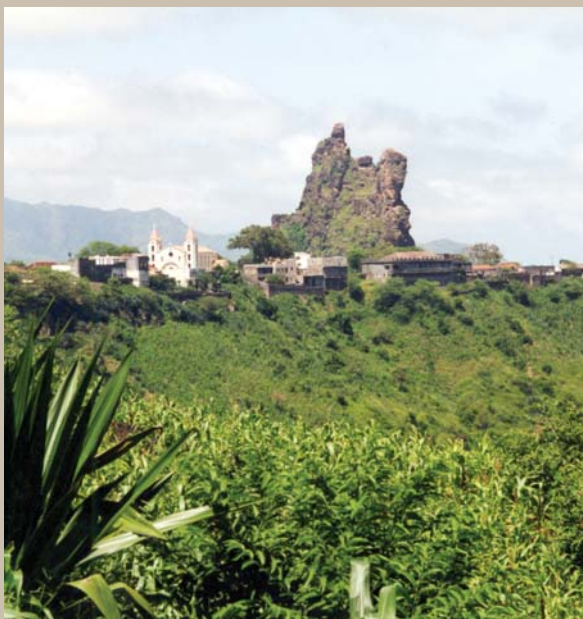


THE PEACE CORPS WELCOMES YOU TO
CAPE VERDE



A PEACE CORPS PUBLICATION
FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS



October 2009

Cape Verde



A WELCOME LETTER

Dear Future Volunteer,

Congratulations on your invitation to become a Peace Corps Volunteer in Cape Verde! This may well be one of the most rewarding and challenging experiences of your life. It may also become a reference point for all you do later in life. The people of Cape Verde, Peace Corps staff and Volunteers, all look forward to working with you over the next two years.

As a Volunteer in Cape Verde, you will be living on one of eight islands—each with unique characteristics and variations in language, terrain, and people. Many of your homes will have water and electricity. Others may live in small villages tucked away in the *ribeiras*, or valleys, without those amenities. Most Volunteers consider their sites to be the best, and you probably will, too.

Volunteers receive excellent health care and safety training, along with regular program, administrative and logistical support. The nine-week pre-service training program you will receive emphasizes mastery of language skills, acquisition of cultural and technical knowledge for principal work activities, cross-cultural adaptation, how to maintain good health and how to reduce your security risks and improve personal safety—all essential skills for a meaningful Peace Corps Volunteer experience. The quality of your Peace Corps experience is largely in your hands. You should begin to prepare yourself now by learning about Cape Verde and its people, Portuguese for the teachers and Creole (Krioulo) for the SED Volunteers.

The greatest secret of this nation is who it is. Many of you may arrive here with different assumptions. Perhaps, the image you hold of Peace Corps countries will be lost on you when you first see some paved streets. Perhaps, you will be confused by the levels of development around you, and question your purpose. Or perhaps it will be the opposite—perhaps you will be shocked by the rivers of trash, accumulating and smoldering, or the parade of pigs and goats meandering the streets, or how small distances became eternities when in a minivan or on a ship, or how different life is for those just outside the cities. Regardless, these polar perceptions signify Cape Verde's situation, in a unique disposition, where some things appear in place, others are loose or missing, like some of the stones in the cobblestones roads you will grow to know well. In the two years that you are here, it will be good for you to remember a few things. Remember that in Krioulo, "spera" means to both wait and hope. Remember that Cape Verde takes time to live up to its name, as do the paths and journey that take place upon it. Remember that while Portuguese is the official language, the people speak variants of Krioulo. Remember patience, and calmness, and strength; in the manner of the people and the land that forged them, for to accomplish anything here you need to work with them.

By studying the Peace Corps *Volunteer Handbook* and other reference materials in this *Welcome Book* you'll arrive *better informed and prepared*. There's much to learn, but don't worry. Soon, you will face the challenges and share the rewards of Peace Corps service. We all look forward to your arrival and to meeting you. *Bem-vindo a Corpo da Paz!*

Sincerely,

Peace Corps Cape Verde staff

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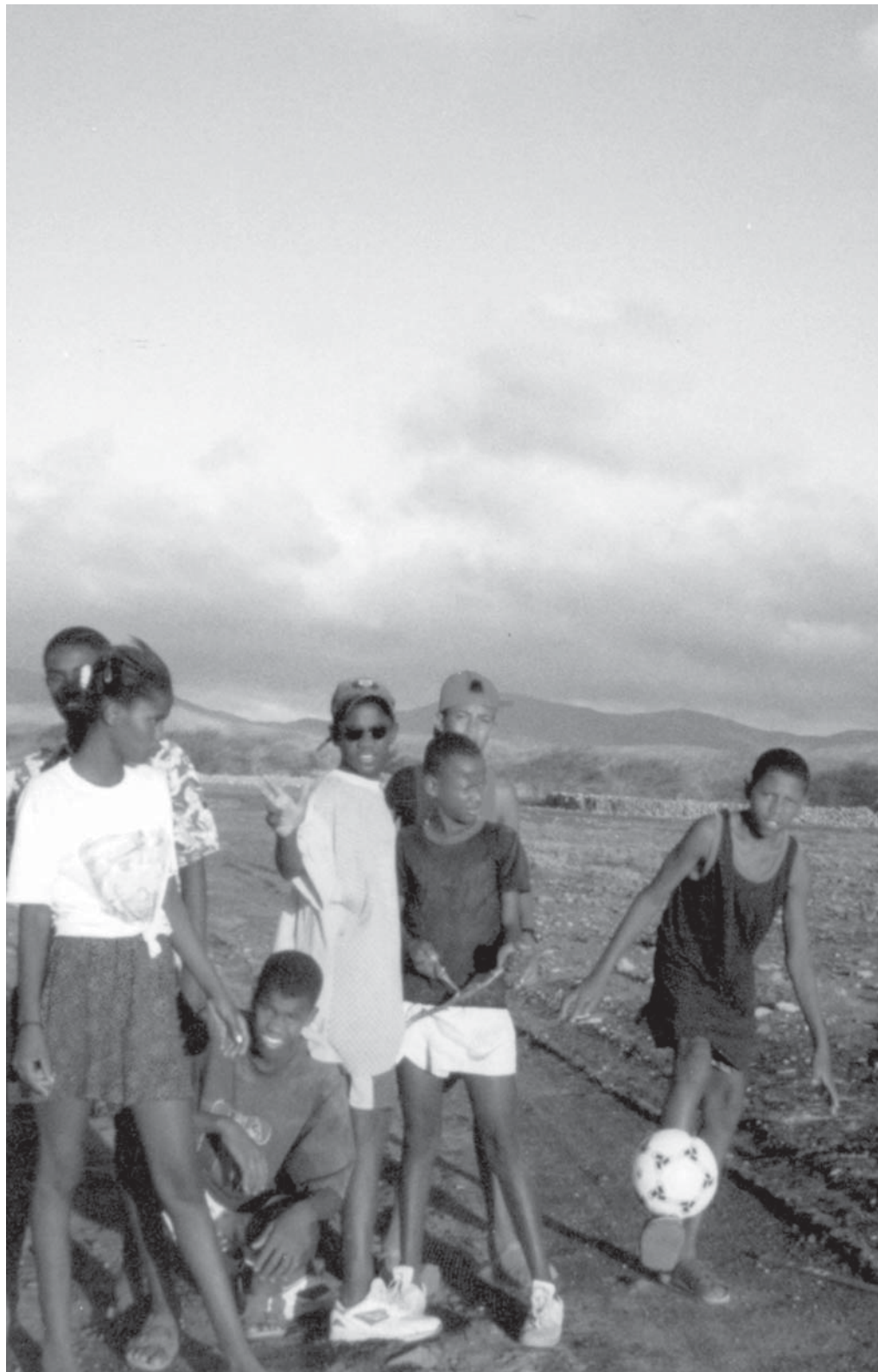


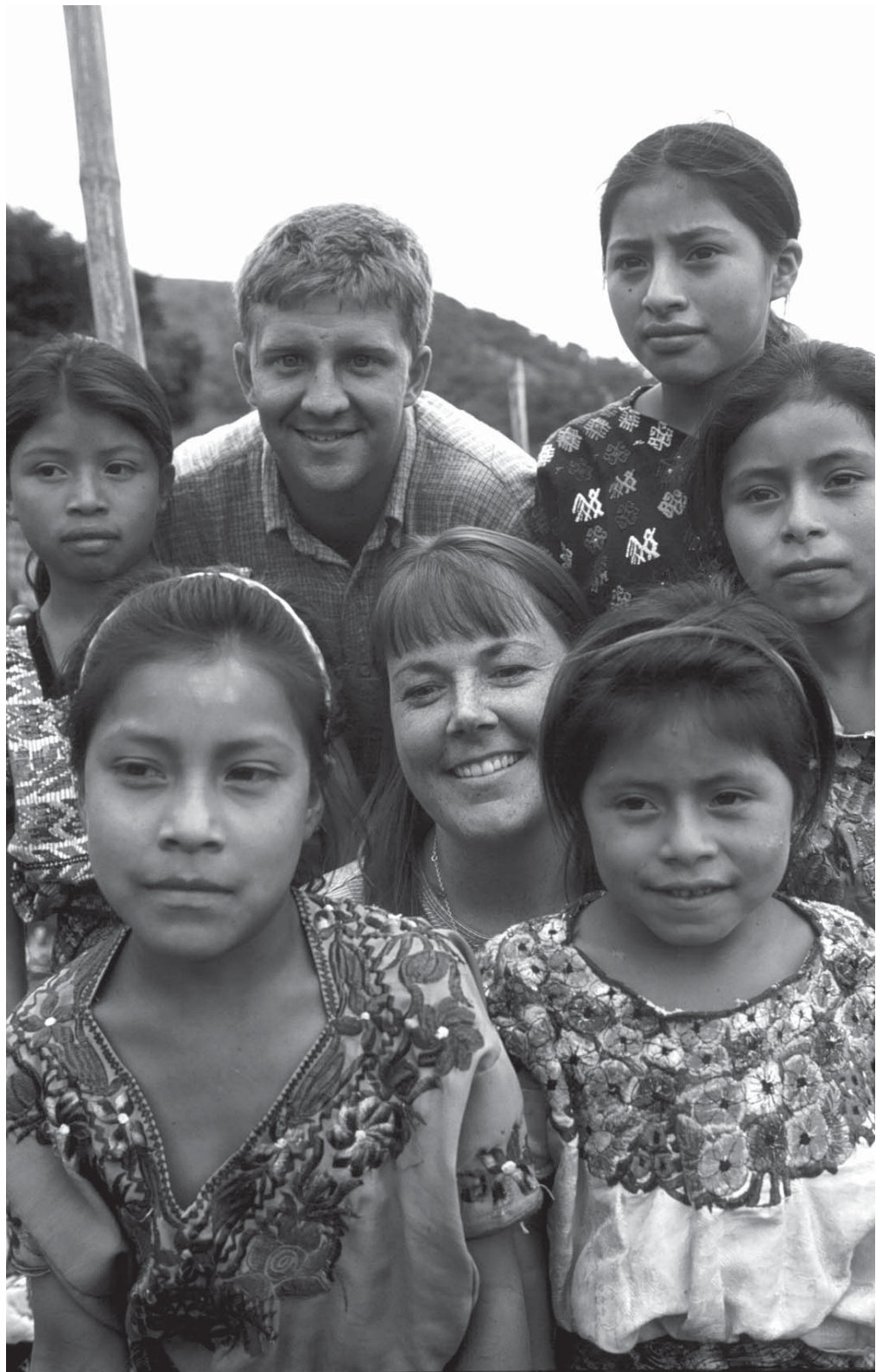
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CORE EXPECTATIONS FOR PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS



In working toward fulfilling the Peace Corps Mission of promoting world peace and friendship, as a trainee and Volunteer, you are expected to:

1. Prepare your personal and professional life to make a commitment to serve abroad for a full term of 27 months
2. Commit to improving the quality of life of the people with whom you live and work; and, in doing so, share your skills, adapt them, and learn new skills as needed
3. Serve where the Peace Corps asks you to go, under conditions of hardship, if necessary, and with the flexibility needed for effective service
4. Recognize that your successful and sustainable development work is based on the local trust and confidence you build by living in, and respectfully integrating yourself into, your host community and culture
5. Recognize that you are responsible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for your personal conduct and professional performance
6. Engage with host country partners in a spirit of cooperation, mutual learning, and respect
7. Work within the rules and regulations of the Peace Corps and the local and national laws of the country where you serve

8. Exercise judgment and personal responsibility to protect your health, safety, and well-being and that of others
9. Recognize that you will be perceived, in your host country and community, as a representative of the people, cultures, values, and traditions of the United States of America
10. Represent responsively the people, cultures, values, and traditions of your host country and community to people in the United States both during and following your service

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PEACE CORPS/CAPE VERDE HISTORY AND PROGRAMS

History of the Peace Corps in Cape Verde

Since the first Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Cape Verde in 1988, approximately 400 Volunteers have served, working in education, agriculture, water and sanitation, urban development, community development, and small business. In the early years, Volunteer projects focused on teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), agriculture extension, as well as water and sanitation.

There is no U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) presence in Cape Verde so Peace Corps Volunteers are about the only Americans active in English language teaching, teacher training and small enterprise development work. Volunteers are also working with youth and business development, environmental education, as well as in HIV/AIDS prevention, life skills and summer camps, throughout the islands; supporting municipal offices, youth centers, and local NGOs with information technology and related training. In 2008, the Peace Corps responded to Cape Verde's request to strengthen local initiatives by establishing the small enterprise development project (SED). Approximately 55 Volunteers are currently working throughout the country in the SED and education projects.

Current Peace Corps Programming in Cape Verde

Peace Corps/Cape Verde's current program has two projects: education and SED. The Ministry of Education and the Peace Corps began their collaboration with the education project in

1988. The education project allows Peace Corps teachers to share knowledge (content) and skills (methodologies) with Cape Verdean students, teachers, administrators, parents, organizations, and communities in formal and informal education settings. Volunteers work in schools as TEFL teachers, TEFL teacher trainers, and vocational and technical education teachers.

The framework of the projects represents a shift from a primarily TEFL focus to greater community capacity building and developing more effective school-home-community-linkages. Volunteers advocate life skills, gender relationships and promote women's and youth participation to increase their status and opportunities. The project also educates students and the community in summer camps, youth leadership, life skills and HIV/AIDS education. Some schools include computer training through the national high school information technology (IT) curriculum. Volunteers work with youth through sports, the summer leadership camps, and other community development activities. A vocational education component enables Volunteers to teach technical courses and trades such as construction, electrical work, drafting, autocad and mechanics at technical high schools. There is a renewable energy initiative in Cape Verde and Volunteers have responded by teaching about solar energy, how to build solar cookers, solar desalination units, energy efficiency, and other green technologies and processes. The need and requests for this type of vocational, technical, and environmental training is increasing in-country.

The new SED project has a goal to empower local institutions, municipal government, agriculture, water and rural associations, youth centers, national government-funded institutes and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and their social service providers to identify community needs and respond

with appropriate support. Volunteers provide support by building human resource capacity (i.e., helping people who are entering the job market for the first time and/or those seeking to enhance their skills), with a focus on small business, youth, IT, and environment, which will subsequently increase income levels of families and help alleviate poverty.

Many SED Volunteers work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment rural extension programs, at municipalities and regional youth centers—assisting with IT and small business training, teaching English, and helping address major concerns for Cape Verdean youth such as teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and reproductive health education, alcoholism and drugs, and transfer of HIV/AIDS information through life skills. SED Volunteers also work with youth through music, sports, summer camps, and other programs targeting the needs of young people at the community level.

Starting in 2004 and in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), some Volunteers are working on an environmental biodiversity project, assisting the government to establish the first national reserves and parks in Cape Verde. Volunteers work in these protected areas and park projects, as well as in rural development and environmental education in and around the buffer zones.

Regardless of their main project sector, Peace Corps Volunteers take an active role in activities related to four cross-cutting themes or global initiatives: working with youth, HIV/AIDS education, women in development/gender and development (WID/GAD) IT, and environmental education.

The AIDS pandemic strikes across all social strata in many Peace Corps countries and Cape Verde is not an exception. According to Ministry of Health estimates, since the beginning of the pandemic, over 2,000 Cape Verdeans have

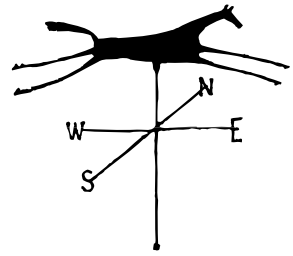
been infected with HIV, translating to a relatively low HIV prevalence rate. Of the identified cases, approximately 50 percent contracted AIDS and many died from complications related to HIV/AIDS. According to figures from the national HIV/AIDS Commission, 50 percent of HIV cases are among those between 25 and 49 years old; and among teens, girls accounted for more than half of new HIV-positive infections reported.

Though HIV prevalence rates are relatively low in Cape Verde, you will experience behaviors that may make you think twice about these figures. You will need to anticipate these situations and utilize resources available throughout your training and service to share information and convey messages, while maintaining your own emotional strength, so you can continue to be of service to your community. It is important to be aware of the high emotional toll that disease, death, and violence can have on Volunteers. As you strive to integrate into your community, you will develop relationships with local people who might die during your service. Because of the AIDS pandemic, some Volunteers will be regularly meeting with HIV-positive people and working with training staff, office staff, and host family members living with AIDS. Volunteers need to prepare themselves to embrace these relationships in a sensitive and positive manner. You will need to anticipate these situations and utilize supportive resources available throughout your training and service to maintain your own emotional strength so you can continue to be of service to your community.

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COUNTRY OVERVIEW: CAPE VERDE AT A GLANCE



History

In 1951, Portugal changed Cape Verde's status from that of colony to "overseas province." At that time, Cape Verde was considered among the most "assimilated" of Portugal's holdings. Nevertheless, many Cape Verdeans resented Portugal's neglect of the islands' economic development and found common cause with the Partido Africano da Independencia da Guine e Cabo Verde (PAIGC or the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde), formed by Amilcar Cabral (whose father was Cape Verdean) in Guinea-Bissau in 1956. In 1959, the PAIGC decided to proclaim an all-out independence struggle.

Generalized armed rebellion in Portuguese Africa began in March 1961. The PAIGC began its struggle in earnest in 1963. The islands of Cape Verde, kept under relatively tight control by the Portuguese police and military, were used as a place of confinement for political prisoners from the other Portuguese-African possessions and from Portugal. Although there was no actual fighting on the islands, Cape Verdeans crossed over to Guinea-Bissau to aid in the struggle.

In January 1973, Amilcar Cabral was assassinated. In September 1974 (the year a military coup in Portugal ushered democracy into that country and effectively ended the colonial era), Portuguese Guinea gained its independence from Portugal and officially became Guinea-Bissau. On July 5, 1975, Cape Verde achieved independence and joined with Guinea-Bissau under the joint rule of the PAIGC.

Efforts to keep Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau united under PAIGC ended in 1980, when Guinea-Bissau president Luis Cabral (Amilcar Cabral's brother) was overthrown. In response, the party in Cape Verde changed its name to Partido Africano da Independência de Cabo Verde (the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV)). Relations between the two countries improved after the 1982 release of Luis Cabral, and diplomatic ties were resumed.

The PAICV continued to govern Cape Verde as a one-party state until the country held its first democratic elections in 1990. The country has had seven rounds of elections since independence in 1975, all considered free and fair. It has one of the best records in Africa in terms of good governance. The opposition Movimento para a Democracia (MPD) won and continued in power until 2000. In elections held in 2000, PAICV was returned to power. The PAICV won elections again in 2006, but the 2008 election results were close and local "camaras" were about equally divided. The municipal elections held in May, 2008 had a voter participation rate of 78 percent. The main opposition party, the MPD (Movement for Democracy), won a slight majority of the municipalities and the governing PAICV (African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde) accepted defeat.

Government

Cape Verde defines itself as a democratic republic. The government structure has three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. The National Assembly constitutes the legislative branch. It determines the fundamental internal and external policies of the country and organizes and controls political, economic, cultural, social, and defense lines of actions. The National Assembly is directed by a steering committee composed of the president and four other

members. Its members, *Deputados da Nação*, are elected through national elections every five years; all citizens may be candidates.

The executive branch is composed of the president, elected every five years, and the Council of Ministers, elected by the National Assembly from within the ranks of the party with the most seats. The president is the head of state and of the armed forces. The Council of Ministers is the executive and administrative body; it consists of the prime minister, who is the head of government, plus a number of government ministers and secretaries of state.

The judicial branch is headed by a supreme court composed of five justices nominated by the president, the executive branch, and the Lawyer's Association.

Local government (Camaras) and both the private and public sectors play important roles in Cape Verde's mixed economy. After independence, nationalization in the agricultural and industrial sectors took place, but free enterprise is now active and growing, and much of the land is privately owned.

Cape Verde's good governance and human rights indicators have earned the country important political and economic benefits during the past 20 years Peace Corps has been here. Relations between the United States and Cape Verde are excellent, with a shared commitment to democracy.

Economy

Cape Verde has high levels of poverty and unemployment, partly attributable to a lack of obvious economic growth opportunities and a scarcity of resources, particularly water. Despite the poor natural resource base partly due to serious water shortages caused by cycles of long-term drought, Cape Verde has a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) close

to \$2,000, allowing for recent reclassification from least-developed to middle-income country status. The economy is service-oriented, with commerce, transport, and public services accounting for almost 70 percent of GDP. The share of agriculture in GDP in 2000 was only 8.5 percent, although some 45 percent of the population lives in rural areas. About 90 percent of the country's food is imported and is affected by the growing cost of transport. The fishing industry has some potential. Cape Verde annually runs a high trade deficit, which is financed by direct budget support and other foreign aid, as well as emigrants' remittances, which represent a significant part of the country's GDP. In 1998, the National Assembly approved a liberalization of the economy. The plan expects tourism earnings to account for about 20 percent of the \$1.35 billion economy, but for now it is likely that there will be a downward revision because it is expected that the increased transport costs and the financial and housing crisis may have a negative impact on tourism

The constitution was changed to remove state control from most sectors of the economy (except the central bank), opening the economy to foreign and domestic investment. At the same time, efforts were made to diversify the economy. Plans to develop local business products and services like tourism, fishing, and logistics were made. Development is limited, in part, due to a shortage of skilled and specialized labor; the small market size; and by the country's natural high transportation costs, as an island nation with nine populated islands. This makes it difficult to achieve economies of scale and results in substantial transportation, energy, food, and water costs. Current electrical energy generation is insufficient. The government continues focusing on the private sector and attracting foreign investment to diversify the economy.

People and Culture

About 70 percent of the population is Creole of mixed black African and Portuguese descent. The remainder of the population is mostly black Africans, with a small number of whites. The European men who colonized Cape Verde did not usually bring wives or families with them. As female African slaves were brought to the islands, inter-marriages occurred. The intermingling of Europeans and Africans extended to sociocultural patterns and language as well. The social and cultural patterns of the population are similar to those of rural Portugal, but West African and even Brazilian patterns remain strong on many islands. Many rural women still use the traditional African market methods like the custom of carrying children, tied by scarves, on their backs.

Western religion, to some extent, has diluted African cultural traditions. Roman Catholicism, brought by the Portuguese, is Cape Verde's primary religion, though some Protestant sects (especially Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons, and Nazarenes) have attracted followers. Despite bans by the Portuguese colonists, some vestiges of African animism remain in superstitions and traditional rituals.

Environment

The Cape Verde archipelago is located approximately 375 miles off the coast of West Africa. It is composed of nine inhabited islands and eight islets. The islands have a combined size of just over 4,000 square kilometers (roughly the size of Rhode Island). The islands are divided into the *Barlavento* (windward) islands (Santo Antão, São Vicente, Santa Luzia, São Nicolau, Sal, and Boavista) and the *Sotavento* (leeward) islands (Maio, Santiago, Fogo, and Brava). The largest island, both in size and population, is Santiago, where Praia, the capital is located.

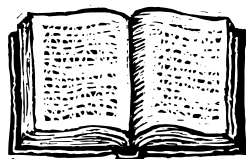
Of volcanic origin, these islands, boast some of the windiest beaches in the world, and vary widely in terrain. An active volcano on the island of Fogo is the highest point on the archipelago (elevation 2,829 meters). Extensive salt flats are found on Sal and Maio. On Santiago, Santo Antão, and São Nicolau, arid slopes give way in places to sugarcane or banana fields spread along the base of towering mountains. The climate is tropical, but the archipelago's location in the Sahel belt makes for periodic sand storms and devastating droughts, interspersed with years of greater, yet still less-than-adequate, rainfall.

Water shortages and successive droughts have greatly weakened crop production capacity over the last century. Any decline in Cape Verde's import capacity as a result of the price increases or grain shortages could have serious implications for the food security of this country where corn, rice, and bread represent the basis of the dietary consumption. The country has studied various solutions to overcome its water and energy development burden and has strategically decided to invest in alternative energy resources. The announced goal is to produce 25 percent of energy needs from renewable sources by 2011 and 50 percent by 2020. There are also plans to make the island of Sal fully reliant on renewable energy (a combination of solar, wind, wave, and biofuel) in the next 5 to 10 years. Until then, Cape Verde remains highly vulnerable to price increases in the energy and food markets.

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RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION



Following is a list of websites for additional information about the Peace Corps and Cape Verde and to connect you to returned Volunteers and other invitees. Please keep in mind that although we try to make sure all these links are active and current, we cannot guarantee it. If you do not have access to the Internet, visit your local library. Libraries offer free Internet usage and often let you print information to take home.

A note of caution: As you surf the Internet, be aware that you may find bulletin boards and chat rooms in which people are free to express opinions about the Peace Corps based on their own experience, including comments by those who were unhappy with their choice to serve in the Peace Corps. These opinions are not those of the Peace Corps or the U.S. government, and we hope you will keep in mind that no two people experience their service in the same way.

General Information about the country:

www.countrywatch.com

On this site, you can learn anything from what time it is in Praia to information about converting currency from the dollar to the escudo. Just click on Cape Verde and go from there.

www.state.gov

This U.S. State Department website issues background notes periodically about countries around the world. Find Cape Verde and learn more about its social and political history.

www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations

Visit this site to learn all you need to know about any country in the world.

www.psr.keele.ac.uk/official.htm

This site includes links to all the official sites for governments of countries around the world.

www.geography.about.com/library/maps/blindex.htm

This online world atlas includes maps and geographical information about countries around the world. Each country page contains links to other sites, such as the Library of Congress, that contain comprehensive historical, social, and political backgrounds.

www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/infonation/e_glance.htm

This United Nations site allows you to search for statistical information for member states of the U.N.

www.worldinformation.com

This site provides an additional source of current and historical information about countries worldwide.

<http://praia.usembassy.gov/>

Website for the U.S. Embassy in Praia, Cape Verde.

Embassy Information:

www.state.gov/r/pa

www.embassy.org/embassies/cv.html

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw

News Sites About Cape Verde:

www.asemena.cv

Asemana Online (newspaper)

www.liberal-caboverde.com

Liberal Online (newspaper)

www.visaonews.com

www.caboverde24.com

www.expressodasilhas.cv

www.sapo.cv/

<http://jornaldigital.com/noticias.php>

Visitor's Guides:

www.guiadecaboverde.cv

This site provides an additional source of current information about Cape Verde and was last updated in 2008.

www.bradtguides.com

This site is a collaborative project of the worldwide Capeverdean community, hosted at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth

www.umassd.edu/SpecialPrograms/caboverde/capeverdean.html

This is a website to visit with links to the e-government websites:

www.governo.cv

www.portondinosilha.cv

www.caboverdeonline.com

<http://capeverde-isoands.com>

www.virtualcapeverde.net

These are virtual portals with many useful links including those to local radio stations

Connect with Current as well as Returned Volunteers and others:

www.rpcv.org

This is the site of the National Peace Corps Association, made up of returned Volunteers. On this site you can find links to all the Web pages of the “friends of” groups for most countries of service, made up of former Volunteers who served in those countries. There are also regional groups who frequently get together for social events and local volunteer activities. Or go straight to the Friends of Cape Verde site.

<http://www.rpcvwebring.org>

This site is known as the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Web Ring. Browse the Web ring and see what former Volunteers are saying about their service.

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

The post IT committee, with Volunteer and staff contributors, maintain this web site for Peace Corps Cape Verde.

www.peacecorpswriters.org

This site is hosted by a group of returned Volunteer writers. It is a monthly online publication of essays and Volunteer accounts from countries around the world.

<http://peacecorps.org.cv/>

This site is hosted by the post IT committee, along with a group of current and returned Volunteers

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/peacecorps2/>

This Yahoo site hosts a bulletin board where prospective Volunteers and returned Volunteers can come together.

Recommended Books:

1. Davidson, Basil. *The Fortunate Isles: A Study in African Transformation*. Trenton, NY: Africa World Press. 1989.
2. Halter, Marilyn. *Between Race and Ethnicity—Cape Verdean Immigrants, 1860-1965*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993.
3. Irwin, Aisling and Colum Wilson. *Guide to Cape Verde Islands: The Bradt Travel Guide*. Chalfont St. Peter; UK: Bradt Travel Guides; fourth edition, 2008.
4. Goncalves, Manuel da Luz. *Pa Nu Papia Kriolu*, 2003.
5. Leite, Ana Mafalda. *Cape Verde: Language, Literature, and Music (Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies)*. North Dartmouth, MA: Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture, 2002.

Books About the History of the Peace Corps

1. Hoffman, Elizabeth Cobbs. *All You Need is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960's*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.
2. Rice, Gerald T. *The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.

3. Stossel, Scott. Sarge: *The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2004.

Books on the Volunteer Experience

1. Dirlam, Sharon. *Beyond Siberia: Two Years in a Forgotten Place*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: McSeas 2004.
2. Casebolt, Marjorie DeMoss. *Margarita: A Guatemalan Peace Corps Experience*. Gig Harbor, Wash.: Red Apple Publishing, 2000.
3. Erdman, Sarah. *Nine Hills to Nambonkaha: Two Years in the Heart of an African Village*. New York, N.Y.: Picador, 2003.
4. Hessler, Peter. *River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze*. New York, N.Y.: Perennial, 2001.
5. Kennedy, Geraldine ed. *From the Center of the Earth: Stories out of the Peace Corps*. Santa Monica, Calif.: Clover Park Press, 1991.
6. Thompsen, Moritz. *Living Poor: A Peace Corps Chronicle*. Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1997 (reprint).

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LIVING CONDITIONS AND VOLUNTEER LIFESTYLE



Communications

Mail

Few countries in the world offer the level of mail service we consider normal in the United States. If you bring American standards for mail service, you will be in for a lot of frustration. A letter from or to the United States takes, on average, three weeks to arrive. Some mail may not arrive. Fortunately, this is not a frequent occurrence, but it does happen. Advise your family and friends to number their letters and to include “Air Mail” and “Par Avion” on their envelopes. They should also write “Via Portugal” at the bottom of the address. If possible, family and friends should ask their local post office that their mail to Cape Verde gets routed through Boston (and not New York or Atlanta, where there is less familiarity with Cape Verde and, therefore, greater chance of delays or lost mail).

Initially, during pre-service training, staff will pick up your mail at the post office in Praia once or twice a week and deliver it to the training center where mail will be placed in your mailbox.

Your address during training will be:

“Your Name,” PCT
A/C Corpo da Paz
C. P. 373 – Praia
Republic of Cape Verde

Once you become a Volunteer your personal mail can be sent directly to your site. At site, Volunteers can have mail sent to their work address or pick it up themselves at the local post office. At some sites, post office boxes are available for a minimal annual fee. There is no home delivery.

Do not send money, large packages, or airline tickets through the mail. There are no customs duties if sent by airmail; however, postage costs may be high. Packages sent in bubble manila envelopes have a better chance of arriving directly to the Volunteer's site. Larger packages may often mysteriously disappear in transit.

Telephones

Cellphones are important in Cape Verde. Most Volunteers may also have a land line phone in their home. Peace Corps/Cape Verde includes money in the living allowance to cover the cost of local telecom use and suggests you use a cellphone, as it is one of the best ways to connect and link.

Generally, long-distance communication via telephone is available, though expensive. International phone connections from the United States to Cape Verde are better and much cheaper than the other way around. Cabo Verde Telecom, the national telephone company, has offices in all major cities and some smaller towns. Those who bring a laptop and choose to pay for Internet service may want to use economical Internet phone services such as Skype or Vontage. You need a microphone, headphones or speakers.

The Peace Corps office in Cape Verde can be reached by direct dialing from the United States. The numbers are 011.238.261.1618 or 261.6020. Phone service in Cape Verde is improving. However, due to variable factors such as the electrical power quality and weather conditions, you may encounter some difficulty when making international calls.

Volunteers are not permitted to use telephones at the Peace Corps office in Praia to call family and friends unless the call pertains to an emergency and is approved in advance by the country director.

Cellular phones have become very popular to Cape Verdeans, especially in urban centers. At this time there are two providers. Cellphones are widely used and are an important tool for your work connections and networking.

Computer, Internet, and Email Access

If your sponsoring agency or counterpart owns a computer, you may be able to arrange Internet access for work-related or personal use. Volunteers have access to two computers with Internet access in the Volunteers' Resource Center at the Peace Corps office in the capital. Internet is available at most sites, either through private businesses or Internet cafes. In the major cities and many small towns, Volunteers can get their own personal email accounts. If you own a laptop, it may be useful for you to have your own Internet account. Peace Corps staff office computers are not available for trainee/Volunteer use.

Housing and Site Location

Your host agency will provide safe, adequate housing in accordance with the Peace Corps' site selection criteria (see Health Care and Safety for further information). Many Volunteers live in small apartments. At the very least, Volunteers will have a bedroom, a bathroom, and a kitchen that they are not required to share with a host family after pre-service training (PST) but do have the option. Volunteers may share an apartment or a house with another Volunteer and you should come prepared to possibly share a house with another Volunteer. Your sponsor will provide simple, basic

furniture—usually a bed, table, chairs, and a stove (without oven). Upon swearing in as a Volunteer, the Peace Corps will give you a modest settling-in allowance to purchase household necessities such as dishes and other household items.

Some Volunteers will not have regular running water. Those who do not have running water will either collect water when it is available in their home or buy water from a water truck. Those who live in smaller towns most likely will have some electricity, although not 24 hours a day. Some very remote areas may not have electricity at all, or electricity may only be available for six to 12 hours per day. To be a Volunteer here you will need to be very flexible in your housing and living expectations, as there are no guarantees of continuous water, electricity, transportation or Internet.

Volunteers are expected to live at the level of their counterparts. Housing varies, depending on what your community has to offer. This varies from a more spacious apartment or house to a smaller home in a village community.

Each Volunteer should have access to housing that meets the following basic standards:

- Private living quarters (though probably small, you will have your own space)
- A bed, table, four chairs and stove (without oven)
- A well-dug, built, and protected latrine (if no internal toilet/plumbing)
- Solid door(s) with deadbolt locks, with an inspection (peep) hole in the main entrance door
- Secure locks on windows/shutters (bars on first-floor windows if no wooden shutters)
- Located away from bars and/or discos (in separate building)

- Phone access (if there is access to phone lines)
- Smoke alarms
- Walking distance to work and market areas
- Reasonable access to a water source

To those who have more than the minimum, count yourselves lucky! For those of you who don't receive this minimum, the Peace Corps will work with you and the local authorities responsible so the above criteria are met.

Living Allowance and Money Management

As a Volunteer in Cape Verde, you will receive different types of payments called allowances.

A *living allowance* covers your basic living expenses. To ensure that the living allowance is adequate, a review is conducted on a yearly basis through a market survey. Currently, the living allowance is paid in local currency (CVE), equivalent to about \$320 per month (varies according to the island and exchange rate). It is paid every month at the beginning of each fiscal quarter (October 1, January 1, April 1, and July 1). The living allowance covers such expenses as food, utilities, household supplies, clothing, recreation and entertainment, transportation, reading materials, and other incidentals.

A *vacation allowance* of \$24 per month is added to your living allowance each quarter and is paid in U.S. dollars.

A one-time *settling-in allowance* is also provided in CVE to purchase household goods upon arrival at your site.

If you are requested by Peace Corps to travel, additional money for transportation and meals will be in a *transportation allowance*. This amount is established by the administrative officer, based on the cost of transportation and lodging.

Most Volunteers find they can live comfortably in Cape Verde with these allowances, although many bring cash or traveler's checks for vacation travel. Volunteers are strongly discouraged from supplementing their income with money brought from home. The living allowance is adequate and Volunteers should be living at the economic level of their neighbors and colleagues.

Credit cards may be used at banks, major tourist hotels, and travel agencies. You will not find retail stores where they can be used in Cape Verde. Volunteers set up bank accounts with a debit card at the national bank.

Food and Diet

The variety of food in Cape Verde can be relatively limited depending on the site. Small restaurants can be found in most cities and towns. Dairy products are limited to imported powdered or pasteurized (boxed) milk and locally produced or imported yogurt and cheese. Butter, yogurt, and cheese are available. Gouda and Edam cheeses are available in larger towns. In the countryside, locally produced milk is available, but it is not pasteurized; it must, therefore, be boiled before consumption. Due to the limited rainfall, the availability of fresh produce will vary depending on the time of year. The Cape Verdean diet is mostly based on fish and staple foods like corn and rice. Vegetables available during much of the year are potatoes, onions, tomatoes, manioc, cabbage, kale, collard greens and dried beans. Fruits like bananas and papayas are often available year-round, while others like mangoes and avocados are seasonal.

Fish is available at the markets most of the year. Locally produced canned tuna is also available. It is more difficult to find fish in the countryside in the interior of islands.

Bread is available locally. There are also some biscuits and cookies. Pastry shops can be found in a few larger cities.

The traditional diet can be high in fat and cholesterol. Vegetarians will find it challenging to maintain their accustomed diet due to the lack of fruits and vegetables during the dry months. They may need to bring powdered protein to help increase their protein intake. Volunteers will be confronted with local customs and cultural issues when visiting Cape Verdean families. You will be offered—and expected to accept—traditional food choices. Though you can maintain a vegetarian lifestyle in your home, you should arrive in Cape Verde with an open mind and flexibility about sharing in the Cape Verdean diet when visiting your friends and neighbors. Your living allowance will enable you to buy some imported fresh and canned fruits and vegetables.

Transportation

This is a logistically challenging island nation. Most of the transportation between islands is done by plane but is costly. There are regular flights to and from the major islands (Santiago, Sal and São Vicente), with less frequent flights to most of the other islands. Volunteers are given the equivalent of one inter-island ticket per year. Boat transportation is also available, though not as widely used by Peace Corp due to the undependable scheduling of arrivals and departures. Volunteers must use life jackets to travel by boat and these life jackets are provided by Peace Corps.

To travel within the islands Volunteers use a system of privately owned mini-vans, *hiaces*, which run regular routes between major towns. Volunteers should not travel at night due to unsafe roads and reckless drivers.

In a few major cities, public bus transport runs periodically and taxis are common. In smaller towns, there are mostly *hiaces* and/or taxis.

In locations where transportation is scarce, you will mostly walk. Volunteers are not permitted to drive vehicles or to drive or be a passenger on a motorcycle.

Geography and Climate

Cape Verde's climate near some of the coastal sites may be milder than that of the African mainland. At the sites near the sea, temperatures are moderate, but it can get very hot in the countryside in the interior of the islands and a bit cool at night in the dry season (though still hot in the day). In most places, vegetation is scarce, so there is very little shade or protection from the sun, which makes it even hotter. Cape Verde is part of the Sahel arid belt and only receives about 8 cm (3 inches) of rain on most islands. When it does rain, the rainfall occurs between August and October, with brief downpours.

Social Activities

With the exception of the larger cities, where there are a limited number of restaurants and social clubs, most of your social activities will consist of community activities, sports, music, and visiting friends and neighbors. In most communities, there will be regular dances and parties that you will be encouraged to attend. In towns where there is electricity, Cape Verdeans have access to television and watch Cape Verde's programs on two channels (Cape Verdean and Portuguese). In all communities, soccer games and church activities may provide a source of social interaction and entertainment. The traditional walk around the *praça* (town square) to meet friends is practiced regularly in Cape Verdean

towns. During these nights out, you will likely be approached by community members who will try to make you feel at home. Many Volunteers comment that developing friendships in their community is one of the greatest rewards of Volunteer service.

Professionalism, Dress, and Behavior

One of the difficulties of finding your place as a Peace Corps Volunteer is figuring out how to fit into the local culture while maintaining your own cultural identity. This balance can be difficult to achieve, and we can only provide you with some guidelines. You will be working as a representative of an association or professional entity in a professional setting; as such, you are expected to dress and behave accordingly. A foreigner wearing ragged, torn clothing is more likely to be considered offensive. Long hair, body piercing, visible tattoos, and earrings are not appropriate for men; wearing long, uncovered dreadlocks is considered inappropriate for men and women in the workplace. Volunteers should not dress in any way that could be considered provocative.

Personal Safety

More detailed information about the Peace Corps' approach to safety is contained in the "Health Care and Safety" chapter, but it is an important issue and cannot be overemphasized. As stated in the Volunteer Handbook, becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer entails certain safety risks. Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment (oftentimes alone), having a limited understanding of local language and culture, and being perceived as well-off are some of the factors that can put a Volunteer at risk. Many Volunteers experience varying degrees of unwanted attention and harassment. Petty thefts and burglaries are not uncommon, and incidents of physical and

sexual assault do occur, although most Cape Verde Volunteers complete their two years of service without incident. The Peace Corps has established procedures and policies designed to help you reduce your risks and enhance your safety and security. These procedures and policies, in addition to safety training, will be provided once you arrive in Cape Verde. Using these tools, you are expected to take responsibility for your safety and well-being.

Each staff member at the Peace Corps is committed to providing Volunteers with the support they need to successfully meet the challenges they will face to have a safe, healthy, and productive service. We encourage Volunteers and families to look at our safety and security information on the Peace Corps website at www.peacecorps.gov/safety.

Information on these pages gives messages on Volunteer health and Volunteer safety. A video message from the Director is on this page, as well as a section titled “Safety and Security in Depth.” This page lists topics ranging from the risks of serving as a Volunteer to posts’ safety support systems to emergency planning and communications..

Rewards and Frustrations

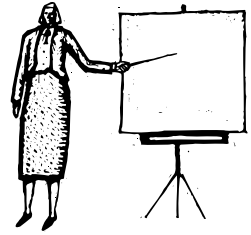
Although the potential for job satisfaction is quite high, like all Volunteers, you will encounter numerous frustrations. Due to financial or other challenges, collaborating agencies do not always provide the support as promised; the pace of work and life is slower than what most Americans are accustomed to; and some Cape Verdeans may be hesitant to change practices, they are used to. The Peace Corps experience is often described as emotional peaks and valleys that occur as you adapt to a new culture, language, and environment.

You have a high degree of responsibility and independence in your work, perhaps more than other jobs you have had. Often you will find yourself in situations that require an ability to motivate yourself and your counterparts with little or no guidance from supervisors. You may work for months without seeing any visible impact and without receiving feedback on your work. Development is a slow process. Positive progress is often seen only after the combined efforts of several Volunteers over the course of many years. You must possess the self-confidence, patience, and vision to continue working toward long-term goals without seeing immediate results.

To approach and master these challenges you will need maturity, flexibility, open-mindedness, and resourcefulness. There is help along the way, however. Cape Verdeans are hospitable, friendly, and warm people. The Peace Corps staff, your coworkers, and fellow Volunteers will support you during times of challenge, as well as in moments of success. Judging by the experience of former Volunteers, the peaks are well worth the difficult times and most Volunteers leave Cape Verde feeling they have gained much more than they sacrificed during their service. If you make the commitment to integrate into your community and work hard at learning the language, you will most likely be a successful Volunteer.



PEACE CORPS TRAINING



Overview of Pre-Service Training

Training is an essential part of your Peace Corps service. Our goal is to provide you with information to develop and enhance some of your skills, which will allow you to live and work effectively in Cape Verde. We anticipate that you will approach your training with an open mind, a desire to learn, and a willingness to become involved. Peace Corps trainees officially become Peace Corps Volunteers after successful completion of pre-service training (PST).

The nine-week PST provides you the opportunity to learn new skills and practice them as they apply in Cape Verde. You will receive training and orientation in local languages (Portuguese and Creole), cross-cultural communication, community development work, health and personal safety, and technical skills pertinent to the context of Cape Verdean development. PST is meant to prepare you for the first three to six months of service, and the skills you learn will serve as a foundation to start your community integration and service as a Peace Corps Volunteer here. We will meet and work together as a group, in villages, and you will have the chance to experience local language, culture, and customs with your host family and during technical field trips.

At the onset of training, the training staff will outline the goals, competencies and assessment criteria that each trainee will have to reach before becoming a Volunteer. Evaluation of your performance during training is a continual process, characterized by a dialogue between you and the training staff. The training director, along with the other trainers, will work with you toward achievement by providing feedback

throughout training. After successfully completing the pre-service training, you will take an oath (swear in) as a Volunteer and finalize preparations for departure to your site.

Technical Training

Training places great emphasis on learning how to transfer the skills you have to the community in which you will serve as a Volunteer. Technical training will cover areas Peace Corps/Cape Verde has identified as important for educational and community work. This includes sessions on economic, cultural, political, and environmental situations in Cape Verde, as well as strategies for working within the project framework. During PST you will review your technical sector's goals and will meet with the Cape Verdean agencies and organizations that invited Peace Corps to assist them. You will be supported and evaluated by experienced Cape Verdean trainers who will conduct the training program and who, throughout this period, will help you build the confidence and skills needed to be a productive member of your community. Some Peace Corps staff and current Volunteers will be involved in PST, as well.

Language Training

As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you will find that language skills are critical to personal and professional satisfaction during your service. They will help you integrate into your host community and ease your personal adaptation to the new surroundings. Therefore, language training is the heart of the training program and you must successfully meet minimum language requirements to complete training and become a Volunteer. Experienced Cape Verdean language instructors give formal language classes five days a week in small village classes of four to five people. Language is also introduced and integrated into the health, cultural, safety and security, and technical components of training.

Your language training will incorporate a community-based approach. You will have classroom time and will be given assignments to work on outside of the classroom. The goal is for you to reach a point where you feel comfortable with basic social communication for developing your linguistic skills more thoroughly at your site. Prior to swearing in as a Volunteer, you will work on strategies to continue your language studies during your two years of service.

Cross-Cultural Training

As part of your pre-service training, you will live with a Cape Verdean host family. This experience is designed to facilitate language learning and to ease your transition into life in the country. Families have gone through orientation conducted by Peace Corps staff and Volunteers to explain the purpose of the pre-service training program and to assist them in helping you adapt to living in Cape Verde. Many Volunteers form strong and lasting friendships with their host families.

Cross-cultural issues and community development strategies are included to help you improve your cultural perception, communication, and facilitation skills. Topics such as small enterprise and community development, conflict resolution, diversity, gender in development, life skills, traditional political structures, and education systems are also addressed.

Health Training

During PST, you will be given primary health training and information. Volunteers are expected to practice preventive health care and to take responsibility for their own health by adhering to all medical policies. As a trainee, you must attend all medical sessions. Topics will include preventive health measures and minor and major medical issues that trainees/ Volunteers may encounter while in Cape Verde. Sexual health and harassment, nutrition, mental health, and safety issues are also covered during these sessions.

Integration of Health and Safety Training

Keeping healthy and safe is an important part of your Peace Corps service, and Peace Corps/Cape Verde takes this seriously. During the health, safety, and security training sessions, you will learn how to adopt a lifestyle and personal behavior that reduces risk in your home, at work and during your travels. You will also learn appropriate, effective strategies for coping with unwanted attention. In essence, you will learn about your individual responsibility for practicing and promoting health and safety throughout your service.

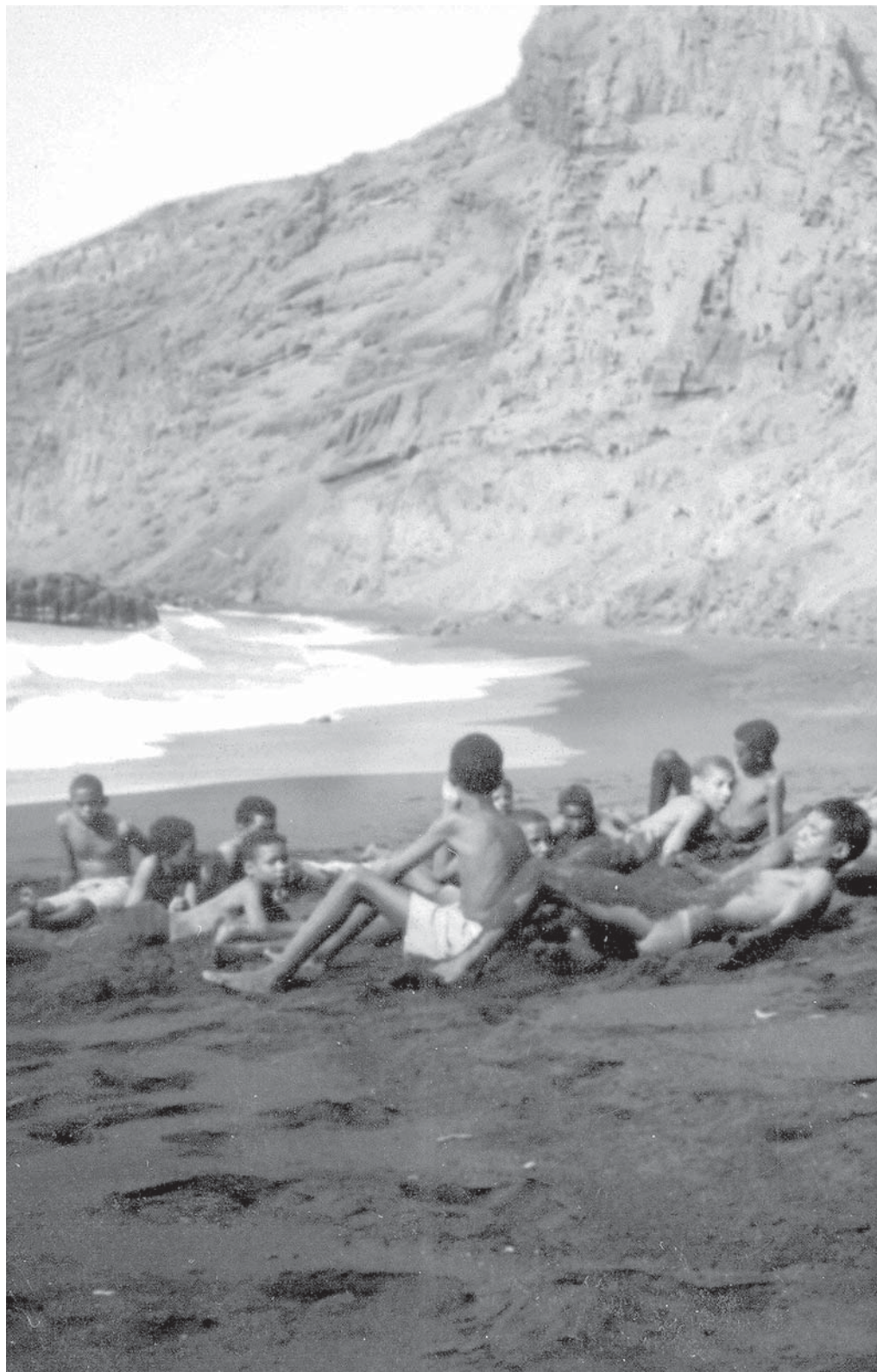
Additional Trainings during Volunteer Service

In our commitment to deliver quality training, the Peace Corps has implemented a training system that provides Volunteers with continuous opportunities to examine their commitment to Peace Corps service while increasing their technical, language, and cross-cultural skills.

Over the two-year Volunteer term of service, there are additional training events.

- *In-service training (IST) and midservice training (MST)* provides opportunities for Volunteers to upgrade their technical, language, and project development skills while sharing their experiences and reaffirming their commitment after having served for three to 12 months. This is usually combined with Volunteer conferences to address broader Peace Corps and Cape Verde sector-specific topics.
- *Close of service (COS) conference* prepares Volunteers for their lives after Peace Corps service and reviews Volunteers' respective projects and personal experiences.

The number, length, and design of trainings are adapted to country-specific needs and conditions. The key to the training cycle is that training events are integrated and interrelated, from the pre-departure orientation through the end of your service, and are planned, implemented, and evaluated cooperatively by the training team, Peace Corps staff, our host country partners, and Volunteers.



YOUR HEALTH CARE AND SAFETY IN CAPE VERDE



The Peace Corps' highest priority is maintaining the good health and safety of each Volunteer. Peace Corps medical programs emphasize the preventive, rather than the curative, approach to disease. The Peace Corps in Cape Verde maintains a clinic with a full-time medical officer, who takes care of Volunteers' primary health care needs. Additional medical services, such as testing and basic treatment, are also available in Cape Verde at local hospitals. If you become seriously ill, you will be transported either to an American-standard medical facility in the region or to the United States.

Health Issues in Cape Verde

Cape Verde is a country in which it is relatively easy to stay healthy. The typical tropical diseases experienced on the continent of Africa, such as schistosomiasis and filariasis, do not occur here. There are occasional isolated outbreaks of malaria during the rainy season on the island of Santiago; consequently, Volunteers on Santiago are required to take malaria prophylaxis for part of the year.

There are health issues in Cape Verde, however, that you may not encounter in the United States. You may acquire intestinal parasites, which cause diarrhea and discomfort, but this is usually easily diagnosed and treated, as is diarrheal illness caused by food poisoning. In addition, fair-skinned people must be very cautious about the sun. Sunburn, permanent sun damage, and the development of pterygium (a callous-like growth on the eyeball from sun exposure) can be cause for concern. Sun-related health problems are easily remedied by wearing a hat, sunscreen, and good-quality sunglasses.

The Peace Corps does not supply sunglasses, regular or prescription. You must bring or ship your own sunglasses.

A surprise to most Americans is that the vast majority of health concerns in Cape Verde are the same as in the United States. Colds, minor injuries, and mild bacterial infections make up the majority of the Volunteer's health problems.

There are two main hospitals in Cape Verde: one in Praia and one in Mindelo. Both hospitals have basic capabilities. The remainder of the health care system is divided into small regional hospitals and outpatient dispensaries, but the care is of variable quality and limited in scope. Of particular concern is the inappropriate use of antibiotics, especially those given by injection. Therefore, you should check with the medical officer before taking any locally purchased or prescribed drug. Because of the limited capacity of emergency medical care in Cape Verde, the risk of trauma is of great concern. To reduce the risk of accidents, the Peace Corps has strict guidelines about vehicle, motorcycle, and bicycle use.

Helping You Stay Healthy

The Peace Corps will provide you with all the recommended inoculations, medications, and information to stay healthy. Upon your arrival in Cape Verde, you will receive a medical handbook, as well as a first aid kit with supplies to take care of mild illnesses and first aid needs. The contents of the kit are listed later in this chapter.

During pre-service training, you will have access to basic first aid supplies in the medical kit. However, during this time, you will be responsible for your own supply of prescription drugs and any other specific medical supplies you require, as we will not order these items during training. Please bring a three-month supply of any prescription drugs you use, since they

may not be available here and it may take several months for new shipments to arrive.

You will have physicals at the midpoint and at the end of your service. If you develop a serious medical problem during your service, the medical contractor in Cape Verde will consult with the Office of Medical Services at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The health unit for Peace Corps/Cape Verde is maintained at the main office in Praia. The facility is similar to that of a small family practice clinic in the United States and it also contains a small pharmacy. The unit is staffed by a Peace Corps medical contractor or officer (also referred to as a PCMO). A Cape Verdean medical secretary and a registered nurse provide coverage on alternate weekends and when the PCMO is not available. The PCMO's primary responsibilities are to provide medical care, immunizations, and health training to trainees/Volunteers; and to assist Peace Corps staff in programming, counseling, and other support functions. The health unit is open five days a week during normal working hours. It is closed on weekends and holidays, but the PCMO, or his/her backup, is on call at all other times for emergencies via cellphone.

Maintaining Your Health

As a trainee or Volunteer, you must accept a certain amount of responsibility for maintaining your own health. Proper precautions will significantly reduce your risk of serious illness or injury. The old adage, "an ounce of prevention..." becomes extremely important in areas where medical diagnostic and treatment facilities are not up to the standards of the United States. Your most important responsibility in Cape Verde includes taking preventive measures.

It is critical to your health that you promptly report to the medical office or other designated facility for scheduled immunizations and that you let the medical contractor know immediately of significant illness and injuries.

Many diseases that afflict Volunteers worldwide are entirely preventable if proper food and water precautions are taken. These diseases include food poisoning, amebiasis, giardiasis, hepatitis A, dysentery, guinea worm, tapeworms, and typhoid fever. The medical contractor will discuss specific standards for water and food preparation for Cape Verde during pre-service training.

Abstinence is the only certain choice for prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). You are taking risks if you choose to be sexually active. To lessen risk, use a condom every time you have sex. Whether your partner is a Cape Verdean, a fellow trainee or Volunteer, or anyone else, do not assume this person is free of HIV/AIDS or other STDs. You will receive more information from the medical unit about this important issue.

Trainees and Volunteers are expected to adhere to an effective means of birth control to prevent unplanned pregnancies. The Peace Corps medical officer can help you decide on the most appropriate method to suit your individual needs. Contraceptives are available without charge from the Peace Corps medical officer.

Dental care, fillings, yearly cleanings, and X-rays (bite-wing) are provided in Cape Verde. Volunteers are expected to practice good oral hygiene habits that protect their teeth during their two years of service. Toothbrushes and fluoride toothpaste are available at local markets and dental floss is provided by the medical unit. There are several Cape Verdean dentists who provide U.S.-standard dental care to Volunteers.

If you wear eyeglasses, bring two durable pairs. The Peace Corps will purchase a new pair of eyeglasses from a government vendor if yours become damaged beyond repair, lost, or stolen. However, because the process takes two to three months and the frame choices are limited, it is worthwhile to have a good backup pair.

The Peace Corps in Cape Verde strongly discourages the use of contact lenses. Some Volunteers who used contact lenses have developed serious eye infections from poor sanitation and the dusty conditions that prevail here during much of the year. If you choose to wear contact lenses in Cape Verde, all expenses for the lenses and materials are your responsibility. Plan to ship or bring all contact lens supplies. The Peace Corps will not supply or replace contact lenses or associated solutions unless their use has been recommended by an ophthalmologist for a specific medical condition and the Peace Corps Office of Medical Services has given approval.

Women's Health Information

Pregnancy is a health condition that is treated in the same manner as other Volunteer health conditions requiring medical attention, but may also have programmatic ramifications. The Peace Corps is responsible for determining the medical risk and the availability of appropriate medical care if the Volunteer remains in-country. Given the circumstances under which Volunteers live and work in Peace Corps countries, it is rare that the Peace Corps medical and programmatic standards for continued service can be met. The majority of Volunteers who become pregnant are medically separated, terminating their Peace Corps service.

Regarding feminine hygiene products, only tampons are available in the health unit and are limited to regular size OB

tampons. Sanitary pads are available on the local market and are not provided by the health unit. If you require another brand of tampon other than OB regular, please bring a supply with you. Alternatively, you may want to look into a device called the Keeper, which many Volunteers use successfully (for more information about this product go to: www.thekeeper.com).

Your Peace Corps Medical Kit

The Peace Corps medical officer provides Volunteers with a first aid kit that contains basic items necessary to prevent and treat illnesses that might occur during service. Kit items can be periodically restocked at the Peace Corps medical office.

Medical Kit Contents

Diphenhydramine HCL (Benadryl): 25 mg tablets
Pseudoephedrine HCL (Sudafed): 30 mg tablets
Antacid tablets (Tums)
Antiseptic antimicrobial skin cleaner (Hibiclens)
Tinactin cream (Tolnaftate)
Bacitracin/Neomycin/Polymycin B ointment
Tetrahydrozoline eye drops (Visine)
Cepacol lozenges
Robitussin-DM lozenges (Cough calmers)
Iodine tablets (Water purification tablets)
Lip balm (Chapstick)
Insect repellent stick (Cutter's)
Oral thermometer (Fahrenheit)
Oral rehydration salts and Gatorade
Adhesive tape
Band-Aids

Butterfly closures

Ace bandage

Sterile gauze pads

Dental floss

Condoms

Red Cross First Aid and Personal Safety Manual

Scissors

Tweezers

Before You Leave: A Medical Checklist

If there has been any change in your health since the time you submitted your examination reports to the Peace Corps—physical, mental, or dental—you must immediately notify the Office of Medical Services. Failure to disclose new illnesses, injuries, allergies, or pregnancy can endanger your health and may jeopardize your eligibility to serve.

If your dental exam was done more than a year ago, or if your physical exam is more than two years old, contact the Office of Medical Services to find out whether you need to update your records. If your dentist or Peace Corps dental consultant has recommended that you undergo dental treatment or repair, you must complete that work and make sure your dentist sends requested confirmation reports or X-rays to the Peace Corps Office of Medical Services.

If you wish to avoid taking duplicate vaccinations, you should contact your physician's office, obtain a copy of your immunization record, and bring it with you to your pre-departure orientation (also called staging). If you have any immunizations prior to Peace Corps service, the Peace Corps cannot reimburse you for the cost. The Peace Corps will provide all the immunizations necessary for your overseas

assignment, either at your pre-departure orientation or shortly after you arrive in Cape Verde.

Bring a three-month supply of any prescription or over-the-counter medication you use on a regular basis, including birth-control pills. Although the Peace Corps cannot reimburse you for this three-month supply, we will order refills during your service. While awaiting shipment—which can take several months—you will be dependent on your own medication supply. The Peace Corps will not pay for herbal or nonprescribed medications, such as St. John's Wort, glucosamine, selenium, or anti-oxidant supplements.

You are encouraged to bring copies of medical prescriptions signed by your physician. This is not a requirement, although it might come in handy if you are questioned in transit about your on-hand three-month supply of prescription drugs.

If you are eligible for Medicare, over 50 years of age, or have a health condition that may restrict your future participation in health care plans, you may wish to consult an insurance specialist about unique coverage needs before your departure. The Peace Corps will provide all necessary health care from the time you leave for your pre-departure orientation until you complete your service. When you finish, you will be entitled to the post-service health care benefits described in the Peace Corps *Volunteer Handbook*. You may wish to consider keeping an existing health plan in effect during your service if you think age and/or pre-existing conditions might prevent you from re-enrolling in your current plan when you return home.

Safety and Security—Our Partnership

Serving as a Volunteer overseas entails certain safety and security risks. Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment, a limited understanding of the local language

and culture, and the perception of being a wealthy American are some of the factors that can put a Volunteer at risk. Property theft and burglaries are not uncommon. Incidents of physical and sexual assault do occur, although almost all Volunteers complete their two years of service without serious personal safety problems.

Beyond knowing that Peace Corps approaches safety and security as a partnership with you, it might be helpful to see how this partnership works. The Peace Corps has policies, procedures, and training in place to promote your safety. We depend on you to follow those policies and to put into practice what you have learned. An example of how this works in practice—in this case to help manage the risk of burglary—is:

- Peace Corps assesses the security environment where you will live and work
- Peace Corps inspects the house where you will live according to established security criteria
- Peace Corp provides you with resources to take measures such as installing new locks
- Peace Corps ensures you are welcomed by host country authorities in your new community
- Peace Corps responds to security concerns that you raise
- You lock your doors and windows
- You adopt a lifestyle appropriate to the community where you live
- You get to know neighbors
- You decide if purchasing personal articles insurance is appropriate for you

- You don't change residences before being authorized by Peace Corps
- You communicate concerns that you have to Peace Corps staff.

This *Welcome Book* contains sections on: Living Conditions and Volunteer Lifestyle; Peace Corps Training; and Your Health Care and Safety that all include important safety and security information to help you understand this partnership. The Peace Corps makes every effort to give Volunteers the tools they need to function in the safest way possible, because working to maximize the safety and security of Volunteers is our highest priority. Not only do we provide you with training and tools to prepare for the unexpected, but we teach you to identify, reduce, and manage the risks you may encounter.

Factors that Contribute to Volunteer Risk

There are several factors that can heighten a Volunteer's risk, many of which are within the Volunteer's control. By far the most common crime that Volunteers experience is theft. Thefts often occur when Volunteers are away from their sites, in crowded locations (such as markets or on public transportation), and when leaving items unattended.

Before you depart for Cape Verde there are several measures you can take to reduce your risk:

- Leave valuable objects in the U.S.
- Leave copies of important documents and account numbers in the U.S. with someone you trust.
- Purchase a hidden money pouch or "dummy" wallet as a decoy
- Purchase personal articles insurance

After you arrive in Cape Verde, you will receive more detailed information about common crimes, factors that contribute to Volunteer risk, and local strategies to reduce that risk. For example, Volunteers in Cape Verde learn to:

- Choose safe routes and times for travel, and travel with someone trusted by the community whenever possible
- Make sure one's personal appearance is respectful of local customs
- Avoid high-crime areas
- Know the local language to get help in an emergency
- Make friends with local people who are respected in the community
- Limit alcohol consumption

As you can see from this list, you have to be willing to work hard and adapt your lifestyle to minimize the potential for being a target for crime. As with anywhere in the world, crime does exist in Cape Verde. You can reduce your risk by avoiding situations that place you at risk and by taking precautions. Crime at the village or town level is less frequent than in large cities; people know each other and generally are less likely to steal from their neighbors. Tourist attractions in large towns are favorite worksites for pickpockets.

The following are other security concerns in Cape Verde of which you should be aware:

Security Issues in Cape Verde

When it comes to your safety and security in the Peace Corps, you have to be willing to adapt your behavior and lifestyle to minimize the potential for being a target of crime.

As anywhere in the world, crime does exist in Cape Verde. You can reduce your risk of becoming a target for crime by avoiding situations that make you feel uncomfortable and by taking advance precautions. Crime at the village or town level is less frequent than in the large cities; people know each other and generally will not steal from their neighbors. Tourist attractions, markets and beaches (especially in large towns), are the favorite places for pickpockets to ply their trade. While Cape Verde is known as a peaceful country, Peace Corps trainees and Volunteers may suffer from being easily identified targets for petty thieves. Petty theft is increasingly on the rise and the most common security risk. Purse snatchings are common in particular areas of Praia, and a lackadaisical attitude toward household security (securely locking doors and windows) has resulted in loss of personal property like MP3 players and CD collections. Paying attention to your personal and home security will be essential toward making your service incident free. Peace Corps/Cape Verde advises Volunteers to limit their travel to Praia. Integration into your community through CAREFUL selection of friendships can be one of the most effective ways of securing your personal safety.

We caution Volunteers to take their time getting into relationships. In Cape Verdean culture a woman essentially becomes the property of a man, whether you remain together or not.

Volunteers tend to attract a lot of attention both in large cities and at their sites, but they are more likely to receive negative attention in highly populated centers, and away from their support network —friends and colleagues—who look out for them. While whistles and exclamations may be fairly common on the street, this behavior can be reduced if you dress conservatively, abide by local cultural norms, and respond according to the training you will receive.

Staying Safe: Don't Be a Target for Crime

You must be prepared to take on a large degree of responsibility for your own safety. You can make yourself less of a target, ensure that your home is secure, and develop relationships in your community that will make you an unlikely victim of crime. While the factors that contribute to your risk in Cape Verde may be different, in many ways you can better assure your safety by doing what you would do if you moved to a new city anywhere: Be cautious, check things out, ask questions, learn about your neighborhood, know where the more risky locations are, use common sense, and be aware. You can reduce your vulnerability to crime by integrating into your community, learning the local language, acting responsibly, and abiding by Peace Corps policies and procedures. Serving safely and effectively in Cape Verde will require that you accept some restrictions on your current lifestyle.

Support from Staff

If a trainee or Volunteer is the victim of a safety incident, Peace Corps staff is prepared to provide support. All Peace Corps posts have procedures in place to respond to incidents of crime committed against Volunteers. The first priority for all posts in the aftermath of an incident is to ensure the Volunteer is safe and receiving any medical treatment that is required. After assuring the safety of the Volunteer, Peace Corps staff members provide support by reassessing the Volunteer's worksite and housing arrangements and making any adjustments, as needed. In some cases, the nature of the incident may necessitate a site or housing transfer. Peace Corps staff will also assist Volunteers with preserving their rights to pursue legal sanctions against the perpetrators of the crime. It is very important that Volunteers report incidents as they occur, not only to protect their peer Volunteers, but also

to preserve the future right to prosecute. Should Volunteers decide later in the process that they want to proceed with the prosecution of their assailant, this option may no longer exist if the evidence of the event has not been preserved at the time of the incident.

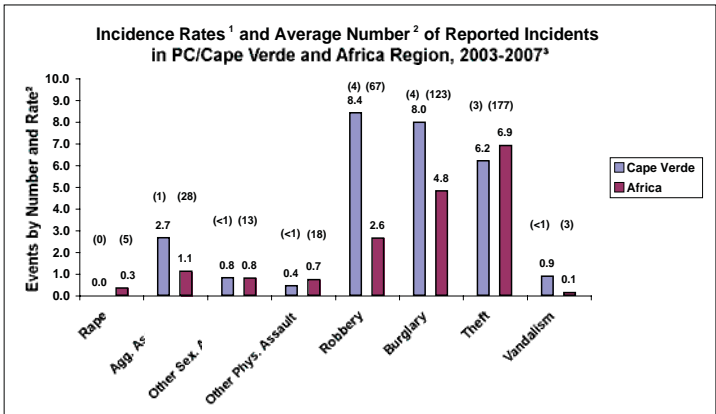
Crime Data for Cape Verde

The country-specific data chart below shows the average annual rates of the major types of crimes reported by Peace Corps Volunteers/trainees in Cape Verde compared to all other Africa programs as a whole. It can be understood as an approximation of the number of reported incidents per 100 Volunteers in a year.

The incidence rate for each type of crime is the number of crime events relative to the Volunteer/trainee population. It is expressed on the chart as a ratio of crime to Volunteer and trainee years (or V/T years, which is a measure of 12 full months of V/T service) to allow for a statistically valid way to compare crime data across countries.

Few Peace Corps Volunteers are victims of serious crimes and crimes that do occur overseas are investigated and prosecuted by local authorities through the local criminal justice system. If you are the victim of a crime, you will decide if you wish to pursue prosecution. If you decide to prosecute, Peace Corps will be there to assist you. One of our tasks is to ensure you are fully informed of your options and understand how the local legal process works. Peace Corps will help you ensure your rights are protected to the fullest extent possible under the laws of the country.

If you are the victim of a serious crime, you will learn how to get to a safe location as quickly as possible and contact your Peace Corps office. It's important that you notify Peace Corps as soon as you can so Peace Corps can provide you with the help you need.



¹Incidence rates equal the number of assaults per 100 Volunteers and trainees per year (V/T years). Since most sexual assaults occur against females, only female V/Ts are calculated in rapes and other sexual assaults.

²The average numbers of incidents are in parenthesis and equal the average number of reported incidents for each year between 2003–2007. Numbers of incidents are approximate due to rounding.

³Due to the small number of V/T years, incidence rates should be interpreted with caution.

Source data on incidents are drawn from Assault Notification Surveillance System (ANSS), Epidemiologic Surveillance System (ESS), and Crime Incident Reporting Form (CIRF); the information is accurate as of 4-21-09.

Volunteer Safety Support in Cape Verde

The Peace Corps’ approach to safety is a five-pronged plan to help you stay safe during your service and includes the following: information sharing, Volunteer training, site selection criteria, a detailed emergency action plan, and protocols for addressing safety and security incidents. Cape Verde’s in-country safety program is outlined below.

The Peace Corps/ Cape Verde office will keep you informed of any issues that may impact Volunteer safety through **information sharing**. Regular updates will be provided in Volunteer newsletters and in memorandums from the country director. In the event of a critical situation or emergency, you will be contacted through the emergency communication network. An important component of the capacity of the

Peace Corps to keep you informed is your buy-in to the partnership concept with the Peace Corps staff. It is expected that you will do your part in ensuring that Peace Corps staff members are kept apprised of your movements in-country so that they are capable of informing you.

Volunteer training will include sessions on specific safety and security issues in Cape Verde. This training will prepare you to adopt a culturally appropriate lifestyle and exercise judgment that promotes safety and reduces risk in your home, at work, and while traveling. Safety training is offered throughout service and is integrated into the language, cross-cultural aspects, health, and other components of training. You will be expected to successfully complete all training competencies in a variety of areas, including safety and security, as a condition of service.

Certain **site selection criteria** are used to determine safe housing for Volunteers before their arrival. The Peace Corps staff works closely with host communities and counterpart agencies to help prepare them for a Volunteer's arrival and to establish expectations of their respective roles in supporting the Volunteer. Each site is inspected before the Volunteer's arrival to ensure placement in appropriate, safe, and secure housing and worksites. Site selection is based, in part, on any relevant site history; access to medical, banking, postal, and other essential services; availability of communications, transportation, and markets; different housing options and living arrangements; and other Volunteer support needs.

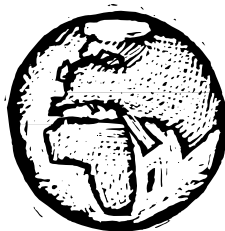
You will also learn about Peace Corps/ Cape Verde's **detailed emergency action plan**, which is implemented in the event of civil or political unrest or a natural disaster. When you arrive at your site, you will complete and submit a site locator form with your address, contact information, and a map to

your house. If there is a security threat, you will gather with other Volunteers in Cape Verde at predetermined locations until the situation is resolved or the Peace Corps decides to evacuate.

Finally, in order for the Peace Corps to be fully responsive to the needs of Volunteers, it is imperative that Volunteers immediately report any security incident to the Peace Corps office. The Peace Corps has established **protocols for addressing safety and security incidents** in a timely and appropriate manner, and it collects and evaluates safety and security data to track trends and develop strategies to minimize risks to future Volunteers.



DIVERSITY AND CROSS-CULTURAL ISSUES



In fulfilling the Peace Corps' mandate to share the face of America with our host countries, we are making special efforts to see that all of America's richness is reflected in the Volunteer corps. More Americans of color are serving in today's Peace Corps than at any time in recent years. Differences in race, ethnic background, age, religion, and sexual orientation are expected and welcome among our Volunteers. Part of the Peace Corps' mission is to help dispel any notion that Americans are all of one origin or race, and to establish that each of us is as thoroughly American as the other, despite our many differences. Our diversity helps us accomplish that goal.

In other ways, however, our diversity poses challenges. In Cape Verde, as in other Peace Corps host countries, Volunteers' behavior, lifestyles, background, and beliefs will be judged in a cultural context very different from our own. Certain personal perspectives or characteristics considered familiar and commonly accepted in the United States may be quite uncommon, unacceptable, or even repressed.

Outside of Cape Verde's larger cities, residents of smaller towns and rural communities have had relatively little exposure to other cultures, races, religions, and lifestyles. What is advertised as "typical" cultural behavior or norms may also be a narrow and selective interpretation, such as the perception in some countries that all Americans are rich and have blond hair and blue eyes. Cape Verdeans are known for their generous hospitality to foreigners; however, members of the community in which you will live may display a range

of reactions to differences that you present. Volunteers are encouraged to be supportive of one another.

To ease the transition and adapt to life in Cape Verde, you may need to make some temporary, yet fundamental compromises with how you see yourself as an American and as an individual. For example, female Volunteers may not be able to exercise the independence available to them in the United States; political discussions will need to be handled with great care; and some of your personal beliefs may best remain undisclosed. You will need to develop techniques and personal strategies for coping with these and other limits. Peace Corps staff will lead diversity and sensitivity discussions during your pre-service training and will be on call to provide support, but the challenge ultimately will be your own.

Overview of Diversity in Cape Verde

The Peace Corps staff in Cape Verde recognizes adjustment issues that come with diversity and will endeavor to provide support and guidance. During pre-service training, two diversity sessions and through discussion, Volunteer sessions will be held to discuss diversity and coping mechanisms. We look forward to having male and female Volunteers from a variety of cultures, backgrounds, religions, ethnic groups, sexual orientation and ages and hope that you will become part of a diverse group of Americans who will take pride in supporting each other and demonstrating the richness of American culture.

What Might A Volunteer Face?

The comments below are intended to stimulate thought and discussion. At the head of each section, the Peace Corps/ Cape Verde staff makes comments relevant to the Volunteer experience within Cape Verde. The comments come from a

cross-section of Volunteers who have served in Cape Verde. It is important to recognize that these issues may or may not have an impact on your own Volunteer experience. Rather, they are here to make all Peace Corps Volunteers aware of the issues that one particular group or another may have to deal with. As you read them, you might ask yourself, “How would I feel if that happened to me?” and “How could I help a fellow Volunteer if it happened to him or her?” Each section concludes with personal comments from individual Volunteers on their experience in Cape Verde.

Possible Issues for Female Volunteers

Cape Verde is a traditional, “macho” culture. Although women are found in all sectors of society, including staff leadership positions, the people of Cape Verde at the local community level may not have had much experience with women who take professional roles or live independently from their families. This is especially true in small villages and remote areas of Cape Verde. It may take Volunteers a bit more time to make female friends, since socialization time for Cape Verde women is limited due to home and children responsibilities. Female Volunteers are encouraged to visit women in their homes. Current Volunteers feel that service is more difficult for female Volunteers than for males because of the machismo culture. One of the challenges of living and working in Cape Verde is coping effectively and constructively with the differing status and standards of behavior for women and men. If this isn’t challenging enough, female Volunteers will also face unwanted attention from host country men. You will be invited to discuss these and other issues once you are a Volunteer, through direct or indirect participation in the Peace Corps/Cape Verde gender and development, cross culture training and diversity committee activities.

Female Volunteers may:

- Find that being a single woman living alone is not the cultural norm
- Receive more unwanted and inappropriate attention from Cape Verdean men than in the United States
- Have to work harder than male Volunteers to gain the respect of Cape Verdean colleagues in the workplace
- Experience resentment from Cape Verdean women for the attention they are getting from Cape Verdean men
- Need to keep a discreet social life in public (e.g., drinking in bars) to avoid developing an undesirable reputation in their community

Volunteer Comment:

“I bet if any of the female Volunteers received a dime for every time they were called ‘beautiful’ by a passing stranger, we could be Peace Corps Volunteers for the rest of our lives. Who needs a 401K when you have that much money? One peculiar comment was when a man told me I was as beautiful as my dog. That one really confused me, was it a compliment or an insult? I just ignore such comments and keep walking when I am in the city. In my town, I actually bite my tongue and say thank you. On the bright side, if you do move to a small town like I did, you will not hear such comments much after the first month. Furthermore, in the local government office where I work, there are many other women, so that has not posed an issue in my case. Only once did I hear a comment about how engineers (which is what my degree is in) are usually thought to be male, and that was said by my colleagues in a gender bias workshop during training. So, in conclusion, although it is a ‘macho’ culture, Cape Verde is a pretty good place for female Volunteers too.”

Possible Issues for Volunteers of Color

African-American Volunteers have often expressed that they are treated according to local social norms because it is assumed they are Cape Verdean. On the islands where the population is more mixed, there is sometimes differentiated treatment for people with darker skin. African-American Volunteers may be expected to learn the local language more quickly than others, particularly during the homestay program in PST and may be more quickly accepted into the culture. They may not be recognized as Americans since the dominating image Cape Verdeans get from America is that of white people. They may also be perceived as considering themselves superior to Cape Verdeans.

Hispanic Volunteers may not be considered or perceived as “real” Americans. Because of Hispanic surnames, Peace Corps Volunteers may be expected to learn Portuguese faster than non-Hispanic colleagues. The host-country culture may project stereotyped perceptions of other Hispanic cultures; Volunteers may be labeled *o Cubano* or *el Mexicano*.

Asian-American Volunteers may be subject to stereotyped behavior observed in films, the “Kung Fu Syndrome.” They may not be accepted as Americans, perhaps being identified by their cultural heritage instead of their American citizenship. No matter what country in Asia they are descendents of, they are called Chinese. There is a growing merchant Chinese class in Cape Verde, so Asian-American Volunteers are often thought to be store owners. There is little contact with Indian or Middle Eastern people in Cape Verde and, therefore, Americans with these backgrounds usually raise a lot of curiosity among Cape Verdeans. In spite of these stereotypes, Asian-American Volunteers find Cape Verdeans are curious about and interested in their heritage and graciously welcome them into their homes and communities.

Volunteer Comment:

“For my first few weeks in Cape Verde, as a Volunteer of Indian ancestry and pale skin still lingering from the dreadful Michigan winter, I found myself perpetually being asked if I was from one of the Cape Verdean islands, usually either Fogo or Brava. After some time here, I am now being asked merely if I am Cape Verdean. Granted, this happens no matter if I am by myself or with a group of fellow Peace Corps Volunteers, but they never seem to believe me when I answer with a firm ‘yes.’ Yes, all doubt of my actually being from the United States is erased once they hear me speak in my obviously foreign Creole. I am asked this question very often. I have even heard of people being shocked that I am actually American. Though in the end, it is not that much different from my experience in the United States. People are very tolerant, and only once have I been told that I am actually not American, and I believe the person was just joking. Trust me, it also has its advantages. One European tourist actually went home with a picture of my dog and me thinking he captured a young Cape Verdean with her adorable puppy. I laughed about that for days!”

Possible Issues for Senior Volunteers

Respect comes with age in Cape Verde. Younger Volunteers may have to work harder than their older colleagues to be accepted as professionals. However, older Volunteers may feel isolated within the Peace Corps overseas, since the majority of the Volunteers are in their 20s.

In training, older Volunteers may:

- Encounter frustrations in having their needs met for an effective learning environment in areas such as timing, presentation, and style
- Need to be assertive in developing an effective, individual approach to language learning based on

their learning style, but be able to do this in a hot, dry, windy, and often challenging climate

In terms of inclusion and acceptance, older Volunteers may:

- Work and live with individuals in the Peace Corps community who have little understanding and respect for the lives and experiences as senior Americans
- Not receive desired personal support from younger Volunteers
- Not feel inclined to participate fully in order to “give the young folks their turn”
- Be reluctant to share personal, sexual, or health concerns
- Find that younger Volunteers look to them for advice and support. Some seniors find this a very enjoyable part of the Volunteer experience, while others choose not to fill this role

Volunteer Comment

This is a good place for senior teachers because the students love older people, especially if the older person is open to hugs and affection from students. I believe they consider seniors safe to show affection to. A lot do not have grandparents and this could be part of it.

Possible Issues for Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Volunteers

There are no laws that prohibit homosexual, lesbian, or bisexual behavior in Cape Verde, but there is a general attitude of ignoring that it exists. Cape Verdean gays often live in anonymity. Being in a “macho” society, there are strict expectations of how men and women should look and behave. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual Volunteers may serve for two

years without meeting openly gay Volunteers or community members.

Men will encounter a “macho” environment, talk of conquest, girl watching, and tell dirty jokes. Lesbians, like all women, will have to deal with constant questions about boyfriends, marriage, and sex. Most openly gay Cape Verdeans have migrated to the larger cities, while most Peace Corps Volunteers are posted in smaller towns, where cultural difficulties may be greater. Civil liberties are frequently ignored; gays may be hassled in bars or in the streets.

Volunteer Comment:

There are no openly gay clubs, bars, restaurants, film festivals, or social services in Cape Verde. Such is to be expected. In the absence of these Western ‘spaces,’ Cape Verde offers a different perspective from which to rethink identity politics. Don’t come looking to start a revolution; do be prepared to appreciate the many ways people navigate an extraordinarily rigid ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ cultural imperative and more.

Possible Religious Issues for Volunteers

Volunteers are often asked about their religious affiliation and may be invited to attend a community church. Volunteers not in the practice of attending church may be challenged to explain their reluctance, but it is possible to politely decline if the church or religious practice is not of your choice. In general, Cape Verdeans do not judge people who do not attend church. There is very little knowledge about non-Christian and non-Western religions (Cape Verde is about 90 percent Roman Catholic, with the rest being other Christian denominations). Cape Verdeans are generally curious and appreciate learning about other religions and cultures.

Volunteer Comment:

It still amazes me that I have yet to meet one Cape Verdean who has heard of Hinduism. However, it does have its benefits. It is hard enough to explain what the factory I worked at before I came here is, let alone try to explain the religion of Hinduism. Very often I am asked if I go to Mass at one of the two churches in my town, and when I say 'no,' I am kindly asked why. I, in exchange, try to explain that I am of another religion. Most people leave it there, besides a few questions about the kind of church (I have not met anyone who has heard of a temple either) I attend back in the States.

Possible Issues for Volunteers with Disabilities

As a disabled Volunteer in Cape Verde, you may find that you face a special set of challenges. In Cape Verde, as in other parts of the world, some people may hold prejudicial attitudes about individuals with disabilities and may discriminate against them. There is none of the infrastructure to accommodate individuals with disabilities that has been developed in the United States. In Cape Verde, disabled Volunteers may find the language used to describe people with a disability brutal. The concept of "politically correct" does not exist here. A Volunteer with a disability may be referred to as "the crippled one," "the blind one," "the dumb one," or "the deaf one." The style of language in Cape Verde can be very direct and simple, but it is not meant to be offensive.

That being said, as part of the medical clearance process, the Peace Corps Office of Medical Services determined that you were physically and emotionally capable, with or without reasonable accommodations, to perform a full tour

of Volunteer service in Cape Verde without unreasonable risk of harm to yourself or interruption of your service in a hot, hilly dry, windy, and often challenging climate without much infrastructure on most of the islands. Peace Corps/Cape Verde staff will work with disabled Volunteers to make reasonable accommodations in training, housing, jobsites, and other areas to enable them to serve safely and effectively.

NOTES



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



How much luggage will I be allowed to bring to Cape Verde?

Most airlines have baggage size and weight limits and assess charges for transport of baggage that exceeds this allowance. The Peace Corps has its own size and weight limitations, and will not pay the cost of transport for baggage that exceeds these limitations. The authorized baggage allowance is subject to change but at the time of this edit, two checked pieces of luggage with combined dimensions of both pieces not to exceed 107 inches (length + width + height) and a carry-on bag with dimensions of no more than 45 inches were still allowed on international flights from the USA. Checked baggage should not exceed 80 pounds total with a maximum weight allowance of 50 pounds for any one bag. DUE TO REGULAR CHANGES IN AIRLINE BAGGAGE LIMIT POLICIES IN RECENT YEARS, PLEASE VERIFY THIS INFORMATION PRIOR TO YOUR DEPARTURE!

Peace Corps Volunteers are not allowed to take pets, weapons, explosives, radio transmitters (shortwave radios are permitted), automobiles, or motorcycles to their overseas assignments. Do not pack flammable materials or liquids such as lighter fluid, cleaning solvents, hair spray, or aerosol containers. This is an important safety precaution.

What is the electric current in Cape Verde?

The electric current in Cape Verde is 220 volts. Some sites do not have electricity 24 hours a day, but only for part of the day, while others do not have electricity at all. There are surges, spikes, outages, brown-outs, low voltage levels, and other power quality issues that put a strain on voltage

converters, electronics, and appliances, so bring good quality items. The Peace Corps does not provide transformers. Batteries are available here, but their quality is sometimes questionable so rechargeable ones with a small battery charger are a good option for reliability and the environment

How much money should I bring?

Volunteers are expected to live at the same level as the people in their community. They are given a settling-in allowance and a monthly living allowance, which should cover their basic expenses. Often Volunteers wish to bring additional money for vacation travel to other countries. For security purposes credit cards and traveler's checks are preferable to cash. However, banks may charge a large fee to cash traveler's checks. If you choose to bring extra money, plan on bringing the amount that suits your own personal travel plans and needs.

When can I take vacation and have people visit me?

Each Volunteer accrues two vacation days per month of service (excluding training). Leave may not be taken during training, the first three months of service, or the last three months of service, except in conjunction with an authorized emergency leave. Family and friends are welcome to visit you after pre-service training and the first three months of service as long as their stay does not interfere with your work. Extended stays at your site are not encouraged and may require permission from the country director. The Peace Corps cannot provide your visitors with visa or travel assistance.

Will my belongings be covered by insurance?

The Peace Corps does not provide insurance coverage for personal effects. However, such insurance can be purchased before you leave. Ultimately, Volunteers are responsible for the safekeeping of their personal belongings. If you wish, you may contact your own insurance company; additionally, insurance application forms will be made available and we encourage you to consider them carefully. Additional information about insurance should be obtained by calling the company directly. Volunteers should not ship or take valuable items overseas. Jewelry, watches, radios, cameras, and expensive appliances are subject to loss, theft, and breakage, and in many places, satisfactory maintenance and repair services are not available.

Do I need an international driver's license?

Volunteers in Cape Verde do not need to get an international driver's license. Operation of privately-owned vehicles is prohibited. Most urban travel is by bus or taxi. Rural travel ranges from buses to mini-buses to trucks to a lot of walking. On very rare occasions, a Volunteer may be asked to drive a sponsor's vehicle, but this is only with prior written permission from the country director. Should this occur, the Volunteer may obtain a local driver's license. Your U.S. driver's license will facilitate the process, so bring it with you just in case.

What should I bring as gifts for friends and my host family?

This is not a requirement, and be aware of what effect such a precedence may have on future Volunteers where you live. A token of friendship is sufficient. Some gift suggestions include: "knick-knacks" for the house; pictures, books, or calendars of American scenes; souvenirs from your area; hard candies that will not melt or spoil; or photos to give away.

Where will my site assignment be when I finish training and how isolated will I be?

Peace Corps trainees are not assigned sites until after they have successfully completed the competencies of pre-service training and passed their language proficiency exam(s). This gives the Peace Corps staff the opportunity to assess each trainee's technical, cultural, and language skills prior to assigning sites, in addition to finalizing site selections with our partners and counterparts. If feasible, you may have the opportunity to provide input on your work, site preferences, including geographical location, distance from other Volunteers, or living conditions. However, many factors influence the site selection process and the Peace Corps cannot guarantee placement where you might ideally like to be. Most Volunteers will live in small towns but will usually be within one hour from the nearest Volunteer. There will usually be at least one Volunteer based on seven of the nine inhabited islands, with no one on Brava or Boavista.

How can my family contact me in an emergency?

The Peace Corps' Office of Special Services provides assistance in handling emergencies affecting trainees and Volunteers or their families. Before leaving the United States, you should instruct your family to notify the Office of Special Services immediately if an emergency arises, such as a serious illness or death of a family member. During normal business hours, the number for the Office of Special Services is 1.800.424.8580, extension 1470. After normal business hours and on weekends and holidays, the special services duty officer can always be reached at 202.638.2574.

For non-emergency questions, your family can get information from country desk staff at the Peace Corps by calling 1.800.424.8580, and dialing extension 2317 or 2318.

Can I call home from Cape Verde?

International phone service to and from Cape Verde is reasonably good. Calling cards may be used from some telephones. Before you leave the United States, check with your international long distance company to see if they provide services in Cape Verde. Also, small businesses and stores like Store 24 in the Boston area, have inexpensive international calling cards. Many Cape Verdeans have found that calling with the calling card is a lot cheaper and convenient. Most Volunteers have telephones in their homes and for a fee (it is significantly more expensive to make calls from Cape Verde to the U.S. than the other way around) many of you will be able to call the U.S. with little difficulty.

Should I bring a cellular phone with me?

Cellphones are available and widely used in Cape Verde; however, SIM cards can be more expensive than in the U.S. and services have not reached some remote areas. Your cellphone from the U.S. will not work here unless you bring an unlocked tri or quad band with the correct specifications for West Africa. Cellphones are widely used in the workplace and communities. They also are targets for theft so use them safely and with discretion. Text messaging or dialing calls while walking in public areas is not advised and is better down in your home or office.

Will there be email and Internet access? Should I bring my computer?

Email access is available in all cities and most small towns. It is not yet available in remote areas. Many Volunteers find it a great advantage to have their computers with them for work and Internet use. Please note, however, that the Internet will be of limited use if you are posted in a remote site.



WELCOME LETTERS FROM CAPE VERDE VOLUNTEERS



Hello, and congratulations to future trainees and Volunteers!

Welcome to the Peace Corps. I am a second-year Volunteer, rounding off my service in the area of youth development in the large town of Assomada, on the island of Santiago. During the past 1 1/2 years, I feel as though I have seen and done “it all,” so hopefully I can provide for you a glimpse into what Cape Verde is like.

Mingling with your feelings of anxiety, there are likely more questions than there are Cape Verdeans living in Boston. Rest assured, not all questions will be answered yet, but in due time, things will come. Get used to being patient and flexible (two words you will soon grow tired of hearing), but don’t let it keep you from asking what’s on your mind.

You will soon be entering one of the more diverse countries I have been to in my short life, making any “introduction” or generalization quite difficult. Just know that once you get here, your experience could be similar or vastly different from what other Volunteers have seen and lived—the best we can do is present some of the possibilities so you know what could happen. Do know in the beginning, though, that when you arrive it may not be what you imagined Peace Corps/Africa to look like. Cape Verde is simply an in-between world that lacks an appropriate label or definition of self.

That said, your lifestyle won’t be one of entirely physical deprivation; you may have electricity and possibly occasional running water. A few Volunteers have even had hot water. Many places have a variety of food options (though admittedly other islands may not), and the island of Santiago has access to most anything you may need (we’re talking “need” here, not fancy American-style “wants”).

However, I hesitate to tell you that life here is easy. Besides the challenges typical of crossing cultures, learning new languages, and interacting in a completely foreign environment as a quite obvious foreigner, Cape Verde can be a deceptively difficult place to accomplish what you want to, presenting adversities you wouldn't imagine at first. Underneath the seemingly "on its way to developed" surface lies a frustrating lack of infrastructure and water with many exasperating attitudes confronting your attempts to start projects and present new ideas. While you may have more opportunities for change in Cape Verde based on its level of development, you have much to overcome in the process.

Thus, instead of bug-infested latrines, you're more likely to dread the aggravating office politics inherent in your three-hour meetings held in Portuguese—if that is your work environment. Or rather than wondering what to do with your dozens of laptop-free hours in the dark (without electricity), you may be wondering what to do you with a fairly unstructured job in a community that doesn't know what it wants or needs, other than *djuda* (help).

While there are inherent difficulties associated with working in Cape Verde (not the least of which, for me, came with being a blonde female who never again wants to hear “*Branca, n gosta di bo*,” or “White girl, I like you”; it truly is a good place for Peace Corps to be for many reasons. You get the diversity of nine separate islands, each akin to being a separate country with a slightly different creole, culture, and topography for you to explore. Cape Verde is a country of peace and international friendship, not experiencing political, religious, or cultural conflict, nor the extremes of desperation and sometimes corruption existing on the continent (mainland Africa).

I work with two different youth organizations, one a center for girls who are abused, orphaned, abandoned, or neglected, and the other a general youth volunteer center. I spent my first six months being completely overwhelmed, partly because of the frightening stress of the brand new, understaffed, under-supported girls' center, although this was

also due to both centers wanting all of me, all the time. Over time, I have been forced to learn how to say “no” and have learned that the role of a Peace Corps Volunteer is not a 9 to 5-er. I have freedom to collaborate with as many different organizations and individuals as possible, continually building and maintaining contacts and creating links where there were none before. Likely there will never be a lack of “needs” or things to do, but you have to let your skills, interests, and willingness of partner institutions define what you choose to become or not become involved in.

It is common to share housing with another Volunteer especially in the less rural sites. The only thing I would suggest is to maintain as much autonomy as possible, immersing yourself in work and your community and meeting people, so you are not finding yourself using an American sitemate as a crutch who happens to speak your language.

Language is probably the most important thing, particularly initially, so my suggestion is to try and learn a bit of Portuguese before coming (even though Kriolu is a different language, there are many commonalities and everything is written in Portuguese). Once you get here, throw yourself into learning Kriolu. It will be tough and humbling, and you may speak like a 3-year-old for awhile, but make the effort, because if you don't you will have a much more challenging experience. And it is so rewarding to understand the jokes and be able to tell them in the local language.

Definitely bring business casual clothes, which may seem like a vague classification (what does that mean in Africa). Dress style is huge for Cape Verdeans, and they make sure to look *bazofa* (super fly) at all times.

Other than that, just be prepared to open yourself up to a new culture and new experiences. Don't remain so stuck in your ways that you miss out on new experiences, traditions, and ways of thinking. Push yourself farther than you thought possible, and don't get bogged down with expectations—you will always end up disappointed. Relax, sip your Fanta, and enjoy the music! Best of luck to you all.

— Courtney Phelps

Congratulations on your invitation to Cape Verde!

I am a community development Volunteer living in Paul, Santo Antão. Since I've only been a Volunteer for three months at the time of this writing, I may be short on experience, but I can relate well to your excitement and anxiety, as I remember like yesterday opening this welcome packet and reading it cover to cover. You've been dying for more concrete information other than "you'll be going to somewhere in Africa in July." Well, although you'll find some much-needed specific information in this packet, there will still be a lot of room for surprises and you'll need to be flexible. Part of the reason is that Cape Verde is a country rich in diversity. Every island looks different, has people who look different from people on other islands, and has slightly different versions of Kriolu.

I work for a Câmara Municipal (municipality office) here in Paul. I came here with a job description of helping the women of this town build their own small business, but it seems that my job will be what they and I want to make it. There seems to be a lot of room for exploration and implementation. I'm still trying to figure things out, but the process itself is very interesting.

I also came to Paul after nine weeks of training, thinking I had a reasonable understanding of Kriolu after studying it for four hours a day during training and speaking it with my host family. I found out how different the same Kriolu can be, because I couldn't understand anything people were saying to me for the first month, no matter how slowly I had them speak to me.

On a lighter note, I came here prepared for a very simple lifestyle, but it turns out that I have a clean, big house with flushable toilet (when there is water), electricity, and (slow, but still) Internet access. I can do my banking and buy most things in a neighboring town that is a 15-minute bush taxi ride away.

There are also encounters that I had no expectations for, like local folks who catch some fish in the ocean during

the day, walk it up the river, start a fire, then put the fish, chopped up vegetables and green bananas into a pot and make *Cald d' Pexi* (fish soup) and serve it on banana leaves. Another thing I wasn't prepared for is how people do nothing but "hang out." People invited me into their homes before they know me. People walk around town and see who else is walking around, see what's going on, and "hang out." Kids play on the street under streetlights until late at night. This was very odd to me since I come from Los Angeles where people rarely walk on the streets.

So, even after staging, training, site announcement, and getting to the site, there are still plenty of surprises. At first I was frustrated with how different the Paulense Kriolu (Kriolu of Paul) was compared to that of Santiago, but now I'm very happy to be learning our special dialect, which people are so proud of. I've come to welcome such surprises and new experiences. After all, that's part of why I'm here—to experience a culture different than in America. And I'm sure every other Volunteer in Cape Verde has a different experience than mine.

Finally, I wish I had started learning Portuguese early so that Kriolu acquisition would be smoother; I'm so happy to have brought my laptop (set up Outlook to minimize time online); I regretted not buying a memory stick, but managed to get one" iPod is a great idea: blank CDs here are ridiculously expensive: and you can find a good supply of books at transit house or a previous Volunteer's house so save the weight for other stuff. Kitchen stuff will be loved by your host moms and sisters (a good can opener, veggie peeler, etc.). And, if all else fails, you can have your family send stuff for two to seven weeks. However, I have yet to receive my M-Bag that I had my roommate send to me five months ago.

Congrats again and good luck

—Kayo Shiraishi



Dear Future Volunteers,

I am a married Master's International environmental Volunteer assigned to Praia. My husband and I live in a new apartment in a safe area of town. Praia, although it is the capital, maintains a small town mentality; everyone will know who you are, even though you may not know them. Wherever you are assigned to live, you will be the talk of the town, your life will no longer be private, and your neighbors will know where you are the majority of time. I've found the key is to embrace this. There is a lot of security in knowing that if I'm not following my normal routine, someone is keeping an eye out for me.

Life as a married Volunteer is different than that of a single Volunteer. My greatest challenge has been integrating into my community. In the beginning, I had to force myself to leave the house some days. Life here is very different from the States and it's easy to stay at home with your spouse where things are comfortable. In addition, it is a bit more difficult for female Volunteers to meet other female Cape Verdean friends. The roles of men and women are very traditional here and, at times, I have found it difficult to relate. Despite some initial difficulties, I have found a few families that I make a point of visiting every week after work and they have been both an excellent support system and patient teachers.

My assignment has me working with the General Direction of Environment as a biologist in a program aimed to conserve globally significant biodiversity throughout the country. I work from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., take lunch until 2 p.m. and then finish at 6 p.m. The government here is working very hard to advance and I have found people to be open and appreciative of Peace Corps. Your experience here is truly what you make of it; there are endless opportunities to implement new ideas and learn another culture.

Although Cape Verde is a developing country, it is in a unique position. The country offers many services and there are actually few items that you cannot find here. Peace Corps has a large library of books for both pleasure and reference.

Getting around is relatively easy, they have an excellent bus system to get out of the city (shuttle vans leave about every 30 minutes) and you can use them to move around the island. I've also found the living allowance to be plenty to buy food, supplies, and even travel around the island a bit.

Be prepared in the beginning to be patient—training is trying, you may not sleep well initially, it takes a while for your stomach to adjust to the new food, communicating is a challenge, and you're in class five days a week. Once your body acclimates, life gets a lot easier. In fact, I am probably the healthiest I've ever been. If you thought the application process was difficult, it only gets harder, but keep in mind all the waiting you've done and patience you've had will pay off. It is indeed a once-in-a-lifetime experience!

—Kimberly King



Hey y'all, my name is Tamika and I'm writing from Calheta, São Miguel, on the island of Santiago. I guess that you could say that Calheta is "a little bit country, a little bit rock and roll." We have many of the conveniences you might find in a city here, but the people are still primarily fishers and farmers. In fact, we supply the cities with their fruits and vegetables, most of which, unfortunately, never stay here.

Being a Volunteer of color in Africa has many challenges and victories. Other than 50-cent, Michael Jordan, and Jay-Z, the only other persons of African descent many Cape Verdeans know about are family members who immigrated to the States. Being a Volunteer of color has its advantages, like being readily accepted in your community or as a member of a family. On the other hand, Volunteers of color are often expected to speak Kriolu faster and better than their colleagues, and cultural norms and customs that apply to Cape Verdeans often get applied to Volunteers of color, especially in regards to dating, friendships, or even the clothes you wear!

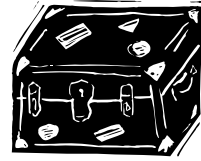
I work at the Centro de Juventude (youth center) and my responsibilities include everything from soup to nuts. I teach a computer class, I work with a youth group that will serve as peer educators for other youth, I tutor English classes, and counsel young women. While I do love my job at least 90 percent of the time, the other 10 percent is filled with plain old culture shock and normal everyday frustrations. Being a Volunteer is not an easy task; it requires a lot of patience and perseverance. It requires thinking that small is beautiful and that development does not necessitate super-size ideas.

—Tamika

NOTES



PACKING LIST



This list has been compiled by Volunteers serving in Cape Verde and is based on their collective experience. Use it as an informal guide in making your own list, bearing in mind that experience is individual. There is no perfect list! You can always have things sent to you later. You obviously cannot bring everything we mention, so consider those items that make the most sense to you personally and professionally. As you decide what to bring, keep in mind that you have an 80-pound weight restriction on baggage. And remember, although it may be more expensive than back home, *you can find and buy most things you may need in Cape Verde!*

General Clothing

Keep in mind that traditional scrub board washing techniques tend to wear out clothing at a fast rate. This is a hot, arid and windy climate: modest cotton clothing is usually a good choice

Women

- Dresses: light casual and a couple of nice ones for special occasions
- Skirts: wash and wear
- Blouses: casual blouses for work, any style; preferably light colors
- Pants: casual slacks and jeans both come in handy and are acceptable for work. Baggy and ragged jeans are not acceptable for work, trainings or official events
- Shorts: are acceptable for casual wear, but not at work
- T-shirts

- Shoes: sneakers, comfortable and durable sandals/shoes (cobblestones, dirt, and rocky roads are tough on shoes), shoes for dressing-up, hiking boots (if you are so inclined) and sturdy flip-flops. Flip-flops are considered too casual to wear to work
- Socks, underwear, and (sports) bras: a two-year supply. Cotton underwear is preferable (it can get pretty hot here) but difficult to obtain in-country

Men

- Pants: light cotton pants, khakis, or jeans for outdoor work, teaching, and evenings. A couple of nice pairs of slacks for dressier occasions. Nice blue jeans are considered appropriate for work, but cotton pants or khakis are preferred
- Shirts: inexpensive short-sleeve cotton dress shirts for classroom and office. Short-sleeved, lightweight work shirts for outside labor. A good supply of T-shirts is crucial. A dress shirt is needed for official occasions. A few long-sleeved shirts for cooler, windy weather
- Shorts: acceptable and practical for men as casual wear, but not for work
- Ties: you will need one for weddings, New Year's, swearing in, etc. A blazer would be good for occasions such as these as well
- Shoes: depending on your preference for footwear, you may want one pair of tennis shoes and one pair of work shoes. Sturdy rubber soles are best. The climate and terrain here (and the cobblestones) will wear shoes down rapidly, and Volunteers tend to do a lot of walking. An inexpensive, yet sturdy pair of casual loafers may be your best bet for dress wear. A pair of sandals for around the house and casual wear will be useful, as well as a pair of sturdy flip-flops. Flip-flops are considered too casual to wear to work. Also, larger

sizes are hard to find. Socks and Underwear: a two-year supply

Men and Women

- A sweatshirt or sweater for cool evenings
- A bathing suit or two
- Bandannas or handkerchiefs. Indispensable for dusty road trips
- Athletic shorts, for sports or at home only
- Hats/caps and sunglasses
- Socks and underwear: a two-year supply (bring extra as traditional washing techniques tend to wear out clothing at a fast rate). Cotton underwear is preferable and difficult to obtain in-country
- Small, easy to carry umbrella
- Cellphone: we recommend bringing approximately \$75 to buy a cellphone here. You can bring one but it has to be unblocked; the specifications are GSM triband

Personal Hygiene and Toiletry Items

Most of the items listed below can be found in Cape Verde; however, they are more expensive and of lesser quality, so they may not be up to your standards.

- Razors and shaving cream
- Contact lens solutions (wearing contacts is highly discouraged by Peace Corps due to sand storms)
- Makeup
- Scissors or other hair cutting device
- Lotions and Chapstick: though this comes in your medical kit, you might want to bring your favorite brand

or flavor. Those provided by the Peace Corps Medical Office but they are generic bulk buy items so you cannot be given preferences

- Favorite personal hygiene items: you can get shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste and brush, deodorant, and lotion, but you may not find your favorite brands, and the prices are high
- Tampons
- Prescription drugs: a three-month supply until the Peace Corps in Praia can order refills
- Travel sewing kit
- Hair dryer, curling iron, or straightener

Some personal items may not be possible to find or have sent to you (HAZMAT items may not travel in planes): insect repellent, alcohol-based hand cleaner, many things that are come in an aerosol can). Bring a two-year supply or consider doing without these items.

Electronics

It is important to note that most electronics items are at higher risk to break because of Cape Verdean's landscape (rust/corrosion, dust, sand, and/or proximity to sea) and climate (heat and/or humidity).

- Electronic gadgets with batteries (some of you may not have regular electricity). A solar battery charger and set of rechargeable batteries is very practical here
- Laptop computer: very usable, but bring at your own risk. Power surges are common, so bring a good surge protector and purchase insurance coverage. Peace Corps does not provide insurance for personal items
- Computer software: a lot of places have computers with corrupted files, so you will need the backup disks (or CDs) to fix the problems. Most computers now have USB ports, a jump-drive is ideal for transferring files

- 220 electricity converter and adaptor plugs (to use for 110-volt electronics you bring from the U.S.)
- Camera and replacement batteries: film can be bought and developed here, but can be expensive. Camera batteries can be purchased here, but they are expensive and may not meet the specific requirements for your camera (see solar charger above)
- Shortwave radio: good for news; most Volunteers can tune into BBC or VOA quite easily
- A cellphone and a flashlight are essential items (see note on cellphones, you can buy them in Cape Verde)

Kitchen

You can easily buy most kitchen supplies (e.g., dishes, pots, glasses, and utensils) here. There are, however, a few items we highly recommend bringing:

- A good Teflon frying pan
- Good can opener
- Favorite spices
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Rubber spatula

Miscellaneous Items

- Good-quality towels
- Anti-bacterial, no-rinse soap
- Extra batteries (rechargeable ones are best)
- One or two sets of double-sized bed sheets, mattress cover, and pillow cases, preferably not white
- Backpack for day trips
- A Swiss Army knife, leatherman tool or the equivalent

- Alarm clock
- Duct tape
- Pocket-size dictionary and thesaurus
- Pictures of home, family, friends
- Money belt or other means of concealing your passport and valuables when traveling
- Your favorite music
- Your favorite games (travel-size)
- Good hairbrushes
- Small sewing kit
- Musical instrument (bring extra strings, reeds, etc.)
- Mattress cover
- Compact sleeping bag or bed roll
- Leash, collar, and other pet necessities (if you are planning on getting a pet)
- Hair dryer
- Roach motels
- Travel iron
- Snorkeling gear (if that is your thing)
- U.S. postage stamps (many people come and go to the United States and can send letters if you have stamps)
- Sturdy water bottle (e.g., Nalgene)
- Sports bras
- Tea (if you have preferences)
- High fluoride (prescription) toothpaste

NOTES



PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST



The following list consists of suggestions for you to consider as you prepare to live outside the United States for two years. Not all items will be relevant to everyone and the list is not exhaustive.

Family

- Notify family that they can call Peace Corps' Office of Special Services at any time if there is a critical illness or death of a family member (24-hour telephone number: 800.424.8580, extension 1470).
- Give the Peace Corps' *On the Home Front* handbook to family and friends.

Passport/Travel

- Forward to the Peace Corps travel office all paperwork for the Peace Corps passport and visas.
- Verify that your luggage meets the size and weight limits for international travel.
- Obtain a personal passport if you plan to travel after your service ends. (Your Peace Corps passport will expire three months after you finish your service, so if you plan on traveling longer after your service, you will need a regular passport).

Medical/Health

- Complete any needed dental and medical work.
- If you wear eyeglasses, bring two pairs.
- Sunglasses
- Arrange to bring a three-month supply of all medications (including birth control pills) you are currently taking.

Insurance

- Make arrangements to maintain life insurance coverage.
- Arrange to maintain supplemental health coverage while away. (Even though the Peace Corps is responsible for your healthcare during Peace Corps service overseas, it is advisable for people who have pre-existing conditions to arrange for the continuation of their supplemental health coverage. Many times if there is a lapse in supplemental health coverage it is difficult and expensive to be reinstated for insurance; this is especially true when insurance companies know you have predictable expenses and are in an upper age bracket).
- Arrange to continue Medicare coverage if applicable.

Personal Papers

- Bring a copy of your certificate of marriage or divorce.

Voting

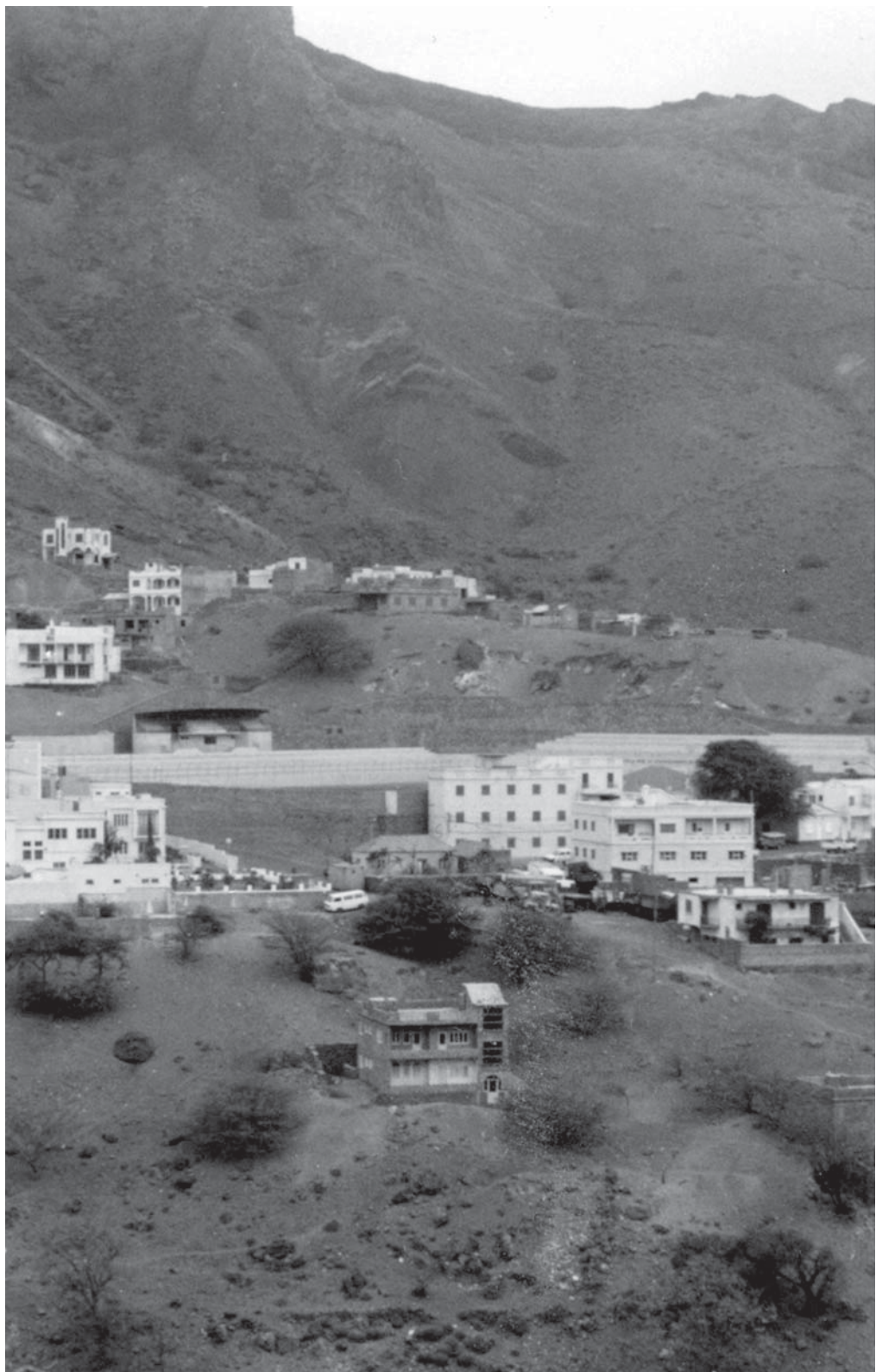
- Register to vote in the state of your home of record. (Many state universities consider voting and payment of state taxes as evidence of residence in that state).
- Obtain a voter registration card and take it with you overseas.
- Arrange to have an absentee ballot forwarded to you overseas.

Personal Effects

- Purchase personal articles insurance for the time you leave your home for service overseas until the time you complete your service and return to the United States.

Financial Management

- Keep a bank account in your name in the U.S.
- Obtain student loan deferment forms from lender or loan service.
- Execute a Power of Attorney for the management of your property and business.
- Arrange for deductions from readjustment allowance to pay alimony, child support, and other debts through the Office of Volunteer Financial Operations at 800.424.8580, extension 1770.
- Place all important papers—mortgages, deeds, documents, stocks, and bonds—in a safe deposit box, with attorney or with caretaker.



CONTACTING PEACE CORPS HEADQUARTERS



Please use the following list of numbers to help you contact the appropriate office at Peace Corps headquarters with various questions. You may use the toll-free number and extension or dial directly using the local numbers provided. Be sure to leave the Peace Corps toll-free number and extensions with your family in the event of an emergency during your service overseas.

Peace Corps Headquarters

Toll-free Number: 800.424.8580, Press 2, then
Ext. # (see below)

Peace Corps' Mailing Address:

Peace Corps
Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters
1111 20th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20526

For Questions About:	Staff	Toll-free Extension	Direct/Local Number
Responding to an Invitation	Office of Placement	Ext. 1840 Ext. 1835	202.692.1840 202.692.1835
Programming	Country Desk Officer Email: capeverde@peacecorps.gov	Ext. 2317	202.692.2317
	Country Desk Assistant Email: capeverde@peacecorps.gov	Ext. 2318	202.692.2318

Questions About:	Staff	Toll-free Extension	Direct/ Local Number
Plane Tickets, Passports, (SATO Travel) Visas, or Other Travel Matters	Travel Officer	Ext. 1170	202.692.1170
Legal Clearance	Office of Placement	Ext. 1845	202.692.1845
Medical Clearance and Forms Processing (including dental)	Screening Nurse	Ext. 1500	202.692.1500
Medical Reimbursements	Handled by a Sub-contractor		1.800.818.8772
Loan Deferments, Taxes, Readjustment Allowance Withdrawals, Power of Attorney	Volunteer Financial Operations	Ext. 1770	202.692.1770
Staging (Pre-departure Orientation) and Reporting Instructions <i>Note: You will receive comprehensive information (hotel and flight arrangements) three to five weeks before departure. This information is not available sooner.</i>	Office of Staging	Ext. 1865	202.692.1865
Family Emergencies (to get information to a Volunteer overseas)	Office of Special	Ext. 1470	202.692.1470

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