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**The U. S. Peace Corps - Possible Areas of
Improvement in the Third Millennium**

Diplomová práce

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Abstrakt

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá tématem Amerických mírových sborů a jejich možných oblastí k zlepšení ve třetím tisíciletí. Práce se snaží prozkoumat dostupné dokumenty a následně určit a zanalyzovat možné oblasti k zlepšení během vlád George W. Bushe a Baracka Obamy. Práce se zaměřuje na africký kontinent v rámci hodnocení přítomnosti Mírových sborů v jednotlivých hostitelských zemích. Hlavní výzkumné otázky této diplomové práce zní: „Jaké jsou možné oblasti k zlepšení v rámci Amerických mírových sborů ve třetím tisíciletí?“ a „Reflektuje agentura a politické debaty ohledně reform agentury zkušenosti a zpětnou vazbu dobrovolníků?“ Odpovědi na tyto otázky jsou hledány pomocí rešerše v dokumentech a s pomocí analýzy jednoho sta autorčiných dotazníků, které nashromáždila od současných i bývalých dobrovolníků. Práce se dále zabývá oblastí výcviku Mírových sborů, náboru a podpory dobrovolníků, stejně tak jako Washingtonskou byrokracií Mírových sborů, posláním agentury, bezpečností dobrovolníků, odezvou agentury na sexuální útoky a reformami navrženými osobami, které upozorňují na nekalosti uvnitř organizace. Práce je rozdělena do čtyř kapitol a několika podkapitol. První kapitola se zabývá původem myšlenky na založení Mírových sborů a následně historií agentury mezi roky 1961 a 1989. Druhá kapitola je věnována analýze agentury mezi roky 1989 a 2001, zatímco třetí kapitola se zabývá obdobím mezi roky 2001 a 2016 a analýze jednotlivých možných oblastí k zlepšení. Čtvrtá kapitola se zabývá kontrolní studií sondážního vzorku, která analyzuje výsledky jednoho sta shromážděných odpovědí od dobrovolníků.

Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with the topic of the U. S. Peace Corps and its possible areas of improvement in the third millennium. The aim of the thesis is to research available documents and to determine and analyze possible areas of improvement during the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama. The thesis focuses on African continent with regards to the Peace Corps presence in individual host countries. The main research questions of this thesis are: “What are the possible areas of improvement within the U. S. Peace Corps organization in the third millennium?“, and “Is the agency and the political debates concerning the reforms of the agency reflecting experiences and feedback of the volunteers?“ The answers to these questions are sought with the help of research in documents as well as with the help of the analysis of author’s one hundred collected surveys from current and former volunteers. Moreover, the areas of the Peace Corps training, recruitment, and support of the volunteers are researched in this thesis alongside with the Washington bureaucracy, mission of the agency, safety and security of the volunteers, sexual assault response, and whistleblower reforms. There are four chapters in the thesis and several subchapters. The first chapter elaborates on the origins of the Peace Corps, and the agency between years 1961 and 1989. The second chapter is devoted to an analysis of the agency between 1989 and 2001, while the third chapter deals with the agency between 2001 and 2016 and an analysis of individual possible areas of improvement. Furthermore, the fourth chapter is devoted to a control study that analyzes the results of one hundred surveys.

Klíčová slova

Mírové sbory, možné oblasti k zlepšení, Afrika, George W. Bush, Barack Obama

Keywords

Peace Corps, Possible Areas of Improvement, Africa, George W. Bush, Barack Obama

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(bez poznámkového aparátu a abstraktu)

Prohlášení

1. Prohlašuji, že jsem předkládanou práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedené prameny a literaturu.
2. Prohlašuji, že práce nebyla využita k získání jiného titulu.
3. Souhlasím s tím, aby práce byla zpřístupněna pro studijní a výzkumné účely.

V Praze dne ... 29. 7. 2016

Aneta Firýtová

Poděkování

Na tomto místě bych ráda poděkovala vedoucímu své diplomové práce doc. PhDr. Francisovi D. Raškovi, Ph.D. za cenné podněty a připomínky při zpracovávání daného tématu a za přínosné konzultace.

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V čem se oproti původními zadání změnil cíl práce?	Cílem práce zůstává určení a analýza možných oblastí Amerických mírových sborů vhodných k zlepšení. Rozdíl však bude v samotné podobě práce, která nově nebude tzv. policy paper, který pouze přichází s určitými doporučeními pro agenturu, nýbrž se bude jednat o případovou studii, která na agenturu nahlíží z většího odstupu, pracuje s rozličnými zdroji a nezdráhá se kritiky. Tato podoba diplomové práce autorce umožní téma zkoumat objektivněji bez jakéhokoliv omezení možné kritiky samotné organizace.
Jaké změny nastaly v časovém, teritoriálním a věcném vymezení tématu?	Časové i teritoriální vymezení zůstává stejné jako u projektu diplomové práce, jedná se tedy časově o funkční období prezidentů George W. Bushe a Baracka Obamy. Teritoriálně se práce zaměří na území USA a jednotlivých afrických států, ve kterých Sbory působily. K zásadní věcné změně dochází v oblasti podoby práce. Z tzv. policy paper se podoba nově mění na případovou studii.
Jak se proměnila struktura práce (vyjádřete stručným obsahem)?	Nově bude práce tvořena celkem čtyřmi kapitolami, namísto původních dvou. První kapitola se bude zabývat původem myšlenky vzniku Mírových sborů a jejich následným fungováním během let 1961 až 1989, tedy obdobím až do konce studené války. Druhá kapitola se bude naopak věnovat období mezi lety 1989 a 2001, tedy od konce studené války do zahájení války proti terorismu. Následující třetí kapitola bude zkoumat období mezi lety 2001 až 2016, jmenovitě od začátku války proti terorismu až do současnosti. Zvláštní pozornost bude ve všech třech kapitolách věnována typickému profilu dobrovolníků, jejich školení a následnému působení v hostitelských zemích Afriky, stejně tak jako rozpočtu a reformám organizace a změnám v její struktuře. V rámci třetí kapitoly autorka zamýšlí rozpracovat jednotlivé možné oblasti zlepšení v Mírových sborech a

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provést jejich analýzu. Naproti tomu poslední kapitola se bude zabývat analýzou výsledků ideálně jednoho sta získaných dotazníků vyplněných dobrovolníky Mírových sborů. Vzorek respondentů bude pouze sondážní, poněvadž analýza bude pracovat se všemi dotazníky, které byly zodpovězeny a které budou odpovídat časovému a teritoriálnímu vymezení práce.

Jakým vývojem prošla metodologická koncepce práce?

Metodologická koncepce práce se změnila oproti původnímu konceptu z tzv. policy paperu či komparativní analýzy na případovou studii. Autorka si klade za cíl shromáždit okolo jednoho sta dotazníků zodpovězených samotnými dobrovolníky Mírových sborů. Sktruktura těchto dotazníků bude pečlivě připravována a konzultována.

Které nové prameny a sekundární literatura byly zpracovány a jak tato skutečnost ovlivnila celek práce?

Nově byly do seznamu literatury také zařazeny výpovědi agenturou poškozených dobrovolníků či jejich pozůstalých v rámci televizního investigativního pořadu "20/20" stanice ABC News. Takto bude práce obohacena o přímé výpovědi zasažených dobrovolníků a výsledky vyšetřování na místě činu. Stěžejní zdroj pro práci představují rovněž senátní debaty, stejně tak jako mnohé další odborné publikace.

Charakterizujte základní proměny práce v době od zadání projektu do odevzdání tezí a pokuste se vyhodnotit, jaký pokrok na práci jste během semestru zaznamenali (v bodech):

Nejdříve jsem se věnovala shánění dostupné literatury, kterou jsem uvedla v projektu diplomové práce.

Rozhodla jsem se psát práci v anglickém jazyce, aby měla širší uplatnění a přínos i za hranicemi ČR, popřípadě, aby práce mohla být nějakým přínosem samotné organizaci Mírových sborů či americké odborné veřejnosti.

Dalším pokrokem v mé práci bylo samotné přehodnocení metodologického konceptu práce a změna z tzv. policy paper na případovou studii.

Dalším vývojem prošla také struktura dotazníků, které budou rozesílány současným a bývalým dobrovolníkům Mírových sborů.

V neposlední řadě jsem se rozhodla, že zařadím analýzu klíčových možných oblastí vhodných k zlepšení.

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INTRODUCTION

The U. S. Peace Corps is an independent volunteer agency within the executive branch of the United States government. The President of the United States appoints the Peace Corps director and deputy director, and the appointments must be confirmed by the U. S. Senate. The Agency was established after an initiative of the President John Fitzgerald Kennedy in 1961. This agency seems as a purely peaceful tool of help and cooperation between the USA and developing countries. The truth is that its structure, organization and budget vary during individual presidential administrations significantly.

The topic of the U. S. Peace Corps in the third millennium was not researched in the Czech Republic yet. Therefore, this diploma thesis aims to introduce the agency to both the academic and non-academic public in the Czech Republic. The author chose the English language as a language of this thesis in order to possibly reach the international audience as well. The author of this thesis devoted her previous research within the frame of the bachelor thesis to the activity of the U. S. Peace Corps in Africa during the presidency of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. The main research question was whether the Peace Corps was a purely altruistic organization or whether it fulfilled any political goal in the concept of the Kennedy's foreign policy. The research revealed that the Peace Corps served as a political tool, in a sense. Although the volunteers did not promote American foreign policy and they avoided any political propaganda on their side, they helped the United States in securing its sphere of influence in the context of the Cold War by simply helping the local people in Africa, being friendly, and therefore combating the stereotype of an "Ugly American". Moreover, activities and achievements of the American volunteers in individual African countries (Somalia, Tanganyika and Nigeria) were elaborated as well.

More importantly, this diploma thesis aims to determine and analyze the possible areas of improvement within the U. S. Peace Corps in the third millennium. Also, with the help of her own survey and research, the author attempts to determine whether the agency or political debates concerning the reforms reflect experiences and feedback of the volunteers. Furthermore, the time frame of this diploma thesis corresponds with the

functioning of the agency under the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama. From the territorial point of view, this thesis focuses on the Peace Corps' presence in African host countries.

Nevertheless, there are two main research questions of this thesis. The first one is: "What are the possible areas of improvement within the U. S. Peace Corps organization in the third millennium?" The second question is: "Is the agency and the political debates concerning the reforms of the agency reflecting experiences and feedback of the volunteers?" The answers to these questions are sought with the help of research in documents covering this topic and time period, as well as with the help of the author's one hundred collected surveys from current or former volunteers and their analysis.

Methodology of this diploma thesis is a case study. The author intends to research the history and present of the organization, covering the whole fifty-five years of its existence and many more years prior to its establishment. Moreover, the author's own research with the help of more than one hundred questionnaires obtained from the volunteers will form a significant part of the thesis. The analysis of the questionnaires will be discussed in the fourth chapter, and it will reveal the responses of the volunteers to the main question of the survey that intends to find the answer to the main research questions.

As for the structure of the thesis, this thesis is divided into four main chapters and several subchapters. There are also enclosed several texts and graphs in the appendices at the end of the thesis. The first chapter elaborates on the origins of the idea of the Peace Corps, on its establishment and mission, as well as its history between years 1961 and 1989. Moreover, the second chapter is devoted to an analysis of the agency between years 1989 and 2001, while the third chapter deals with the time period between 2001 and 2016. A substantial part of the third chapter is devoted to an analysis of individual possible areas of improvement identified by scholars and in political and public debates. The remaining part of the third chapter analyzes official Peace Corps Volunteer Surveys and its directors. Furthermore, the fourth chapter is devoted to a control study. The control study analyzes the results of one hundred collected responses to a volunteer survey conducted by the author of this thesis. In particular, it analyzes the

proposed possible areas of improvement in the agency. Last but not least, a significant attention is also given to the areas of the Peace Corps training effectiveness, main motivation of the volunteers to join the agency, expectations of the volunteers, and the positive and the negative impacts of the service on their lives in the appendices.

The Czech sources on the topic of the thesis are rather limited. However, the main sources of the thesis are scholarly publications, congressional debates, official documents of the Peace Corps as well as articles in political journals. Another significant source of the thesis are the responses to the author's questionnaires by the volunteers and the official results of surveys conducted by the Peace Corps itself on an annual basis. The results of the author's questionnaire represent wide range of spectrum of responses. The author encouraged the volunteers to voice their concerns and share their experiences by a structure of the survey that allows it. There were only open-ended questions that provided volunteers enough space to list all of their thoughts. On the other hand, the official survey of the agency consisted of predefined answers and, therefore, left limited space for volunteers' innovative answers or attitudes. Moreover, the author derived important data from other official Peace Corps materials on its website as well. However, the U. S. literature that is researched in connection with the topic of the Peace Corps history and present seems rather critical of the organization. The author of the thesis would identify as the most critical authors Watkins and Strauss. They were critical to an extent that their work could be seen as inaccurate sometimes. On the other hand, the official documents of the agency were many times seen as inaccurate, too. They lacked any self-criticism and only constantly praised the agency. These materials seemed as a propaganda-type of work to the author of the thesis and she worked with them carefully.

1. THE PEACE CORPS 1961-1989

1.1. *Establishment of the Peace Corps and Its Mission*

1.1.1 Establishment of the Peace Corps

The Peace Corps was established as an initiative of the President John Fitzgerald Kennedy on March 1, 1961 by an executive order.¹ Kennedy announced the idea to establish such an agency during his presidential campaign speech to university students at the University of Michigan around two o'clock in the morning on October 13, 1960. Kennedy spoke to a crowd of ten thousand students and asked them how many of them would be able to work abroad and dedicate a part of their life to service to their own country. An unprecedented response followed.² There were seven hundred students of the University of Michigan who enlisted as volunteers during the following two days in yet non-existent organization.³ Kennedy emphasized that the willingness of future volunteers to serve was essential if America had to preserve its liberal society.⁴ Additionally, Kennedy stated that the American aid to economically poor countries shall lead to their greater independence, and that the Peace Corps volunteers should be able to combat the stereotype of an "Ugly American". Kennedy did not perceive Peace Corps as a purely altruistic organization; on the contrary, he regarded it as another political tool in the context of the Cold War. Last but not least, he spoke about the need to contain communist expansion through the development of sources of the third world.⁵ To demonstrate the significance of the agency, since its establishment, more than 220,000 Americans of all ages have served in one hundred forty countries worldwide.⁶

Nevertheless, the idea of establishment of similar organization was much older than the beginning of the presidential campaign of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Many volunteer organizations served people in need years before Kennedy. Especially young

¹ Robert B. Textor, *Cultural Frontiers of the Peace Corps* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1966), 1.

² James N. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 155.

³ Richard N. Goodwin, *Remembering America, A Voice from the Sixties* (New York: Perennial Library, 1989), 120.

⁴ Thomas G. Paterson *Kennedy's Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 285.

⁵ Giglio, "The Presidency of John F. Kennedy", 155.

⁶ "2015 Annual Volunteer Survey Results – Global Tabular Report", Official Site of the U. S. Peace Corps, http://files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/opengov/2015_Annual_Volunteer_Survey.pdf, accessed May 15, 2016, 63.

Mormons helped other people through their mission programs.⁷ Moreover, American philosopher William James mentioned at the Universal Peace Conference at the beginning of the twentieth century that mankind would only find peace through self-sacrifice and example.⁸ On the other hand, Clinton C. Gardner suggested that many people credited Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy as an ideological father of the Peace Corps. Rosenstock-Huessy published a book titled “The Moral Equivalent of War“ in year 1912. Two years later, he published a proposal that work-service could be an alternative to military conscription and later, in the 1920s, he organized several of the first volunteer-service camps in Europe.⁹ Also, a similar program as the Peace Corps was Operation Crossroads Africa in the fifties of the twentieth century. It was labeled as the progenitor of the Peace Corps by the President Kennedy himself. Operation Crossroads Africa allowed young Americans to cooperate with and help young Africans and is active as well as the Peace Corps until these days.¹⁰

1.1.2 The Peace Corps’ Mission and Goals, Original Concept Versus Current Mission

Peace Corps represented one of the projects that had to help the United States win dominance in the third world countries and be more influential in this area than the Soviet Union. The Peace Corps turned out to be the most visible and noble historical legacy of Kennedy’s political program New Frontier. The Peace Corps was an exact embodiment of the spirit of the New Frontier. This organization was vivid, realistic, liberal, persistent, and focused on its mission, as well as attractive, youthful and sporty.¹¹ Years before its establishment, Kennedy used to complain that only few official American representatives abroad spoke the language of the particular country they were responsible for. Kennedy cultivated meeting local citizens and the U. S. citizens instead of the U. S. official representatives as a young member of the Congress

⁷ Ibid., 154.

⁸ Lawrence F. Lihosit, *Peace Corps Chronology; 1961-2010* (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2011), 8.

⁹ Clinton C. Gardner, *Letters to the Third Millennium: An Experiment in East-West Communication* (Norwich: Argo Books, 1981), 212.

¹⁰ “Why volunteer as a Crossroader? - History”, Official Site of the Operation Crossroads Africa, <http://operationcrossroadsafrica.org/>, accessed May 10, 2016.

¹¹ Textor, „Cultural Frontiers of the Peace Corps“, 1-3.

on his excursion tours in foreign countries already back then. Therefore, the program of the Peace Corps was very close to Kennedy's ideals.¹²

The Peace Corps embodied idealism and hope that so many young people had in Kennedy. The service in Peace Corps corresponded with the spirit of Kennedy's inaugural address.¹³ He stated: "My fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man."¹⁴ Moreover, Kennedy and Peace Corps volunteers had a special kind of bond between each other. Their relationship is relatively well illustrated by the volunteers' nickname as Kennedy's children.¹⁵

The contemporary Peace Corps describes itself as a preeminent international service organization of the United States. Its mission is to send Americans to tackle the most pressing needs of people around the world. The volunteers that serve in the Peace Corps work at the grassroots level to make a sustainable change that impacts the lives in their community long after they return home, according to the agency. Volunteers also become global citizens and serve their country at the same time through their service. Moreover, volunteers who come back to the United States from their host countries bring their knowledge and experiences as well as global worldview and they enrich the lives of those around them, claims the agency.¹⁶ Nevertheless, according to Anthony Watkins, there is a great difference between the icon of the Peace Corps and the reality of the Peace Corps. It is quite difficult to criticize this agency as it is surrounded by a myth of perfection. Thanks to John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the organization became an American icon.¹⁷ It is designed as an independent agency, however, there is

¹² Ibid., 5.

¹³ David Burner *John F. Kennedy and a New Generation* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1988), 85.

¹⁴ "John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Inaugural Address (20 January 1961)," Official Site of the Voices of Democracy, the U.S. Oratory Project, <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/kennedy-inaugural-address-speech-text/> (accessed May 10, 2016).

¹⁵ Theodore C. Sorensen *Kennedy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 532.

¹⁶ "About Us – The Peace Corps' Mission", the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, <http://www.peacecorps.gov/about/>, accessed May 10, 2016.

¹⁷ Anthony Watkins *Peace Corps: The Icon and the Reality: The story the government agency doesn't want you to know*, Peace Corps Wiki (USA, 2012), 5, <https://www.amazon.com/Peace-Corps-Reality->

sometimes a tension between its independence and the demands of the U. S. foreign policy. The Peace Corps would lose its credibility and its acceptance if its independence was in danger.¹⁸

However, the Peace Corps is abundant with a very rich source of energy and commitment, being its volunteers. They are determined to do the best they can, regardless of their country director, Peace Corps director or the president of the United States. The volunteers' quality has convinced many countries to ask each year for more Peace Corps volunteers. Moreover, there are many great talents within the current and former volunteers. The alumni include two U. S. senators, nine House of Representatives members, two governors, three mayors, twenty ambassadors, many university presidents and many more, including for instance boards' chairs of influential companies, founders of companies, writers, novelists, television news anchors, and so on.¹⁹ Gardner even goes further in terms of the appreciation of the concept of the Peace Corps as he calls it "theoretically the most promising experiment of all".²⁰

As for the Peace Corps main three goals that have not changed since its establishment, the Peace Corps volunteers have to promote world peace and friendship by fulfilling the following three goals:

1. To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women
2. To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served
3. To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans²¹

Anthony-Watkins-ebook/dp/B007MD089Q/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_product_top?ie=UTF8 (accessed June 23, 2016).

¹⁸ Stanley Meisler, *When the World Calls: The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and Its First Fifty Years* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2011), 6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁰ Gardner, „Letters to the Third Millennium: An Experiment in East-West Communication“, 211.

²¹ The Peace Corps Website “About Us – The Peace Corps’ Mission”.

1.2. *The Peace Corps Since its Establishment Until the End of the Cold War*

1.2.1. The Peace Corps 1961-1975

The Peace Corps under the leadership of its first director and brother-in-law of John F. Kennedy, Sargent Shriver, represented a quite idealistic and energetic organization where the employees demonstrated their commitment for instance by working overtime or coming to work on Saturdays. However, the organization was focused on expansion since its very beginning. This aspect remains the same until these days. Back then, evaluators of the Peace Corps saw excessive expansion as harmful and they were against such a quantitative focus.²² Watkins even criticizes the agency that the job title of the evaluator no longer exists in the Peace Corps.²³ However, Shriver decided to disregard report of Professor Max Milikan of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in which he was advised to start the project of the Peace Corps on small and experimental scale with only a few hundred volunteers. The President Kennedy agreed with Milikan's report and wanted Shriver to follow the system proposed by him. Nevertheless, Shriver did strongly disagree with it, and instead suggested a proposal of Warren Wiggins, the deputy director of Far East operations for later Agency for International Development. Wiggins insisted in his document "A Towering Task" that for the Peace Corps to make an impact on the developing world, it must be large enough. Namely, it should accommodate tens of thousands young Americans who wish to devote their time to service to their country. Wiggins was later named as a director of program development and operations and some time after that as a deputy director of the whole Peace Corps.

Kennedy embraced the idea of the Corps in his foreign policy conduct as he emphasized the ability of communist countries all over the world to send experts to Third World countries to help and promote their own ideology. Therefore, Kennedy stated that the United States has to have a program of its own that could compete in this

²² Meisler, "When the World Calls: The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and Its First Fifty Years," 4-5.

²³ Watkins, "Peace Corps: The Icon and the Reality: The story the government agency doesn't want you to know," 10.

respect with the communist program.²⁴ In addition, Elizabeth C. Hoffman stated that perhaps the most important achievement of the Peace Corps was that it allowed young Americans to be proud of their country in the 1960s when it embodied very noble ideas (obviously until the Vietnam War).²⁵

The program encountered numerous problems since its establishment as the exact structure and functioning of the program was still to be defined. What was very important for its president Shriver was to urge Kennedy that the program represented contribution to the world community and it was not an arm of the Cold War. Many politicians in Washington wished that the Peace Corps functioned as a part of the already existing Agency for International Development. However, Shriver fought for the independence of the agency quite vehemently. He refused to connect the wildly popular Peace Corps to the widely unpopular program of foreign aid.²⁶ Shriver and his team started the talks with government officials in perspective countries in Africa, in particular in Ghana with its President Kwame Nkrumah. Very important aspect in the talks was that Ghana only recently gained its independence and other African countries followed its example. Therefore, it was wise to start to negotiate the conditions in Ghana. Nkrumah agreed to invite first volunteers, but he did not want any social sciences teachers to avoid the U. S. propaganda. The invitation that came from Ghana was a beginning of the numerous Peace Corps presence on the African continent.²⁷

Moreover, Indian prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru agreed to receive some Peace Corps volunteers despite almost everybody expected him to be against the idea. What is quite interesting is that Nahru very well expressed the future problems of the Peace Corps when he said: „I hope you and they will not be too disappointed if the Punjab, when they leave, is more or less the same as it was before they came.”²⁸ On the other hand, there were also negative effects of Shriver’s preoccupation with large-scale project; there were cases of groups of volunteers that behaved as a fraternity in big cities

²⁴ Meisler, “When the World Calls: The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and Its First Fifty Years,” 11-24.

²⁵ Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 6.

²⁶ Meisler, “When the World Calls: The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and Its First Fifty Years,” 18-22.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 23-27.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 27-32.

due to the incessant campaign for larger number of serving volunteers.²⁹ Partly, it could be because the selection of volunteers targeted young college graduates that had outstanding academic careers and experience of school leadership position.³⁰

Nevertheless, the criticism of Peace Corps by certain scholars could be altered by its comparison to its Anglo counterparts, namely Voluntary Service Overseas and Canadian University Service Overseas. They were without any intention similar in their organizational structure and culture, placements, and political outlook. The Peace Corps provided to its volunteers extensive training on safety and hygiene (to the extent that some volunteers found it a way too much). The Corps also innovated the practice of preventive gamma globulin shots, which was later adopted by the Canadian counterparts, and provided medical personnel to each host country to attend the volunteers. The volunteers in Corps' counterparts suffered a much higher incidence of hepatitis (that is potentially deadly), malaria, and dysentery in the early 1960s.³¹

However, despite the agency was welcomed in the host countries in the early 1960s, later on, many volunteers wondered during the Vietnam War if they represented an imperial power that was not much-favored in many host countries.³² These were the perils of representing the United States in foreign countries. Volunteers who served during the Vietnam War were generally considered as "hippie" types as they escaped the military draft by joining the Peace Corps. Joseph Blatchford, who was appointed by the President Nixon in 1969 as a Peace Corps president, deemphasized B. A. generalists and looked for older and more technically skilled volunteers who could also do other assignments than teaching. The reason he recognized this area for improvement was that the Third World was experiencing urgent need of trained professionals in areas of health, food, sanitation, and business development. For example, Ghana also expressed the need of more mature and professional volunteers.³³ However, academic superiority of the volunteers was no longer emphasized for the selection process.³⁴ The Peace Corps had accomplished a lot. For instance, over the past years it improved the area of

²⁹ Ibid., 5.

³⁰ Lihosit, "Peace Corps Chronology; 1961-2010", 9-10.

³¹ Hoffman, "All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s," 174-176.

³² Meisler, "When the World Calls: The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and Its First Fifty Years," 5.

³³ Hoffman, "All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s," 173.

³⁴ Lihosit, "Peace Corps Chronology; 1961-2010", 10.

education in Ghana as their native teachers dramatically grew in number. Minister of education, Sebastian Opon has known the Peace Corps for long time so he saw a room for improvement in 1969. He suggested that there should be in-country training of the volunteers provided by the Ghanaians to achieve greater local participation in the program. Ghanaian government and the Peace Corps cooperated closely in order to coordinate training, tribal language instruction, and relations with local officials.³⁵

However, historian Gary May speaks in essay about the Peace Corps language instruction that it “was almost legendary for its poor quality” and that “Peace Corps incompetence and ignorance” in the area of volunteer health caused a “nightmare”.³⁶ To demonstrate how much the U. S. government was asked to pay for each volunteer, the Peace Corps stated in its first Presentation of fiscal year 1962 Program to US Congress that it would require 9,000 USD annually per volunteer. The document presented Peace Corps program clearly with its organizational structure and funding. A wide range of details was specified in it, such as that the volunteers did not have to wear any uniform as this was against the spirit of the organization.³⁷ The total number of volunteers overseas in the First Annual Peace Corps Report was 1,050 volunteers in seventeen countries worldwide, while they were present in Africa in four countries, namely Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Tanganyika. Some 1,838 volunteers were in training as of June 1962. There were, however three volunteer deaths in the first year of its existence (none of them in Africa), and many cases of illnesses, mostly gastroenteritis, dysentery, and acute upper respiratory infection. The budget for the first year of its existence was 30 million USD. The report also addressed mistakes as it stated: “The Peace Corps makes mistakes.”, while it referred to three incidents caused by the volunteers within the first year. The agency had also created a team of top U. S. scholars to evaluate and research its program efficiency.³⁸

The official reports from year 1975 showed different statistics. The agency undertook its major reassessment and launched a program that had to renew the agency

³⁵ Hoffman, “All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s,” 176.

³⁶ Paterson, “Kennedy’s Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963,” 290.

³⁷ “Peace Corps – Presentation of FY 1962 Program to US Congress”, the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, <http://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/cbj/1962.pdf>, accessed June 30, 2016, 26-61.

³⁸ “1st Annual Peace Corps Report”, Official Site of the U. S. Peace Corps, http://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/cbj/annualreport_1962.pdf, accessed June 30, 2016, 55-80.

to meet the needs of the 1970s. The agency recruited Americans from wider variety of educational, vocational, and cultural backgrounds. The average age of volunteer was twenty-eight years, while there were more than three hundred volunteers over the age of fifty. There were ten percent of volunteers with graduate and professional degrees, while fourteen percent had special skills without any college degree. Both of these figures represented increase in this respect and a major shift in the profile of typical volunteer. The public support has been renewed as there were only 19,022 applications in year 1970, while in fiscal year 1973 the Peace Corps received already 33,637 applications, a maximum since 1967. Moreover, eighty-eight percent of Americans found the Peace Corps either “very effective” or “somewhat effective” in a public opinion survey, and it outnumbered all other organizations of foreign assistance in the United States.³⁹

Furthermore, management priorities of the Peace Corps were reduction of early terminations, increased distribution of host country contributions, minimizing average unit costs, and utilization of new country management plan system. Early termination represented nine percent in man-months lost ratio. As a consequence, ten Peace Corps countries with the highest attrition rates had to be provided with a set of stringent goals. Moreover, Peace Corps planned to make the effort to achieve equitable distribution of host country contributions, especially from the countries with relatively high income per capita. Average unit costs were planned to be held constant where possible. Last but not least, Country Management Plan was implemented in fiscal year 1974 and it used special system that combined budgeting and programming into long-range documentation. This management tool had to help support good programs while spotting weaker projects that should be improved or terminated.⁴⁰ The funds that the agency requested from the Congress in fiscal year 1975 were 82 million USD for its 6,800 volunteers in service overseas.⁴¹

³⁹“Peace Corps Annual Operations Report – FY 1975”, the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, <https://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/cbj/1975.pdf>, accessed June 30, 2016, 8-14.

⁴⁰ “Peace Corps Annual Operations Report – FY 1975”, 10-11.

⁴¹ Ibid., iii.

1.2.2. The Peace Corps 1975 – 1989

The next time period this thesis deals with did not start with much of a great success as there was one serious incident between two Peace Corps volunteers that was not dealt with accordingly either by the agency itself or by the U. S. government. The incident happened at the island of Tonga in 1976. An attractive twenty-three years old female volunteer, Deborah Gardner, was murdered by her fellow Peace Corps volunteer, Dennis Priven, who stalked her and was attracted to her. Dennis probably could not stand her refusal and murdered Deborah in a very violent way – he stabbed her twenty-two times and let her die inside her hut. However, with the help of the agency, Dennis Priven was despite clear evidence despite him never convicted of any crime. The Peace Corps funded a vehement defense in Tonga that allowed Priven to be released. The agency did everything in its power to hide the scandalous murder so that the negative publicity does not harm the perfect image of the Peace Corps.⁴² The man accused of murder was tried in Tonga, however he was not found guilty based on a psychiatric report that declared him to be insane. They released him with a promise of the USA to the host country and the family of the victim that he will be sentenced to long-term confinement in a mental institution in the United States. Nevertheless, there were some loopholes in the U. S. legal system that allowed Priven to go free as nobody had the authority to commit him.⁴³ Moreover, he started working for another U. S. government agency, the Social Security Administration. There was clearly an incompetent leadership of Peace Corps full of political appointees at that time as the Country Director called the victim many times a “slut”, and blamed the victim for the tragedy.⁴⁴ What is even worse is the fact that the family of the victim assumed that Priven had been hospitalized and found out the truth only nearly thirty years later when the author of the book about the incident, Philip Weiss, interviewed them.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, the whole era of 1970’s was rather challenging for the Peace Corps in many ways as it experienced decrease in its popularity among young

⁴² Philip Weiss, *American Taboo: A Murder in the Peace Corps* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2005), 31-248.

⁴³ Watkins, “Peace Corps: The Icon and the Reality: The story the government agency doesn’t want you to know,” 4-5.

⁴⁴ Weiss, “American Taboo: A Murder in the Peace Corps”, 275-389.

⁴⁵ Watkins, “Peace Corps: The Icon and the Reality: The story the government agency doesn’t want you to know,” 5.

Americans. Lawrence F. Lihosit even calls the chapter devoted to this era: “1970’s: Reductions and Loss of Autonomy”.⁴⁶ As an example of the loss of its autonomy, the Peace Corps had to react in the 1980s to the wish of the Washington to reward Honduras. The reason was that Honduras allowed the United States to use its country as a base for attack of the contras against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. As a reward, the Peace Corps provided the largest program in the world to Honduras.⁴⁷

1.2.2.1. Peace Corps Budget and Transition Estimate Fiscal Year 1976

As for the official Peace Corps data, the budget estimate for the fiscal year 1976 showed that there was a decrease of 739 volunteers below the projected fiscal year 1975 level from 6,062 volunteers. There was also a trainee input decrease 250 below the projected fiscal year 1975 level from 3,750 trainees. Moreover, the requested budget of 80,826,000 USD for FY 1976 was 2,117,000 USD below the level of FY 1975. The Peace Corps served in sixty-eight countries that year. The domestic part of the program was estimated to cost 101,600,000 USD.⁴⁸

As for the reforms, the crucial reform of that year was under the federal agency for volunteer service, ACTION. This agency was established on July 1, 1971 and was provided legislative authority by the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973. There were altogether six agencies under the agency ACTION. ACTION made substantial strides in several program and management areas. For instance, on domestic scene, it continued the trend toward improved staffing and reallocation of staff. The domestic programs began implementation of the Integrated Program and Training System. It was meant to coordinate response of the agency to requests for volunteers among all six agencies under ACTION to provide the optimum mix of volunteers. Moreover, the Peace Corps terminated its program in Peru and, at the same time, it started to prepare several programs for new countries. Education still enjoyed over a half of all volunteer

⁴⁶ Lihosit, “Peace Corps Chronology; 1961-2010”, 23.

⁴⁷ Hoffman, “All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s,” 173-174.

⁴⁸ “Fiscal Year 1976 Budget and Transition Estimate: International Programs (Peace Corps)”, the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, <https://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/cbj/1976.pdf>, accessed July 3, 2016, 1-7.

positions, however, the agency planned to reduce this area to be able to increase other areas, such as agriculture, health and nutrition, and conservation.⁴⁹

All volunteers received special training prior to and during their volunteer service. Training consisted of three parts – language study, technical skills adaptation, and cross-cultural orientation. The duration of the training decreased as it represented only nine weeks on average. In the area of evaluation, the Peace Corps recognized three main priority issues. These were program evaluations, special evaluative studies, in-country self-evaluation, and monitoring. There were present around two thousand volunteers in Africa and they had to be present around 1975 in altogether twenty-six African countries.⁵⁰

Moreover, there was enacted the International Development Cooperation Act of 1979 on August 14, 1979. It authorized the U. S. president to provide assistance under this act for forestry projects and national food security. However, it limits the budget of the Peace Corps for fiscal year 1980 to 105,404,000 USD. Furthermore, a person that has received a Foreign Service Reserve or staff appointment or assignment may be appointed to a position in any United States department, agency, or establishment no later than three years after separation of such appointment.⁵¹ Furthermore, the General Accounting Office asked the agency in 1981 to calculate the Early Termination Rate as a percentage of volunteers who fail to complete their full length of service. This system was to be changed in the early 2000's to calculate differently in order to achieve much lower Early Termination Rate.⁵²

1.2.2.2. Peace Corps Budget Justification Fiscal Year 1983

Regarding the official statistics from the year 1982, the proposed Peace Corps budget for fiscal year 1983 was 97,500,000 USD which represented a 7,500,000 USD

⁴⁹ Ibid., 6-13.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 17-41.

⁵¹ “International Development Cooperation Act of 1979 – Public Law 96-53, 96th Congress”, Official Site of the U. S. Government Publishing Office, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-93/pdf/STATUTE-93-Pg359.pdf>, accessed July 2, 2016, 1-13.

⁵² Watkins, “Peace Corps: The Icon and the Reality: The story the government agency doesn’t want you to know,” 13.

decrease in comparison with the FY 1982 appropriation of 105,000,000 USD. The budget was affected by the decrease in the number of volunteers serving overseas. There were only 2,610 trainees in 1982 which was a reduction by more than 250 volunteers. The number of volunteers was 4,641, a decline of about seventy-five volunteers from the previous year. The Peace Corps was operating in sixty-two countries.⁵³

Concerning the reforms, special emphasis was to be placed on staff functions in order to improve the effectiveness and reduce the cost of management and support. There were evaluations based in field in the host countries as well as centrally funded contract evaluations to identify ways to reduce funds on management. Again, the agency emphasized the need of full participation of the host countries in the program, not only governmental, but in form of local agencies, and public and private organizations. The agency followed the philosophy of the President Ronald Reagan to help develop others skills needed for their self-sufficiency, the most importantly the economic one. Volunteer placements were to be reconsidered, and priority was to be given to assignments where volunteers serve as a catalysts and where their efforts indicated to have lasting multiplier effect. The Peace Corps presented redesigned training that was more economic as there was a standardized core curriculum for all trainees in several countries. This program was to be fully operational in all countries in the following year. The Peace Corps was also separated from the organization ACTION in 1981, and as a consequence began major reorganization in its headquarters. There used to be 215 staff in Washington prior to the separation, however, the Peace Corps was reconstituted as an agency with 476 employees in the United States as a consequence of transfer of the ACTION employees who provided support to the Peace Corps.⁵⁴ There were 2,048 volunteers serving in Africa in 1981 in total in twenty-five countries. From all Peace Corps volunteers served 1,900 of them in education, teaching math, science, special education, vocational education, and English. Around seven hundred worked in capital-saving technologies, five hundred worked in health education. Some 1,100 volunteers worked in food production projects, while four

⁵³ “Peace Corps Congressional Submission: Budget Justification Fiscal Year 1983”, the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, <https://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/cbj/1983.pdf>, accessed July 5, 2016, 1-8.

⁵⁴Ibid., 7-14.

hundred of them worked to help replant forests and prevent soil erosions in potential areas for deserts.⁵⁵

1.2.2.3. Peace Corps Congressional Presentation Fiscal Year 1990

Request of the Peace Corps for its budget was 163.6 million USD for the fiscal year 1990, it represented an increase of ten million USD over the appropriation budget of the previous year. The projection was that there would be 6,800 volunteers serving in sixty-nine developing countries in the fiscal year 1990. Congress provided authorization for Peace Corps to grow to a 10,000–volunteer force by the early 1990s in 1987. That represented an increase of eighty-five percent over the number of then-serving volunteers. Nevertheless, in 1988 did the Peace Corps experience growth of number of trainees by twenty-one percent for a total of 3,360 trainees, the largest rate of increase since the late 1970s. However, the rates were slowed for the following years because of increased costs and pressure to reduce the federal deficit. Only around 3,250 volunteers were to be recruited each year in 1989 and 1990. There were planned to be 2,227 volunteers in 1989 in Africa and 1,330 trainees for Africa. Also, they operated in twenty-nine African countries.⁵⁶

Concerning the reforms, the Peace Corps planned to focus on better programs instead of bigger programs, but wanted to preserve big projects at the same time. Special emphasis was to be placed on strong projects in youth and urban development that became a development priority for many host countries. Recruitment and applicant screening methods had been overhauled and resulted in reduction of trainee and volunteer dropout rates. The Peace Corps planned to enter four new host countries at the end of 1989, these were The People’s Republic of China, Bolivia, Ivory Coast, and Sao Tome and Principe. As for the typical profile of volunteer, they came from all fifty U. S. states, their average age was thirty years, fifty-two percent of them were women, while ninety-three percent were college graduates, and eleven percent was married.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid., 15-85.

⁵⁶ “Peace Corps Congressional Presentation: Fiscal Year 1990”, the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, <http://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/cbj/1990.pdf>, accessed July 7, 2016, 1-6.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 9-26.

2. THE PEACE CORPS 1989 – 2001

2.1.1.1. Peace Corps Congressional Budget Presentation Fiscal Year 1994

Among significant changes since the establishment of the agency was the fact that the work of the Peace Corps had evolved, following the development in the host countries. Even though the volunteers still continued to serve in education sector as teachers and teacher trainers, the programs that grew the fastest were in environmental and small enterprise sector. The Peace Corps even claimed that it had one of the largest workforces in the environmental sector among international development organizations. Moreover, the Peace Corps claimed that it was quite cost-effective as it spent only 39,000 USD a year to support one volunteer, while only 9,000 USD on average was spent directly on the expenses connected to the needs of the volunteer. The agency praised its philosophy of having the volunteers living the same way as the people in the communities they served lived. Moreover, the Peace Corps opened new programs during the fiscal year 1993 in many countries that they could not enter before the collapse of the communism, such as Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.⁵⁸ On the other hand, to oppose the claimed apolitical nature of the agency, Meisler argued that the Peace Corps sent its volunteers to Eastern European and other former Soviet bloc countries when the Cold War ended as agents of capitalism.⁵⁹

Peace Corps also claimed that its volunteers do not finish their mission once they come back home, but on the contrary, they help other Americans understand the complexity of other countries in the world. The agency treasured the following words of President Clinton: “Peace Corps has enabled thousands of Americans to help people all over the world become what they ought to be, and has brought the message by their

⁵⁸ “Peace Corps Congressional Budget Presentation Fiscal Year 1994”, the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, <https://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/cbj/1994.pdf>, accessed July 25, 2016, 1.

⁵⁹ Meisler, “When the World Calls: The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and Its First Fifty Years,” 5.

very lives that America is a great country that stands for good values and human progress.”⁶⁰

The agency requested 219.7 million USD for fiscal year 1994 which was 1.6 million USD above the level of the budget of the preceding year. There was a plan of having more than seven thousand volunteers working in ninety-seven countries at the end of the fiscal year 1994. The Peace Corps was present in thirty-five countries on the African continent. Nevertheless, the programs in Rwanda and Equatorial Guinea were suspended in fiscal year 1993 due to the political situation in both countries. Africa alone had 1,387 trainees, and 2,161 volunteers, while programs in Africa were funded by 64.2 million USD. Nearly half of all volunteers in Africa worked in educational sector, precisely 1,060 of them. Furthermore, the profile of the average volunteer in the fiscal year 1992 was the following: thirty years old, twelve percent of all 3,309 volunteers belonged to racial or ethnic minority, ten percent were over fifty years old, while women represented more than half of the volunteers.⁶¹

2.1.1.2. Peace Corps Congressional Budget Presentation Fiscal Year 1998

The budget request for fiscal year 1998 was 222 million USD which represented an increase only by one percent in comparison with the preceding year. The agency carried out an extensive survey in 1996 that asked returned volunteers who served since the establishment of the agency until 1996 for at least one year about their Peace Corps experience. The agency collected 1,253 responses and their results were interesting. The agency asked the volunteers if they think they made some contribution to the host country they served in. Ninety-four percent thought as much, however such question was highly subjective, therefore the responses cannot be taken as something exact or measurable. The same percentage of volunteers stated that they would make the same decision to join the Corps. Moreover, seventy percent stated that their experience had a positive impact on their careers. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents worked in education, twenty-two percent worked in business, while federal state was the employer

⁶⁰ “Peace Corps Congressional Budget Presentation Fiscal Year 1994”, 1.

⁶¹ Ibid., 2-15.

of fifteen percent of them, and non-profit organizations attracted thirteen percent of them. It is also quite interesting to hear that whole seventy-eight percent of returned volunteers performed some type of volunteer work since they returned from their service in the host countries to the United States.⁶²

The agency set its top priorities in its 1998 Presentation and they are the following: to maximize opportunities for Americans to serve as volunteers, to maintain a broad, global presence, and to reduce administrative costs. Moreover, the Peace Corps planned closure of its programs in thirteen host countries within three years. Among these were for example Swaziland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Uruguay, Botswana, Costa Rica, Chile, Fiji, and Tuvalu. On the other hand, the agency newly entered two countries, South Africa and Jordan. Moreover, another priority was the establishment of the Crisis Corps, an initiative within the Peace Corps that responded to humanitarian crises and natural disasters. The agency also prioritized its collaboration with other international volunteer organizations. The Peace Corps started to cooperate with governments and non-governmental organizations in Senegal, Mali, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Chile, and the Czech Republic in order to help these countries to establish their own national volunteer organizations. Regarding the Czech Republic and the mission of the Peace Corps volunteers there, it was so successful, according to the official report, that the agency worked with the Czech Association of High School Principals to help establish the Bohemia Corps. Bohemia Corps was designed as an organization to recruit and place native speakers of English in Czech schools.⁶³

As for the profile of typical volunteer in the fiscal year 1994, it was following: average age was twenty-nine, fifty-seven percent were women, while forty-three percent were men, and minorities comprised of thirteen percent of all volunteers. There were also seven percent of volunteers who were older than fifty years, while the oldest volunteer was seventy-six years old. As for funding of the programs for the African continent, the Peace Corps spent 51,8 million USD in the fiscal year 1996 and the estimate was that it will cost close to 53 million USD in the fiscal year 1998. There

⁶² “Peace Corps Congressional Budget Presentation Fiscal Year 1998”, the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, <https://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/cbj/1998.pdf>, accessed July 25, 2016, 1-5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5-12.

were serving 2,250 volunteers in thirty African countries. Thirty-six percent of them worked in education, twenty-six percent in health, seventeen percent in environment sector, while nine percent worked in agriculture, and another nine percent worked in economic development.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Ibid., 13-28.

3. THE PEACE CORPS 2001 – 2016

3.1. *Peace Corps Possible Areas of Improvement 2001 - 2016*

3.1.1. Significant Developments in the Agency Since Its Beginning

P. David Searles mentioned in his foreword to the book *Peace Corps Chronology: 1961-2010* by Lawrence F. Lihosit that there are several matters that have significantly changed over the history of the Corps. The ratio of men to women volunteers has become the reverse than what it was in the beginning.⁶⁵ As of spring 1964, the ratio between men and women was sixty-five percent for men and thirty-five percent for women.⁶⁶ Isolation of volunteers in remote work sites that was the norm throughout the history has been alleviated in a significant manner with the arrival of new modern communications technologies. Moreover, the problem of HIV and AIDS that did not exist for many years of the Corps' existence has become very serious personal concern as well as very important area of volunteer work in later years of the organization.⁶⁷

3.1.2. The Peace Corps' Mission

It is not obvious, according to Robert L. Strauss, a former Peace Corps volunteer and country director in Cameroon, what type of organization the Peace Corps really is. He suggests that it is a sort of schizophrenic entity as it is unsure whether it is a development organization or cross-cultural exchange program. Strauss believes that because the agency was established in a very short period of time in order to fulfill the pledge of John F. Kennedy in his campaign, yet nobody dares to question thinking of its founding fathers as the concept was only vaguely defined in its three goals. His opinion is that the agency is also afraid to grow up and face the challenges of the modern world.

⁶⁵ Lihosit, "Peace Corps Chronology; 1961-2010", 7.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 7.

It simply tries to achieve too much on too many places with very few people, and the results can never be satisfying as a consequence, according to Strauss.⁶⁸

Furthermore, Peace Corps does not seem to be a successful development organization despite the fact that the Peace Corps material, many volunteers and staff members claim the opposite. If it was successful, it would be cited and referred to as a model at least sometimes. Nevertheless, scholars and other organizations overlook the Peace Corps and do not cite it as a model when discussing development agencies. It might be because the majority of volunteers is inexperienced and young, and because the agency cannot decide whether it is a development organization or an organization with mission to promote the world peace and friendship which was stipulated by the Congress in the Peace Corps Act. The agency fails to fulfill both of these objectives as it cannot decide which of these objectives is more important. The issue is that development work is seen by many volunteers and staff as sort of obligation that legitimizes the cultural exchange aspects of the organization.⁶⁹ On the other hand, to be fair, the first director and a founding father of the Peace Corps, Sargent Shriver, held the position that “Peace – not Development, it might be noted- was the overriding purpose, and the process of promoting it was necessarily complex. So the Peace Corps should learn to live with complexity that could not be summed up in a single proposition.”⁷⁰ The Peace Corps highlights the personal experience to its applicants, not the volunteers’ development impact, however, to foreign governments it promises significant assistance regarding technical development. The reality is that the agency offers predominantly recent college graduates who might have or might not have any skills to offer. Strauss argues that the agency represents only a little more than an extended, semester abroad program that is funded by the government without proper focus on economic development and improvement of standards of living in the host countries.⁷¹

Moreover, the Peace Corps volunteers are often the only representatives of the U. S. government that the rural, poor populations ever encounter. That can be, in fact,

⁶⁸ Robert L. Strauss, “Think Again: The Peace Corps” *Foreign Policy* (April 22, 2008), <http://foreignpolicy.com/2008/04/22/think-again-the-peace-corps/> (accessed July 12, 2016), 1.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁰ Jay Chen, *A Small Key Opens Big Doors: 50 Years of Amazing Peace Corps Stories: Volume Three: The Heart of Eurasia* (Palo Alto: Traveler’s Tales, 2011), 13.

⁷¹ Strauss, “Think Again: The Peace Corps”, 4.

damaging for the image of the United States abroad as volunteers are not trained or expected to represent the U. S. government and its positions or interests. What more, the agency was created as an independent organization so it should not be influenced by the U. S. foreign policy objectives in short term or long term sense. Furthermore, Strauss adds that many of the tens of millions people that the agency has interacted with since its establishment do not have any idea what the Peace Corps is. Regardless of knowing that the agency is funded one hundred percent by the U. S. taxpayers. For instance, many host country nationals asked Strauss about a particular volunteer from Rome, Paris, or Tokyo that they thought was a member of the Peace Corps. That is a clear example of how poorly presented is the agency and its connection to the United States in the host countries.⁷² What more, many volunteers felt during the Iraq War as if they represented an imperial power that was not much-favored abroad in the Peace Corps host countries.⁷³ Nevertheless, Strauss claims that the Peace Corps does not have any consistent strategy. In order to have a strategy, one has to aim at certain conclusion, a certain final goal. A strategy implies a conclusion, a final goal. The Peace Corps is not used to having any benchmarks that could signal accomplished mission. That is the reason why volunteers still do the same jobs in many countries as they did when they originally came in the 1960s. Nevertheless, if anyone tries to question or change the system, the Peace Corps is against it as placing of its volunteers is more important than questioning the ability of the host country government to provide sufficient training to its own citizens to do the job themselves. Strauss says: “A serious development organization would either not allow such a situation to persist or would refuse to abet it.”⁷⁴

The Peace Corps is unable to do this because it has never had any benchmarks to signal when the mission has been accomplished. In Cameroon, volunteers are still teaching math and science, the job they originally came to do in 1962. This was a situation Strauss tried but failed to change because the placing of volunteers in the field was more important to the Peace Corps than questioning whether the Cameroonian government had failed to do its job by not training and hiring adequate numbers of local teachers over a period of more than four decades. In any case, doing the same thing for

⁷² Ibid., 5.

⁷³ Meisler, “When the World Calls: The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and Its First Fifty Years,” 5.

⁷⁴ Strauss, “Think Again: The Peace Corps”, 7.

forty-six years ought to indicate that something is broken, something the Peace Corps is unlikely to fix, perhaps.⁷⁵

3.1.3. Placement of the Volunteers

However, selection of placements of the volunteers represents another significant area of possible improvement. The agency operates on inertia mostly and keeps sending volunteers to the same places to do the same things as many volunteers before. Nobody seems to be bothered by the fact that former volunteers were doing the same things twenty or thirty years ago and it is not really obvious whether their mission still makes sense. Strauss suggests that the agency does not really care whether their presence in particular countries makes sense or not. At the time Strauss investigated the issue in 2008, the Peace Corps was active in ten countries with high human development (according to U.N. Human Development Report), forty-nine with medium human development, while operating only in eleven countries that have low human development. The agency should focus on the countries that are in need the most, given the limited resources the agency has.⁷⁶ It is quite surprising that Peace Corps was still active in Romania and Bulgaria, two countries that became members of the E. U. in 2007. The agency left Romania in 2013, after twenty-two years in the country.⁷⁷ Moreover, the program in Bulgaria was also phased out in 2013, as well twenty-two years after the agency came into the country.⁷⁸

Similar wondering evoke numbers of volunteers per capita in the host countries. For instance, there was one volunteer for every 3,800 citizens of Tonga, however, Tanzania received one volunteer for every 245,000 of its inhabitants. Strauss also wondered why there was one volunteer for every 2.5 million Mexicans, while tens of thousands Americans actually live in Mexico, there are millions of Mexicans in the United States, and both countries are among each other's most important trading

⁷⁵ Ibid., 7-8.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁷ "Peace Corps to close its programme in Romania", the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, (June 29, 2011): 1, <http://www.mae.ro/en/node/9568>, accessed July 17, 2016.

⁷⁸ "Peace Corps Phasing Out Programs in Bulgaria, Romania", the official website of the International Information Programs, Embassy of the United States of America, (January 15, 2013): 1, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/article/2013/01/20130115140939.html#axzz4EwLJavU>, accessed July 17, 2016.

partners. It might indicate that the numbers of volunteers sent abroad are random and nobody really analyzed whether they are meaningful. The people who resist closing programs in particular countries are from the State Department as well as former volunteers who resent seeing programs shut down in their former host countries. Obviously, there would be additional costs in connection to relocation of the program from one country to another, however, much more could be achieved in any poorer country with the same resources. Nevertheless, the truth is that nobody can claim whether the agency makes difference or not.⁷⁹ With only 6,919 volunteers scattered over sixty-three countries one can hardly quantify the efficiency of the program.⁸⁰

3.1.4. Peace Corps Three Goals

On one hand, the success of the agency's three goals is quite difficult to quantify. On the other hand, as a sort of indicator should serve a surprising number of nations, which the Peace Corps left and which later requested for it to return back, according to Lihosit.⁸¹ As for the objectives of the third goal, one in two hundred volunteers decides to write a book about their Peace Corps experience. There are similarities in their memoirs as they refer about loneliness, difficulty to understand and to adapt to culture and language that was foreign to them, constant struggle to maintain good health, and gratefulness for the opportunity to experience something different while having to work hard. Lihosit suggests that the third goal of the Peace Corps could be achieved through establishment and proper maintenance of permanent Peace Corps Library and Museum. There used to be a library in 1989, however it was dismantled without proper public announcement or a future plan for the materials in 1995.⁸²

Nevertheless, the third goal has always received insufficient attention and funding (less than 0.5 percent of fiscal year 2015 budget) than did the first and the second goal. The third goal was singled out by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in its report in 2010 as an area that needs to receive more attention and was not given enough priority. The third goal activities represent efforts by volunteers and former

⁷⁹ Strauss, "Think Again: The Peace Corps", 8.

⁸⁰ "Peace Corps - Fast Facts".

⁸¹ Lihosit, "Peace Corps Chronology; 1961-2010", 10.

⁸² Ibid., 11.

volunteers to promote understanding of other people on the part of Americans. The activities include blog writing, public talks, community service in the United States, and charitable fundraising. The most prominent activity sponsored by the agency is World Wise Schools program that connects schools all over the United States with volunteers. The report suggested increased funding of this objective and development of agency-wide strategy to achieve objectives of the third goal. As a response to the report, the agency established an Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services. As a result, the number of schools that participated in World Wise Schools program rose by almost two hundred percent between fiscal years 2009 and 2013.⁸³

3.1.5. Washington Peace Corps Bureaucracy

Searles believes that it is the fault of the federal government that it was not able to provide the Peace Corps with sufficient budget. He criticizes that staff appointments are very often linked to the political connections rather than to the personal ability and commitment to serve the world and make it a better place. Moreover, Searles is against the debates concerning the five-year rule as he believes that the merits of the rule are quite obvious and poorly presented in the debates. A very disturbing fact, according to Searles, is that Lihosit has found out that the bureaucracy of the Peace Corps in Washington enjoys much greater portion of the agency's funds than it has ever had in its history. Searles supports Lihosit's idea about a room for improvement as he believes that it would be beneficial to establish a permanent home for Peace Corps materials such as books, personal memoirs, official documents, photos, art, in fact all that has a connection with the Peace Corps. Such a collection shall be based in the Library of the Congress, according to him.⁸⁴

Despite all criticism, the Peace Corps is probably one of the least-expensive development agencies that have ever been established. To support a volunteer in the field cost the agency 41,000 USD a year in total in 2008. It was only a fraction of the money the government spent on single American diplomat or USAID worker. Nevertheless, the Peace Corps Press Director, Amanda Beck, estimated that the agency

⁸³ Curt Tarnoff, "The Peace Corps: Current Issues" *Congressional Research Service* (February 9, 2016), <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS21168.pdf> (accessed July 24, 2016), 4-5.

⁸⁴ Lihosit, "Peace Corps Chronology; 1961-2010", 6-7.

directly spent only 3,000 USD a year per volunteer. If that is true, it means that the remaining 38,000 USD a year per volunteer goes to the costs of the bureaucracy in Washington and in the host countries. Strauss comments on this that it only says more about the lack of significant results of the agency than about Peace Corps financial effectiveness.⁸⁵

3.1.6. The Five-Year Rule

The five-year rule represents a continuing issue of concern as it is seen to have had both positive and negative effects on the performance of the Peace Corps. The rule became law in August 1965 and limits Peace Corps staff to employment in length of five years. It also allows an extension of one year with personal approval of the Director. Amendment from 1985 also permits fifteen percent of U.S. direct hires an extension of two and a half years, resulting in the total possible length of employment in eight and a half years. The staff can be rehired only after they are out of the agency for the same period of time they served at least. The five-year rule does not apply to personal service contractors or foreign nationals. Staff that is involved in safety and security of volunteers, including new victims advocate position, Inspector General, and the staff in his office are also exempted since 2004 and 2011 new legislations respectively.⁸⁶

On one hand, the positive features of the five-year rule reflect the original thoughts of Shriver that could be the benefits, namely that the workforce is seen as vibrant, youthful, and energetic; high turnover permits the hiring of more returned volunteers and brings their high-quality policy input (fifty-three percent of all direct hires and seventy-eight percent of all overseas positions comprised of returned volunteers); generates a group of former Peace Corps staff that departs into other international agencies which increases the influence of the agency (benefit originally suggested by Sargent Shriver); poorly performing staff is departed easily; creates performance incentive for volunteers who might want to become a part of the staff in the future; and creates cost savings from not having long-term salary and benefit

⁸⁵ Strauss, "Think Again: The Peace Corps".

⁸⁶ Curt Tarnoff, "The Peace Corps: Current Issues", 16.

obligations. On the other hand, negative features of the five-year rule are poor institutional memory; frequent staffing vacancies; no long-term career incentives to increase performance; insufficient time to identify, develop, test, and implement new ideas; discouragement for management to invest in training and professional development; diminished management capacity; and high staff recruitment costs. The reality is that the average length of employment is only three years, while the annual turnover that would be expected around twenty percent, according to the rule, is twenty-five to thirty-three percent each year since 2004. The agency had not utilized the possibility of one-year or two-and-a-half-year extensions until 2012 evaluation of Inspector General. The agency has sought ways to fully utilize existing legislative authority to extend employment of its staff since 2012, however, the issue remains open as the Inspector General found in September 2015 that recommendations were not fully addressed by the agency.⁸⁷

3.1.7. Training, Recruitment, and Support of Volunteers

As for training, recruitment, and support of volunteers, Searles suggests that there are still some of the major problems from the early years of the program to be encountered these days. He suggested that the agency still struggles with the question of the best way of recruitment, training and support of the volunteers.⁸⁸ Lihosit mentions that volunteers are older, more experienced and mostly female now. There are many volunteers over fifty years and they are quite diverse. The agency has experimented over the years with many areas of its work, for instance with selection, training, jobs and even organization. Peace Corps included into its strategy work with other agencies such as USAID and international non-governmental organizations. The academic profile of the volunteer has also changed over the time. The average volunteer has had 3.6 college Grade Point Average and in ninety-four percent of cases have held some sort of leadership in his or her school. Lihosit found the decision to cut training to only twelve weeks as unfortunate. Training used to be sixteen weeks in 1967, while in 1979 it was cut to only ten weeks. Cutting language training is quite harmful as the ability of the volunteer to speak the foreign language represents a crucial part of volunteer's work. The first goal promises technical assistance to the nations that request it, however, there

⁸⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁸⁸ Lihosit, "Peace Corps Chronology; 1961-2010", 6.

is much more emphasis on business today than in the beginning as the needs of the host countries have evolved. On the other hand, the relative number of health workers and teachers is similar to the beginning.⁸⁹

However, to be recruited by the Peace Corps might not be as difficult as the agency claims officially as they look only for the best. The agency used to claim in the 2000s that it accepts only each seventh applicant, while later in 2008 it accepted every third applicant. Strauss highlights that the agency rarely rejects an applicant in case he or she meets the minimum standards and is healthy and persistent outright. As a result, each group of volunteers sent overseas includes a few highly motivated and capable individuals, while the rest of the group consists of people who were not sure what they want to do with their life, being recent college graduates, recently divorced, looking for government-subsidized travel experience, or wanted to build their resume. Once the trainees are overseas, there is only less than a two-percent chance that they will be sent back due to their unacceptable performance. As a result, it makes no difference whether volunteer is qualified or not, or motivated or not. Moreover, system of recruitment and placement is also ineffective, as the agency does not make use of language or other skills of the volunteers and sends them to areas and work assignments in which they cannot use their skills as an advantage. Unfortunately, the inability to hire the best is not limited only to volunteers. There are twenty-nine political appointments in the Peace Corps that attract only lower-level politicians, party loyalists, family members of elected officials and the like.⁹⁰

3.1.8. Safety of Volunteers, Sexual Assault Response

Moreover, another important issue that Searles recognizes in Lihosit's work is that something should be done to achieve safety of volunteers, especially women, and to combat the rising violent incidents directed towards them. His book was dedicated to all volunteers who lost their lives during the Peace Corps service which was a very fine gesture. Searles believes that there are not many people who recognize what an issue this is as the occurrence of death during the service is much more common than most of

⁸⁹ Ibid., 6-7.

⁹⁰ Strauss, "Think Again: The Peace Corps", 8.

the people realize.⁹¹ Lihosit stated that everybody who learned the number of volunteers who died in their service was surprised as this fact is not publicized. The greatest number of deaths is caused by accidents, while motor vehicle accidents are the most common cause of death. This particular rate has decreased, while there has been an alarmingly high increase of assaults and even murders of volunteers since 1992. Many of these assaults were of sexual nature and targeted mostly the young female volunteers who represent the majority of volunteers these days. Lihosit suggests an hour a day of self-defense class during the training period and that they shall be given appropriate tools to respond accordingly to any assault such as shrill whistles or pepper sprays. Also, the system of placement of the volunteers shall be overhauled as female volunteers who serve alone in tiny villages are in danger the most. Lihosit suggests placing volunteers in pairs to prevent this from happening.⁹²

However, the Peace Corps claims that it has implemented a Sexual Assault Risk-Reduction and Response Program that is designed to reduce the risk of sexual assault. Its role is to ensure volunteers receive comprehensive support that is timely and compassionate. There are more than thirty policy changes in this program, the Office of Victim Advocacy was created, and extensive training for Volunteers and staff was newly implemented. Included are in the program also new clearly defined procedures for reducing the risk of sexual assault and responding to volunteers who report incidents of sexual assault. The agency claims that it has fully implemented the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011, and at the same time that it provides care and support to the victims of crime beyond Peace Corps' legal obligations. Volunteers are encouraged by the agency to seek out support of the agency and report all incidents. They are guaranteed confidentiality and a process that is driven by the volunteer.⁹³

Concerning the case of Kate Puzey prior to the implementation of the Kate Puzey Protection Act, the twenty-four years old volunteer murdered in Benin. Her family claimed that the agency was responsible for her death as Peace Corps personnel breached her confidentiality and revealed her role in the dismissal of an employee who

⁹¹ Lihosit, "Peace Corps Chronology; 1961-2010", 7.

⁹² Ibid., 6-7.

⁹³ "Peace Corps – Agency Reforms", the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, <https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/leadership/agency-reforms/>, accessed July 10, 2016.

sexually abused children in school that Kate taught in. Kate accused Constant Bio, a citizen of Benin, of the crimes after her students came to her and revealed their secret, also other fellow teachers complained about the issue to Kate. When the agency notified Constant Bio that he would be dismissed from his contractor position, he slit the throat of Kate Puzey in her sleep during night not long after he received the information. The parents of Kate claimed that the agency attempted to keep the case and the mistakes quiet. The agency tried to keep in secret from the family all details of her murder, so that was the reason for them to join 20/20 report of the ABC News to investigate the case. Kate asked in her email to the Peace Corps Country Director, Sheryl Cowan, in Cotonou for her role to be secret as a brother of Bio worked in the office as a manager. Sheryl Cowan promised to keep Kate's role confidential. However, she did not, and the Peace Corps did its best to keep its apparent mistake secret. The agency referred publicly to this incident only in a 2008 report by the Peace Corps Inspector General that stated that an investigation found that "there was a direct link between the leaked information and a local criminal investigation". There was no reference to Kate Puzey or Benin. Even two years later from the incident, the agency had not apologized to the Puzey family nor had it made any public acknowledgment of the breach of confidentiality. The attitude of the agency towards Puzey family was according to them "insensitive" until the management found out that ABC News had begun to investigate the case. Even belongings of Kate were delivered in a cardboard box in front of the house without any ceremony and the Peace Corps kept "radio silence" towards the family. There was no representative, no letter or anything. Nevertheless, the agency claims that it has changed its procedures in cases when they deal with the families of volunteers who were killed during their service now. Kate was the twenty-third volunteer that was murdered during service since the establishment of the agency.⁹⁴

Moreover, Watkins provides a different point of view on the safety and security policy than the Peace Corps itself. He claims that negative experiences of the volunteers are brushed aside by the Peace Corps. The agency was accused many times of neglecting certain things that lead to illness, injury, rape, and death. Victims of violence,

⁹⁴ Anna Schechter and Brian Ross, eds., "Parents of Slain Volunteer Say Peace Corps Error Led to Murder", the official website of the ABC News, (January 14, 2011), <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/parents-slain-volunteer-peace-corps-error-led-murder/story?id=12607274>, accessed July 27, 2016.

sexual assault, and illness are blamed and ostracized instead of being provided support of the agency. The agency refuses to take the responsibility and leaves the volunteers dehumanized and hurt by the agency that is number-oriented. The volunteers, unsupported, are left to deal with the issue on their own and their rebound process is often painful. The agency perceives the victims as threats to the perfect image of the agency. The agency maintains a culture of silence and suppression of criticism as it wants to keep the Peace Corps myth perfect and use the power of the agency as a political tool, claims Watkins.⁹⁵

Due to the Peace Corps culture of silence, there were several women who refused to obey to it and spoke publicly during ABC News 20/20 investigation about the response of the agency in cases of their sexual assaults. More than one thousand young American women became a victim of rape or they were sexually assaulted in the host countries in the last decade. Victims claimed that the agency ignored safety concerns in some cases and later blamed the raped women that they brought on the attack. There were six rape and sexual assault victims who told their stories in 20/20 report on ABC News in hope that the Peace Corps would improve training of volunteers and victim counseling. The most brutal attack survived Jess Smochek who was gang raped in Bangladesh in 2004 by a group of young men. Smochek claims that the incident happened after the Peace Corps officials in the Peace Corps Bangladesh office ignored her repeated pleas for relocation due to safety concerns. Smochek said that the group began to stalk her and tried to touch her and kiss her from the very first day she arrived to the city. The incident occurred only several hours after a Peace Corps safety official filed a report with the local police, but again ignored her plea to be reassigned. The group knew that Smochek filed a complaint. Smochek went through so much pain during the attack that she begged the attackers to kill her at some point. She was left unconscious after the incident. The Peace Corps was afraid of offending the Bangladeshi officials so they immediately started to cover up what happened to Smochek. Smochek was instructed by the Peace Corps to tell other volunteers about her consequent travel to Washington, D.C., that she had to have her wisdom teeth out in the United States. Jess Smochek was told that her counselor made her to feel that the attack

⁹⁵ Watkins, "Peace Corps: The Icon and the Reality: The story the government agency doesn't want you to know," 3-4.

was her fault because of walking alone on the street shortly after 5 p.m. She had to list all things she had done wrong that resulted in the accident happening to her. However, the Peace Corps denied that it has attempted to cover up or keep in secret the large number of rapes and sexual assaults. The Peace Corps statistics show that between 2000 and 2009 there were 221 rapes or attempted rapes, 147 serious sexual attacks, and 719 other unwanted or forced sexual assaults (namely kissing, fondling, or groping).⁹⁶

There was nobody who could serve as an advocate or point person and manage the case, according to another sexually assaulted former volunteer Casey Frazee. Therefore, Frazee, who was assaulted during her service in South Africa in 2009, decided to establish a support group for other Peace Corps victims, First Response Action. Even Frazee complained about the myth surrounding the agency as she said: “No one is really looking at this [sexual assault response management] because there's this over-idealized picture of the JFK Peace Corps.”⁹⁷

Moreover, another volunteer, Danielle Dryke, was raped during her service in Mali in 2004 and delivered her testimony to The Guardian. She was flown back to the United States after the incident for counselling sessions by the Peace Corps. A few days later, she realized that “her own behavior on the night of the attack was coming under the spotlight”. The counselor questioned all choices Dryke made before, during and after the attack. Dryke was asked about her choice of clothing, whether her footwear was appropriate for an escape, and even though Dryke did not normally drink alcohol she was sent for a specialist alcohol assessment because she drank it that night. She felt threatened as she was told that if the counselling took longer than forty-five days, her contract would be terminated. The counselor read Dryke’s emails to the Peace Corps staff and discussed them during the sessions, and she was told that she is not the one who can make the decision whether she may or may not return back. Despite Dryke knew the name and the address of her attacker, the Peace Corps did not make any attempt to report the rape to the police in Mali. Dryke’s counselor suggested that it

⁹⁶ Anna Schecter and Brian Ross, eds., “Peace Corps Gang Rape: Volunteer Says U.S. Agency Ignored Warnings”, the official website of the ABC News, (January 12, 2011), <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/peace-corps-gang-rape-volunteer-jess-smochek-us/story?id=12599341>, accessed July 25, 2016, 1-6.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 6-9.

might be possible due to the cultural norms in Mali that the attacker did not know that he was committing a crime or doing anything bad. Dryke was made to suggest ways she could make herself safer if she was given the chance to return to Mali. As Dryke wanted to get back as soon as possible, she agreed to sign a letter of intent, introducing steps she would take, including strict ban of alcohol drinking on her placement. The letter of intent started with the following statement: “I have learned many hard lessons through this experience, and recognize first and foremost that I have let myself down in a series of poor judgments.”⁹⁸

3.1.9. Peace Corps Health Care System

Peace Corps health care system needs serious improvement, probably starting with the medical screening. According to David Kotz, Peace Corps Inspector General at the time of 2007 Senate Hearing on Peace Corps Volunteer Empowerment Act, stated in his testimony that eighty-two percent of all applicants who withdrew their applications did so during the medical screening process. Kotz claimed that frustrations during the procedure prevented many applicants from serving to the Peace Corps. The top four reasons for withdrawal were all related to the medical screening process.⁹⁹

Moreover, there have been serious concerns regarding the quality of health care provided to volunteers during and after their service. The 2014 Volunteer Survey shows that only seventy-eight percent of volunteers were very satisfied or satisfied with the medical support provided by the Peace Corps. Moreover, there is a serious concern regarding the use of mefloquine, an anti-malarial medication as it can result in serious side-effects. The Peace Corps was sued by a former volunteer in 2015 for giving the drug to the volunteers without appropriate warnings and instructions. The agency opposed the claim and stated that it monitors the tolerance and offers changes in

⁹⁸ Celeste Hicks, “I was raped and my counsellor asked me what I had been wearing” *The Guardian* (March 31, 2016), <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/mar/31/i-was-raped-and-my-counsellor-asked-me-what-i-had-been-wearing> (accessed July 26, 2016), 1-7.

⁹⁹ “Enhancing the Peace Corps Experience: S. 732, The Peace Corps Volunteer Empowerment Act – Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps and Narcotics Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate, 110th Congress”, Official Site of the U. S. Government Publishing Office (July 25, 2007), <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-110shrg45008/pdf/CHRG-110shrg45008.pdf>, 41-52.

medication, but only if requested. Furthermore, returned volunteers with maladies caused by their service complain about inadequate support from the agency and significant frustration when they try to obtain the health services they are eligible for. Former volunteers have to file claims under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act and cooperate with the Department of Labor Office of Worker's Compensation Programs in order to claim their medical expenses. The Peace Corps is in turn responsible for reimbursement of the Department of Labor. The primary concern of the affected returned volunteers is the length and complexity of the process, together with a very common lack of understanding of volunteer service and the types of illnesses that they can suffer from after having worked in developing countries by the bureaucrats.¹⁰⁰

To address these issues, the Peace Corps hired staff for assistance to the volunteers during the process of claiming their expenses. There was also established a Healthcare Task Force in November 2015 that proposed a set of actions based on recommendations from Inspector General. The group for instance seeks legislation to raise the ceiling on disability compensation, enhances explanation of health benefits to returned volunteers after their service, and provides assistance to volunteers regarding the access to insurance under the Affordable Care Act.¹⁰¹

3.1.10. Early Termination Rate

As for the early termination rate, Lihosit's data indicated that the early termination rate has lessened. The attrition rate of the volunteers who terminated their service early was about the same as it was in the early 1960's.¹⁰² However, Watkins' point of view offers different perspective. A Peace Corps Inspector General memo to the Peace Corps Director Gaddi Vasquez from 2004 determined as the cause of high early termination rate quality programming. The memo stated that "lack of meaningful work is closely linked to early termination, travel out of site, feelings of isolation, and risky behavior".¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Curt Tarnoff, "The Peace Corps: Current Issues", 15-16.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 16.

¹⁰² Lihosit, "Peace Corps Chronology; 1961-2010", 6.

¹⁰³ Watkins, "Peace Corps: The Icon and the Reality: The story the government agency doesn't want you to know," 8-9.

This resulted in many cases into incidents of violence. However, Vasquez opposed the official criticism and downplayed the connection between high early termination rate and quality programming. Already the appointment of Vasquez divided the community of returned volunteers and was questionable. The agency completely obfuscated the issue of early termination rate in its 2010 Comprehensive Agency Assessment. The report was requested by the Congress and the agency claimed it was its plan to reform its operations. The report legitimized new Annual Rate that seemed to reduce the number of early terminators. Moreover, the agency claimed that volunteers terminate service early usually for personal reasons. The only reasons that the agency wanted to be concerned about were those controllable ones, in particular volunteer resignation. On the other hand, the agency did not qualify medical separation, service interruption, or administrative separation as something it could have control over. Such attitude is problematic because it means that the agency is never at fault when it terminates volunteer's service due to administrative reasons and it also implies that all reasons for medical separation are out of the control of the agency. The agency is not oversighted when presenting these data and it has very significant leeway if it wants to terminate volunteer's service due to administrative or medical reasons.¹⁰⁴

The resignation rate was also not designed to indicate the performance of the agency. The agency introduced new metric that would measure the average length of service. This concept further hid information about early termination rate, even more than the Annual Rate that was already a rather misleading figure. The report also stated that twenty-five percent of all terminations occurred in the first three months, during training. The agency would like to begin measuring the early termination rates after the first three months, only when volunteers are officially sworn in. This type of measurement would exclude from the statistics all volunteers who terminated their service due to reasons within control of the agency, for instance because of programming quality, training quality, or staff professionalism.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 9-10.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 9-10.

Moreover, the leading critic of the agency, Chuck Ludlam, adds that the agency has an annual drop-out rate around ten percent. The calculation is based on the number of volunteers who drop out in a given year versus the total number of all volunteers in service that year. The current number of volunteers represents an increase of nearly one thousand thanks to an effort by the Obama administration to expand the workforce. According to Ludlam, the real drop-out rate is around one third if it is calculated as a percentage of volunteers who do not finish their full service. Moreover, the researcher at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in statistics, Mike Sheppard, and former Peace Corps volunteer in Gambia, found out that the drop out rate around thirty percent has been consistent for the past forty years. Sheppard also found out that almost two-thirds of volunteers were leaving the Peace Corps before the end of their service in 1968. That was the time when numbers of applicants and accepted volunteers were at their peak.¹⁰⁶

3.1.11. Evaluation of Impact

As for an evaluation of the agency's impact, Strauss highlights that the real problem the Peace Corps faces is that it has never carried out a thorough evaluation of its impact. The agency shall work harder to fulfill its second goal and it should at least ask people in the host countries whether they even know which country the Peace Corps volunteers come from. If the host country nationals do not know the answer, then the agency does not fulfill its mission and in particular the second goal. Moreover, any development agency does measure its impact. Therefore, Strauss argues that the Peace Corps needs to "undertake rigorous measures to assess its impact" if it is a development agency. The agency only relies on surveys that are answered by volunteers every second year. The problem is that the volunteers themselves comment whether they are making a difference.¹⁰⁷

Moreover, Strauss claims that not all of the volunteers sent abroad were appreciated by the local population. He argues that volunteers are in many cases a curiosity or amusement for the local people as they are not used to foreigners speaking

¹⁰⁶ Anna Schechter, "What Happened to the Peace Corps?", the official website of the ABC News, (February 1, 2011), <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/peace-corps-scandal-volunteers-criticize-agency/story?id=12749900>, accessed July 27, 2016, 1-5.

¹⁰⁷ Strauss, "Think Again: The Peace Corps", 9.

their language or dancing their sacred traditional dance. Volunteers were remembered in many places, however, not necessarily for a concrete thing they achieved, it might have been only their willingness to pay for other guests' drinks, Strauss suggests. On the other hand, many volunteers spoiled the image of the Peace Corps due to their drug or alcohol abuse or the way they violated cultural or professional norms. The Peace Corps has as any other large organization "its share of deadbeats, philanderers, parasites, gamblers, and alcoholics". He suggests that it cannot be expected that such people can work responsibly with minimal supervision when sent tens of thousands of miles from their home. Strauss adds: "Disasters logically result." Nevertheless, the agency is truly effective in getting the volunteers back to the United States before the authorities of the host country can step in. However, it is not known whether the overall impact of the Peace Corps on the part of the local communities and understanding of the United States is based on a minority of truly great volunteers and is positive, or whether is the image damaged by the average, or notorious volunteers. There are no data that could indicate the answer to this question because the agency simply does not measure its impact in the host countries and does not ask.¹⁰⁸

Last but not least, the Peace Corps should give up on the myth that its establishment resulted from a perfect conception that is not to be questioned or altered. Only then it can become relevant and effective. The agency shall recruit only the top percents of its applicants. It shall really divert its resources in a limited number of countries that are interested in the development of their country. It must also give up the excuse that even though there are no measurable results, good intentions of the agency are sufficient measure.¹⁰⁹

3.1.12. Whistleblower Reforms

As for the whistleblower reforms, the returned volunteers Chuck Ludlam and his wife Paula Hirshoff, claim that the agency needs extensive reforms. Instead of that, the agency focuses on further expansion, not listening to the complaints of its volunteers, or dealing with the drop-out rate of more than thirty percent. Ludlam and Hirschoff served

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 10.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 11.

in the 1960s and then decided to serve again in Senegal from 2005 to 2007. Ludlam held a position of an advisor to the Obama and Biden Peace Corps transition team. He was also a member of the National Peace Corps Association, the volunteers' alumni group. According to Ludlam, nostalgia prevents so many former volunteers to speak up as well as the fact that the agency is a part of the John F. Kennedy legacy. The second service of the couple made Ludlam and Hirschhoff realize that the agency was being harmed by incompetent country directors, poor management, inadequate training, rapid turnover and a culture that does not support volunteers to come with problems to their superiors. Ludlam obtained surveys completed by volunteers from all over the world from a whistleblower from the Washington Peace Corps Headquarters. More than three dozen country directors received "terrible" ratings. It turned out that only fifteen out of seventy-seven countries were well managed, while the rest of them were poorly managed. Moreover, the rapid turnover slowed the growth of some potentially good programs. Ludlam also complained about the fact that there is no record of what happened at particular sites in the past and volunteers have to start after their arrival in fact from a scratch. In his opinion, it does not indicate the agency's serious effort at development. Ludlam noted that young volunteers become disillusioned without good training, in poor sites with poorly designed programs and poor support, and it is the reason why so many of them leave early.¹¹⁰

Furthermore, Ludlam was concerned about the reluctance of the agency to listen to volunteers and their valuable feedback of what works and what does not in a particular host country. Volunteers have to feel free to speak about their ideas with confidence if Peace Corps wants to improve, according to him. The reality is that the agency threatens the volunteers to send them home if they cause trouble. Many young volunteers do not speak out because of that. Therefore, volunteers should have full whistleblower rights, similar to those given to the employees of the government. The whistleblower status of volunteers must be provided by law to protect them, according to Ludlam.¹¹¹ Actually, such a law was enacted a year later, in 2012 as The Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Schechter, "What Happened to the Peace Corps?", 1-4,

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹¹² "No FEAR and Whistleblower Protection Acts", the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, <https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/open-government/no-fear-act/>, accessed July 26, 2016.

3.2. Functioning of the Peace Corps Since the Year 2001 Until 2016

There are 6,919 volunteers and trainees in the Peace Corps currently, and they are serving in sixty-three countries. Sixty-three percent of them are female, while thirty-seven percent are male volunteers. Ninety-five percent of them are single, while only five percent is married. Minorities represent twenty-eight percent of all volunteers and the average age of them is twenty-eight years. Moreover, there is seven percent of volunteers over the age of fifty. As for the African continent, there are 3, 113 volunteers serving in Africa right now.¹¹³ The current budget of the organization is 410 million USD which reflects an increase of nearly eight percent in comparison with the preceding fiscal year. The estimate for the costs of the direct volunteer operation in Africa alone is that 102,2 million USD would be used.¹¹⁴ The budget of Peace Corps for the operations in Africa has almost doubled since 2001.

3.2.1. Functioning of the Peace Corps Under the Administration of George W. Bush

The budget of the Peace Corps for fiscal year 2001 was 275 million USD. There were seven thousand U.S. citizens who served as the Peace Corps volunteers in seventy-seven countries around the world in the year 2001. There was an estimate of 55, 1 million USD spent on direct volunteer operations in Africa for the fiscal year 2001.¹¹⁵

Furthermore, there were two Peace Corps directors who were appointed by the President George W. Bush. The first one was Gaddi H. Vasquez. He served as a director from January 23, 2002 to September 7, 2006. Moreover, he was the first Hispanic American director and he focused on recruiting diverse volunteers so that the Peace Corps becomes more diversified. The Peace Corps reached its maximum in the number of volunteers in the last thirty years under Vasquez's leadership. Vasquez opened

¹¹³ "Peace Corps - Fast Facts", the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, <http://www.peacecorps.gov/about/fastfacts/>, accessed May 15, 2016.

¹¹⁴ "Peace Corps – Congressional Budget Justification, Fiscal Year 2016", the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, http://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/cbj/peacecorps_cbj_2016.pdf, accessed May 15, 2016, 5-13.

¹¹⁵ "Peace Corps – Congressional Budget Presentation, Fiscal Year 2001", the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, <http://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/cbj/2001.pdf>, accessed May 16, 2016, 4-37.

a historic program in Mexico, overhauled the safety and security systems globally, and initiated programs under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, according to the agency.¹¹⁶

The second director appointed by George W. Bush was called Ronald A. Tschetter and he served from September 26, 2006 to January 16, 2009. He was a former Peace Corps volunteer from India in years 1966 to 1968. His primary sector of the Peace Corps assignment was community health and he served there with his wife, Nancy. He devoted his efforts to attract volunteers who are over fifty years of age, he promoted the idea of volunteerism, and increased efforts to measure success and impact of the Peace Corps.¹¹⁷

3.2.2. Functioning of the Peace Corps Under the Administration of Barack Obama

The budget of the Peace Corps for the fiscal year 2009 was 343, 5 million USD. There were 8,100 U.S. citizens who served as the Peace Corps volunteers in seventy-seven countries around the world in year 2009. There was an estimate of 76, 2 million USD spent on direct volunteer operations in Africa for the fiscal year 2009.¹¹⁸ Moreover, the Peace Corps claims that it underwent a major change in its culture during the Obama Administration. The health, safety, and security of Volunteers became the top priorities for the Peace Corps.¹¹⁹

Furthermore, there were two Peace Corps directors who were appointed by the President Barack Obama. The first one of them was Aaron S. Williams who served between August 24, 2009 and September 17, 2012. He was a returned Peace Corps volunteer from the Dominican Republic from years 1967 through 1970. Also, Peace

¹¹⁶ "Peace Corps – Past Directors", Official Site of the U. S. Peace Corps, <http://www.peacecorps.gov/about/history/pastdir/>, accessed May 15, 2016.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ "Peace Corps – Congressional Budget Justification, Fiscal Year 2009", the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps, <http://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/cbj/2009.pdf>, accessed May 16, 2016, 5-25.

¹¹⁹ "Peace Corps: Agency Reforms", 1.

Corps programs were historically re-opened in Colombia, Sierra Leone, and Indonesia under the leadership of Williams, in particular, it happened during his first year as a director. The agency celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2011. Williams encouraged as a Peace Corps director all potential applicants to become a part of the Peace Corps, and to devote their time and efforts to public service. They would benefit from its experienced leadership, according to him.¹²⁰

The second Peace Corps director, that was appointed by the President Obama, is the current one, Carrie Hessler-Radelet who was sworn in on June 25, 2014. She served as the Agency's acting Director and deputy director between the years 2010 and 2014. She is a returned Peace Corps volunteer that served as a teacher in secondary school in Western Samoa from 1981 to 1983. She served with her husband, Steve Radelet. She oversaw record-breaking application numbers in 2015 as a consequence of her continued effort to revitalize volunteer recruitment, application as well as selection process. She started to collaborate with First Lady Michelle Obama in order to expand access to education for adolescent girls around the world under the auspices of the initiative Let Girls Learn. She is concerned with the health and safety of volunteers and her aim is to launch programs that would improve support of the volunteers and reduce the risks they are imposed to. Last but not least, she oversees the implementation of the 2011 Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act.¹²¹

The data shows us that the budget of this governmental agency has increased significantly over the years. The President George W. Bush wanted to strengthen the organization as an effective tool in the war against terrorism, however his budget request was not approved by the Congress.ⁱ Nevertheless, the agency's budget kept rising during the administration of Barack Obama so it is possible to perceive the political importance of this agency within the concept of the U. S. foreign policy.

¹²⁰ "Peace Corps – Congressional Budget Justification, Fiscal Year 2009", the official website of the U. S. Peace Corps", 22-25.

¹²¹ "Peace Corps – Director", Official Site of the U. S. Peace Corps, <http://www.peacecorps.gov/about/leadership/dir/>, accessed May 16, 2016.

3.3. *Analysis of the Peace Corps Annual Volunteer Surveys from 2009 and from 2015*

The Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning of the U. S. Peace Corps conducts every year an Annual Volunteer Survey in order to find out the satisfaction of its volunteers with the management of the organization and key areas of service experience, such as the Peace Corps training effectiveness, their personal health and safety and in-country staff support. Understandably, the organization promotes its successes in the Annual Volunteer Surveys. However, on the contrary, this chapter puts the emphasis on the Peace Corps areas of possible improvement and possible shortcomings, as the purpose of this thesis is to suggest possible areas of improvement for the Peace Corps. There will be presented an analysis of two official Annual Volunteer Surveys, particularly from the year 2009 and 2015. These years will be covered because the year 2009 represents the final year of the Bush's administration while the survey from year 2015 is the closest available survey towards the end of Obama's administration. Therefore, achievements of the agency and its development during both administrations can be compared.

3.3.1. Annual Volunteer Survey 2009

The Volunteer Survey from year 2009 is different in its form and shorter than the following survey from year 2015. However, many of the data that will be provided can serve as an overview of the progress of the agency over the years that were between years 2009 and 2015, and to demonstrate how the agency has evolved.

There were 4,652 respondents of this survey out of who were sixty-one percent female and thirty-nine percent male volunteers. Eighty-four percent of the respondents were between twenty and twenty-nine years old, nine percent were between thirty and forty-nine years old, while seven percent were older than fifty years. The primary assignment sectors of the respondents were the following: English teaching (twenty percent), youth development (eleven percent), health extension (nine percent), community development (eight percent), business education or advising (seven

percent), environmental education (six percent), HIV or AIDS (six percent), teacher training (five percent), agriculture (four percent), NGO development (four percent), math or science teaching (four percent), agroforestry (three percent), ICT(three percent), other education (two percent), water sanitation (two percent), urban planning and regional development (one percent), forestry and parks (one percent). Moreover, the respondents stated that they were prompted to apply to the Peace Corps by their personal interest in the Peace Corps (seventy-three percent), followed by knowing or meeting personally former Peace Corps volunteer (forty-one percent), others were attracted by the Peace Corps website (forty-one percent) and campus or community information session held by the Peace Corps.¹²²

Furthermore, activities that were by the respondents selected mostly as the ones that their primary work or assignment included were working with youth (fifty-three percent), English teaching (thirty-nine percent), HIV and AIDS (twenty-eight percent) and working with NGO(s) and girls' education (twenty-four percent). Average time that the volunteers spent doing their primary assignments was less than twenty-four hours per week. However, as a secondary activity was mentioned mostly English teaching (forty-eight percent), working with youth (forty-seven percent) and sports, fitness and HIV, AIDS (twenty-seven percent). Secondary activities consumed more than ten hours per week of the volunteers' time. Nineteen percent of all respondents could not state they were satisfied with their primary assignment, while the same was true of only ten percent of the respondents concerning their secondary activities and projects. As for the Peace Corps Pre-Service Training, almost fourteen percent found on the average the overall efficiency of the training as poor or not effective. Insufficient preparation for work with counterparts and community partners reached the worst rating (twenty-five percent), followed by insufficient preparation to perform technical aspects of the respondents' work (twenty-five percent), and insufficient preparation to monitor project goals and outcomes (nineteen percent).¹²³

¹²² "Peace Corps Volunteer: 2009 Annual Volunteer Survey – Global Report", Official Site of the U. S. Peace Corps, http://files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/policies/2009_Annual_Volunteer_Survey.pdf, accessed May 15, 2016, 3-7.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 8-13.

Moreover, twenty-three percent of all respondents felt the people they had to work with were unprepared for them when they arrived at their site. On the other hand, only seven percent of the respondents were satisfied with the health care provided by the Peace Corps in-country minimally or not at all. Nearly seventeen percent of all respondents were minimally or not at all satisfied with the support provided by the Peace Corps in-country staff. Moreover, twenty percent of all respondents were either minimally or not at all satisfied with the time and resources allocated to mental health and adjustment issues. The average of more than sixteen percent did not find the interaction with their country director as adequate; while twenty percent of them were not comfortable in discussing issues with their country director, and twenty-four percent found the frequency of his or her visits as inadequate. Furthermore, eighteen percent of the respondents stated that their country director was either minimally or not at all aware of the volunteer issues and concerns. More than forty percent of the respondents experienced verbal sexual harassment, while more than fourteen percent experienced it more than twenty-six times. More than seventeen percent of the respondents experienced physical sexual harassment, while more than eight percent of all respondents experienced it more than once. Four tenths of one percent experienced rape during their service, while nearly seven percent of all respondents were sexually assaulted.¹²⁴ There was only one percent of the respondents that stated that they had no stress during their service. Last but not least, nineteen percent of all respondents felt that they achieved goal one either minimally or not at all, only four percent felt that they achieved goal two minimally, while only seven percent felt that they achieved goal three minimally.¹²⁵

3.3.2. Annual Volunteer Survey 2015

There were 5,213 respondents of the survey in the year 2015. Female volunteers represented sixty-one percent of the respondents, while male volunteers represented thirty-four percent. Forty-four percent of all respondents served in Africa. The average age of the respondents was close to twenty-eight years, while the median age was twenty-five. It is interesting that approximately one in five volunteers felt that the

¹²⁴Ibid., 15-29.

¹²⁵Ibid., 38-49.

current Peace Corps work in their host country should be reduced or discontinued. The volunteers who suggested that their primary project work should be discontinued represented eight percent of all respondents, while it should be reduced according to twelve percent. Moreover, every twentieth respondent, in other words five percent of all respondents, felt the Peace Corps program should be discontinued or closed down in their host country entirely.¹²⁶

Moreover, every tenth respondent (ten percent of all respondents) would refuse to evaluate their overall Peace Corps service as rewarding, while twenty-three percent of the respondents did not evaluate other aspects of the assessment of the Peace Corps service as rewarding. There were four percent of all respondents who were not sure whether they would like to finish their service. As for the goals of the Peace Corps, the implementation of the goal one (effectiveness in building local capacity) was not seen as effective by almost thirty-three percent of the respondents. There were more than sixteen percent of the respondents who felt that they could not evaluate their achievements in sharing America with the world (goal two) as effective, while the implementation of the goal three (effectiveness in bringing the world back home) was not seen as effective by almost twenty percent of the respondents. Moreover, among the most common challenges that prevent effective implementation of the Peace Corps goals were mentioned professional challenges (promptness, work style, lack of resources, etc.) with fifty-seven percent, community or organization was not receptive to change with fifty-four percent, language barriers (forty-nine percent), logistical difficulties (forty-five percent) and, last but not least, cultural barriers (forty percent). Twenty percent of the respondents stated that their community did not need a volunteer, while twenty-three percent of the volunteers did not receive the support they needed from the Peace Corps staff.¹²⁷

As for the Peace Corps training, forty-nine percent of the respondents could not state that they felt prepared for their service when they arrived into their host country. Only forty-one percent of the respondents stated that they were able to communicate

¹²⁶“2015 Annual Volunteer Survey Results – Global Tabular Report”, 2-13.

¹²⁷Ibid., 6-9.

well or very well in their local language, while seventeen percent communicated poorly or could not communicate at all (one percent). Overall effectiveness of the Peace Corps training in the respondents' primary work assignment skills was not seen as effective by thirty-eight percent of the respondents. Primary project sectors of the respondents in year 2015 were the following ones: agriculture (eight percent), education (thirty-six percent), environment (nine percent), health (twenty-four percent), community economic development (ten percent), and youth in development (ten percent). As a part of their work, sixty percent of the respondents mentioned English teaching, while only twenty-seven percent of the respondents mentioned teacher training. Thirty-two percent of the respondents could not state that they had enough work to do at their site, twenty-eight percent could not claim that their skills were a good match to the work they did at their site, and thirty-one percent did not believe that their work was related directly to what their community needed.¹²⁸

The following paragraph will deal with the safety perception of the respondents. More than seven percent did not feel safe in the place they lived, more than five percent did not feel safe in the place they worked, and twenty-three percent did not feel safe during transportation within the country, while seven percent did not feel personally safe while traveling. Thirteen respondents did not feel safe in the city where their main Peace Corps office was located. There were only twenty-one percent of the respondents who did not experience any insensitive comments, harassment or discrimination, moreover, fifty percent experienced harassment based on their gender, forty-nine percent experienced discrimination based on their race and thirty-two percent experienced discrimination based on their marital status.¹²⁹

Moreover, thirty percent could not state that they felt satisfied with the administrative and logistical in-country staff support, forty-eight percent did not feel satisfied with emotional support, twenty-seven percent with medical support, twenty with safety and security support, forty-one with site selection and preparation and, last but not least, thirty-four percent were not satisfied with project specific technical skills.

¹²⁸Ibid., 9-19.

¹²⁹Ibid., 21-25.

Thirty-eight percent could not state that their country director was aware of volunteer issues and concerns. Also, twenty-two percent of the respondents who were medically attended could not state that they were satisfied with their Peace Corps Medical Officers.¹³⁰ Last but not least, Sexual Assault Awareness skills learned at the Pre-Service Training had to use to mitigate unwanted sexual advances thirty-five percent of all respondents, while five percent were unable to apply them when they needed it. These figures reveal that at least forty percent of volunteers experienced unwanted sexual advances.¹³¹

Some of the data from both Annual Volunteer Surveys are not comparable as there were applied different methods and scales of ratings in the survey from 2009 than were used in the survey form 2015. The survey from 2009 contained different specification of the individual rating marks than the survey from 2015. This needs to be considered when comparing the data that were evaluated concerning effectiveness and satisfaction of the volunteers. It might seem that the agency has developed in a wrong direction, but weighted rating could indicate different results. On the other hand, what data can be compared are the statistics. It was revealed that the agency increased number of its volunteers who teach English significantly. The sixty percent compared to only twenty-seven percent in teacher training suggest that the agency should change its development in this direction and instead, focus on the training of the local professionals.¹³²

¹³⁰Ibid., 26-29.

¹³¹Ibid., 12.

¹³²Ibid., 26-28.

4. CONTROL STUDY

The following part of this diploma thesis is dedicated to the analysis of one hundred questionnaires out of the total of one hundred two questionnaires collected. Two extra questionnaires did not correspond either with the time frame of the research or with the geographical area of the research. Respondents of the questionnaires were either current or returned U. S. Peace Corps volunteers that have served in Africa since the year 2001 until now. The time frame corresponded with the presidency of George W. Bush and Barack Obama as their administrations are the time frame of this thesis. This control study represents a probe into the concerns and opinions of the volunteers. The selection of the respondents was random and was limited to the volunteers who were willing to devote their time to fill in the survey and reacted to the author's plea. Nevertheless, all volunteers were assured that the questionnaires are fully anonymous and for purely academic purposes. However, several of the respondents expressed their doubts whether it is achievable that their responses remain fully anonymous. In order to ensure that, the analysis will in no way attempt to link individual responses to particular individuals and will never reveal the countries in which respondents served, years of their service or their gender, so such a concern shall be ungrounded. The author of the thesis published the responses online via website Peace Corps Interviews Wordpressⁱⁱ, nevertheless, without the information about the countries or years of service, etc., so that their anonymity is ensured. Respondents also acknowledged that the author is in no way affiliated with any governmental or non-governmental organization that could profit from the results of the questionnaires.

The responses were obtained by the virtue of the company SurveyMonkeyⁱⁱⁱ which is the world's largest company providing online surveys. An open link to the questionnaire was posted by the author of the diploma thesis to individual private Facebook^{iv} groups intended for U. S. Peace Corps volunteers in individual African countries. The intention of the author is to share the thesis in all U. S. Peace Corps Facebook groups that the author joined in order to present volunteers with the outcomes of the study. Many of them expressed their curiosity to learn the outcomes as well as a gratitude that somebody deals with the delicate topic of areas that need improvement in the organization. The author supposes that she is in an ideal position to suggest any

possible areas of improvement as she is fully independent on the organization and has the advantage of a detached perspective from the outside of the organization.

The questionnaire is formed by seven open-ended questions. Such a form enables the respondents to voice all of their concerns, opinions, findings, and remarks. It is important to realize that such a form of arrangement of the questionnaire makes the volunteers to invent their own answers, and that most of the responses would reach much higher percentage of references if the responses were already listed and the respondents could only select multiple choices. The first question is rather general as it is linked to the reasons for joining the Peace Corps and not to an individual experience while serving in the host country. The majority of the respondents seems to have similar altruistic reasons for joining the organization. On the other hand, the following four questions are connected to an individual experience of the volunteers. Every question is analyzed in a separate chapter. However, the evaluation of the responses to the questions one to five is a part of the appendices. Namely, appendices number four to eight. The reason for that is that these questions are not the main focus of the thesis. Furthermore, there is a division based on specific criteria in the last part of this control study. Those criteria are defined in the last question and they include specification of years of service of the individual volunteer, his or her country or countries of service, gender, and age at the time of the U. S. Peace Corps service. The outcomes of this analysis of questionnaires are in no way general and cannot be applied for all current, returned or even future U. S. Peace Corps volunteers. It has only informative nature and is purely directory.

Hereinafter is provided a list consisting of all questions from the questionnaire:

1. What was the main reason for joining the Peace Corps?
2. What were your expectations and were they met?
3. Was training by the Peace Corps before your assignment sufficient?
4. Could you please list some of the positive impacts of your service on your life?

5. Could you please list some of the negative impacts of your service on your life?
6. Are there any areas of the U. S. Peace Corps organization that need improvement? If yes, what areas need improvement and optimization the most?
7. Please provide additional information about years and country of your volunteer service, gender and age at the start of your service to categorize answers efficiently.¹³³

¹³³ Aneta Firýtová (Interviews with Peace Corps Volunteers for M.A. Thesis called U. S. Peace Corps – Areas of Possible Improvement in the Third Millennium), online interviews with volunteers, Palo Alto, California, USA: SurveyMonkey Inc., available at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FG2R6X8> (created February 19, 2016), Questions 1-7.

4.1. *The Analysis of the Results Connected to the Research Question – The Possible Areas of Improvement Within the Peace Corps Organization*

This chapter is connected to the main research question of this diploma thesis. Both returned and current volunteers were asked about the areas of the U. S. Peace Corps organization that need to be optimized and improved. The question was: "Are there any areas of the U. S. Peace Corps organization that need improvement? If yes, what areas need improvement and optimization the most?" The responses can be divided into three different groups. The first group represents the areas of possible improvement that were mentioned the most and, in particular, between eleven and seven times. The second group deals with the possible areas of improvement that were mentioned between six and three times. Last but not least, the third group consists of areas that were mentioned once or twice.¹³⁴ The results of the analysis of the responses are illustrated in Appendix No. 3 in a graph.

The following paragraph is dedicated to the most common possible areas of improvement. The mostly mentioned answer was that nothing comes to the mind of the volunteers in that aspect and that they think Peace Corps did a great job when they served in it. This answer was mentioned eleven times. Some of these respondents highlighted that Peace Corps service is in fact an individual journey, or they mentioned that they do not have enough experience to answer the question accordingly. There were three types of areas that were emphasized ten times each. Firstly, ten volunteers highlighted the need of more thought-out Peace Corps goals and their consistency, modernization and better promotion of Peace Corps, and an analysis of its impact. Also, Peace Corps should have a specific working plan of what it needs and wants from the volunteers. Moreover, dissemination of information is also a challenge at times, especially when a volunteer needs to be able to plan projects at site and does not know until too late whether or not they coincide with other Peace Corps events. Furthermore,

¹³⁴ "Interviews with the U. S. Peace Corps Volunteers (collected by Aneta Firytová)," Website Peace Corps Interviews Wordpress, <https://peacecorpsinterviews.wordpress.com/interviews-with-the-u-s-peace-corps-volunteers-collected-by-aneta-firytova/> (created June 18, 2016), Question 6.

there is a lot of reinventing the wheel or policy changes that happen very hastily. In other words, program goals cannot be changed after two years from their articulation as there was even no chance for the program to work yet. Moreover, there should be more country-specific objectives, rules, and regulations. Rather than blanket policies and objectives coming out of the headquarters. The countries and continents on which the Peace Corps serves are simply too different to follow the same guidelines. On the other hand, Peace Corps needs modernization of thought. Volunteers should not be teaching English in most countries as English is already spoken in many places. What they need are people with specific skills to advise governments on policy in particular cases. In that case volunteers would have to be older, more educated and experienced. More emphasis needs to be placed on modern solutions such as an information technology rather than using the old low-impact methods. Peace Corps needs to be more and better promoted with the help of communications to both the American public and international partners according to the respondents. Peace Corps needs an analysis of its impact, with more and better data to properly judge which grassroots programs work the most efficiently and which do not, so that they might be expanded on a larger scale. Secondly, other ten volunteers address the topic of improvement of the Peace Corps training. The training shall improve according to the volunteers significantly, it should be more hands-on and modernized and there should be also more resources available. A more specialized curriculum would benefit everyone as a substantial amount of sessions during Pre-Service Training is required from the Peace Corps Washington and they can be rather useless for the context of particular host countries. Additionally, training should be less focused on culture versus culture and more on technical skill's development. Volunteers learn outdated technical data that they never use at their site. There should be also included training in cultural self-awareness and blog-writing. Many respondents feel that their feedback about what information they need in training in order to have the tools to be successful at post is not heard. Respondents are asked for their feedback routinely, but changes reflecting that feedback do not seem to be happening. Thirdly, other ten volunteers put an emphasis on the issue of appropriate Peace Corps' response to female volunteers who become victims of sexual assault. There needs to be improved response and protection for female volunteers. Sexual harassment from host country nationals during Peace Corps service occur quite regularly according to the volunteers. Therefore, female volunteers need to be given tools to respond and deal with sexual harassment in the field. Moreover, there should be

sexual harassment training for Peace Corps country staff as well. Some volunteers state that country directors are in denial about safety, particularly female safety. While there might be volunteers who did not act culturally appropriately, many other volunteers were forced into unsafe situations and later blamed for the assault. Probably training on sexual assault and self-defense might be beneficial. Moreover, there were nine respondents who stated that cooperation between the Peace Corps Headquarters in Washington, D. C. and the branch offices in host countries needs to be improved as well as understanding of volunteers' needs. Volunteers suggested that Peace Corps should modernize to meet needs of the host countries and there should be more visits to sites from the top management in Washington. Less micro-management from the Washington level would be, according to them, quite helpful as it would promote more practical, locally-based, and culturally appropriate support and programming at the country level. It is important to highlight that the Peace Corps management is unique among many major companies or nonprofit organizations as it is spread out across the world and within individual countries. Staff at Peace Corps Headquarters is often isolated, geographically and psychologically, from the volunteers. More outposts, closer to volunteers, should be created and more emphasis should be placed on the volunteer experience and volunteer growth. Concerning the bureaucratic aspect, volunteers complained that the bureaucracy is infinitely removed from the work on the ground and needs to be reformed, one even called the interactions with Peace Corps as a "bureaucratic nightmare". Higher level Peace Corps managers in the USA are either political appointees, former embassy staff or they come from non-governmental organizations which makes them great politicians, but not always great support for Peace Corps volunteers. Moreover, what has to be understood is the fine line between setting global standards for Peace Corps management, and the unique requirements for volunteers and U. S. foreign policy in each country.¹³⁵

Furthermore, there were eight volunteers who emphasized that there needs to be more support for each country home office and training of host country nationals who work there. It is important to mention that the number of people in the office is not sufficient for the amount of work that they are required to do. When a host country Peace Corps office happens to be extremely understaffed, a lot of things can go

¹³⁵ Ibid., Question 6.

unattended or forgotten. Moreover, host countries nationals understand rather rarely what management is in many countries. Therefore, they should receive the same training Peace Corps volunteers receive about Americans and American culture, including customer service and efficiency. There also has to work more U. S. citizens or former volunteers as country staff because, according to the respondents, allowing the favoritism, inefficient and ineffective practices that inhibit development in the country to be carried out within the Peace Corps office does not instill confidence in Peace Corps volunteers and prevents promotion of the desired image of Peace Corps to the host country as a consequence. Last but not least, there were three types of possible areas of improvement that were mentioned seven times. Firstly, each country post should have to follow the same rules in dealing with volunteers and there should be more former volunteers on staff positions. It is not fair when a volunteer is sent to a certain post and have a negative two-year's experience because of that post or country specifically, when he or she could have had a better experience elsewhere. The mission of each country's Peace Corps staff depends on the country director. Unfortunately, there are different types of leaderships and goals differ from one country director to another. While some country directors make volunteers feel valued and less like their work has to be quantified constantly, work in other countries feels less genuine and is constantly quantified. Peace Corps could be radically improved if most American-staffed positions in country posts were filled by returned Peace Corps volunteers. Many Americans on staff positions that are not former volunteers mirror gross and sometimes even offensive disconnect between the realities of volunteer life and the demands put on that person by Washington. In this case, volunteer ends up being the one to suffer. Every country is also run differently, given the limitations or resources available in different countries, as well as the members that make up the staff, and the quality of direction provided by the country director. Additionally, Peace Corps volunteers should be able to evaluate their program managers. Secondly, Peace Corps should recruit more and better qualified Peace Corps volunteers and staff. A lot of volunteers do not truly understand what Peace Corps is about before they join; a more well-rounded campaign policy could be helpful. Peace Corps training in the host countries is not designed for people with learning disabilities (dyslexia, ADHD, anxiety, etc.), so it was particularly difficult for some volunteers. Moreover, there are many employees in management position that appear to have zero interest in doing their jobs while some of the host country staff seems rather apathetic. Volunteers should also be assigned to countries

where they have a background in the language. One of the respondents for example studied Portuguese for four years and Spanish for two years, but she was placed in a francophone country where she could not be as effective as in a Portuguese or Spanish-speaking country. Last but not least, there should be a greater assurance that volunteers are making a positive impact. Some people may have actually harmed foreign relations with their drinking, lackadaisical lifestyles, and cultural mishaps. Thirdly, medical support post-service should be provided to the volunteers. Peace Corps needs to recognize that returned volunteers are not trying to be sick on the Agency's expenses and that the Agency owes it to the returned volunteers to give them adequate care post-service. Long-term health problems that are acquired during service should be easy to address and paid upon the volunteer's return to the USA.¹³⁶

Then, there are four areas that were mentioned six times. Firstly, medical care in host countries should improve. Medical staff should be trained and certified in the U. S., but specialists in the regions and conditions in which they serve. Secondly, continued commitment to recent reforms in whistle-blowing and the handling of safety and security concerns. Experiences of some volunteers are, according to them, truly terrible. Such accidents tend to happen in a country with too many volunteers and not enough staff to handle the demand. Volunteers shall be able to voice concerns more freely without the fear of having to leave. The limitations given by the means of transportation in the host countries expose female volunteers to more sexual harassment or assault. Thirdly, more funding for the organization and a dramatic increase in the number of volunteers would be beneficial. Readjustment allowance post-service is also rather low. Fourthly, Peace Corps should allow volunteers to be passive tools in the efforts made by the local population and it should not replace particular jobs, rather train the local people so that they can do the professions themselves. Closer attention should be paid to placement locations and site development within each country. Peace Corps should find sites where there is a higher potential for the volunteer to accomplish local development goals with the support of the community. The organization should make sure that there are open-minded people who want to work with the volunteers and learn from them, not people who want the volunteer to give them material and monetary things. Furthermore, there were three possible areas of improvement that were mentioned five times each.

¹³⁶Ibid., Question 6.

Firstly, there shall be provided better support to the volunteers, they should be equipped by satellite phones, backpacks, and other helpful tools. They should be able to find a stage house nearby them. For example, Participatory Analysis for Community Action is promoted a lot during training, but volunteers feel unsupported and without resources when they are trying to implement it in their village. Secondly, mental health sector in host countries needs a lot of improvement. The counseling and psychology sessions that Peace Corps provides are insufficient to effectively help some volunteers, many of them struggle with issues that could have been maintained or even eliminated if there was a better functioning mental health system. Thirdly, the Peace Corps volunteers should be better aligned with businesses on the ground to help them further their goals in developing economies. They should be optimally placed to be liaisons between non-governmental organizations and the communities they serve. These organizations have to be held accountable, at the same time, and monitored whether the equipment and materials granted via Peace Corps were actually used. There was only one area that was mentioned four times, being that the returned volunteers should have an equal status and benefits with the U. S. military veterans. Volunteers were especially interested in one year of health insurance upon return, one year of therapy upon return (current three sessions are very insufficient), loan forgiveness, better post-service living allowances, job preferences, language lessons before arrival in country. Furthermore, there are five different possible areas of improvement that were mentioned three times. Firstly, application process needs to be streamlined, more efficient and simplified so as not to discourage people from applying. The application process can take some volunteers up to a year. Secondly, five-year turnover rate is too limiting for the Peace Corps, eliminating people with a wealth of knowledge of the Peace Corps history from further involvement. Constant turnover of American staff in the Peace Corps countries is hard on the local Peace Corps staff as well. It results in a state of no administrative experience within the organization. What could be done is an extension on the term of employment or training grace period for particular administration jobs. Thirdly, clear communication between the administration and volunteers is crucial. It takes a long time for an important information to get from the headquarters to the volunteers in the field. For efficient communication, the involvement of Volunteer Advisory Council is needed. However, there are countries in which various members of Volunteer Advisory Council staff are regularly absent, which communicates to volunteers that Volunteer Advisory Council meetings are not a priority for them even though they take place only

three times a year. Fourthly, country directors shall be monitored and evaluated. According to volunteers, Peace Corps key employees were never Peace Corps volunteers or were they experienced human resources managers. They also did not know enough about the job tasks they oversaw. As a consequence, they let go many volunteers during their service. Office of Inspector General needs to be more active in order to solve this issue. Volunteers should be able to take a survey in country anonymously, while the Peace Corps staff should take an anonymous survey when a new director comes in. Last but not least, fifthly, volunteers should be placed in teams or pairs, particularly in hostile countries or in villages in order to be more successful.¹³⁷

The last group of possible areas of improvement consists of answers that were mentioned once or twice each. There were eight areas that were mentioned twice. Firstly, financial management of the organization should improve and the way money is used needs to be reconsidered. There are areas that the Peace Corps financial group try to retrench and areas where there does not seem to be a concern that unnecessary funds are being used. For example, volunteers do not have enough meal allowance when they are in the capital city on medical purposes, while many volunteers receive much more in housing allowance than they actually use to rent a house. According to some respondents, Peace Corps would do more good focusing on training the host country professionals more, rather than focusing so much money on untrained, unfit young Americans. They should also recruit to make sure that the Americans they are sending overseas have the experience and talents needed to be a positive influence in the communities they serve, rather than a drain on resources. Secondly, two respondents stated that current mission set by the Peace Corps is neither realistic nor achievable. They suggest that volunteers should be encouraged to be as immersed as possible, and to be integrated into their communities. They could be involved in many different smaller projects, rather than having relatively bigger impacts within a single project. The pressure in some Peace Corps countries to have large projects is not always aligned with the reality of an individual's placement, and it might be sometimes unfair and unrealistic to push every volunteer toward that style of service. Moreover, the idea that economic development of an independent country could be imposed or influenced by

¹³⁷Ibid., Question 6.

outside forces is, according to some respondents, fallacious. They would suggest limiting the goals in the field, and instead focus solely on cultural exchange. Thirdly, the Peace Corps needs major improvement in management to carry out third goal activities. Host countries cannot be promoted to Americans solely thanks to online tools provided to volunteers. A significant part of the U. S. population is surprised to know Peace Corps still exists. However, the Peace Corps often occupies a very important presence in the national consciousness of the host countries. For example, volunteers are sworn-in in the presidential palace in a ceremony attended by the president himself or the fact that volunteers' evacuation was highly publicized in all forms of local media. Fourthly, the Peace Corps needs to develop a better way to safeguard institutional memory between volunteer classes. It is quite hard to find a detailed history of what past volunteers have done their successes and failures, and their methods. Each class has to reinvent the wheel in fact. Therefore, continuity and consistency should be achieved. Fifthly, it should be easier for volunteers and international staff to extend for a third year or more in their village if they have legitimate projects. Sixthly, two respondents stated that volunteers should not choose where they want to be sent. The reason is that they might have expectations and those might not be met. Seventhly, the issue of danger during transportation shall be addressed as well. Many distances are far apart from each other and walking or bicycling are hazardous. Volunteers used to have motorcycles in some countries, but they were taken away from the volunteers later. Eighthly, there should be realistic expectations on reporting and use of technology for volunteers with no access to internet with good speed or electricity. Volunteers should not have to do the Volunteer Report Form online in such conditions. Last but not least, there were three various possible areas of improvement that were each mentioned three times. Firstly, Peace Corps should do psychological assessments and screen potential candidates before accepting them. The reason is that some volunteers are not able to withstand the Peace Corps experience and there are many expenses connected to that with no results. Secondly, one volunteer believed that more truth about what the volunteers were expected to do would have been helpful. Thirdly, on the other hand, another volunteer suggested that people with disabilities should be able to serve in the Peace Corps.¹³⁸

¹³⁸Ibid., Question 6.

4.2. *An Analysis of the Responses Based on Specific Criteria*

4.2.1. Division Based on the Country of Service of the Respondents:

4.2.1.1. Mali (16 Responses)

According to the respondents who served in Mali, their country director was focused on each volunteer's ability to learn about his or her site, make personal connections, and extend useful knowledge and tools to their site. As a consequence of that, Peace Corps volunteers in Mali felt more valued and less like their work had to be quantified constantly. As for training, the technical training was informative, but language was rather insufficient. Focusing on French was detrimental to female volunteers being able to communicate with other females who spoke local language. Training needs an overhaul, according to another respondent, as it should be more skill-based. The volunteer added that his or her supervisor told the volunteers not to do any work in the first three months at site, but get to know how the community works. The supervisor provided them with a whole guided assessment, as well as areas for cultural learning. However, one respondent claimed that there should be more hard skills in the basic training (language, area of expertise), an overview of culture, and then once volunteers get to their sites, they can do the assessments and learn more about the culture. Another respondent claimed that while language training was sufficient to have basic conversations, the volunteers were not able to speak at a professional level with their host communities, and they did not have sufficient professional skills training to make a difference or be taken seriously. Furthermore, Peace Corps would do more good focusing on training the host country professionals more, rather than focusing so much money on untrained, unfit young Americans. They should also recruit to make sure that the Americans they are sending overseas have the experience and talents needed to be a positive influence in the communities they serve, rather than a drain on resources. Furthermore, response to women and volunteers who are victims of assault shall improve significantly. Female volunteers are in many cases forced into unsafe situations and are then blamed for the assault. Volunteers also need more support, one volunteer stated that he or she had to bribe his or her way to a stage house and it took him or her three days to get there. Satellite phones might be the right solution. Moreover, mental health services could use a vast improvement in Mali. Last but not least, an enormous

part of the population in the United States is surprised to know Peace Corps still exists. However, the Peace Corps often occupies a very important presence in the national consciousness of the host countries. The volunteers in Mali were sworn in in the presidential palace in a ceremony attended by the president himself, and their evacuation from Mali was highly publicized in all forms of local media. Moreover, interactions with the headquarters shall be simplified; they are removed from the work happening on the ground. That issue needs to be addressed, starting with medical services. As for the reality of possible achievements in Mali, given the resources the volunteers are given (and the fact that they are not experienced development or aid workers), the opportunities to carry out the classic idea of development projects, especially in any kind of large number, is limited. As for any unexpected events, service in Mali was cut short to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) threats for many volunteers.¹³⁹

4.2.1.2. Senegal (15 Responses)

The country director in Senegal was according to some volunteers who served there incompetent, distasteful, focused on disciplinary actions rather than inspiring volunteers and was altogether very poorly suited for the position. He or she was more business and number-oriented, wanting more reports on numbers of people reached through high-profile projects. As a consequence of that, the work in Senegal felt less genuine, and volunteers felt that the leadership did not care about projects that would reach smaller populations that were usually located in more rural sites, regardless of their importance. Moreover, Peace Corps Senegal was extremely understaffed and a lot of things went unattended or forgotten. Nevertheless, the training was very thorough due to a volunteer-driven training that was supported by the staff. Volunteers felt prepared for the action aspects of their work but not the evaluation or reporting part. Additionally, Peace Corps Senegal training should have included homestays for the majority of training to encourage volunteers to stay in site during service and to develop good habits one respondent stated. Another respondent was sexually attacked and her

¹³⁹ “Interviews with the U. S. Peace Corps Volunteers (collected by Aneta Firytová),” Website Peace Corps Interviews Wordpress, <https://peacecorpsinterviews.wordpress.com/interviews-with-the-u-s-peace-corps-volunteers-collected-by-aneta-firytova/> (created June 18, 2016), Questionnaires 8, 12, 26, 68, 80-91, 93.

actions were questioned by the Peace Corps leading up to it which was an example of victim blaming. The country director was called by this victim ‘an evil dictator, who mistreated me to an extreme level’. On the other hand, another volunteer appreciated the way he or she felt like a part of everyday life in the village, and how unexceptionally people treated the volunteer once he or she settled in, they made no difference between him or her and them. Last but not least, the Peace Corps should increase its professionalism, especially expectations of professionalism from volunteers and it should be better aligned with businesses on the ground to help them further their goals in Senegal and other developing countries. As for unexpected events, respondents stated that Ebola outbreak happened during their service in Senegal.¹⁴⁰

4.2.1.3. Uganda (13 Responses)

Peace Corps Uganda should focus on better preparation and selection of sites for the volunteers. A number of volunteers in Uganda experience sites where the supervisors or staff do not understand the type of work volunteers do, and are either unsupportive, ask volunteers to complete tasks they are not meant to do, or at worst decide during a volunteer’s service they are uninterested in having a volunteer. Therefore, sites need to be better prepared to receive volunteers. For example, health volunteers in Uganda are not allowed to actually treat or advise patients, even if they are trained professionals. This causes confusion among their Ugandan counterparts, and can lead to many volunteers being under-utilized. Moreover, site postings and work assignments of volunteers could be better specified and more clearly defined. Goals should be more thought-out and consistency improved. Response to women who experience sexual violence needs to be improved in Uganda, too. The mental health sector in Uganda definitely needs a lot of improvement as well. There should be more outposts, closer to volunteers; emphasis should be placed on volunteer’s experience and growth. Moreover, transportation in Uganda is a big problem, because many distances are far apart from each other. Walking or bicycling are hazardous, as one volunteer noted, he or she was hit by a motorcycle and needed surgery. Housing in a safe area is another issue in Uganda.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰Ibid., Questionnaires 12, 17, 18, 21, 23-26, 31, 34, 37-39, 46-47.

¹⁴¹Ibid., Questionnaires 13-14, 27, 29-30, 35-36, 40-45.

4.2.1.4. Malawi (11 Responses)

Country director in Malawi was seen as incompetent and he or she did not enforce rules to keep volunteers safe. The budget of Peace Corps Malawi was rather limited and, therefore, most of the staff at the office was Malawian. International staff should be able to stay for longer terms with good recommendations from the volunteers. It would be beneficial, if there were more U. S. citizens and former volunteers brought to work as staff in this country. Top managers from Washington should experience more visits to the sites as the policies and objectives coming out of Washington are blanket. There should be more country-specific objectives, rules and regulations. The key managers in Peace Corps Malawi were not experienced human resources managers and they also did not know enough about the job tasks they had to oversee. Also, they were in denial about safety, particularly female safety. Another volunteer stated that she was sexually assaulted by a fellow volunteer in Malawi, and Peace Corps did not handle that situation properly. Responses to safety and security issues need to be addressed. Probably training on sexual assault and self-defense might be helpful. Moreover, the volunteers claimed that they did not feel as if they had the support they needed. What needs to be worked on as well is the role of the volunteer in the community in Malawi. For example, the teaching sector of the Peace Corps in Malawi still replaces teaching jobs. Volunteers are being used as stand-in teachers, which is not sustainable and puts a heavy workload on volunteers. Educational volunteers became teacher trainers in other countries, therefore, this issue needs to be addressed accordingly in Malawi as well. Training needs to be improved as volunteers learn outdated technical data that they never use at their sites. More regional training might be helpful as well. On the other hand, language training was found excellent. Peace Corps Healthcare during and after service needs some serious improvement according to the volunteers from Malawi, too.¹⁴²

¹⁴²Ibid., Questionnaires 30, 58, 61-63, 65, 69-70, 74, 92, 96.

4.2.1.5. South Africa (11 Responses)

This country is specific with its racism, prejudice and high crime rate. That experience had negative influence on some volunteers as they became suspicious and distrustful, while noticing racial issues much more than before their service. The country staff was not seen as helpful, one volunteer stated that he or she has negative feelings about the Peace Corps as a whole because of the Peace Corps South Africa staff, another claimed that they tried to help with the least effort possible. Additionally, constant turnover of the American staff in Peace Corps home office is difficult for the local Peace Corps staff. Another volunteer stated that Peace Corps should leave South Africa as it is not wanted in this country. Volunteers evaluate South Africa as a hostile country where people in communities have no interest in having a Peace Corps volunteer nearby. They noted that volunteers should be placed in pairs if they request it, especially in such a hostile environment. They were also not treated with respect. Some of the volunteers became jumpy and always worried, another volunteer developed bipolar disorder during the service in South Africa. Moreover, the communication should be improved as it seems to take a long time for an important information to get from Washington to the volunteers in the field. Peace Corps needs modernization of thought, not to teach English in places where they already speak it. In South Africa in particular, it would be good to provide more educated and experienced volunteers to advise government on policy in particular cases. On the other hand, volunteers appreciated good Zulu language training skills.¹⁴³

4.2.1.6. Togo (11 Responses)

There is a need to help women and girls through empowerment projects in Togo. One volunteer achieved success through such a project in one Togolese village. Moreover, volunteers who served in Togo are concerned about security and that includes external and internal threats in the country, sexual and physical harassment and other kinds of harm that could happen to volunteers. Especially sexual harassment occurs quite regularly and the organization needs to respond better to it. Therefore, continued commitment to recent reforms in whistle-blowing shall be pursued. As for medical staff in Togo, it was underqualified. On the other hand, view of Togolese

¹⁴³Ibid., Questionnaires 1-7, 9, 11, 78, 99.

people changed for many volunteers, instead of poor and helpless, they started to see them as people doing the best with the cards they were dealt. Furthermore, countries need to be re-evaluated with the governments in power and reviewed as to how much is really being done. For example, Togo has been a Peace Corps Country for more than fifty years but still has problems to this date throughout the country as when the programs were initially started.¹⁴⁴

4.2.1.7. Morocco (6 Responses)

As for Morocco, training needs to be more country-specific. Volunteers stated that a substantial amount of sessions during Pre-Service Training were required from Peace Corps Headquarters and were utterly useless for the context of Morocco. A more specialized curriculum would be a certain benefit. Moreover, a lot of volunteers join without knowing what the Peace Corps is about. The training in Morocco was not designed for people with learning disabilities and so was particularly difficult for some volunteers. Volunteers also stated that financial management needs improvement as it is not balanced. There are areas where unnecessary funds are being used and where the funds are insufficient on the contrary. For example, volunteers did not have enough meal allowance when they stayed in the capital city on medical purposes, while many volunteers received much more in housing allowance than they actually used to rent a house. Several female volunteers stated that they were quite regularly sexually harassed and they fought anxiety connected to that stress. Mental health is often completely disregarded in the Peace Corps Morocco. As for the community, some volunteers have found little participation or excitement about their presence in the community. Peace Corps Morocco should make sure that volunteers are wanted in the communities they are assigned to. Moreover, female volunteers stated that it was quite challenging connecting to other women in the community as they live very private lives.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴Ibid., Questionnaires 53-55, 60, 64, 75-76, 94-95, 97, 98.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., Questionnaires 48-52, 59.

4.2.1.8. Sierra Leone (6 Responses)

Issue that needs to be addressed in Sierra Leone is local support for country posts. In particular, medical sphere in Sierra Leone was insufficient, there were for example no professional dentists who could provide medical care to the volunteers, the counseling and psychology sessions the Peace Corps provided were insufficient to really help some volunteers as well. The transfer of skills to the host countries shall be maximized; the Peace Corps should focus on it. Corruption and greediness ran rampant at all levels (bribery, monetary misuse, etc.) in Sierra Leone and it was extremely difficult for some volunteers to work within this context. Goals in the field of economic help shall be limited and the Peace Corps Sierra Leone should instead focus solely on cultural exchange and allow volunteers to be passive tools in the efforts made by the local population. However, the system was not in favor of many students advancing in their life and career which was quite depressing for some education volunteers as their efforts would go in vain.¹⁴⁶

4.2.1.9. Zambia (5 Responses)

People in American-staffed positions in the Peace Corps Zambia office who were not former volunteers often had a gross and sometimes even offensive disconnection between the realities of volunteer life and the demands put on that person by Washington, according to the respondents. Moreover, it is a country with too many volunteers and not enough staff to handle the demand. Sexual harassment training for the Peace Corps country staff is needed as well. Country directors shall be monitored and evaluated; Inspector General needs to be more active in this aspect, especially in Zambia. Medical care improvement, better rules for safety and security are needed in Zambia as well. Moreover, there is a need to link up more with non-governmental organizations that run other projects in Zambia as volunteers should be liaisons between these organizations and the communities the volunteers serve. On the other hand, the respondents found their training in Zambia very rigorous. Volunteers spent in training nine hours a day, six days a week and stayed with their homestay families in similar

¹⁴⁶Ibid., Questionnaires 15-16, 18, 20, 22, 28.

conditions to the rest of their service. Their language training was evaluated as incredibly helpful.¹⁴⁷

4.2.1.10. Mozambique (3 Responses)

Mozambique is rather a big country, to support all two hundred volunteers in the way they deem sufficient seems like an impossible task. This area needs improvement in the Peace Corps Mozambique, it is important to hire more staff. Some of the volunteers became frustrated with the host country nationals when working on projects with them. The health system in the host country and many of those who work within it made this respondent frustrated and angry as well.¹⁴⁸

4.2.1.11. Cameroon (2 Responses)

According to the volunteers who served in Cameroon, there should be higher standards for hiring staff and volunteers should be able to evaluate their program managers as some of them appear to have zero interest in doing their jobs. Moreover, there needs to be improved communication between the administrator and Volunteer Advisory Council. The administrator was the one who tried hard to improve it, while Volunteer Advisory Council did not prove much interest. To be more specific, Youth Development volunteers in Cameroon were challenged by the lack of resources and classroom sizes of more than one hundred students. The Peace Corps training did not prepare them for their assignment as they were given only one hour of practical English language information and no resources as far as teaching grammar. Volunteers stated that when they asked in Peace Corps feedback survey for more current volunteers during training because they appreciated their experience and perspective, other volunteers' participation was actually cut from the next Education training session.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷Ibid., Questionnaires 32-33, 40, 66, 70.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., Questionnaires 57, 71-72.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., Questionnaires 67, 100.

4.2.1.12. Ethiopia (1 Response)

There were too many volunteers in Ethiopia and not enough staff to support them. Therefore, it is essential to employ more staff before sending more volunteers into the field.¹⁵⁰

4.2.1.13. Ghana (1 Response)

Respondent from Ghana stated that joining Peace Corps was the best decision he or she ever made. However, sexual assault management needs improvement in Ghana, according to the volunteer.¹⁵¹

4.2.1.14. Guinea (1 Response)

The volunteer evaluated the language training as insufficient as one of the language trainers was ineffective and the respondent was in his or her group. The local language training was also too basic, according to the respondent. Moreover, the respondent was evacuated from Guinea to another host country during the service.¹⁵²

4.2.1.15. Botswana (1 Response)

4.2.1.16. Comoros (1 Response)

4.2.1.17. Niger (1 Response)

4.2.1.18. Swaziland (1 Response)

There were insufficient data provided by the respondents to evaluate country-specific information from these countries.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰Ibid., Questionnaire 79.

¹⁵¹Ibid., Questionnaire 77.

¹⁵²Ibid., Questionnaire 85.

¹⁵³Ibid., Questionnaires 4, 10, 61, 80, 61.

4.2.2. Division Based on the Presidential Era During Which the Respondents Served:

4.2.2.1. George W. Bush's Administration (34 Responses)

There were thirty-four responses from the volunteers who served during George W. Bush's administration.

4.2.2.2. Barack Obama's Administration (66 Responses)

There were sixty-six responses from the volunteers who served within the presidential era of Barack Obama.¹⁵⁴

The difference between the number of responses from the Bush's presidential era and Obama's era might be due to the fact that some of the respondents were current volunteers, therefore, the ones who are the most interested into the issue of the Peace Corps improvement as it might still affect them. There were detected no significant differences between the responses from these two presidential eras of the Peace Corps. Therefore, there are no outcomes that could indicate whether the Agency was more successful during the first or the second era.¹⁵⁵

4.2.3. Division Based on the Age of the Respondents:

4.2.3.1. Eighteen to Thirty-Five Years Old (87 Responses)

The overwhelming majority of the responses was from the respondents who were between eighteen and thirty-five years old at the beginning of their service. These respondents represented eighty-seven percent of all responses (with eighty-seven responses). Such respondents tended to be much more critical and descriptive in their answers.

¹⁵⁴ "Interviews with the U. S. Peace Corps Volunteers (collected by Aneta Firytová)," Website Peace Corps Interviews Wordpress, <https://peacecorpsinterviews.wordpress.com/interviews-with-the-u-s-peace-corps-volunteers-collected-by-aneta-firytova/> (created June 18, 2016), Questions 1-7.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., Questions 1-7.

4.2.3.2. Thirty-Five to Fifty-Five Years Old (4 Responses)

There were only four responses (four percent) from the generation of the volunteers who were between thirty-five to fifty-five years old at the start of their service. There was insufficient data to analyze further outcomes, but this generation seemed more apologetic than the preceding one.

4.2.3.3. Fifty-Five to Seventy-Five Years Old (9 Responses)

There were nine responses (nine percent) that were from the respondents who were between fifty-five and seventy-five years old at the beginning of their service. These respondents were not critical of the Agency nearly at all. They seemed much more apologetic and humble than the younger generation and they were very appreciative of their time spent during their service.¹⁵⁶

4.2.4. Division Based on the Gender of the Respondents:

4.2.4.1. Male (22 Responses)

There were twenty-two responses from the volunteers who were male, which represents twenty-two percent of all responses.

4.2.4.2. Female (78 Responses)

Female volunteers represented seventy-eight percent of all responses which corresponds to seventy-eight responses.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., Questions 1-7.

The answers from the male and female respondents did not vary in the range of their topics significantly. For example, both female and male respondents highlighted the need of better response of the Agency to female victims of sexual assaults.¹⁵⁷

4.2.5. Race of the Respondents

Although the author of the Interviews did not require any information about the race of the respondents, many of them tended to specify the race by themselves or it was obvious within the context of their service (e.g. when they emphasized being for the first time in their life a minority somewhere). Nevertheless, all of the respondents who specified their race were Caucasians.¹⁵⁸

4.2.6. Collection of the Responses Schedule

4.2.6.1. February 15 – February 22, 2016:

9 Responses

4.2.6.2. February 22 – February 29, 2016:

31 Responses

4.2.6.3. February 29 – March 7, 2016:

49 Responses

4.2.6.4. March 7 – March 14, 2016:

9 Responses

4.2.6.5. March 14 – March 21, 2016:

2 Responses

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., Questions 1-7.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., Questions 1-7.

4.2.6.6. March 21 – March 28, 2016:

2 Responses

CONCLUSION

“What are the possible areas of improvement within the U. S. Peace Corps organization in the third millennium?” This diploma thesis suggests that the answer differs according to who is being asked this question. If it is the agency, its staff or management, current or returned volunteers, or politicians in the Congress. The agency hardly ever admits that it has any possible areas of improvement. Its official standpoint is that it is a perfectly-managed organization that does not make mistakes, whose image is completely flawless, and whose mission still makes sense without the need to evaluate its programs. However, if it is the organization criticized by outsiders or even by its own Inspector General or volunteers, it either denies the very often obvious truth or it claims that requested changes are being implemented. Only to find out later that the implementation was not rigorous as promised, but only halfway. Moreover, for the agency to apologize for its failed procedures, a very serious negative publicity must occur firstly. Only then is the agency willing to publicly address an issue. Therefore, areas that could possibly be improved are the transparency of the agency, its greater accountability to its volunteers, and greater listening skills regarding their feedback. On the other hand, from the perspective of the official survey results of the agency, the volunteer’s placement site location, volunteer’s role in the community, his or her work assignment, and training, both in language and technical skills represent the most significant possible areas of improvement. Firstly, what needs to be considered is the location of the volunteer’s placement as twenty percent of the volunteers stated that their community was not interested in having a volunteer, while forty-four percent of the volunteers claimed that their community was not receptive to change brought by an individual volunteer. Therefore, the agency could need to conduct a rigorous analysis of its impact, and reconsider particular locations of volunteers’ placement sites to avoid possible drain on resources.

Concerning the role and the work assignment of the volunteer, the respondents of the official survey claimed that it is important to become a passive tool in the efforts of the local population. In other words, it is important to train the local people to do the job themselves, not to do their job instead of them. Nevertheless, the Peace Corps did not realize that this issue represents a possible area of improvement as the figures even

became worse over the past seven years. More specifically, there were sixty percent of volunteers who taught English, while only twenty-seven percent of volunteers who were teacher trainers. Moreover, forty-nine percent of the volunteers did not feel prepared for their work assignment after their Peace Corps training, while the same percentage of the volunteers claimed that their language barrier restrained them from achieving their goals. Therefore, the agency could possibly overhaul its training system and focus on proper local language training instead of learning French, and on improving training related to the primary work assignment in order to make it more job-specific. Last but not least, twenty percent of volunteers stated that their local Peace Corps support was minimal and it prevented them from achieving their goals. Therefore, the agency could identify the issue of selection and hiring process of the staff in its local host countries offices as another possible area of improvement and it could make efforts to achieve more professional and better staffed local offices.

On the other hand, from the perspective of the control study, the main possible areas of improvement within the Peace Corps identified by the volunteers were: modernization and consistency of the Peace Corps three goals (they should be reconsidered and reformulated as many volunteers see them as outdated for the needs of modern times), training of the Peace Corps (it should contain less general information and more country-specific information), and the response of the agency to sexual assaults and harassment (the agency could deal with this delicate issue carefully, the investigation of the victim should be limited and, most importantly, the agency should not blame the victims for the incident). Moreover, cooperation between the Peace Corps Headquarters and its host country offices could also improve significantly, as well as the support and training of staff of the Peace Corps host country offices. There should be the same guidelines and standards for all Peace Corps host country offices in dealing with the volunteers as well as the agency shall seek recruitment of more, better qualified Peace Corps volunteers and staff (it would be quite beneficial to bring more former volunteers to work for the Corps).

Moreover, the possible areas of improvement determined in various scholarly publications include the agency's mission (whether it still makes sense, and whether it is a development organization or a cultural exchange program), system of placement of its volunteers (they do over and over the same jobs as years before, there is only limited

progress), three goals (the third goal was singled out as the one mostly disregarded), and the Washington Peace Corps bureaucracy (it enjoys greater proportion of the budget than ever before). Other possible areas of improvement were the five-year rule (as it causes loss of institutional memory and departure of talents), training, recruitment, and support of volunteers (this area still needs serious improvement, according to the publications), safety and security of volunteers, sexual assault response (victims should be properly taken care of, not blamed for the incidents, better precaution by the agency), and healthcare system (superior and better accessible care during and after the service). Furthermore, the early termination rate around thirty percent could also deserve some attention, while it could be a good opportunity for the agency to finally evaluate its impact that is connected to the high drop-out rate. Last but not least, whistleblowers need proper protection of their status.

There were some areas of possible improvement that were shared between the groups, however, the areas addressed by the scholars and by volunteers in the control study were very similar. A rather different point of view offered the official statistics as it was designed to address issues the agency wanted to address. For instance, the control study of this thesis revealed strong dissatisfaction of volunteers with the agency's response to the incidents of sexual assault. This was also reflected in the testimonies of the volunteers in the U. S. media. However, the official survey did not reflect this possible area of improvement as much as it would be needed. Moreover, cooperation between the headquarters and the host country offices was also not much reflected in the official agency's surveys. Last but not least, the modernization of three goals was also less reflected in the official surveys than in the case study or other literature. The only goal that the official document indicated that needed to be overhauled was the goal one. On contrary, many respondents of the author's survey claimed that all three goals represent one of the major possible areas of improvement within the organization, while scholars identified goal three as the crucial one. The agency could find open-ended questions in their surveys as a valuable tool for feedback.

“Is the agency and the political debates concerning the reforms of the agency reflecting experiences and feedback of the volunteers?” The answer to this question is that the agency repeatedly failed to reflect the feedback of its volunteers. This opinion is present in the control study as well as in many sources of literature in the third chapter

of this thesis. If the agency listened more to its volunteers, it would become much more efficient. On the other hand, the people who do listen to volunteers and their feedback are the U. S. politicians during congressional hearings, for instance those held by Senator Dodd. The volunteers' voice is in fact quite important during these debates and often generates positive changes, but only after the Congress steps in. The agency hardly ever initiates any changes or reforms of its system.

Last but not least, possible further area of research is the service of Afro-American volunteers in African host countries. The majority of them was shocked by the reality of their continent of origin and, as a consequence, their identity of the U. S. citizens was strengthened by their experience. Further work could also include more comparisons with volunteer organizations of other countries, for instance the Japanese system that is very well developed. The history and origins of volunteerism in the United States could be also more explored in any future work. Additionally, it could be interesting to focus on other continents than the African one, regarding the presence of the Peace Corps.

Summary

Tato diplomová práce zpracovala téma Amerických mírových sborů a jejich možných oblastí k zlepšení ve třetím tisíciletí. V práci byla provedena rešerše dostupných dokumentů a autorka následně určila a zanalyzovala možné oblasti k zlepšení během vlád George W. Bushe a Baracka Obamy. Práce se zaměřila na africký kontinent v rámci hodnocení přítomnosti Mírových sborů v jednotlivých hostitelských zemích. Hlavní výzkumné otázky této diplomové práce zní: „Jaké jsou možné oblasti k zlepšení v rámci Amerických mírových sborů ve třetím tisíciletí?“ a „Reflektuje agentura a politické debaty ohledně reform agentury zkušenosti a zpětnou vazbu dobrovolníků?“ Odpovědi na tyto otázky byly hledány formou rešerše v dokumentech a s pomocí analýzy jednoho sta autorčinných dotazníků, které nashromáždila od současných i bývalých dobrovolníků Mírových sborů. V práci jsou rovněž zpracovány oblasti výcviku Mírových sborů, náboru a podpory dobrovolníků, stejně tak jako Washingtonská byrokracie Mírových sborů, poslání agentury, bezpečnost dobrovolníků, odezva agentury na sexuální útoky a reformy navržené osobami, které upozorňují na nekalosti uvnitř organizace. Práce je rozdělena do čtyř kapitol a několika podkapitol. První kapitola se zabývala původem myšlenky na založení Mírových sborů a následně historií agentury mezi roky 1961 a 1989. Druhá kapitola byla věnována analýze agentury mezi roky 1989 a 2001, zatímco třetí kapitola se zabývala obdobím mezi roky 2001 a 2016 a analýzou jednotlivých možných oblastí k zlepšení. Čtvrtá kapitola se zabývala kontrolní studií sondážního vzorku, která analyzovala výsledky jednoho sta shromážděných odpovědí od dobrovolníků. Práce splnila svůj očekávaný cíl, našla odpovědi na obě dvě výzkumné otázky. Možné oblasti k zlepšení jsou uvedeny na několika různých místech práce, zatímco v závěru práce jsou výsledky obecně shrnuty. Ohledně zpětné vazby dobrovolníků práce zjistila, že jejich hlasu agentura příliš nenaslouchá. Ve větší míře se názory dobrovolníků zabývají politici v rámci debat v Kongresu.

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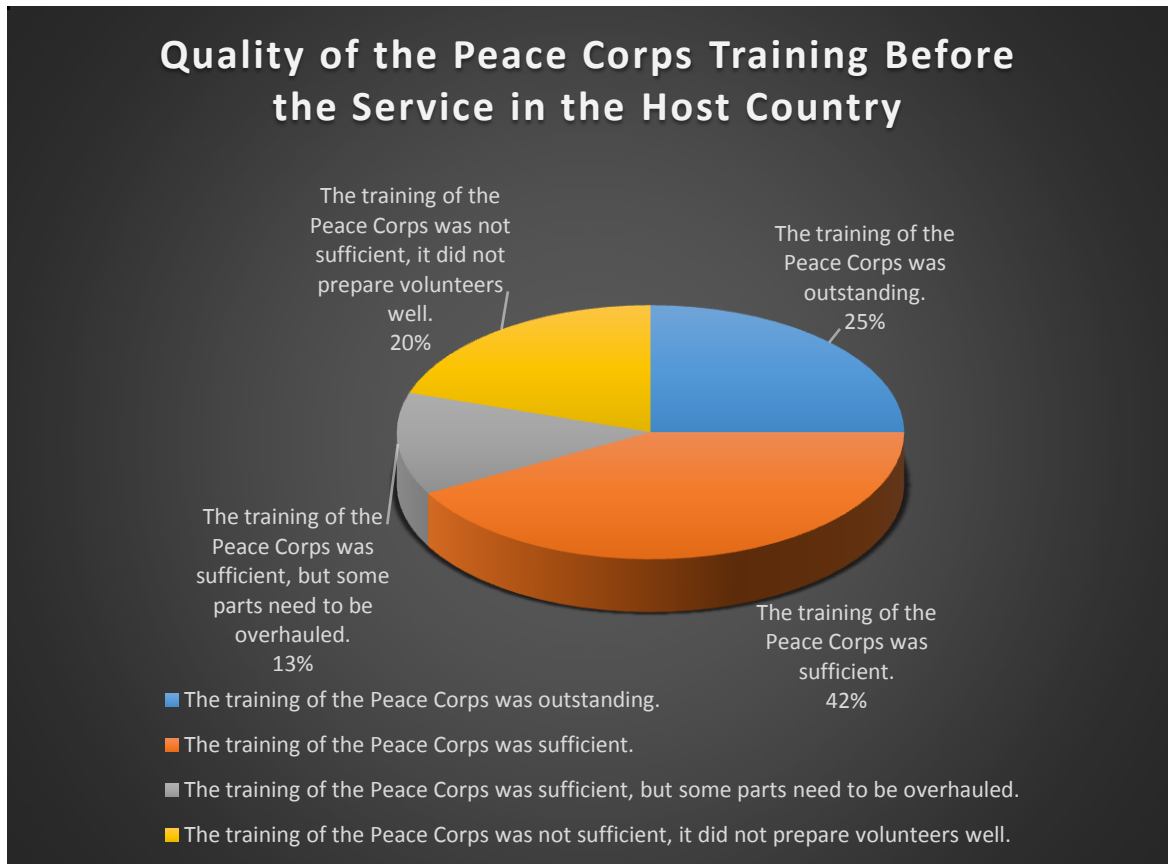
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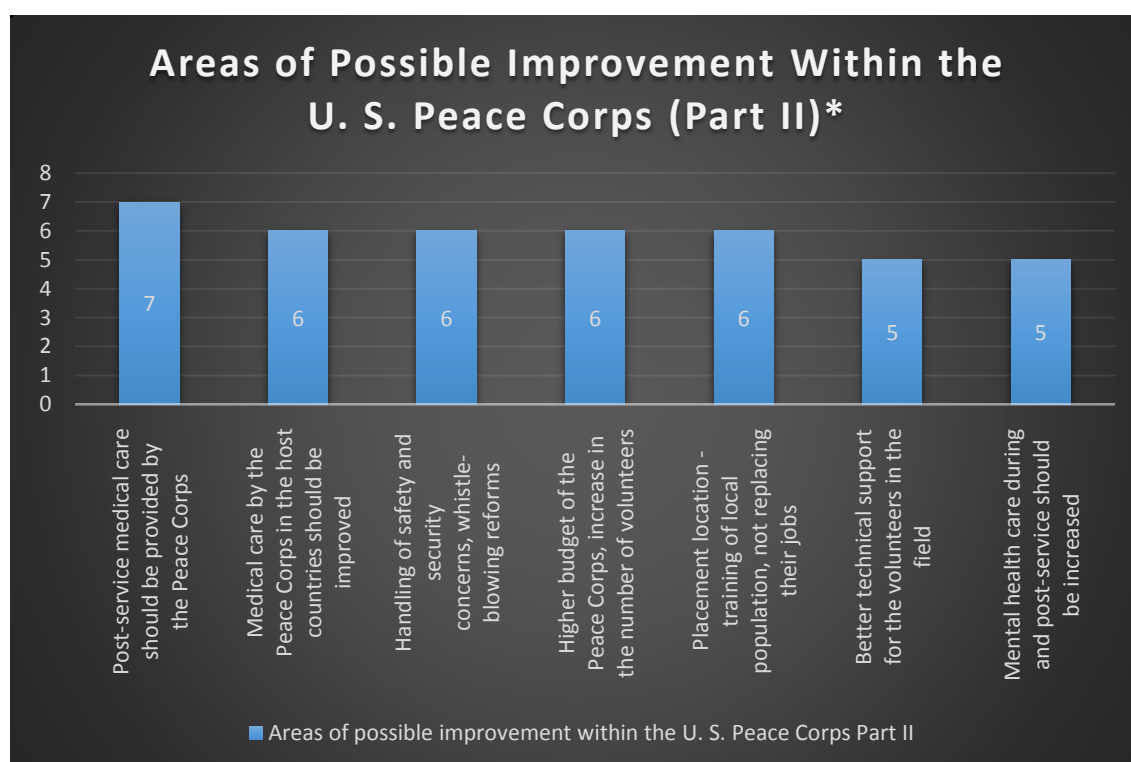
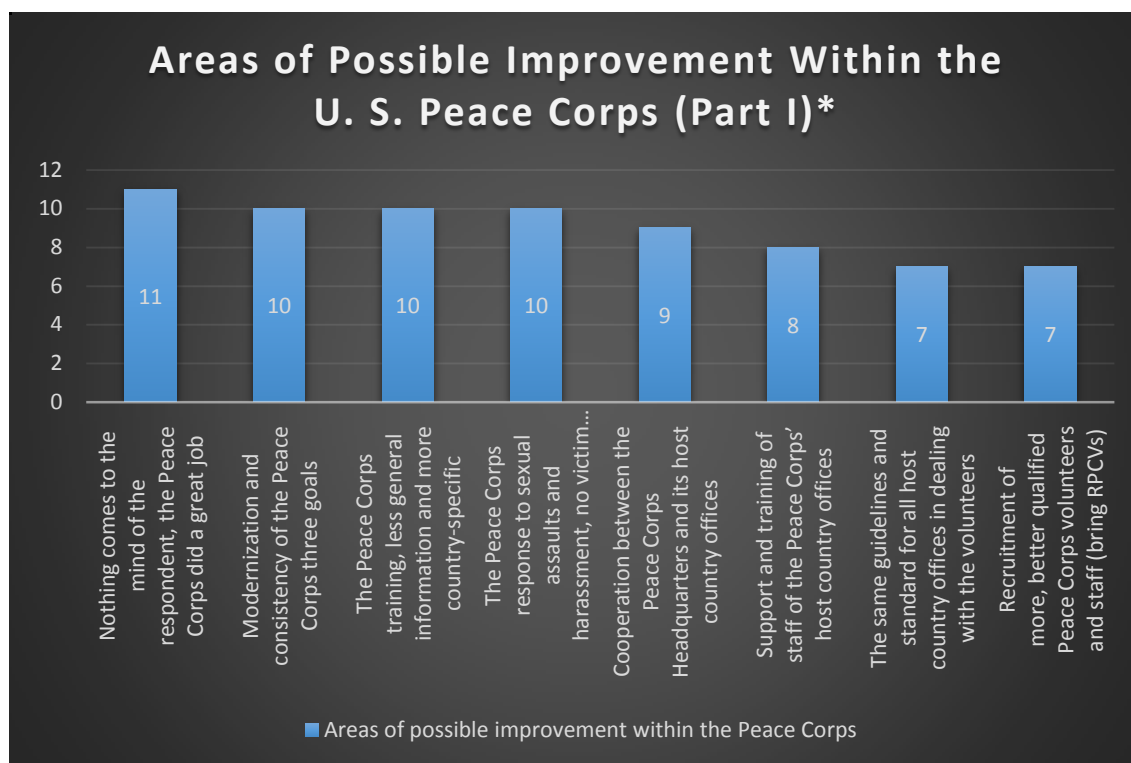
Appendix No. 1: Expectations of the Peace Corps Volunteers (graph)

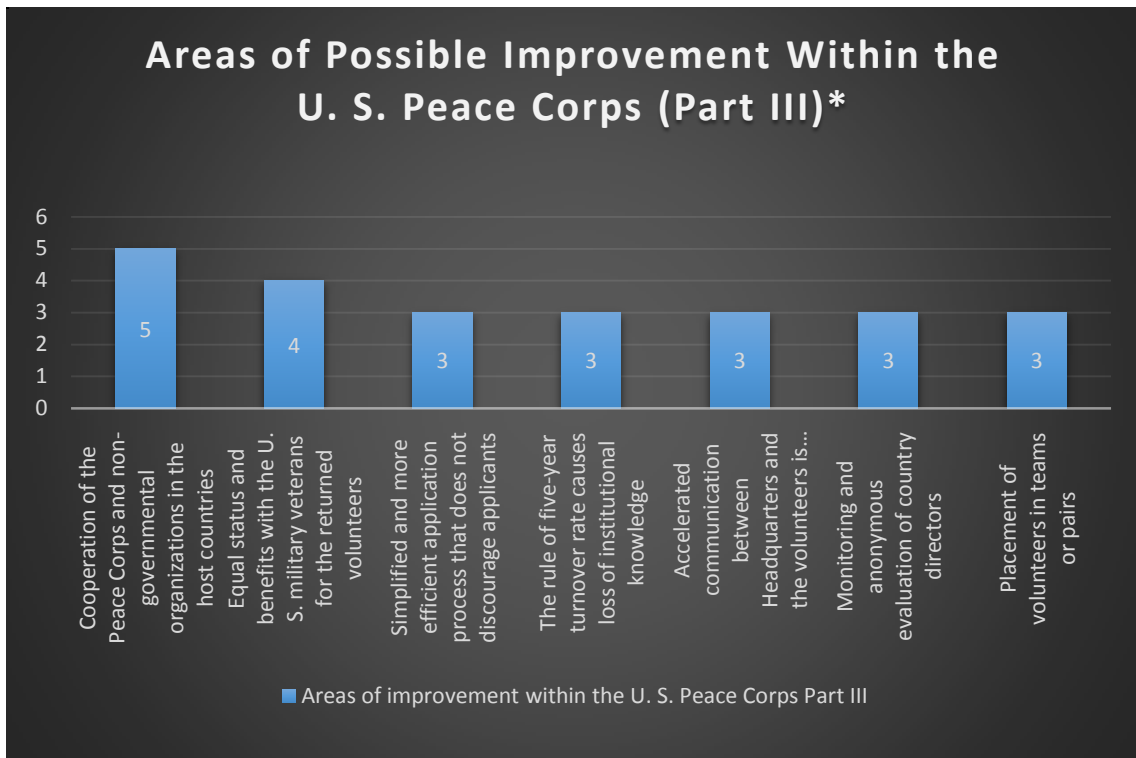


Appendix No. 2: Quality of the Peace Corps Training Before the Service in the Host Country (graph)



Appendix No. 3: Areas of Possible Improvement Within the U. S. Peace Corps (Part I-III) (graph)





*One point corresponds to one percent.

Appendix No. 4:

4.3. *The Main Motivation of the Volunteers to Join the Peace Corps*

The author made an analysis of all of the questionnaires and counted on how many individual questionnaires was mentioned particular reason that motivated volunteers to join the organization in order to serve in host countries. The majority of the responses contained more than only one reason for joining; there are altogether thirty-four different reasons. As a consequence of that, there are more references to individual reasons than is the number of respondents. The author begins the analysis with the most common reasons and continues to the less common ones. The analysis is finished with reasons that enjoyed very minor representation in this survey.

The leading reasons were that volunteers desired to offer their service and help to other people that are in need (with twenty-eight references) and that they wanted to travel around the world and get foreign experience while living abroad (with twenty-

four references out of which five respondents stated that they did not dispose of sufficient financial reserves and, therefore, was the opportunity to enjoy travel on U. S government expenses an ideal solution for them). The top two leading reasons are followed by the desire to learn about another culture (with twenty references), the need to experience working in the field of their study and by that to build the volunteer's resume (with fourteen references). The next thirteen references were dedicated to the possibility of the volunteers to work in the area of international development and in developing countries, followed by twelve references in which volunteers mentioned that they needed to experience personal growth, challenge themselves and to be out of their comfort zone. The thrill of adventure attracted eleven of all one hundred respondents. The last three reasons that are still part of the leading group are the following ones. Nine respondents mentioned that they wanted to do something positive, meaningful or in other words real and useful; one person also stated that he or she was surrounded by a lot of negativity in his or her life at the time he or she decided to do something positive. Next reason that achieved identical quantity of votes, being nine, is passion for linguistics and the desire to learn another language or gain fluency in it. Last but not least eight different respondents claimed that they wanted to make difference in the world and make it a better place.¹⁵⁹

The next paragraph is dedicated to all of the reasons that were mentioned by the volunteers ranging from six references to three references. Two types of answers were both mentioned six times. The first one is the desire to build relationships and make deeper cross-cultural connections, while the second one was the reason that the respondents had the spirit of volunteerism and appreciated its ideals. The following three reasons were each referred to five times. The first one is the desire of the volunteers to give back to the world, the second one is represented by the intention to get to the grassroots, being followed by the third reason that the volunteers felt that the service was a call and that they had a strong feeling of being pulled to it. Then, there are reasons that were mentioned four times each, there are five of them. Firstly, it was a life goal for some since childhood or since college years; both of the reasons achieved two

¹⁵⁹ "Interviews with the U. S. Peace Corps Volunteers (collected by Aneta Firytová)," Website Peace Corps Interviews Wordpress, <https://peacecorpsinterviews.wordpress.com/interviews-with-the-u-s-peace-corps-volunteers-collected-by-aneta-firytova/> (created June 18, 2016), Question 1.

references, making them altogether reach four references. Secondly, volunteers signed up for their service in order to learn about themselves. Thirdly, the volunteers wanted to find out whether they enjoyed working hands-on in the area of international development. Fourthly, four volunteers expressed as a reason their passion for education and wanting to pass their knowledge further, while the last group of four references was devoted to the desire to serve their own country and represent it well abroad. The last group of references in this paragraph is the reasons that were mentioned three times, there are four of them. Firstly, they mentioned that this was to be their experience of a lifetime, and as one of the volunteers puts it bluntly, they wanted to get away from the prescribed life of school, job, marriage, family and death. Secondly, another reason was simply altruism being followed by the third reason that was the need of person to person direct approach in order to change something. Last reason that was mentioned three times was the need of a career change.¹⁶⁰

The last group of responses consists of references that were mentioned only twice or once from all of the respondents. These represent quite minor reasons for joining the U. S. Peace Corps, but it is quite important to include them into this analysis as well. There are five reasons that were mentioned twice, the first one is to spread world peace. Secondly, to gain another person's perspective or to walk in somebody else's shoes. Thirdly, the reason of the volunteers was that they felt to be global citizens; while fourthly, they wanted to help discourage ignorance and promote understanding. The last reason that was mentioned by two respondents is that they joined because of their master specialization and master research for the master thesis; the Peace Corps experience would help them to conduct it accordingly. Then, there are also five responses in the group mentioned only once. These are that the volunteer wanted to make a difference for children who are the ones most in need in the first place. Secondly, the volunteer wanted to make use of the help with funding of the graduate school after completion of the service. The third reason was that the volunteer's mother served in Peace Corps herself before she had her children and it influenced the volunteer in a positive way of knowing that one day he or she would like to serve as well. The fourth reason was that the respondent was not able to find a job in Washington, D. C.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., Question 1.

for two years, while the last reason was that the person was looking for the right career direction.¹⁶¹

Appendix No. 5:

4.4. *The Expectations of the Volunteers Before the Service and the Outcomes After or During Their Service*

Responses to the question "What were your expectations and were they met?" varied greatly, but the author of the thesis was able to find five major categories into which could be the responses categorized. These were:

1. My expectations were met (47 respondents)
2. My expectations were met only partly (16 respondents)
3. My expectations were not met (11 respondents)
4. I had no or very limited expectations (21 respondents)
5. I cannot remember my expectations (5 respondents)¹⁶²

The highest number of respondents, forty-seven which corresponds to forty-seven percent of all respondents, answered that they had certain expectations and that they were all met during their Peace Corps service. Majority of the respondents in this group even noted that their expectations were not only met, but a way exceeded. On the other hand, twenty-one respondents stated that they had no or very limited expectations before their service. Majority of them tended to find this quite useful as they find it nearly impossible to be prepared for what the service has to offer in a realistic way, but many noted, at the same time, that it was more than they could have ever imagined. The following group of answers was respondents who stated that their expectations were met only partly. There were sixteen responses that belong to this group. However, it is important to specify that partly met means in all of the cases that majority of them was met, while one or two of the expectations was not. Moreover, eleven people stated that all of their expectations were not met while five returned or current volunteers cannot

¹⁶¹Ibid., Question 1.

¹⁶² "Interviews with the U. S. Peace Corps Volunteers (collected by Aneta Firytová)," Website Peace Corps Interviews Wordpress, <https://peacecorpsinterviews.wordpress.com/interviews-with-the-u-s-peace-corps-volunteers-collected-by-aneta-firytova/> (created June 18, 2016), Question 2.

remember what their sincere expectations were.¹⁶³ The results of the analysis of the responses are illustrated in Appendix No. 1.

The following paragraph will deal with the types of expectations that were mentioned that were rather met by the volunteers. Volunteers expected to serve in rural Africa, experience adventure, fun, learn another language and experience another culture, make new friends, serve others and help the community with their goals. Other expectations were to integrate into a new community, work on projects benefiting the community and to see more of the world in a deeper way than travel. Other expectations that were met were to be taken care of and provided with good training, to teach appreciative students, to work hard. Volunteers also mentioned they expected to learn how to sustainably make the world more equitable, to live in a small remote village, and work with youth. Other expectations that revealed to be true were feeling sad to miss things in the lives of the friends and family at home, the service to change the volunteers' lives, to be mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally challenged. They also expected to be uncomfortable and to change some of their outlooks on life. Another expectation that was met was to find warm, open, loving people who would be happy to have the volunteers working with them. Last but not least, volunteers also expected a lot of heat in their host country and to get sick.¹⁶⁴

On the other hand, this paragraph will discuss the types of expectations that were mentioned that were rather not met by the volunteers. They expected to be welcomed with open arms by their village, people wanting to learn English, to be safe or to have the opportunity to start programs in the community. Other expectations that were not met were to be supported by the Peace Corps staff and to be treated with respect, to serve for a minimum of twenty-seven months. Another expectation that was not met was support by the Peace Corps as working in a rural community presents a lot of emotional challenges. Idealistic expectations were obviously also not met such as getting along with the villagers, easily and successfully, easily developing teaching skills. Furthermore, expectations about the Peace Corps being a competent organization, other volunteers being competent and there to be in place a well-rehearsed system to

¹⁶³Ibid., Question 2.

deal with problems were not met for some either. Other volunteers who expected to feel as if they were making a huge difference were not satisfied with the outcomes of their service and the extent to which they could change the world either. Some respondents also stated to expect the U.S. government to act with more integrity. Further expectations that were not met were to see a lot of poor people and huts. Another unfulfilled expectation was to receive more hands-on training and more information about the volunteer's community before beginning the work.¹⁶⁵

Appendix No. 6:

4.5. *The Quality of the Peace Corps Training Before the Service in the Host Countries*

Responses to the question "Was training by the Peace Corps before your assignment sufficient?" can be categorized into four groups. These are:

1. Yes, it was outstanding. (25 respondents)
2. Yes, it was sufficient. (42 respondents)
3. Yes, but some parts of the training need improvement. (13 respondents)
4. No, it did not prepare me for the service. (20 respondents)¹⁶⁶

There were exactly twenty-five respondents who answered that their Peace Corps training was outstanding and prepared them very well for their service. However, the highest number of respondents, forty-two which corresponds to forty-two percent of all respondents, answered that their Peace Corps training was sufficient and prepared them well enough for their service. Thirteen respondents evaluated the training provided by the Peace Corps as sufficient, however, some parts of the training need improvement according to them. On the other hand, twenty respondents stated that the training before

¹⁶⁵Ibid., Question 2.

¹⁶⁶ "Interviews with the U. S. Peace Corps Volunteers (collected by Aneta Firytová)," Website Peace Corps Interviews Wordpress, <https://peacecorpsinterviews.wordpress.com/interviews-with-the-u-s-peace-corps-volunteers-collected-by-aneta-firytova/> (created June 18, 2016), Question 3.

their assignment was not sufficient and did not prepare them for the service.¹⁶⁷ The results of the analysis of the responses are illustrated in Appendix No. 2.

There were nine respondents who stated that the language training was excellent. At the same time, there were complaints that female volunteers in French-speaking host countries had to focus on French primarily and only after achievement of certain intermediate knowledge of it, they could learn the local language that is spoken by the women in their community. This fact resulted that many female volunteers were not able to communicate with women from their community well and had to rely on communication with men. This was not very fortunate in many cases as it caused certain tensions as men tried to flirt with the volunteers.¹⁶⁸

Nevertheless, many volunteers mentioned that it is impossible to expect even the best training preparing them accordingly for their real service on their site. They even mentioned that Peace Corps service is an on-the-job-training type of work. With this aspect in mind, the figures look very well for the Peace Corps, its training is quite successful. One respondent with very rich background in education praised cross-cultural training of the Peace Corps as the most advanced, modern and progressive he or she has ever seen. As quite useful and handful were labeled all resources and study materials provided by the Peace Corps to the volunteers. Some five respondents felt that the technical training was not sufficient and as a result of that they did not feel qualified to train farmers who had been farming their whole lives. Last but not least, volunteers noted that there is quite a steep learning curve during the training and an enormous volume of materials from the Peace Corps Headquarters in Washington D. C. that is not necessarily relevant to the position that the volunteer is assigned for.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷Ibid., Question 3.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., Question 3.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., Question 3.

Appendix No. 7:**4.6. *The Positive Impacts of the Peace Corps Service on the Volunteers' Lives***

This chapter deals with the topic of positive impact of the Peace Corps service on volunteers and their life, more precisely it analyzes responses to the question "Could you please list some of positive impacts of your service on your life?". There were one hundred responses in total that could be divided into three main groups. However, the majority of responses contained more than one positive impact. The first group consists of answers that were mentioned mostly, ranging from thirty-six references to ten references. The second group of less common responses consists of answers mentioned between nine and three times, while the last group consists of minor impacts that were mentioned by the respondents in only one or two cases. These answers represent the most unique viewpoint at this particular topic.¹⁷⁰

The most referenced positive impact that was mentioned thirty-six times was that the volunteers found amazing lifelong friends, both from their fellow Peace Corps volunteers group and from the host country nationals. Respondents appreciated a special kind of bond that cannot be explained or broken that was created during their service with people around them, both like-minded and those with different world views than the respondents'. The following type of positive impact was mentioned twenty-two times and it was the appreciation of broad and in-depth experimental knowledge of a quite different culture, the respondents began to understand and value other cultural attributes and ethnicities while being comfortable with them. There were two types of positive impacts that were mentioned nineteen times. The first one was that the respondents got to know and understand themselves; they became aware of their strengths and capacities and started to be proud of themselves. The second one was that the respondents learned new language (either local minor African language or French) or improved their existing knowledge and fluency in French (for those in French-speaking African countries) while some of them broadened their linguistic capabilities

¹⁷⁰ "Interviews with the U. S. Peace Corps Volunteers (collected by Aneta Firytová)," Website Peace Corps Interviews Wordpress, <https://peacecorpsinterviews.wordpress.com/interviews-with-the-u-s-peace-corps-volunteers-collected-by-aneta-firytova/> (created June 18, 2016), Question 4.

as well. Moreover, there were two types of positive impacts that were mentioned seventeen times. The first one was devoted to volunteers stating that they became much more open-minded and active people. They claimed that they became much more flexible, adaptable, outgoing, and talkative and that they like to explore and go out much more than before their service. The second type mentioned that they have much better understanding of the world, they learned how the world works and how it does not work, in other words, their service raised their global awareness and changed their world views. Furthermore, there were two types of positive impacts that were mentioned fifteen times. The first one was that the Peace Corps service represented for the respondents quite unique and original experience while living in a developing country. On the other hand, the second one dealt with the achieved ability of the volunteers to see someone else's perspective, see the world in a new perspective and they also gained the ability to view America as well as Americans through this new perspective. However, fourteen volunteers appreciated that they became stronger and tougher people who were able to handle unknown situations and stress much better than before their service. The respondents also stated that they became self-confident, self-motivated and independent. Furthermore, there were two types of positive impacts that were mentioned twelve times. The first type caused that volunteers know what they want out of life, the service has changed and shaped their perspective and priorities. Many changed their perspective on their personal life and goals, they started to see the value of family relationships over money and material items while others' priorities shifted towards what they want not what social norms guide them to. The second type dealt with the fact that the respondents became more patient and understanding, many of them also expressed being humble and not judgmental at the same time, they found themselves better at "going with the flow". Eleven respondents mentioned that they developed their professional skills thanks to their service. The types of skills ranged from teaching, health care, project management, organizational skills to grant writing and many more. The last two positive impacts from this group reached both ten references. The first one was that volunteers developed greater compassion and more empathy for the lives in the Third world thanks to their international development experience. They also acquired better understanding of deep-rooted challenges that

developing economies are facing. Last but not least, the second one is represented by a very good cross-cultural understanding that was enriching for both sides.¹⁷¹

The following group of references ranges from nine to three references. There are two references that were mentioned nine times both. The first one is that the service refocused the career of the respondents and their personal goals while they discovered passion for particular type of work that they pursued during their Peace Corps service. The second type is represented by the better appreciation of all the blessings that volunteers have in the United States and other people in developed world as well. These are represented by both tangible and non-tangible advantages, higher standard of living as well as real religious and political liberties. Three different positive impacts were mentioned seven times each. The first one was that seven volunteers found their husband or wife during their Peace Corps service, some of them got married during their service already. Therefore, they claimed that their Peace Corps service had really a huge lifelong positive impact. The second impact was that the Peace Corps service helped the volunteers upon their return to the United States to get into a graduate school and win respect of others and receive a fellowship. The third impact is that the volunteers comprehended the universality of human nature and oneness of all humans. Some respondents even stated: "We are more alike than different." Moreover, there are three references that were mentioned six times. The first one is that the volunteers had the opportunity to travel and discover foreign countries while living in them. They did not have to spend a lot of money for the travel as this was a part of their Peace Corps service, they also became comfortable while traveling in foreign countries all over the world upon their return back home. Many fulfilled their lifelong dream of travel to Africa. Secondly, volunteers became much more selfless and generous while at the same time they became more sensitive to the needs of others, they learned how to listen to others. One respondent clarified that he or she became more patient in matters involving himself or herself, and much less patient in matters involving others. Thirdly, volunteers appreciated that they learned how to live in a community and to collaborate and share with other members of the community even without the need of full communication due to a language barrier. Furthermore, there are five types of positive impacts that were all mentioned four times. The first one is that four volunteers valued

¹⁷¹Ibid., Question 4.

that they found a new family in their host country. Secondly, volunteers claim that they acquired continued inspiration to serve the world. The third positive impact for other four volunteers was that their Peace Corps service experience got them several jobs that were focused internationally. The fourth impact that the respondents stated was that they developed working-with-youth skills and they were very proud of their young students. Fifthly, four volunteers decided to do teaching "for real" upon their arrival to the United States as they developed a passion for education. Then, there are two types of positive impact that were mentioned three times by the volunteers. The first one was that the respondents learned to live in isolation and to work and live alone. While the second type represented that the volunteers were able to see the changes in the lives of others and they saw that they are able to help with very few funds to make the life of the community better.¹⁷²

The last group of types of positive impact is the group that represents minor impacts reaching between two and one references. There are eight references that were mentioned twice. The first one of them was that the service helped the volunteers experience personal growth and to grow up. Secondly, volunteers learned what was important in life and they learned to differentiate between a problem and an inconvenience. Thirdly, they learned that helping others might have benefited the volunteers more than the people they came to help. Fourthly, two of the one hundred volunteers stated that they felt very rewarded and gratified that they could be part of such a great project. Fifthly, the volunteers developed practical life skills such as cooking, gardening or communication skills. Sixthly, two Peace Corps volunteers became better stewards of world's scarce resources and became more conscious of how much are Americans and the rest of developed world wasteful. Seventhly, two volunteers expressed the gratitude that it was quite useful that they could experience as white Americans what it feels like to be a minority or a part of discriminated culture. Last but not least, eighthly, the respondents have very fond memories of their Peace Corps service and they have good stories to tell thanks to that. On the other hand, there were sixteen responses that were mentioned only once. One volunteer realized that there are things to be learned from all cultures, even from the poorest ones (economically speaking). Another volunteer realized that poor people are not sad, while other came to

¹⁷²Ibid., Question 4.

a conclusion that the best people to help Africa are Africans themselves, the volunteers can work as a catalyst, but the ideas and solutions have to come from Africans in order to be well accepted and implemented. Another volunteer learned how to take time with other people, not doing anything in particular, while other respondent enjoys that the Peace Corps slowed his or her life down for him or her as he or she discovered the beauty of lazy morning coffee, spending three hours eating lunch by neighbors or devoting time to hobbies. Furthermore, another volunteer gained the ability to deal better with stress, while other acquired a new sense of humor and the ability to laugh at himself or herself. In contrast, there was one volunteer who could list not even one positive impact of the service on his or her life as it was purely negative experience for him or her while another volunteer learned thanks to his or her service to respect fellow Americans as he or she has been for some years abroad before joining the Corps. Another volunteer stated that he or she was less prone to fear that American politicians like to push after his or her service, while other volunteer used the opportunity to contribute to his or her PhD dissertation thanks to the service. Moreover, another volunteer lives abroad now because of his or her experience with the Peace Corps service while other volunteer adopted two boys from Africa because of his or her service. Last but not least, the following three volunteers shared their positive impacts as deepening and strengthening of his or her marriage (as he or she served with his or her spouse during the service), learning how to parent from Togolese mothers (specially to wear babies, co-sleep with them, nurse them on demand and treat babies as babies, not small adults as is according to the respondent done in the USA) and the experience of living and working with some of the most kind, generous, funny and humbling people.¹⁷³

Appendix No. 8:

4.7. The Negative Impacts of the Peace Corps Service on the Volunteers' Lives

The following chapter deals with the topic of negative impact of the Peace Corps service on volunteers and their life, more precisely it analyzes responses to the question "Could you please list some of negative impacts of your service on your life?" This

¹⁷³Ibid., Question 4.

chapter is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the negative impacts that occurred mostly in the responses and that range from twenty-two references to eleven references. The second group is dedicated to negative impacts that achieved from ten to three references by the volunteers, while the last group consists of minor answers that were mentioned once or twice.¹⁷⁴

The leading number of the respondents, being twenty-two, stated that the service left negative impact on their life in the form of continued health problems, residual health effects or long-term illness. Hereinafter is provided a list of illnesses that the volunteers stated to have due to their Peace Corps service. Four volunteers suffer or suffered from chronic gastrointestinal distress, three volunteers from rapid weight loss and another three volunteers experienced lasting impact of intake of anti-malarial medication for the length of their service (among other lasting impacts volunteers experienced temporary psychosis and persistent anxiety as a consequence of this medication). These illnesses were all mentioned by two different volunteers: giardiasis, parasitic illness, autoimmune disease, exposure to tuberculosis. The following illnesses or negative health effects were all mentioned by different volunteers once: schistosomiasis (snail fever), leishmaniasis, blastosemiasis, malaria, insomnia, vitiligo, amoebas, weakened immune system, diarrhea (a lot of), wrongly set broken bone, a lot of scars, several cracked teeth requiring crowns.¹⁷⁵

Moreover, one volunteer stated that they both felt very sick post-service with a spouse that was also serving with the Peace Corps. The experience was according to them awful, unexpected, and they had no warning or support in dealing with it. It took about six months before they both felt normal again and, therefore, it was a very frustrating experience for both of them. Moreover, twenty respondents stated that due to their Peace Corps service they found themselves to be without sufficient funds upon their return to the United States, they were away from gaining work experience; they experienced delay in paid career development and delay in paying back debts or student loans. Another disadvantage that was mentioned was that the volunteers did not

¹⁷⁴ “Interviews with the U. S. Peace Corps Volunteers (collected by Aneta Firytová),” Website Peace Corps Interviews Wordpress, <https://peacecorpsinterviews.wordpress.com/interviews-with-the-u-s-peace-corps-volunteers-collected-by-aneta-firytova/> (created June 18, 2016), Question 5.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., Question 5.

contribute to their retirement during their service. All of these circumstances left many volunteers with financial burden. Sixteen volunteers claimed that it was extremely hard for them to be away from their family and friends for such a long period of time. Majority of them stated that it was much harder than they could ever have imagined. Volunteers missed out on really important life events of their family and friends such as weddings, newborn babies, spending holidays together, funerals, etc. Their service took according to them an emotional toll while feeling lonely during difficulties and struggles as well. There were two types of negative impacts that were mentioned eleven times. Firstly, eleven respondents stated that it was quite difficult to readjust to developed-world life and their own culture on return. It was not easy to find a job for many of them and some of them had mixed feelings when they found the job as they felt financially secured but, at the same time, they felt as if they were not meant to have any more real impact by their activity. Some of them even felt as unrelatable outsiders to their own culture. Secondly, other eleven volunteers were injured or seriously injured, ranging from being hit by a motorcycle and needing a surgery, being hit by a drunk car driver or being involved in a car accident and as a consequence being in coma and suffering severe brain damage and lastly, being in quarantine. They were not able to work upon their return to the United States.¹⁷⁶

The following paragraph is dedicated to the negative impacts that were mentioned between ten and three times. Ten volunteers reported that they struggled and the service was quite challenging, but it had no long-lasting negative impacts on their life, in contrast it shaped them. Their living conditions were hard. Having no electricity, running water or cell phone service was challenging for them. Many lived in a thatched roof huts and were always battling insects and rats. They accessed water from an open well as everyone else in their community did. Not being around anyone of their own culture who spoke their language was also challenging at times. With that being written, they lived exactly the way other people from their community lived. On the other hand, there were ten volunteers who claimed that their service had no negative impacts and that they cannot think of any. Another ten volunteers had to leave earlier from their country post due to different reasons. Reasons ranged from evacuation from Mali for four of them and medical reasons to a reason that the volunteer realized that Peace

¹⁷⁶Ibid., Question 5.

Corps might actually cause more harm than good in the host countries. The volunteer stated that the Peace Corps reinforced negative social stereotypes, such as single mothers need to be shunned and that all Americans are wealthy. As a consequence of that, some had a sense of failure; others regretted that they did not qualify for non-competitive eligibility. Moreover, there were five volunteers who started to expect others not to be wasteful and be appreciative. They did not agree with people who live with a lot of material possessions and spend time and money on themselves. As a consequence of this, they were angry on their friends and family or at least annoyed. It also made them eschew the private sector and consumerism. Moreover, five different types of negative impacts were each mentioned four times. Firstly, physical and mental health of the volunteers declined during the service. Secondly, four volunteers developed depression during their service. Thirdly, another four felt frustration and anger at the health system of the Peace Corps and host countries and many of those who work within it. Peace Corps medical staff was seen as inadequate and to have a tendency to be dismissive of volunteers' health concerns. Fourthly, four volunteers complained about poor nutrition or malnutrition for their entire service. Fifthly, four volunteers developed persistent anxiety, they became suspicious and distrustful. These volunteers became jumpy and always worried. One of them stated that living in a constant state of fear has changed him or her and that there is nothing good to say about his or her time in service and that the negative impacts are immeasurable. Last but not least, there were five types of negative impacts that were mentioned three times. Firstly, volunteers have learned that power, corruption and greediness are real problems both in the host countries and the USA, and that it is extremely difficult for them to work around these sometimes. Secondly, evacuation was negative and traumatic event for volunteers serving in Mali. The volunteers felt that their life was thrown to the wind. Thirdly, three different volunteers have a negative feeling about Peace Corps as a whole because of the staff from top management to the one at their country post. The issue was that they were not getting support from the staff. Fourthly, their experience made volunteers cynical and jaded with international aid, development projects and charity. Fifthly, the great distance from family and friends made it difficult to maintain important relationships and many people that the volunteers were once close to became estranged simply due to the distance and difficulty to communicate.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷Ibid., Question 5.

This paragraph is dedicated to the minor negative impacts, more precisely to those that were mentioned once or twice. There were seven types of negative impacts that were mentioned twice. Firstly, volunteers realized that they might not have big of an impact on their community as they believed they would. Secondly, the volunteers became more jaded and gained cynical world view. Thirdly, volunteers realized that bureaucracy ruins everything and that while volunteers went to their host countries to help, they felt that their country sent them there for good public relations reasons and they started to hate U. S. politics as a consequence of that as the fourth impact. Fifthly, volunteers suffered from physical ailments from high long-term exposure to stress. Sixthly, the volunteers fight anxiety stemming from sexual harassment and they have assumption that every man near them will say or try something on them. Last but not least, seventhly, two female volunteers were sexually assaulted, one of them by a fellow Peace Corps volunteer, the other one by a host country national. Both of these cases were not handled by the Peace Corps properly according to them. One of them stated that her actions leading up to the attack were questioned by the Peace Corps and that it was an example of victim blaming. The investigation made her to question herself and how she presented herself as a female. The volunteer stated that her experience was one of the many inspirations for the Peace Corps reforms initiated by the Mr. and Mrs. Ludlum. Furthermore, there are twelve types of negative impacts that were mentioned once. The first and the second one were frustration of the volunteer with host country nationals when working on projects with them and being disappointed with people who are not "go-getters". The third, the fourth and the fifth one were the loss of equilibrium, traumatic after-effects (terrifying flashbacks) and seeing everything in a much darker, negative perspective. The sixth and the seventh one were having a greater sense of world that makes a volunteer feel like a preacher and the fact that a volunteer had to hide certain facts (such as the Ebola outbreak in the host country during the service) from people in the United States in order to avoid stigmatization. The eighth and the ninth impacts were that it did not help the volunteer start a career as the work experience during Peace Corps was not good and another volunteer notices race so much more than before (after spending two years in South Africa, a country that only talks about racial issues). The tenth and the eleventh impacts were that the volunteer thinks over a bit more than needed what to say (so that he or she does not offend

anyone) and being depressed to see the impact of the corruption in the host country on educational system and infrastructure, that felt at times that the volunteer's efforts would amount to nothing or at most very little, only because the system was not in favor of the students advancing in school, going to a college, and getting a job beyond farming or trading. Last but not least, one volunteer developed bipolar disorder and was medically separated and is, therefore, required to take medication for the rest of his or her life, it is connected with struggles with mania, depression and inappropriate actions.¹⁷⁸

ⁱ However, an entire annual budget of the Peace Corps corresponds to the budget for only one day for the war in Iraq.

ⁱⁱ WordPress.com, <https://peacecorpsinterviews.wordpress.com/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Palo Alto, California, USA: SurveyMonkey Inc.

^{iv} Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA: Facebook Inc.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., Question 5.