

THE DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE CORPS  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

January 21, 2011

Ms. Jan M. Guifarro  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Mr. Kevin F. F. Quigley  
President  
National Peace Corps Association  
1900 L Street, NW  
Suite 404  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Ms. Guifarro and Mr. Quigley:

Thank you for your letter and for providing me with an opportunity to respond to your letter regarding Peace Corps' work in the area of safety and security. The health and safety of our Volunteers is the single most important priority for our agency. We are consistently reviewing and improving our global operations to ensure that we are doing our best to keep our Volunteers healthy, safe, and productive.

We welcome an opportunity to discuss our work and clarify misleading information that was presented regarding Peace Corps' response to and support of victims of Sexual Assault. Over the past two years, we have made considerable progress in our efforts to reduce the incidence of sexual assault and enhance our response to victims as demonstrated by the following achievements:

- The Office of Safety and Security assumed responsibility for managing the agency's response to violent crimes against Volunteers in September 2008. The lead security specialist position was created in December 2008 to provide guidance and support to posts and crime victims.
- *Peace Corps' Commitment to Sexual Assault Victims* was developed to outline services that a victim of sexual assault would receive from the Peace Corps. These will be rolled out to all staff in February.
- An Interdepartmental Sexual Assault Working Group (90 percent RPCVs) was formed to analyze current agency protocols and recommend agency strategies for sexual assault risk reduction and response.
- All country-level Peace Corps safety and security coordinators were trained in sexual assault and other crime incident response procedures, investigative practices, and victim assistance concepts in August 2010.
- All Peace Corps safety and security officers completed Department of Justice victim assistance training.
- The Peace Corps developed a case management database to track ongoing cases to ensure that proper support and follow-up is provided to Volunteer crime victims.
- All Peace Corps medical officers receive training in the medical/mental health aspects of responding to sexual assaults.

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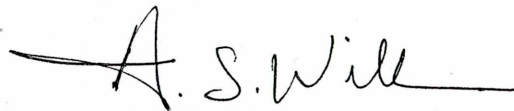
- All country directors going overseas are trained in sexual assault response and prevention.
- *The Guidelines for Responding to Rapes and Sexual Assaults*, which outlines management, medical, and counseling responses and reporting procedures following a sexual assault for overseas posts, was completed and will be rolled out to posts in February.

The Peace Corps is in the process of developing a state-of-the-art Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program. This program is based on the industry standard called the Spectrum of Prevention and is used by the Department of Defense SAPR program, national and local community-based prevention and response organizations, and colleges and universities across the nation. The model was created by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), the nation's top clearinghouse for sexual violence materials and models. (NSVRC is funded in part by the Department of Justice). The spectrum is a comprehensive model to organize and deliver sexual assault services. The activities in the seven-point action plan you refer to are encompassed in this more comprehensive Spectrum of Prevention model.

We will continue to work with the Volunteer and returned Volunteer community as we implement this model. We have been in regular communication with First Response Action since October of last year. In December, the group was invited to share their testimonies and recommendations with Peace Corps staff members. Both the deputy director and the chief of staff participated in the meeting. We remain in active contact with its members.

We look forward to sharing more of our achievements in the coming months. In the month of April, we will be observing Sexual Assault Awareness month with a variety of awareness raising activities. We invite NPCA to also get the word out to its members about ways they can engage returned Volunteers and Volunteers in observing this month and raising awareness in their own communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. S. Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Aaron S. Williams  
Director