of sexual harassment in relation to the sexual assault risk reduction and response program.	Open
7. That the Director provide guidance and support to posts to integrate culturally appropriate training on sexual harassment into the Volunteer 27-month learning continuum.	Open
8. That the Director provide Volunteers with clear guidance on how and when to report sexual harassment to the Peace Corps.	Open
9. That the Director develop a plan to provide professional development opportunities to staff, including sexual assault response liaisons, to improve staff capacity in the delivery of sexual assault risk reduction and response training.	Open
10. That the Director consider incorporating intercultural diversity and inclusion training in the agency's plan to improve staff capacity to deliver sexual assault risk reduction and response training.	Open
11. That the Director develop guidance to clarify the role of other programming and training staff at post in supporting the planning and delivery of sexual assault risk reduction and response training throughout the 27-month Volunteer learning continuum.	Open
12. That the Director provide posts with alternative training guidance for Volunteers who do not attend sexual assault risk reduction and response sessions with their training group.	Open
13. That the Director revise the terminal learning objective assessment to provide posts with a better understanding of Volunteers' comprehension of the content of the training.	Open
14. That the Director implement and communicate a process that tracks Volunteer completion of specified learning events (both in person and online) and comprehension of the sexual assault risk reduction and response training on the agency's learning management system.	Open
15. That the Director establish a process to utilize feedback from Volunteers and staff on how to improve the training.	Open
16. That the Director establish a process to gather information on Volunteers' use of risk reduction and response skills taught in the training, and use it to make improvements to the training.	Open
17. That the Director pursue a change in the language of the immediate notification requirement in Sec 8B (a) (3), of the Kate Puzey Act to allow any designated staff person to perform the immediate notification of the Victim Advocate.	Closed
18. That the Director develop and implement mental health access to care timeliness standards for victims of sexual assault with a mechanism to notify management when these standards are not met.	Open

19. That the Director designate a full-time program manager for the sexual assault risk reduction and response program.	Closed
20. That the Director assess and redefine, if necessary, the roles and responsibilities of sexual assault response liaisons to make more effective use of existing staff capacity.	Open
21. That the Director continue to explore ways to better engage sexual assault response liaisons with Volunteers during pre-service training and as needed during service.	Open
22. That the Director assess and redefine, if necessary, the role and responsibilities of Peace Corps safety and security officers to make more effective use of existing staff capacity.	Open
23. That the Director define and communicate the role of the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity in responding to sexual assaults.	Open
24. That the Director develop and communicate guidance for overseas staff on documenting site-specific security incidents in site history files while maintaining Volunteers' confidentiality, and on using the information in site history files as part of post's site vetting process.	Open
25. That the Director provide implementation guidance and training to improve overseas staff capacity to talk sensitively and candidly to Volunteers about sexual assault risk identification and reduction strategies tailored to their country of service, and about known risks to personal safety such as alcohol abuse.	Open
26. That the Director expand the monitoring and evaluation plan for the sexual assault risk reduction and response program to include sexual assault risk reduction measures.	Open
27. That the Director conduct individual and systemic sexual assault case reviews, and involve monitoring and evaluation staff in the process.	Open
28. That the Director develop a plan to improve the collection of feedback from Volunteers, post, and headquarters staff on the effectiveness of the sexual assault risk reduction and response program.	Open
29. That the Director dedicate additional administrative support to maintain accurate, up-to-date, centralized, and easily accessible overseas staff sexual assault risk reduction and response training records.	Open
30. That the Director develop a formal onboarding and continuing education training program for all designated staff positions.	Open
31. That the Director define and communicate the expectations related to sexual assault trainings for all Peace Corps staff, to include training for staff temporarily filling an overseas position.	Open

32. That the Director assess sexual assault staff training needs, to include interpersonal skills and teamwork, and modify training programs accordingly.	Open
33. That the Director identify an appropriate staff position to provide oversight and coordination of sexual assault training for staff.	Open
34. That the Director create and make available an overarching policy roadmap that encompasses all policies and procedures that support the sexual assault risk reduction and response program.	Open
35. That the Director develop specific guidance to Peace Corps medical officers to clarify the standards and expectations for the provision of counseling services, and communicate that guidance to Volunteers.	Open
36. That the Director develop an internal communication plan to notify staff in a more timely and consistent manner regarding policy changes, especially those affecting the job responsibilities of staff in sexual assault risk reduction and response program designated positions.	Open

Report: Management Advisory Report: Agency Policies Related to Volunteer Sexual Assault Allegations	
Issued: November 21, 2014	
Recommendation	Status
1. That the agency clarify ISP 3-13 reporting requirements as they relate to third-party allegations of sexual assaults, to include staff responsibilities to report such cases, as well as supervisors' responsibility to report to OIG all cases where the alleged perpetrator is another staff member or Volunteer.	Closed
2. That the agency take steps to increase the availability of U.S. direct hire staff to serve in "designated staff" positions at each post, such as sexual assault response liaisons, for the purpose of receiving "restricted reports" of sexual assault from Volunteers.	Closed
3. That the agency address Volunteer reluctance to report sexual assault incidents to host country national staff by strengthening sexual assault risk reduction and response training to better prepare staff to respond to Volunteers, particularly to address individual or cultural bias, and ensure sensitivity and responsiveness to sexually active Volunteers or those of diverse backgrounds.	Open