



# Office of Inspector General

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**To** Carol Spahn, Chief Executive Officer  
Michael McCabe, Regional Director, IAP Region  
Michael Donald, Country Director, Peace Corps/Ecuador  
Emily Haimowitz, Chief Compliance Officer

**From** Joaquin Ferrao, Acting Inspector General

**Date** June 9, 2022

**Subject** Final Report on the Post Re-Entry Health and Safety Review of Peace Corps/Ecuador (IG-22-01-E)

Transmitted for your information is our final report on the Post Re-Entry Health and Safety Review of Peace Corps/Ecuador.

In its response to the preliminary report, management concurred with the only recommendation and provided documentation of actions it took to address the issues that prompted the recommendation. OIG reviewed the documentation, and we will close the recommendation. We wish to note that in closing the recommendation, we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities. However, when we feel it is warranted, we may conduct a follow-up review to confirm that action has been taken and to evaluate the impact.

The agency's response to the preliminary report and our comments are in the report as Appendixes C and D.

You may address questions regarding follow-up or documentation to Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Reuben Marshall at [rmarshall2@peacecorpsig.gov](mailto:rmarshall2@peacecorpsig.gov).

Please accept our thanks for your cooperation and assistance in our review.

cc: Dave Noble, Chief of Staff  
Carl Sosebee, Senior Advisor to the Director  
Julie Burns, Operations Expert  
Scott Beale, Associate Director for Global Operations  
Meredith Giordano, Deputy Director for Global Operations  
Leslie McCuaig, Chief of Operations, IAP Region  
Lindsey Suggs, Chief of Programming and Training, IAP Region  
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Kristin Wells, General Counsel  
Colin Jones, Advisor to the Chief Compliance Officer



PEACE CORPS  
Office of Inspector General

# Health & Safety Review

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Final Report

Post Re-entry Health and Safety  
Review of Peace Corps/Ecuador

IG-22-01-E

June 2022



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### *OVERVIEW*

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On November 5, 2021, the Peace Corps notified the United States Congress that Peace Corps/Ecuador intended to resume operations in February of 2022 with an initial intake of 17 reinstated education Volunteers. However, this intake was delayed due to a rise in COVID-19 cases in Ecuador. The initial intake arrived in country in May 2022. On January 28, 2022, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) announced this review to assess Peace Corps/Ecuador's compliance with specific agency policies and procedures related to Volunteer or trainee health and safety and the re-entry process.

### *WHAT WE FOUND*

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Our review found that the post complied with all but one of the policies and procedures related to Volunteer health and safety that we assessed and the re-entry process. The agency requires certain staff with emergency response roles and responsibilities to be familiar with the Security Incident Reporting Guide (SIRG) and the emergency notification tables, and we found that staff were not sufficiently familiar with the SIRG, and the emergency notification tables.

### *RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF*

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Our review contains one recommendation, to improve familiarity with the SIRG and the emergency notification tables as required for specified staff.

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## BACKGROUND

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In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Peace Corps evacuated all Volunteers from overseas posts in March 2020. The agency created the “Return to Service” working group in April 2020 to facilitate the process of resuming overseas operations. This working group issued the Country Re-Entry Guide (CREG) on June 30, 2020 to guide overseas posts through the planning and preparation process for returning Volunteers to the field. The second version of the CREG issued in April 2021 incorporated input from various offices, including Office of Health Services (OHS), Office of Safety and Security (OSS), Office of Global Operations (OGO), and the three regional offices. The agency also issued “Supporting Volunteer Health, Safety and Security: Roadmap to Updated Policies and Procedures” to alert staff about new and existing guidelines and procedures that overseas posts must complete prior to the return of Volunteers and trainees.

On November 5, 2021, the Peace Corps notified the United States Congress that they intended to return 17 Volunteers to Ecuador in February of 2022. However, due to increasing COVID cases the Peace Corps postponed the Volunteers’ return, which occurred in May 2022. OIG initiated this review after the Peace Corps notified Congress of their intent to return Volunteers to Ecuador. This review was conducted before the initial Volunteer intake arrived in country.

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## OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, & METHODOLOGY

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The Evaluation Unit announced its intent to conduct a post re-entry health and safety review of Peace Corps/Ecuador on January 28, 2022. The objective of this review was to assess Peace Corps/Ecuador’s compliance with specific agency policies and procedures related to Volunteer or trainee health and safety and the re-entry process. We assessed the following researchable questions to achieve the objective:

### Re-Entry Process

- Were CREG criteria for the external and internal review processes met?

### Health Care

- Did the Medical Action Plan (MAP) meet Technical Guidance (TG) 385 requirements?
- Did medical facility assessments meet the requirements of TG 204?

### Emergency Preparedness

- Had the post’s Emergency Action Plan (EAP) been updated?

### Training

- Were mandatory reorientation training sessions for trainees scheduled on the training calendar?
- Did training records show that post staff met the requirements for mandatory training?

## PEACE CORPS OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

The scope of this review included the post's operations from January 2020 to January 2022. This review was conducted from Peace Corps headquarters (HQ) without travel to Peace Corps/Ecuador and the fieldwork occurred from February to April 2022. The Evaluation Unit reviewed documentation provided by the agency using the following methodology:

- We verified that an agency designated certifying official had documented their review and certification of tasks completed on the external and internal factors checklists defined by the CREG.<sup>1</sup>
- We reviewed the post's MAP, and medical facility assessments for compliance with Peace Corps TG 385 and 204.
- We reviewed the Volunteer reorientation schedule to confirm that required sessions were included.
- We checked staff training records for completion of required training on Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response (SARRR) procedures, Death of a Volunteer (DOV) procedures, Security Incident Management System (SIMS) certification, and EAP refresher training. We also verified staff's familiarity with DOV procedures, the Security Incident Reporting Guide (SIRG) and its emergency notification tables.
- We reviewed the post's EAP to confirm that it was updated based on the 2019 template and included the COVID-19 analysis.

When questions arose from this documentation review, we conducted virtual interviews with relevant staff located at Peace Corps/Ecuador.

This review was conducted in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. The evidence, findings, and recommendations provided in this report have been reviewed by agency stakeholders affected by this review.

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<sup>1</sup> The agency created the External Factors Checklist to verify "go/no-go" criteria to determine if conditions are acceptable in a particular country to receive Volunteers and trainees, confirm that the Congressional Notification should proceed, and allow the Peace Corps to invite Applicants to serve in that country. External review concerns conditions favorable for re-entry, and internal review assesses planning and preparation for re-entry. The Internal Factors Checklist is a set of comprehensive operational and mitigation planning actions. When reviewing agency certifications of external and internal review procedures, OIG did not assess the criteria for meeting the external and internal factors.

## REVIEW RESULTS

With the exception of one instance documented below, our review found that, Peace Corps/Ecuador complied with the areas that we assessed, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Results of OIG Review of Peace Corps/Ecuador’s Compliance with Selected Policies and Procedures Related to Volunteer Health and Safety and Re-entry**

Compliance Review Results			
Areas Reviewed:	Result:	Observations	
External Factors	Met	The inspection shows that the process as outlined in the CREG for the External Review Process was followed in re-opening this post.	
Internal Factors	Met	The inspection shows that the process as outlined in the CREG for the Internal Review Process was followed in re-opening this post.	
Medical Action Plan	Met	The inspection shows that the MAP met TG 385 requirements.	
Facility Assessments	Met	The medical facility assessments met the requirements of TG 204.	
Site History Files and Crime Incidents in site history files	N/A	Assessment curtailed because sites were still under development.	
Volunteer or trainee Training	Met	Staff confirmed that all required topics will be covered during the upcoming PST, and required health, safety and security sessions are scheduled on the draft Calendar of Training Events.	
Staff Training	SARRR, SIMS, DOV and EAP	Met	Staff completed required trainings.
	DOV Procedures	Met	Post performed the mandatory DOV table-top exercise.
	Familiarity with notification tables and SIRG	Not Met	Required staff were familiar with the DOV procedures, but not sufficiently familiar with the SIRG and the emergency notification tables, as required in the “Supporting Volunteer Health, Safety and Security: Roadmap to Updated Policies and Procedures.”
EAP Review	Met	Post’s EAP met key requirements related to resuming operations.	

OIG found one area requiring management attention:

***Staff Were Not Sufficiently Familiar with the SIRG and Emergency Notification Tables.***

The agency's guidance titled "Supporting Volunteer Health, Safety and Security: Roadmap to Updated Policies and Procedures Update #3: March 8, 2022" requires that all U.S. direct hires, safety and security managers, Peace Corps medical officers, and sexual assault response liaisons should be familiar with the SIRG and the emergency notification tables prior to receiving Volunteers. We asked the eight required staff who respond to emergencies to rate their familiarity with the SIRG and emergency notification tables on a 3-point scale. 6 of the 8 required staff interviewed said they were unsure about these documents. Therefore, we recommend that the post provide a refresher training for staff who are required to be familiar with the SIRG and the emergency notification tables.

**We recommend:**

- 1. That the country director provide a refresher training for required staff to become familiar with the SIRG and the emergency notification tables.**

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## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

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As part of this review, interviews were conducted with eight members of post staff. See Table 1 for more information on positions interviewed.

**Table 1: Interviews Conducted with Peace Corps/Ecuador Staff**

Position	Location (Post, HQ, other)
Country Director	Post
Director of Management and Operations	Post
Director of Programming and Training	Post
Peace Corps Medical Officer (3)	Post
Safety and Security Assistant	Post
Safety and Security Manager	Post

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**APPENDIX B: LIST OF ACRONYMS**

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OIG	Office of Inspector General
CREG	Country Re-Entry Guide
OGO	Office of Global Operations
SARRR	Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response
HQ	Headquarters
TG	Technical Guidance
MAP	Medical Action Plan
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
COTE	Calendar of Training Events
PST	Pre-Service Training
SIMS	Security Incident Management System
DOV	Death of a Volunteer
SIRG	Security Incident Reporting Guide

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## APPENDIX C: AGENCY RESPONSE TO THE PRELIMINARY REPORT

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### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Joaquin Ferrao, Acting Inspector General  
Reuben Marshall, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations

**Through:** Emily Haimowitz, Chief Compliance Officer

**From:** Michael McCabe, Regional Director, IAP Region

Michael Donald, Country Director, Peace Corps/Ecuador

**Date:** June 2, 2022

**CC:** Dave Noble, Chief of Staff  
Carl Sosebee, Senior Advisor to the Director  
Julie Burns, Senior Advisor to the Director  
Scott Beale, Associate Director for Global Operations  
Meredith Giordano, Deputy Director for Global Operations  
Leslie McCuaig, Chief of Operations, IAP Region  
Lindsey Suggs, Chief of Programming and Training, IAP Region  
Gonzalo Molina, Chief Administrative Officer, IAP Region  
Josie Mahlie-Scheller, Supervisory Country Desk Officer, IAP Region  
Charles Odhiambo, Country Desk Officer, Ecuador  
Joshua O'Donnell, Regional Security Advisor, IAP Region  
Shawn Bardwell, Associate Director, Safety & Security  
Victor Sloan, Associate Director, Office of Health Services  
Kristin Wells, General Counsel  
Colin Jones, Advisor to the Chief Compliance Officer

**Subject:** Agency Response to the Preliminary Report on the Post Re-Entry Health and Safety Review of Peace Corps/Ecuador (Project No. 22-EVAL-02)

EMILY  
HAIMOWITZ  
Signature  
Digitally signed by EMILY  
HAIMOWITZ  
Date: 2022.06.02 10:44:12 -0400

MICHAEL  
MCCABE  
Signature  
Digitally signed by MICHAEL  
MCCABE  
Date: 2022.06.02 09:01:29 -0400

Donald, Michael  
Signature  
Digitally signed by Donald, Michael  
Date: 2022.06.01 17:00:34 -0500

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this preliminary report from the Office of Inspector General. Enclosed please find the agency's response to the recommendation made by the Inspector General as outlined in the OIG's Preliminary Report on the Post Re-Entry Health and Safety Review of Peace Corps/Ecuador (Project No. 22-EVAL-02) sent to the agency on May 9, 2022.

**Recommendation 1**

That the country director provide a refresher training for required staff to become familiar with the SIRG and the emergency notification tables.

**Concur**

**Response:** Peace Corps Ecuador has received trainings and been provided additional supplemental materials to ensure designated staff (DS) and U.S. Direct Hires (USDH) are familiar with the Security Incident Reporting Guide (SIRG) and the Incident Reporting Flow Chart guide. During the week of April 25-30, 2022, the Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer (PCSSO) responsible for supporting Ecuador traveled to post and provided various trainings to staff on the following topics:

- Staff review of the SIRG and sexual assault definitions (SIMS users – DS and USDH)
- MS 461 *Crimes Against Volunteers* (with review of Incident Report Notification Flow Chart)
- Emergency Duty Officer training (with Safety and Security Manager)

To supplement those trainings, Peace Corps Ecuador provided a printed, laminated Incident Reporting Flow Chart to each DS and USDH. Post also added copies of the Incident Report Notification Flow Chart to the two emergency officer kits (i.e., one for the Pre-Service Training kit and one for the Volunteer kit).

**Documents Submitted:**

- (1) Email from PCSSO confirming training completion
- (2) Emails to the DS and USDH staff reminding them of the distribution of their printed, laminated Incident Reporting Flow Chart
- (3) List of Participants at the Various Trainings
- (4) PCSSO's Training Agenda
- (5) Copy of Training on MS 461 Crimes of Against Volunteers (with review Notification Chart)
- (6) Copy of Training on Emergency Duty Officer Training (with Safety and Security Manager)

PEACE CORPS OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

- (7) Pictures of the laminated copies of the Incident Reporting Flow Chart in the two emergency officer kits

**Status and Timeline for Completion:** Completed May 2022

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## APPENDIX D: OIG COMMENTS

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In its response to the preliminary report, management concurred with the only recommendation and provided documentation of actions it took to address the issues that prompted the recommendation. OIG reviewed the documentation, and we will close the recommendation. We wish to note that in closing the recommendation, we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities. However, when we feel it is warranted, we may conduct a follow-up review to confirm that action has been taken and to evaluate the impact.

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## APPENDIX E: REVIEW PURPOSE, COMPLETION AND OIG CONTACT

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### REVIEW PURPOSE

In 1989, OIG was established under the Inspector General Act of 1978 and is an independent entity within the Peace Corps. The purpose of OIG is to prevent and detect fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement and to promote economy, effectiveness, and efficiency in government. The Inspector General is under the general supervision of the Peace Corps Director and reports both to the Director and Congress.

The Evaluation Unit provides senior management with independent evaluations and reviews of management and operations of the Peace Corps, including overseas posts and domestic offices. OIG evaluators identify best practices and recommend program improvements to comply with Peace Corps policies.

### REVIEW COMPLETION

This review was conducted under the direction of Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Reuben Marshall, by Senior Evaluator Kris Hoffer and Program Analyst Kareen Sanchez. Additional contributions were made by Senior Evaluator Paul Romeo.

### OIG CONTACT

Following issuance of the final report, a stakeholder satisfaction survey will be distributed to agency stakeholders. If you wish to comment on the quality or usefulness of this report to help us improve our products, please contact Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Reuben Marshall at [rmarshall2@peacecorpsoig.gov](mailto:rmarshall2@peacecorpsoig.gov).

# Help Promote the Integrity, Efficiency, and Effectiveness of the Peace Corps

Anyone knowing of wasteful practices, abuse, mismanagement, fraud, or unlawful activity involving Peace Corps programs or personnel should contact the Office of Inspector General. Reports or complaints can also be made anonymously.

## Contact OIG

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Online Reporting Tool: [PeaceCorps.gov/OIG/ContactOIG](https://PeaceCorps.gov/OIG/ContactOIG)

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