



Food Security Strategy

2017



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Some 795 million people globally—about one in nine—do not have enough food to lead healthy active lives. The vast majority of the world's hungry people **live in developing countries**, where 12.9 percent of the population is undernourished.¹ Poor nutrition causes **45 percent of deaths in children under age 5**,² and one in four of the world's children are stunted.³ Tackling the issue of food insecurity is no small undertaking.

Peace Corps contributes to the mitigation of food insecurity by improving nutrition outcomes for mothers and children, addressing resiliency to climate-related shocks, and reducing poverty on a global scale. Peace Corps' approach is to build local capacity at the individual, group, and community level to promote sustainability. Peace Corps' comprehensive food security strategy revolves around Peace Corps Volunteers' contributions to the four pillars of food security as defined in the U.S. government's Global Food Security Strategy: **availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability**. As Volunteers focus their collective efforts on food security innovations and interventions, the agency is moving ahead to invest in, support and extend these activities throughout the world.

With the passage of the Global Food Security Act in July 2016, the Peace Corps has developed a comprehensive food security strategy that builds on successes and lessons, both over the past few decades and as a partner in the whole-of-government Feed the Future initiative since 2011. The strategy **strengthens, expands, scales up, and begins to formalize key activities** that have been developed and tested as part of the Feed the Future initiative. In addition to these established activities, the Peace Corps will identify new opportunities to build on previous successes to meet emerging food security challenges.

The Peace Corps is one of 11 partnering agencies in the whole-of-government Feed the Future initiative, which has reinforced food security and nutrition programming and Volunteer training across all three Peace Corps regions: Africa; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia; and Inter-America and the Pacific. These posts have piloted a variety of innovative program interventions, identified and collaborated with partners, and strategically used Peace Corps Response Volunteers to promote and extend these activities. Peace Corps has established a network of posts working in food security across all three regions, enabling staff and Volunteers to widely share higher-quality training resources, employ technical expertise at posts, and make programming efforts more outcome-oriented.

Since its inception, the Peace Corps has promoted methodologies and approaches that are proven, evidence-based, and hold promise for positive results and impact. These methods and approaches must be context appropriate, sustainable, and cause no harm. In addressing food and nutrition insecurity, several promising practices have been developed and are ready to scale up. For example, in West Africa, under the West Africa Food Security Partnership (WAFSP), the Essential Nutrition Actions have been successfully promoted as a useful framework for programming and training curriculum. As a result, the agency is scaling up the Essential Nutrition Actions framework and linking specific interventions to home gardening in Africa. Similarly, the Peace Corps is now promoting the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in more rice-growing countries with increasing success; this same approach has the potential to increase yields of other, more nutrient-dense

¹State of Food Insecurity in the World (<http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/en/>). 2015.

²Series on Maternal and Child Nutrition (<http://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-nutrition>), The Lancet, 2013.

³Prevalence and Trends of Stunting Among...Children

(http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/publications/stunting1990_2020/en/), Public Health Nutrition, 2012.

crops. Another example is the Master Farmer Program, a farmer-led extension approach being replicated in three countries in West Africa. Monitoring tools for Volunteers developed by the WAFSP have been adopted, expanded, and are being used as reference points, as the Peace Corps has further developed its own tools and systems for other posts working in food security.

Peace Corps Volunteers play a vital and unique role in bringing food security best practices and innovations to underserved, rural communities, working with food-insecure households, which are often dependent upon agriculture. Volunteers live alongside with their host country counterparts, learning the local language and culture, becoming true partners with farmers and caregivers of children, and working well beyond where the rural road ends for most nongovernmental organization staff. As Volunteers focus their collective expertise on food security innovations and interventions, the agency is moving ahead to invest in, support, and extend these activities by developing innovative, contextually relevant program resources and materials for use throughout the world; contributing on a global scale to mitigating food insecurity; improving nutrition outcomes for mothers and children; addressing climate change and resiliency; and reducing poverty.

Looking forward, the Peace Corps will expand the progress made under Feed the Future. Agency commitment is vital to capitalize on energy and enthusiasm around this important work. Peace Corps posts and Volunteers are sharing successful models with posts with similar operating contexts. But sustained attention is required for the agency to remain a credible partner in efforts to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. Continuing to build on a solid foundation of food security programming while promoting proven activities and interventions is a key priority in the Peace Corps' efforts to promote peace and friendship and to build capacity and resiliency in the communities where Volunteers serve.

INTRODUCTION

Feed the Future and the Global Food Security Act

Since 2009, the Peace Corps has served as one of 11 partnering agencies in the whole-of-government Feed the Future initiative.

In July 2011, the Peace Corps and the U.S. Agency for International Development Bureau for Food Security (USAID/BFS) signed the Global Food Security Agreement to implement activities in support of the Feed the Future initiative. The overarching goal of the agreement is to reduce global hunger and poverty by tackling their root causes, employing proven strategies to achieve large-scale, sustainable impact.

USAID committed multiyear funding to the Peace Corps through the end of fiscal year 2017 to enhance the Peace Corps' food security programming. This work crosses various sectors, with Volunteers in the Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Environment, and Health sectors implementing food security activities.



In 2016, Congress passed the Global Food Security Act (GFSa) with strong bipartisan support. The act codifies a comprehensive U.S. global food and nutrition security strategy to sustain the successes and momentum of Feed the Future. The legislation solidifies the U.S. government's commitment to the productivity, incomes and livelihoods of small-scale producers, particularly women, by working across agricultural value chains and expanding small-scale producers' access to local and international markets. It strengthens the Feed the

Future initiative's existing accountability mechanisms and establishes parameters for robust congressional oversight, monitoring, and evaluation of impact toward this commitment. The legislation also calls for a whole-of-government Global Food Security Strategy, which the 11 Feed the Future partner agencies and departments delivered to Congress on October 1, 2016.

The Peace Corps is cited as an interagency partner in the Global Food Security Act, and has been actively involved in drafting and vetting the Global Food Security Strategy and A Food Secure 2030 document, in coordination with interagency partners.

In addition, a new U.S. government-wide Global Nutrition Coordination Plan was released in 2016, to which the Peace Corps has contributed extensively. This project pledges continued efforts on key global nutrition issues, providing a mandate to federal agencies to work together to improve nutrition outcomes.

At a congressional event in November 2015, Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet reviewed the Peace Corps' participation in the Feed the Future initiative and renewed the agency's commitment to food security:

"As we continue moving forward, getting closer and closer to the end of the Feed the Future initiative in 2017, I know that Peace Corps' work is not done. None of our work is done. With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals at the U.N. General Assembly in September 2015, the Peace Corps is well situated and eager to continue our inclusive, community-based approach to development so that as a global community we can get poverty to zero. We will continue to engage with our partners across the federal government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to maximize our effectiveness on the ground, utilizing innovative techniques and approaches to reduce poverty, increase nutrition, and enhance food security for some of the most remote populations on earth."

Overview of the Food Security Landscape and Trends

In its Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition 2015, the U.N. Committee on World Food Security noted the following emerging challenges:

- Meeting the food and nutritional needs of growing urban and rural populations, with changing dietary preferences
- Increasing sustainable agricultural production and productivity
- Enhancing resilience to climate change
- Finding sustainable solutions to the increasing competition for natural resources



Since the Peace Corps' inception in 1961, Peace Corps Volunteers around the world have addressed the adverse impact of food shortages through traditional programming and targeted initiatives in the countries where they have served. Agriculture Volunteers, at times, have accounted for up to 20 percent of Volunteers serving worldwide.

In 1985, the Peace Corps launched the Africa Food Systems Initiative (AFSI), which was designed to help reverse declining food production in Africa and develop sustainable food sources. AFSI projects included land preparation, agricultural education, marketing strategies, storage and preservation of products, and nutrition education. In the 1990s, the Peace Corps continued its efforts in integrated development

activities, piloting a number of Participatory Agency Service Agreements (PASAs) with USAID to support selected Peace Corps posts to implement agriculture, environment, and health activities that supported the development priorities of the countries served.

The Peace Corps also took over the management and execution of the USAID-funded Small Project Assistance (SPA) program, which was previously managed by USAID. This relieved USAID of extra administrative duties and allowed the Peace Corps to fund and manage small grants and training resources more efficiently.

Today, Agriculture and Environment Volunteers are planting trees in countries plagued by desertification to prevent soil erosion, improve soil fertility, and provide access to nutrient-dense foods such as moringa leaves and acacia seeds. These off-cycle products improve resiliency and smooth out fluctuations between hungry and harvest seasons, addressing core drivers of food insecurity and resulting undernutrition. Over the years, related projects have ranged from developing fish farms and the introduction of small-scale irrigation systems to improving food processing and food marketing.

On September 25th 2015, the United Nations adopted a set of Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a renewed sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved by 2030, and require the engagement of governments, the private sector, civil society and individuals. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are eight antipoverty targets that U.N. members committed to achieving by 2015. While significant progress has been made toward meeting the MDGs, particularly around reducing poverty, hunger, and malnutrition, much work still remains to attain the SDGs by 2030.

In light of the challenges outlined in the SDGs, the Peace Corps has developed a food security strategy. The strategy creates a framework to guide the development of responsive food security programs and that can be used as a tool for staff to ensure a holistic approach, and an instrument to focus the agency's food security efforts to further empower Volunteers in their sector activities. Further, this strategy and framework will help the Peace Corps work toward more effective interventions and will **strengthen, expand, scale up, and formalize** promising practices and activities.

The Peace Corps' food security strategy supports and reflects the recommendations of the Comprehensive Agency Assessment released in June 2010 in the following:

- Further develop and define the implementation of the agency's Focus In/Train Up initiative
- Strategically place Peace Corps Response Volunteers
- Continue to identify and develop strategic partnerships that can further focus and strengthen the Peace Corps' impact

This strategy also promotes the inclusion of a variety of creative and focused training opportunities for Peace Corps Volunteers, staff, and counterparts. As part of a comprehensive approach to food security, the strategy embraces and participates in agency initiatives and partnerships where appropriate, including Feed the Future, the President's Initiative on Climate Resilient Development, Ending Preventable Childhood and Maternal Deaths, Let Girls Learn, and Stomping Out Malaria in Africa.

Further, this comprehensive food security strategy is built around four focal areas: agriculture, nutrition and health, enhanced management of natural resources, and reduction of climate risks. Cross-cutting issues include gender and youth. All components of the strategy are linked and focused on these areas of emphasis (Figure 1. Peace Corps' Approach to Food Security Programming). Technical training and toolkits in these

areas will be refined and strengthened. Additional optional in-service training events that deepen Volunteer skill development and motivation, regional trainings, and focused training on specific topics for Volunteers early in their second year of service will be considered and implemented. Program interventions will be evidence-based.

FOOD SECURITY OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PEACE CORPS

- **Strengthen, expand, scale up, and formalize food innovative security programming and training successes.** With the support of Feed the Future resources, a number of training packages and food security activities, approaches, and interventions have been piloted and are now ready to be shared across posts with similar conditions. Examples would include Essential Nutrition Actions and Essential Hygiene Actions, a System of Crop Intensification and Conservation Agriculture, and the Master Farmer program and Farmer Field Schools.
- **Use evidence-based training materials, toolkits, and communication for food security interventions.** Key partners are using successful training packages and toolkits, such as the materials developed for the Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths partnership with USAID. As the Peace Corps continues to place greater emphasis on evidence-based interventions, the agency has an opportunity to adapt such materials, saving time and resources.
- **Use innovative approaches and pilots to improve use of data.** Peace Corps Volunteers working in food security have already proven to be resourceful and innovative in their use of technology and digital tools. Strategic pilot projects can increase understanding of how to accurately capture work conducted in the field, improve data quality, and generate learning for the agency as a whole.
- **Support regional and sub-regional approaches across Peace Corps countries and regions to promote food security.**⁴ The Peace Corps has made significant investments in food security, piloting a number of approaches from the sub-regional WAFSP, to in-country agreements supporting food security work in East Africa, Guatemala, Nepal, and Cambodia. Through these efforts, the Peace Corps has a foundation on which to build a comprehensive food security network spanning the three regions in which we work. The case studies of WAFSP, Cambodia, Guatemala, and Nepal are highlighted in Appendix III.
- **Enhance and foster strategic partnerships.** A key recommendation of the Peace Corps Comprehensive Agency Assessment is to identify and develop strategic partnerships that support and build the programming and training capacity of Peace Corps posts. Being a partner in the Feed the Future initiative has positioned the Peace Corps as a strong contributor to food security in all its aspects, providing the agency with an opportunity over the next few years to build partnerships in the public and private sectors to support and strengthen food security efforts.

⁴ See Appendix VI: Food Security Regional Hubs

- **Link and align Peace Corps food security interventions with other U.S. government agencies, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations.** As a full partner in the Feed the Future initiative since 2011 and through the GFSA passed in 2016, the Peace Corps is well-positioned to develop an enabling environment for engagement with strategic partnerships, food security policy, and programming and training support.
- **Align Peace Corps food security interventions with internationally agreed-upon Sustainable Development Goals.** The Peace Corps has joined other agencies and organizations in transitioning from the Millennium Development Goals to working toward meeting the SDGs.

FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMMING AT THE PEACE CORPS

Vision, Mission, Goal, and Strategic Priorities

Vision Statement

The Peace Corps works to ensure food-secure communities with well-nourished, healthy, and resilient individuals and families.

Mission Statement

Through sound capacity-building and training techniques, the Peace Corps contributes to food and nutrition security by providing technical assistance, including educating individuals, communities, and organizations to sustainably increase availability of and access to nutritious food, improve nutrition outcomes, ensure optimal environmental stewardship, and enhance their resilience.

Aspirational Goal

By 2030, individuals, households, and communities that have hosted Peace Corps Volunteers will have reduced food and nutrition insecurity and increased resilience.

Strategic Priorities

1. The Peace Corps will contribute to the eradication of extreme poverty for people in the countries where we serve, currently measured as people living on less than US\$1.25 a day. (SDG 1)
2. The Peace Corps will work to end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food year-round. (SDG 2)
3. The Peace Corps will strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards, natural disasters, and other shocks in the communities where Volunteers serve. (SDG 13)

Four Pillars of Focus

The World Food Summit of 1996 defined, and subsequently reconfirmed, that food security exists “When all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.” Food security is built on four pillars:

- **Availability:** The supply side of food security, determined by food production levels, stock levels, and net trade.
- **Accessibility:** The ability of households to obtain food, including from production, stock, purchase, and/or gathering, obtaining food from relatives, community, donors, etc., and individual access to resources.
- **Utilization:** The way the human body makes the most of food nutrients. Sufficient nutrient and energy uptake results from good care and feeding practices, proper food preparation, dietary diversity, and/or reasonable distribution of food in a household completes the security.
- **Stability:** Availability, access, and utilization should be stable over time. “At all times” emphasizes the risk of adverse effects on the other three dimensions of food security.

Peace Corps’ Approach to Food Security Programming

Over the past four years, the Peace Corps has used a multisectoral approach to address food security, ensuring that all of the sectors (Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health, and Youth in Development) contribute to at least one, and often more than one, food security pillar. To ensure the effectiveness of this approach, sector specialists in the Peace Corps Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support worked to ensure that food security programming across all projects addressed all four pillars. The office developed sector schematics that identified specific project areas and activities to address relevant pillars and to guide food security programming and training support in each sector. Additionally, sector guidance documents, project framework toolkits, and specific indicators for monitoring and evaluating project impact and outcomes were developed in accordance with each sector’s schematics.

The Peace Corps’ efforts to address food and nutrition security over the past four years have been exceptionally positive. We have made impacts in the following:

- **Availability:** The Peace Corps contributes to local production of nutritious food by working with smallholder farmers to successfully apply and adopt new or improved agricultural technologies or management practices that increase the productivity, agrobiodiversity, and profitability of their farming activities.
- **Accessibility:** The Peace Corps contributes to the ability of households to obtain adequate quantities of nutritious food by assisting individuals, families, and groups to identify opportunities and make investments to increase production, improve and/or add value, or initiate new activities that increase income generation and purchasing power or other means of food acquisition (e.g., barter, trade)
- **Utilization:** The Peace Corps contributes to ensuring that individuals, particularly women of childbearing age and infants under two years, make the most of available food nutrients, by supporting behavior change around care and feeding practices and safe food preparation; stressing the importance of clean water and improved hygiene and sanitation; and recommending increased dietary diversity and food distribution that supports the health and well-being of each family member.

- **Stability:** The Peace Corps contributes to stability by building local capacities to appreciate, ameliorate, and sustain sound environmental stewardship, including the following:
 - Adopting appropriate, low-cost, and climate-smart techniques and practices to sustainably manage, conserve, and improve the local natural resource base and ecological services that support rural livelihood.
 - Working with individual smallholder farmers, producers, and other groups to increase capacities in entrepreneurship, small business development, and group organizations.
 - Engaging youth in formal and informal environmental education.
 - Reducing carbon emissions and increasing carbon sequestration to help mitigate climate change.

However, despite significant progress, food insecurity has continued to be a major global challenge. This challenge is compounded by a rapidly increasing population, particularly in urban areas; a dependence on limited and degrading natural resources and ecological services that continue to be compromised or lost; and the effects of climate change. In the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, the U.N. Committee on Food Security highlights specific emerging challenges in addressing each of the four food security pillars:

- Increasing sustainable agricultural production and productivity (availability and accessibility)
- Meeting the food and nutritional needs of growing urban and rural populations, with changing dietary preferences (utilization)
- Enhancing resilience to climate change (stability)
- Finding sustainable solutions to the increasing competition for natural resources (stability)

Peace Corps programming will continue to address each of the four pillars with attention to emerging challenges. Looking to the future, the Peace Corps will build on past success while retaining flexibility and agility to reassess and adjust as changing realities, particularly impacts of climate change, are identified in each host country. On the following page, **Figure 1** illustrates how the Peace Corps and its Volunteers are working to promote food security, as well as the relationship between the four pillars of food security and emerging challenges.

Figure 1. FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK

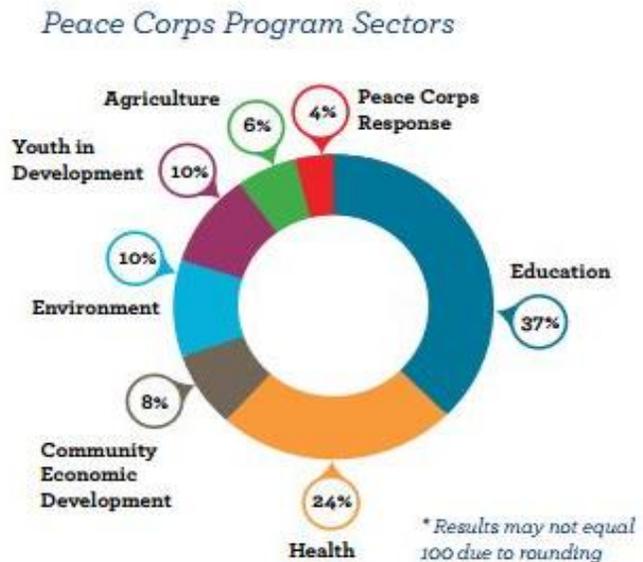


Feed the Future at the Peace Corps

Peace Corps posts are already engaged in food security-related activities to varying degrees globally and across program sectors. Under Feed the Future, Peace Corps Volunteers in the Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Environment, and Health sectors have worked together to promote and report on their food security activities.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of Peace Corps Volunteers by sector. In 2015, 6 percent of Volunteers served in the Agriculture sector, 10 percent in Environment, 8 percent in Community Economic Development, and 24 percent in Health. While not all Volunteers in each of these sectors will work full-time on food security, a high percentage of Volunteers' activities can be linked to food security.

Figure 2. Distribution of Volunteers by Sector



SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES

Together with USAID, the Peace Corps has developed new, innovative, and contextually relevant program resources and materials for use throughout the world. The Feed the Future partnership in particular represents a successful interagency collaboration and has amplified the Peace Corps' contribution to mitigating food insecurity on a global scale, improving nutrition for women and children, addressing climate change and resiliency, and reducing poverty.

In July 2011, the Peace Corps and USAID/BFS signed the Global Food Security Agreement to implement activities in support of the Feed the Future initiative. To participate in the agreement, a Peace Corps post and USAID mission discuss programmatic alignment in country, detail areas of financial support, and collaboratively develop a program description or SOW. The overarching goal of the agreement was to reduce global hunger and poverty by tackling their root causes, employing proven strategies to achieve large-scale, sustainable impact.

The Global Food Security Agreement serves as an umbrella agreement that allows Peace Corps posts and USAID missions in Feed the Future-focused countries to establish a statement of work under the global agreement.

Since signing this agreement in 2011, USAID has supported the Peace Corps with over \$15.5 million through nine statements of work. The agreements have supported activities throughout Peace Corps' area of influence, including six bilateral programs between USAID missions and Peace Corps posts in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

Peace Corps posts maintain important relationships with their USAID missions, and the Global Agreement is managed at the headquarters level by the Peace Corps Office of Strategic Partnerships & Intergovernmental Affairs (SPIGA). This office serves as the primary liaison with USAID/BFS for non-technical issues related to overall management, interpretation of the agreement, revisions, and amendments. This office also provides partnership support to Peace Corps posts implementing Feed the Future funds.

The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support directly manages two statements of work and provides technical assistance and expertise in programming, training, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting to Peace Corps posts implementing food security activities. The specifics of monitoring and evaluation are expanded upon in Appendix IV. Peace Corps posts and Overseas Programming and Training Support implement the individual statements of work under the agreement and assign project managers who are responsible for achieving deliverables and complying with the intended use of funds.

Initial efforts for the development of the Peace Corps' food security strategy focused on engaging a broad range of internal stakeholders to guide the direction of the Peace Corps' food security work under the agreement. Areas of research included exploring what has worked effectively, what has not worked as expected, and how the agency can build on the strong foundation and successes achieved through past efforts to combat food insecurity and malnutrition. A food security working group was established to assist in working through this process, while internal contact and discussions were maintained with relevant technical experts, providing subsequent updates to key policymakers and senior staff. Notable achievements and potential areas for improvement are below.

Key Achievements

- ✓ Increased training events through global, regional, and post-level trainings of trainers and training activity requests
- ✓ Materials and resource development and dissemination
- ✓ Expansion of the Peace Corps' food security community of practice
- ✓ Process evaluations of programming activities
- ✓ Post-level implementation of food security-related activities
- ✓ Increased engagement and collaboration with interagency partners, at the post and agency level

Lessons Learned

- Funding for key staff positions at Peace Corps/headquarters (agriculture specialist, nutrition specialist, monitoring and evaluation specialist, technical training specialist) and, if determined necessary, at regional or sub-regional levels to fill a coordinating and support role (e.g., WAFSP), is an ongoing challenge and is critical in ensuring successful food security programming and training implementation.
- Consistent communication is necessary to ensure food security program quality across Peace Corps posts.
- To formalize innovations and promising activities in food security programming, staff must engage the Peace Corps food security community of practice and implement trainings of trainers.
- Development of effective partnerships can support a variety of food security interventions.
- Mechanisms to access financial resources must be available at both post and Volunteer levels and function in a timely manner.
- High staff turnover rates pose a significant challenge to sustainable and consistent food security programming, both within Peace Corps and other partnering organizations.

BUILDING FOR SUCCESS THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic partnerships play a key role in increasing the Peace Corps' effectiveness and reach. Many partners have greater financial resources coupled with a mandate to cover large geographical areas; however, they may lack sufficient human resources in the field, especially when accessing the most underserved communities where the majority of Peace Corps Volunteers live and work. Volunteers are widely and strategically placed throughout the countries in which they serve, and where portfolios match and support is available, this combination can result in a win/win situation for both the Peace Corps and for the partner organization.

The role of external funding should not be seen as a replacement to support the Peace Corps' core activities, but rather as a supplemental resource that amplifies and strengthens them. A strategic partner should be one that can assist the Peace Corps in providing supplemental training materials and producing effective toolkits and job aids and can continue to work, support, and provide technical or financial assistance to the Peace Corps over time. As we have seen through the many innovative and highly successful activities funded through the Peace Corps' partnership with USAID in the Feed the Future initiative, strategic partnerships with external organizations can contribute dramatically to Volunteer impact. In light of this, the Peace Corps is reviewing current food security partnerships and pursuing others that can support its sectors and activities.

As a Feed the Future partner agency, the Peace Corps was pleased to see the GFSA enacted into law, codifying the U.S. government's food security and nutrition outreach for the future. Together with other interagency partners, the Peace Corps is looking ahead and discussing a revised, whole-of-government strategy for food security. In line with this whole-of-government strategy, the Peace Corps' food security strategy reflects consultations with numerous USAID offices and other partners. Through these consultations, a variety of areas of collaboration and partnership have also been discussed, and preliminary discussions with external partners have been very positive.

NEXT STEPS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This Peace Corps strategy represents a food security road map for the future. While it lays out a path forward, the pace of implementation will depend on the agency's commitment, political will, and strategic partnerships that can be negotiated and implemented. The Peace Corps should continue to build a strong foundation for food security, review best practices and lessons learned, solidify current operations, strategically expand and scale key interventions, and identify partners willing to support the Peace Corps' food security interventions in the future.

Operational Approaches

A variety of approaches will need to be used to support food security interventions. They will depend on current Peace Corps programming, strategic partnerships, and local contexts. Feed the Future has afforded the agency several different but promising models. While many new food security tools and training packages have been developed and distributed, videos produced, and monitoring and evaluation innovations established (noted in Appendix IV), effective and consistent communication has sometimes been a challenge. Increased and direct communication between headquarters staff (particularly Office of Strategic Partnerships and Intergovernmental Affairs, Overseas Programming and Training Support, and Global Operations) and the field will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of internal stakeholders.

The WAFSP (a sub-regional approach described in Appendix VI) represents a possible model for future food security activities in Africa as well as other Peace Corps regions. WAFSP has been developing innovative programming interventions across multiple countries in West Africa. This approach has benefited from synergies between countries and provided Volunteers the tools and training to increase their impact and effectiveness. The partnership and approach has helped the agency direct its efforts to address food insecurity and malnutrition.

Regional coordinators would serve as representatives for their region and work with the Overseas Programming and Training Support Food Security Team in the design, implementation, and promotion of trainings, activities, materials, and exchanges as applicable to the region. If applicable, food security program managers may be placed at the sub-regional level, and would report directly to the regional coordinator, focusing on formalizing anchor activities and sharing information. Post food security points of contact will identify and facilitate engagement with local partners.

Another operational approach the Peace Corps has adopted with USAID is the in-country agreement. Guatemala, Tanzania, and Zambia are successful examples of this approach.

Peace Corps partnerships with USAID at the global and post level have provided funds to support food security coordinators in Cambodia and Rwanda, who are promoting gardening and health activities. Peace Corps/Nepal has been designed as an agricultural program and encompasses agricultural production, nutrition, agroforestry, and soil protection. USAID has supported these activities at the post level through collaboration with Feed the Future implementing partners.

Sustainability

Looking across the Peace Corps countries that have participated in the Feed the Future initiative, there are potential hubs where the Peace Corps could consider building a global comprehensive food security network, based in the field and driven by the field with the support of headquarters and strategic partners. Actors at all levels will need to participate, actively support, and invest in this endeavor. These hubs should continue to be laboratories for innovative and promising practices and activities.

Short-term Implementation

Every effort should be made to identify and solidify ongoing core food security activities at Peace Corps posts. The Peace Corps should encourage the commitment of the remaining and available funding to support common food security objectives where appropriate and practical. The identification and establishment of food security hubs will promote and support food security-related promising practices, activities, and toolkits across program sectors, where appropriate. The Peace Corps should begin to identify and negotiate partnerships with organizations interested in supporting one or more of the core areas described in this strategy. Additional recommendations can be found in Appendix II.

CONCLUSION

Out of a global total of 570 million farms where most of the world's food is produced, an estimated 500 million are smallholder farms. These 500 million smallholder farms produce 70–80 percent of the world's food and are the largest source of employment worldwide. Rural women make up around 43 percent of the agricultural workforce and are considered “less productive” than men due to a lack of access to resources

(e.g., land, water, seeds, training, and credit). **If women farmers had the same access to resources as men, the number of hungry people in the world could be reduced by up to 150 million.**⁵

These are the realities that Volunteers face side by side with their communities every day, and this issue is not limited to one sector or one continent. The impacts are far reaching, affecting more than a few smallholder farmers in a small village in West Africa, Southeast Asia, or Central America. This is a global issue, one which has been integrally tied to the work of Peace Corps Volunteers on the ground since 1961. As the Peace Corps continues to meet the recommendations outlined in the Peace Corps Comprehensive Agency Assessment, food security is a natural mechanism through which Volunteers across all sectors can benefit from greater programmatic structure. Current practices and future recommendations are detailed in Appendixes I, II & V. Creating a clearly defined food security strategy for the agency offers an opportunity to strategically link select activities from related sectors under one umbrella for more focus and efficiency. Food insecurity is a multifaceted, global issue that requires comprehensive, multisectoral solutions.

By adopting an agency-wide food security strategy, the Peace Corps is able to leverage its greatest asset to address food insecurity, empowering Volunteers on the ground with the knowledge, skills, and tools they need, whatever their sector, to address the impacts of food insecurity in their communities. As we look beyond 2017, this strategy will provide the tools to assist the agency in determining the level of commitment and investment it can make to maintain the momentum and gains of the past four years, creating a framework for success that reinforces the key role that Peace Corps Volunteers and their communities play in addressing food insecurity at the last mile across the globe.

⁵ Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e00.htm>), FAO, 2011.

APPENDIX I. PEACE CORPS PROGRAM-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS

Agriculture

A review of project status reports indicates that the top four interventions in the Agriculture sector by Volunteers have been bio-intensive gardening, small animal husbandry/bees, staple/field crop production, and agroforestry. There are considerable income-generation and related activities associated with on-farm activities and an increasing role for Community Economic Development Volunteers in Agriculture and food security, including connecting to new markets, establishing links to for-profit and nonprofit enterprises, and expanding the use of information and communications technology. A growing number of Volunteers are working in post-harvest processing. The Peace Corps has developed a number of country-specific partnerships with various nongovernmental organizations and USAID Feed the Future implementing partners, including Helen Keller International, Save the Children, FinTrac, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), and U.S. Department of Agriculture. There is considerable overlap among the Agriculture, Community Economic Development, and Environment sectors as well as links to health and nutrition and youth. Nutrition-sensitive agriculture improves availability and access to more nutritious foods.

From the perspective of the Agriculture sector, food security should continue to focus on smallholder farmers, most of whom are subsistence farmers. Activities in this sector should include targeted efforts toward food production, natural resources management, and homestead food production, which can include production of cash crops as a component of a diverse farm system.

Volunteers should work with farmers on improving overall farm system productivity by, in most cases, focusing on specific components of the farm system, e.g., gardens, field crops, multipurpose trees/shrubs (perennials), and, if properly trained, small animals, bees, and/or fish—but with an understanding that no single component can be sustainable if not supported/linked to other components, unless the farmer has sufficient income to support and sustain the costs of off-farm inputs.

Volunteers should be trained to use additional participatory extension tools in the form of a toolkit to be used when conducting an initial farm assessment and analysis and to develop an appropriate work plan seeking increased productivity and sustainability. (Note: Farm system diagnostic toolkits using very simple participatory rural appraisal tools are already being piloted by Peace Corps/Cameroon and Peace Corps/Nepal.)

Every post engaged in food security activities should have a long-term strategy for agricultural/food security development and sustainability. Using a Volunteer site succession placement model, planning for at least six years, posts should be able to train each Volunteer for the specific needs of the majority of smallholder farmers at each site.

Besides the traditional types of gardens, both for subsistence and commercial production, seen in many communities, several types of gardens have been developed in recent years, most of which use some or all of the bio-intensive techniques.

Whatever types of garden, techniques, and practices are promoted, they should be suitable and appropriate to the site, the beneficiaries' needs and desires, and the availability of all the required resources and inputs. And, if being promoted to a smallholder farmer, gardening should be integrated with the other farming

activities. Rather, it should be seen as a component that is integrated into other production activities. This will maximize use of time, space, energy/labor, and resources, making it part of a sustainable system.

Gardens can be used in an effort to improve nutrition by producing vegetables and fruits that provide specific nutrients such as green leafy vegetables such as amaranth, greens from the mustard family, and moringa; yellow vegetables such as squashes; and orange vegetables such as carrots and orange-fleshed sweet potatoes. However, promoting gardens for nutrition is not enough. Volunteers must tie the information to household/family nutrition education and, to be even more successful, should be tied to the additional incentive of income generation, especially for women.

Producing and employing organic compost is one of the most effective bio-intensive gardening practices and one that every Volunteer should be competent to promote. Volunteers should be trained on those practices that are most appropriate for the agro-ecological zones, farming systems, and types of farmers they will be working with and be knowledgeable of other suitable practices so that they may determine and disseminate the practice that is most appropriate for each situation.

Nutrition

The Peace Corps' nutrition program is aligned with evidence-based best practices and is designed to harmonize Volunteer community-level activities with the international community in the struggle to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. Specific nutrition intervention strategies have been proven to reverse and prevent undernutrition and address deficiencies of key micronutrients. This body of evidence has helped shape the programming guidance and training Peace Corps staff and Volunteers receive. The Peace Corps' ability to have onboard technical expertise and mechanisms to disseminate that expertise to the field has shaped nutrition activities in Peace Corps-served communities. Volunteers conduct house visits and counsel women on incremental improvements in feeding their young children, followed by repeat visits and regular check-ins. This reflects a deeper level of engagement than in the past and is literally changing the trajectory of growth and development of future generations and creating a more meaningful service for Volunteers. Working on targeted behaviors, using effective communication skills to take advantage of the unique access Volunteers have with communities, and doing so with follow-up and support is a dramatic leap forward.

Through the West Africa Food Security Partnership, the Peace Corps collaborated with JSI, SPRING, and other partners to promote and implement the Essential Nutrition Actions, the Essential Hygiene Actions, and the Homestead Food Production frameworks and approaches to better nutrition. Volunteers of all sectors have access to these technical training packages and toolkits available to teach their communities about vital and concrete health interventions that target the critical window of development known as the 1,000 days—from the start of a woman's pregnancy to the child's second birthday. By encouraging home gardening, exclusive breastfeeding, supplementary meals for pregnant women and lactating mothers, and hygienic cooking techniques, among many other simple improved practices, Volunteers address all four pillars of food security: availability, accessibility, utilization, and security.



In addition, the Peace Corps is working to address underlying causes of malnutrition (lack of hygiene, food insecurity, restricted access to quality health services, gender inequity, etc.), termed as nutrition-sensitive interventions. Fundamentally, the Peace Corps works to address underlying causes of malnutrition through a cross-sectoral, nutrition-sensitive approach. Planning agriculture, community economic development, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and other activities with a nutrition focus and outcomes in mind will help the Peace Corps' community-level work success.

These approaches and tools are being tested in other countries where Volunteers serve and, if successful, will be taken to scale across the agency.

The Peace Corps Africa Region has taken practical steps to recognize the links between nutrition/health and food security by linking bio-intensive gardening and Essential Nutrient Actions in some of their programming activities. Training modules and toolkits have been developed to support and strengthen these links.

Other health interventions linked to improved nutrition and food security

World population is expected to increase from 7.3 billion in 2015 to 9.5 billion in 2050. There is growing evidence of the links between family planning, food security, and nutrition. USAID's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014-2025 recommends increased availability of family planning and reproductive health services and makes a strong case for integrating food security, nutrition, and family planning interventions.⁶

There is also growing evidence and awareness of the links between WASH and improved nutrition. The WHO/UNICEF/USAID document on improving nutritional outcomes with better water sanitation and hygiene notes that lack of access to WASH can affect a child's nutritional status via diarrheal diseases, intestinal parasite infections, and environmental enteropathy. Addressing these pathways with WASH interventions will in turn improve nutrition. As with family planning, WASH needs to be integrated into nutrition interventions for greater impact and improved nutrition.⁷

The Peace Corps has moved to embrace the "first 1,000 days" approach to health activities including an emphasis on Essential Nutrient Actions. The Peace Corps has recently signed an agreement with USAID to be a part of the Ending Preventable Childhood and Maternal Deaths interagency agreement. This agreement strengthens the related linkages and activities described above and will help the Peace Corps identify focused promising practices and activities within its nutrition and health interventions.

Natural Resource Management

Water scarcities, land degradation, depletion of natural resources, and population growth are cited as major challenges to food security now and in the coming years. An estimated 3.5 billion hectares of degraded land now lie unproductive due to overexploitation. Unsustainable water use threatens 40 percent of the world's grain production. The number of people affected by drought or floods each year has risen to 150 million.⁸

The Peace Corps' food security strategy includes current measures to address some of these challenges and recommendations for enhancing these efforts in the future. Peace Corps Volunteers are working on a variety

⁶ World Population Prospects, the 2012 Revision. (<http://esa.un.org/wpp/Excel-Data/fertility.htm>.) United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2013

⁷ Improving Nutrition Outcomes with Better Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene: Practical Solutions for Policies and Programs. (Available at: http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/washandnutrition/en/.) WHO, UNICEF, USAID. 2015.

⁸ CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework 2016-2030 Overview. (<https://library.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10947/3865/CGIAR%20Strategy%20and%20Results%20Framework.pdf>.) CGIAR. 2016.

of measures designed to address and enhance natural resource management including soil fertility and erosion control, natural pest control, agroforestry, and climate-smart agriculture.

A number of strategic partnerships have been established or are being discussed. The Peace Corps has a global memorandum of understanding with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, establishing collaboration on pesticide education and solid waste management. Peace Corps/Uganda is working with the World Wildlife Fund to support local climate monitoring, which could extend to several other Peace Corps posts. Peace Corps Response provides natural resource management Peace Corps Response Volunteers on a case-by-case basis. These and other key partnerships need to be evaluated, prioritized, strengthened, expanded, and taken to scale if appropriate.

Climate Vulnerability and Resilience

Food security will be affected by how climate change and extreme weather affects crop yields at the local and national level, and by how climate change, and extreme weather events, affect food storage, transportation, retailing, and consumption. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs reports that the effects of climate change and variability “could slow the growth of global food production by 2 percent each decade for the rest of the century.” Climate change is a critical global challenge.

Peace Corps Volunteers and their communities see first-hand the devastating effects of climate change: from the local farmers who struggle to feed their families due to increasingly depleted soil and less predictable weather patterns, to region-wide crop loss due to drought or flooding, to rising sea levels threatening whole coastal and island communities.

In her October 2014 meeting with the Peace Corps Director, U.S. Special Representative for Food Security Nancy Stetson discussed a number of food security gaps that are priorities for the coming years. They include an emphasis on climate-smart agriculture, regional approaches, and better safety nets.

A survey of the agricultural and natural resource management techniques and practices currently being promoted by the Peace Corps confirmed that these are not just “smart,” i.e., appropriate, organic, and sustainable, but also “climate smart.” Climate-smart techniques and practices 1) improve productivity and profitability, 2) allow farming to adapt to changing conditions, and 3) mitigate climate change through reduction of emissions and carbon sequestration. All of the core interventions identified for the Agriculture and Environment sectors are climate-smart, address food and nutrition insecurity, and enhance smallholder farmer resilience to climate shocks.

The Peace Corps is assisting smallholder farmers to increase agricultural productivity and income. In sub-Saharan Africa, Volunteers teach local farmers to improve soil fertility with compost, green manure, and use of other on-farm, organic soil amendments; maximize water availability and usage by employing drought-resistant crop varieties and use of mulch and other simple and appropriate water-conserving techniques; and, control pests, improve crop quality, and increase profitability by using companion planting, crop rotations, and integrated pest management.

The Peace Corps is helping communities become more resilient to climate-related shocks. For example, Peace Corps Volunteers train staple crop farmers to use improved soil management practices such as no/low till, permanent soil cover using crop residue, and use of leguminous cover crops. Volunteers train farmers and community members to improve water management practices by building rock lines, terracing hillsides, and planting berms with vetiver grass hedges. Volunteers also assist farmers to improve crop management practices by teaching bio-intensive home gardening, the System of Rice Intensification, agroforestry, and integrated fish farming.

The Peace Corps is working with smallholder farmers and communities to mitigate the impacts of climate change. In Central and South American posts, the Peace Corps has partnered with the U.S. State Department to promote renewable energy. Volunteers and their communities install bio-digesters, solar panels, wind turbines, and fuel-efficient cook stoves that require less energy. Volunteers in communities and schools in many countries promote and assist both school youth and adults to plant trees to sequester carbon.

APPENDIX II. ADDITIONAL SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a list of specific actions that can be undertaken to maintain the success and momentum of the last four years (and the Peace Corps work over 55 years) and to build for the future.

1. Better integrate food security-related interventions into posts' programming, training, and monitoring and evaluation system.
2. The Peace Corps' interventions are becoming more and more important in the area of food security, particularly in Africa and the Pacific. The region should continue to support, strengthen, and expand its focused food security interventions and share its successes with the other regions.
3. Emphasize the importance of staff capacity reinforcement on the use of existing toolkits and training material and adapting the training materials to local contexts as well as integration of monitoring and evaluation into the trainings.
4. Scale up locally successful approaches, methods, practices, and technologies to address food and nutrition insecurity at the community level.
5. Improve data quality to meet partners' standards.
6. Measure and monitor effectiveness of food security partnerships at the post level.
7. Strengthen and expand Essential Nutrition Actions-related interventions. Utilize opportunities to access supplemental technical assistance to further build the capacity of staff.
8. Continue field-based technical trainings, similar to those conducted on bio-intensive gardening in the Africa region. The Africa Region has piloted bio-intensive gardening in a number of countries where the Peace Corps operates. This approach is being evaluated in 2016 to determine how local staff transfer their skills and knowledge and to assess the level of adoption of this specific gardening technology.
9. Better integrate agriculture and nutrition, systematically linking them together. This is underway in all posts with Agriculture projects, and has already been implemented in Ethiopia and Nepal.
10. Promote integration of WASH and family planning into food security and nutrition interventions to increase focus and impact around evidence-based activities.
11. Evaluate the results and sustainability of past System of Rice Intensification activities of Volunteers with a view to adapting and expanding the use of this approach where appropriate.

12. Determine which income-generating activities have been successful for Volunteer and host country partners (gardening, small animal husbandry, value-added conservation/transformation of fruits and vegetables, etc.) and promote these as secondary activities.
13. Better integrate gender, environment, climate change, and water considerations in a cross-cutting manner throughout food security projects and activities.
14. Produce and distribute pragmatic, self-directed, and user-friendly toolkits for Volunteers with laminated posters, seeds, dolls, etc.

APPENDIX III. CASE STUDIES



Case Study: West Africa Food Security Partnership

The West Africa Food Security Partnership (WAFSP) is a regional partnership between USAID and the Peace Corps to support food security programming in four West African Feed the Future focus countries (Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Senegal) and seven non-Future focus countries in West Africa with Peace Corps programs (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Gambia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Togo).

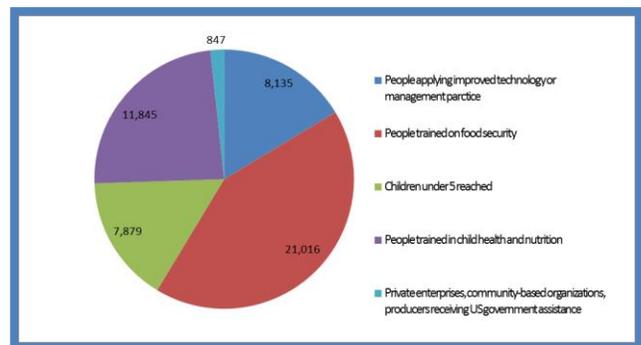
The goal of WAFSP is to enable Peace Corps Volunteers to build grassroots capacity to reduce food insecurity in

West Africa through multiple interventions concerning improved natural resource management, agroforestry, improved agricultural production, gardening, small animal husbandry, nutrition education, economic development projects, food processing and conservation, income-generating activities, and climate-change adaptation.

USAID/West Africa provided \$3.8 million over a six-year period to do the following:

- Increase availability of healthy foods, especially for women and children
- Increase accessibility of healthy foods by decreasing poverty and increasing incomes
- Improve utilization of available food stuffs to improve nutritional status of women and children
- Over the past four years, as a result of Volunteers' interventions, the number of farmers implementing an improved technology or management practice, the number of individuals receiving agriculture and food security training, the number of enterprises receiving business development services, and the number of people trained to support child health and nutrition continue to grow. These increases represent the continued efforts to fully mobilize participating

Figure 3. WAFSP Food Security Impact



countries in making food security a cross-sectoral initiative and programming priority. People and organizations reached during 2012–15 are shown in the corresponding figure.

A central focus of WAFSP is gender empowerment. Volunteers and work partners recognize that women are key players in achieving food security, and many interventions target women specifically.

WAFSP looks to scale up and expand locally successful activities and frameworks contributing to climate-smart agriculture, such as the System of Rice Intensification and bio-intensive gardening for increased agricultural productivity and nutrition, including Essential Nutrition Actions leading to a better nutritional status of children and women.

Case Study: Cambodia

In Cambodia, food security efforts cut across the program’s two education projects, one focused on community health, and the other on English education. In addition to their work in these sectors, Volunteers undertake food security activities in their communities to target poverty and hunger, including undernutrition and malnutrition, by improving availability, access, and utilization of food.

Home Gardens for Nutrition

The villages of Thnot Chum commune in the Kampong Thom province of Cambodia lack ready access to a large market with a variety of vegetables and fruits. Families were making poor decisions about meals and spending critical money on packaged foods with little nutritional value. As a consequence, malnourishment is widespread throughout the commune. Volunteer Josie Mahlie assisted her community in applying for \$1,091 in Small Project Assistance funds to address this challenge, hosting a garden training throughout the commune in various villages to target families with underweight children and family members. As a result of the training, 16 families built successful home gardens and 11 families were able to sell their surplus vegetables to other community members, thereby increasing their own economic wellbeing as well as the nutritional intake of families without home gardens.

These household gardens improved agricultural skills and experience as well as increased nutrition among the community members. Furthermore, the gardens have served as an educational tool for other members of the community. Techniques that were introduced in this training were new to most local farmers and amateur gardeners. Not only has the availability of good food increased, but those community members who have served as role models has increased overall community capacity and built the skills of workers. In the long term, this project will lead to better community health and livelihoods.

Case Study: Nepal

Peace Corps/Nepal’s food security project improves the food and nutrition security of rural smallholder farming families, particularly women and children, and focuses on nutrition-sensitive agriculture to:

- improve soil conditions for garden and field crops,
- increase production of diverse and nutritious food crops, and
- promote new food consumption or feeding practices/behaviors that improve nutrition outcomes.

Volunteers focus their efforts on soil conservation/management, bio-intensive gardening, and nutrition education. All Volunteers are trained to implement specific activities including:

- composting,
- vegetable nursery development and gardening,
- construction and management of fruit tree nurseries,

- improved cook stove construction, and
- mushroom cultivation.

Despite Peace Corps/Nepal’s six-week suspension after the April 2015 earthquake, the overall progress in the food security project has been encouraging. Key outcomes include the following:

- 2,495 community members were trained in child health/nutrition and 3,501 were trained in food security. As a result, 364 mothers adopted new behaviors to reduce the risk of child malnutrition and 879 people applied improved technologies or management practices in agriculture production.
- 321 individuals were trained in income-generation activities. After the training, 93 of them started individual or group businesses.
- At the household level, 177 households reported the production of off-seasonal vegetables, and 119 households started using proper handwashing methods.
- At the organizational level, 432 organizations including farmer and mothers groups received organizational development support from Peace Corps Volunteers. Of the total, 78 of these local organizations and community groups showed improvement in their organizational capacity.



Case Study: Guatemala

In September 2012, USAID/Guatemala provided funds to Peace Corps/Guatemala for the implementation of a food security program as a Peace Corps Response project as well as a cross-sector complementary activity for two-year Volunteers working in health and nutrition.

Results in FY 2015:

- 405 individuals have applied improved technologies or management practices as a result of Peace Corps assistance.
- 1,123 farmers and others have received Peace Corps-supported short-term Agricultural sector productivity or food security training.
- Two food security community-based organizations and eight women’s group received Peace Corps assistance.
- Two community-based organizations and seven women’s group have applied improved technologies or management practices as a result of Peace Corps assistance.
- 5,795 individuals were trained in child health and nutrition through Peace Corps-supported health area programs.



What Peace Corps Response Volunteers Do:

- Peace Corps Response Volunteers possess expertise in specific areas, such as agriculture production, extension methodologies, and business marketing, and are currently supporting USAID implementing partners Save the Children and International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center in their food security efforts.

- The project is also extending support with Peace Corps Response Volunteers to Guatemala's Ministry of Agriculture, Cattle, and Food and to the local nongovernmental organization Federación Comercializadora de Café Especial de Guatemala.

Tracking Promises: Analyzing the Impact of Feed the Future Investments in Tanzania, the USAID and Peace Corps Connection

By Kimberly Flowers & Onesmo Shuma⁹ March 2016

PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN ADVANCING AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT since the agency began in 1961. Today, their grass-roots work in select countries is directly tied to Feed the Future. Since the Peace Corps signed an agreement with USAID in July 2011, some Volunteers are now called Feed the Future Volunteers. Although only 5 percent of the Peace Corps' nearly 7,000 volunteers¹⁰ around the world work exclusively in agriculture, 53 of Peace Corps' 65 total country posts provided food security programming in FY 2014 and reported on Feed the Future results.¹¹ Despite some administrative challenges, the partnership between the Peace Corps and USAID is one that should be celebrated and strengthened.

A formal agreement between USAID/Tanzania and the Peace Corps was signed in April 2013 to directly support the Feed the Future initiative. Over the length of the four-year agreement, Peace Corps/Tanzania receives a paltry amount of funding, an average of \$164,000 a year, to conduct food security trainings for staff, Volunteers, and host-country counterparts, to provide grants to support Volunteers' small projects, and to train Volunteers to accurately collect and report on results. Peace Corps/Tanzania, one of the oldest Peace Corps programs, currently has 200 Volunteers working in three sectors: Education, Health, and Agriculture. The 50 Volunteers that serve in the sustainable Agriculture sector are strategically placed in the Feed the Future zone of influence.

As community mobilizers who have fully integrated into remote villages, Volunteers serve as a bridge between rural communities and other Feed the Future programs, expanding the effectiveness and reach of other U.S. investments to address hunger and poverty. For example, Peace Corps Volunteers in Tanzania are working closely with the Farmer to Farmer program, implemented by Catholic Relief Services, which sends American agricultural experts on short-term volunteer assignment to share skills and build capacity in select Feed the Future focus countries. The collaboration builds on strengths from both sides: Peace Corps Volunteers know the local language, have extensive cross-cultural skills, and have established trust within the community, whereas Farmer to Farmer participants have the technical expertise that many young generalists in the Peace Corps do not. Because Peace Corps Volunteers are based in the country for more than two years and are required to do village situational assessments, their local knowledge can greatly improve the effectiveness of short-term field work by Farmer to Farmer volunteers by understanding capacity gaps and providing logistical guidance.

Additionally, Peace Corps Volunteers are empowering their communities to address food and nutrition security through trainings and projects on climate-smart agricultural practices, water catchment, beekeeping, and food preservation. Volunteers learn and teach others about postharvest handling and storage to reduce food loss or how to make and use natural pesticides to improve pest management. Volunteers formed a peer

⁹ Center for Strategic International Studies, 2016, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/Tracking%20Promises%20-%20Tanzania.FINAL_.pdf

¹⁰ Peace Corps, "Fast Facts," accessed August 23, 2015, <http://www.peacecorps.gov/about/fastfacts/>.

¹¹ Peace Corps, "Performance and Accountability Report FY15," November 16, 2015, <http://files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/policies/annrept2015.pdf>.

group called the FEAST committee to share best practices and provide support, resources, and inspiration to each other on food security projects. In FY 2015 alone, Volunteers in Tanzania trained more than 2,500 Tanzanians on agricultural productivity or food security, and more than 3,000 in child health and nutrition. In the past two years, nearly 2,000 farmers have applied improved technologies or management practices thanks to Peace Corps efforts.

While the Peace Corps and USAID connection is a good example of leveraging the strengths of diverse U.S. agencies and the return on investment is noteworthy, it is far from a perfect union.

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The small amount of funding from USAID comes at a heavy administrative price. Peace Corps country staff explained to the CSIS team that they feel it is a bureaucratic burden to be a USAID grantee and that they are not naturally set up to handle the requirements of being a USAID implementing partner. The Peace Corps struggles between the dual identity of both a development and a volunteer agency, and its small field staff have limited time or capacity to handle the complex reporting requirements of an agency drastically different than its own.

Finalizing the memorandum of understanding between the agencies took a substantial amount of time and effort, and the allocation of funding as well as the establishment of new processes took even longer. Numerous USAID implementing partners, including the Peace Corps, explained to the CSIS team that there has been a rapid turnover rate of USAID/Tanzania staff, creating inconsistency and confusion. Peace Corps country staff said that targets were not clear, yet USAID/Tanzania was impatient and wanted to see results quickly.

Accurate reporting poses a serious challenge to Peace Corps offices and Volunteers. The Peace Corps did not inherently have the kind of tracking system needed to produce quality data, and the heavy focus on indicators is a core cultural difference between the agencies. Required reporting indicators include number of individuals trained in agricultural productivity or food security, number of farmers who have applied improved technologies, number of organizations who have received assistance, and number of people trained in child health and nutrition. However, indicators do not include the number of people Volunteers have linked to other Feed the Future projects that serve their area, a valuable component of the partnership. Numbers are likely double counted in some instances, while results from areas that are technically outside of the Feed the Future zone of influence are included. Plus, numbers reported are from Volunteers across all sectors, including those funded through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), so lines are blurred between Feed the Future Volunteers and their peers. Volunteers live in remote areas, often with limited electricity and internet access, making filling out electronic reports three times a year a challenge in and of itself. Reporting methods need to be adapted to Peace Corps realities, using locally appropriate tools.

On the other hand, the stringent reporting requirements have forced the Peace Corps to improve its data collection tools and monitoring and evaluation systems worldwide. In 2014, the Peace Corps rolled out two new reporting systems, but they still require extensive training, trouble-shooting, and high bandwidth. Data quality standards remain inconsistent between the agencies, as USAID’s requirements do not match Peace Corps’ processes for data collection. Peace Corps Volunteers in posts around the world continue to make errors when reporting, including under-reporting, selecting the wrong indicators, and not following up to measure behavior change.

APPENDIX IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Since 2010, the Peace Corps has made monitoring and evaluation an agency priority. Food security teams, particularly the West Africa Food Security Partnership (WAFSP) and the Overseas Programming and Training Food Security Team, have played significant roles in helping the agency develop and pilot new tools and approaches to monitoring and evaluation. To improve tracking of Volunteers' work, WAFSP posts have been mobilized to implement a more structured and reliable monitoring and evaluation system for food security projects.

Since 2008, the Volunteer Reporting Tool has been the primary reporting mechanism Volunteers have used to capture project activities, outcomes, and other aspects of their service. To better ensure higher data quality, the WAFSP coordinator, in response to USAID's monitoring and evaluation and data quality assessment requirements for WAFSP, developed monitoring and evaluation tools for the partnership. A monitoring and evaluation specialist in Overseas Programming and Training Support developed additional tools for food security and continued to revise and update the tools that WAFSP developed, as necessary.

An improved and redesigned Volunteer Reporting Tool was launched in FY 2014. In addition to being a uniform reporting system, it serves as an integrated performance management system for Volunteers and post staff to track and report on progress toward the achievement of indicators in a project framework. The tool also allows for the collection of other important project and service-related information.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning for the Peace Corps Food Security Strategy

The Peace Corps' food security efforts have the overarching goal of contributing to the sustainable reduction of global hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. Measuring progress toward this ambitious goal is critical. The Peace Corps is committed to monitoring and evaluating our investments to track progress, facilitating performance-based management, remaining accountable on our commitments and learning more about effective and evidence-based approaches to food security.

To accomplish that, global food security efforts will be coordinated under a common approach to accountability and learning that includes the following:

- A common Food Security Theory of Change
- A performance monitoring process and standard performance indicators
- An evaluation approach that employs performance and outcome evaluations

The foundation of our monitoring and evaluation efforts is the Food Security Theory of Change (see figure) that maps linkages between program activities and their intended outcomes as they relate to the overall goal of sustainably reducing global hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. The theory of change assists in both designing effective programming and measuring progress by providing a structure against which to plan post-specific projects and programs and by outlining causal pathways toward the end goal. These causal relationships have been identified through multidisciplinary research focusing on the reduction of global hunger, malnutrition, and poverty.

Posts working in food security monitor their work by collecting and reporting annually on standard indicators relevant to their projects. To strengthen food security coordination, all participating posts will be encouraged to report as many food security activities that lead to achievement of indicators as applicable each year. Indicators reported on by more than one post will be reported each year in the annual report on progress.

These output and outcome indicators help demonstrate both the breadth of Peace Corps food security efforts and the short- and medium-term outcomes that Volunteer work is achieving.

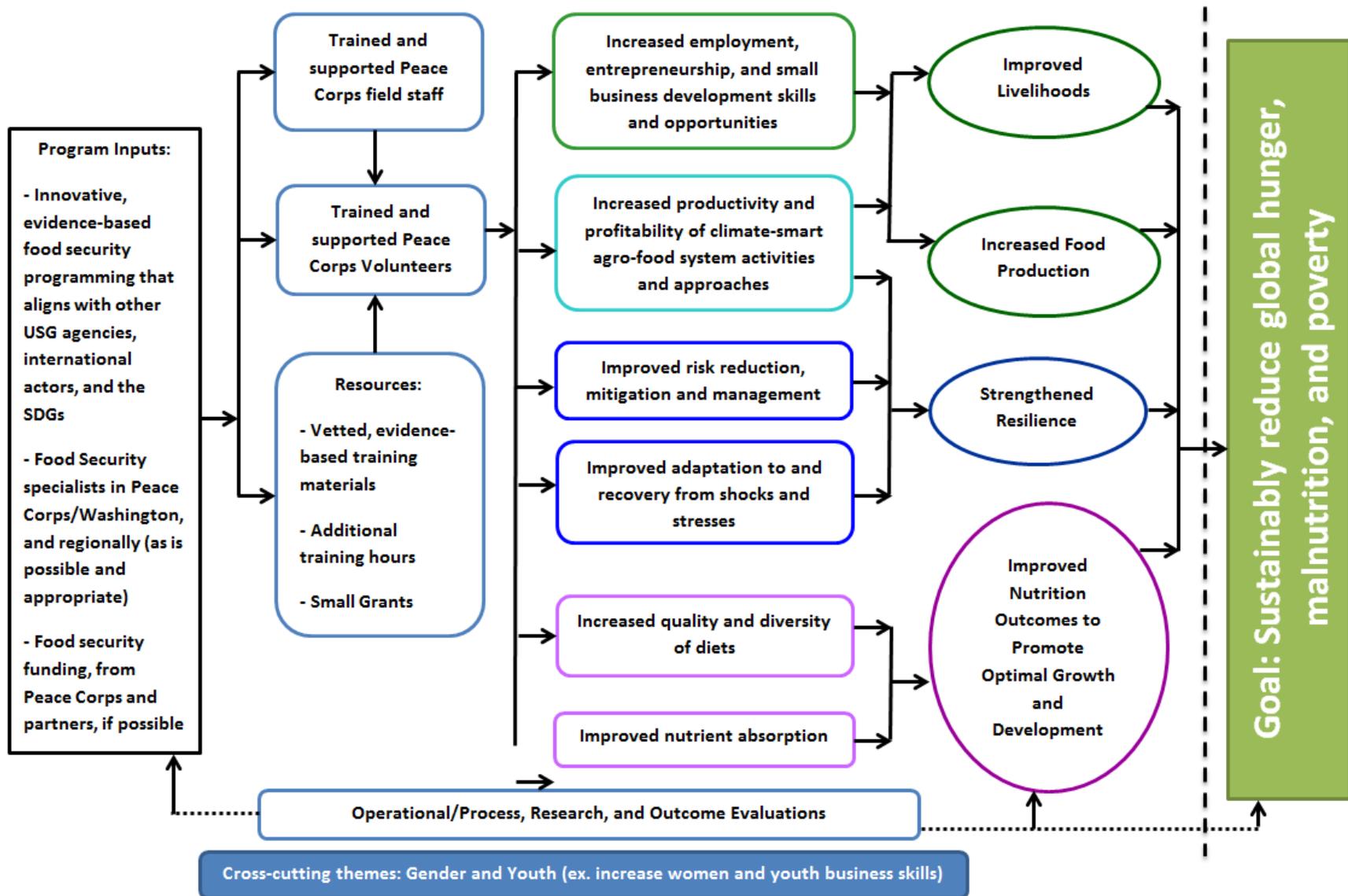
Examples of food security indicators on which multiple posts and projects have historically reported include the following:

- Number of farmers and others who have applied new technologies or management practices with Peace Corps assistance
- Number of children under 5 reached by Peace Corps-supported nutrition programs
- Number of food security private enterprises (for profit), producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations receiving Peace Corps assistance

A food security monitoring and evaluation specialist will finalize the set of Peace Corps food security indicators before FY 2018 reports are due. When possible, Peace Corps food security indicators will align with indicators used by other U.S. government agencies under the Global Food Security Act and indicators used for the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly goals 1 and 2. This alignment will facilitate coordination with other development partners and optimize potential availability of existing data. Food security targets for each indicator will be set at the post level, as food security-related projects are revised or developed.

While monitoring results through indicators is important for managing performance, evaluations are needed to provide an external examination of programs, to thoroughly understand any resulting changes, and ultimately to improve program effectiveness. In alignment with the Foreign Assistance Transparency and Accountability Act, the Peace Corps will use process, performance, and outcome evaluations strategically across programs for those purposes. These evaluations will contribute to the Peace Corps' goal of being an agency focused on learning.

Peace Corps Food Security Program Theory of Change



APPENDIX V. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Current Practices

Staff Community of Practice

- **Community of Practice Email list** – Used to share external resources and internal updates with staff that work with or are interested in food security programming. Bulletins are sent using GovDelivery email system as well as regular Outlook email messaging.
- **Quarterly Community of Practice Calls** – *Skype for Business* calls happen twice a quarter. The Feed the Future staff at headquarters, alongside the WAFSP coordinator, facilitate calls that encourage information exchange and best practices for interested participants from around the world.

Online Knowledge Platforms

- **PCLive** – a platform for Volunteer and staff discussion and resource sharing
 - Anyone can upload resources/links to external sites
 - Categorized by tags
 - All training packages and manuals have been shared on PCLive
- **PC Food Security LibGuide**
 - Library site used to house training packages and other resources by subject matter area
- **Quarterly Technical Webinars**
 - Used to introduce staff to training materials
- **Peace Corps University**
 - Currently piloting a Food Security Basics Course for programming and training staff.

Suggested Practices

- Coordinate with USAID to allow Peace Corps staff access to their resource library.
- Use [Agrilinks](#) site to host webinars and share our resources with others.
- Use Facebook to share videos of current Volunteers working so that new Volunteers can connect with them before departure.
- Offer the “Food Security and Climate Change Basics” course to all programming and training staff and Volunteers who are interested.
- Use external resources and share them with recommendations for Peace Corps context.
- More exploration of e-learning opportunities.

APPENDIX VI. FOOD SECURITY REGIONAL HUBS

The Peace Corps has established a network of food security countries across the three regions over the past few years, primarily with Feed the Future resources. These posts have piloted a variety of innovative program interventions, identified and collaborated with a number of partners, and strategically used Peace Corps Response Volunteers to promote and extend these activities.

A key recommendation of the Peace Corps' Food Security Strategy is to strengthen these posts' capacity and ability to work with neighboring Peace Corps countries, so that they can serve as a regional or sub-regional "hub" through which nearby posts can access information and technical assistance in regards to food security-related interventions. Posts such as Benin and Guatemala already have a strong foundation to become food security hubs, and this should be strengthened so that these posts may foster and support a localized, comprehensive network for training, capturing synergies and complementarities, developing and testing new activities and toolkits, as well as organizing technical exchanges among posts in their zones.

For example, the 11 countries participating in the West Africa Food Security Partnership (WAFSP) work closely with the West Africa Food security coordinator, who is based in Benin. By default, Benin is a functional hub that is already developing and promoting innovative food security approaches, technologies, and interventions, including the Essential Nutrition Actions, the System of Rice Intensification, Master Farmer programs, and handwashing projects across the region. Future possibilities for regional or sub-regional hubs include East Africa (Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia) and Central/South America (Guatemala, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay).

The Peace Corps has piloted several operational approaches as it implemented Feed the Future activities, including a sub-regional approach in West Africa, in-country agreements with specific posts, complementary funding from the Office of Programming and Training Support, and strategic partnerships outside of USAID for specific posts.

Sub-Regional Approach

The sub-regional approach has been a successful model for the Peace Corps in developing, managing, and implementing food security activities. This approach goes beyond a national focus and promotes and encourages synergies and complementarities. It is cost effective and aligns with and supports a number of the recommendations of the Peace Corps Comprehensive Agency Assessment, including Focus In/Train Up, strategic partnerships, and the strategic use of Peace Corps Response Volunteers. This approach has enabled the Peace Corps to reach countries that might not have originally benefited from the Feed the Future initiative.



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