

## Peace Corps

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### Major Accomplishments 2010-2013

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The Peace Corps has worked collaboratively with the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs on developing staff training for PCMOs and the adoption of evidence-based trauma treatment modalities. The Peace Corps has also partnered with the departments of Justice and Defense to support the design and development of a Peace Corps sexual assault risk reduction and response program and several new policies related to trauma-informed care.

Since 2008 the Peace Corps has been working to develop a victim-centered, trauma-informed global sexual assault risk reduction and response program. As part of the program, more than 1,500 overseas and headquarters staff who work directly with Volunteers have received online training on the impact of sexual assault and sexual assault awareness and sensitivity. From 2012–13, all Volunteers received training on sexual assault awareness, risk reduction, reporting and response protocols, and bystander intervention.

In 2011, the Peace Corps established an Office of Victim Advocacy with victim advocates available 24 hours a day for any Volunteer who has been a victim of crime. These victim advocates ensure that Volunteers have access to Peace Corps support services, are available to answer questions, and help Volunteers make informed choices. Advocates also work to ensure that staff at both headquarters and posts understand the wishes of the Volunteer and take them into consideration.

In 2012, the Counseling and Outreach Unit (COU) hired two counselors with experience in the treatment of sexual assault and other traumas and specialized expertise in cognitive process therapy and prolonged exposure therapy, two evidence-based trauma-specific treatment modalities. All current licensed mental health clinicians in the COU are being trained in these approaches.

The Peace Corps instituted a medical evacuation program for sexual assault trauma survivors that includes the choice of accompaniment by a Peace Corps staff member, being met at the airport by a staff member or representative, choice of medical and mental health providers, and a new online survey asking Volunteers about the care they received.

The Peace Corps is developing a multi-level reporting process for sexual assault victims that includes an anonymous hotline as well as options for standard and restricted reporting (which strictly limits those informed about the assault to safety and security staff and medical and mental health providers).

Starting in July 2013, trained sexual assault response liaisons will be available at each post at the request of the victim to accompany him/her through the in-country response.

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### Additional Resources

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<http://www.peacecorps.gov/>