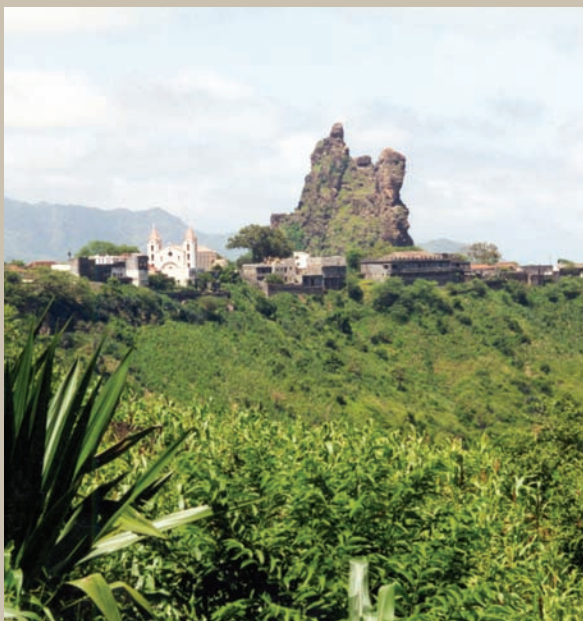


# THE PEACE CORPS WELCOMES YOU TO CAPE VERDE



A PEACE CORPS PUBLICATION  
FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS



April 2006

# Cape Verde



# A WELCOME LETTER

Dear Future Volunteer,

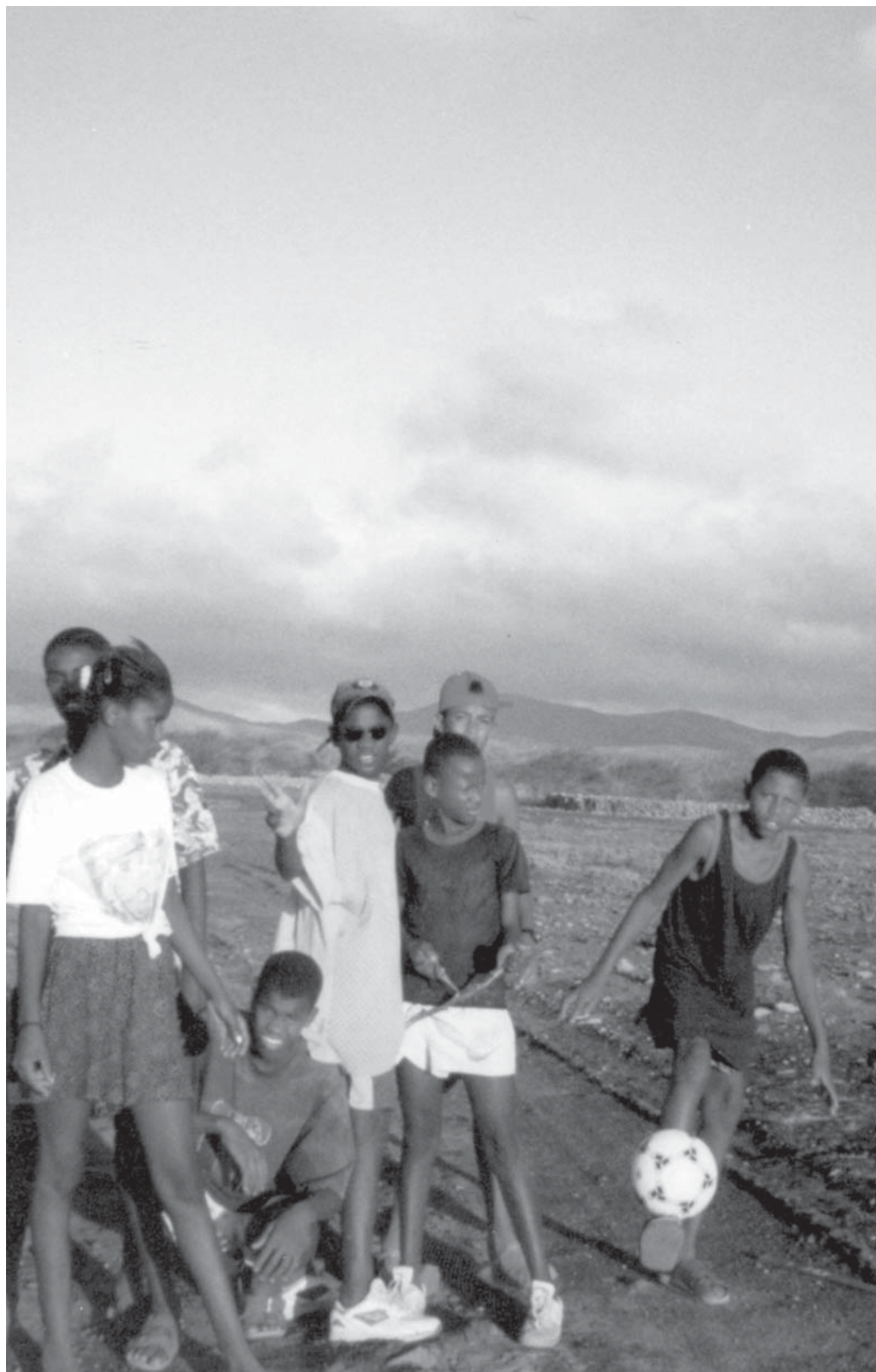
Congratulations on your invitation to become a Peace Corps Volunteer in Cape Verde! This is going to be one of the most rewarding and challenging experiences of your life. It will become a reference point for all that you do in your life. The people of Cape Verde, along with Peace Corps staff and Volunteers,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

As a Volunteer in Cape Verde, you will be living on one of seven or 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 I'm sure that you will, too.

Volunteers receive excellent medical care and 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 technical knowledge for your principal work activities, cross-cultural adaptation, how to maintain good health, and how to reduce your security risks while improving 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 (and Creole, for any of you near the large Cape Verdean-American community in New England), and by studying the Peace Corps *Volunteer Handbook* and other reference materials suggested in this *Welcome Book*. There is much to learn, but don't worry. Soon, you too will face the challenges and share the rewards of Peace Corps service. We look forward to your arrival. *Bemvindo!*

Sincerely,

Matthew Breman,  
Country Director



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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 330 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 TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language), agriculture extension, and water and sanitation. After 1997, the Peace Corps responded to Cape Verde's request to strengthen local initiatives by establishing the community development project. Approximately 40 Volunteers are currently working throughout the country.

## **History and Future of Peace Corps Programming in Cape Verde**

Peace Corps/Cape Verde's current program has two projects: education and community development. 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 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 gender relationships and promote women's participation to increase their status and opportunities. The project also educates students and the community in life skills and HIV/AIDS education; a new initiative in some schools includes computer training through the national high school information technology (IT) curriculum. Volunteers work with youth through sports summer camps and other community activities. A vocational education component enables Volunteers to teach professional trades such as carpentry and metal work at technical high schools. As the need for vocational and technical training increases, this component will grow.

The community development project has a goal to empower local institutions—municipal government, youth centers, national government funded institutes and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs)—and their social service providers to identify community needs and to 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 youth, which will subsequently increase income levels of families and help alleviate poverty.

Most community development Volunteers work with the national program for youth (at regional youth centers)—assisting with IT training (from use of basic computer software to networking) and teaching English classes, helping the centers 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. Community development 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), a Volunteer began working on an environmental biodiversity project, assisting the government to establish the first national reserves and parks in Cape Verde, and two more Volunteers are scheduled to work on this national protected areas pilot project.

Regardless of main project sector, Peace Corps Volunteers take an active role in activities related to four cross-cutting themes: working with youth, HIV/AIDS education, women in development/gender and development (WID/GAD) via the WID/GAD committee, and IT and computer 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 through December 2004, 1,489 Cape Verdeans have been infected with HIV, translating to a relatively low HIV prevalence rate. Of these identified cases, 800 (53.7 percent) contracted AIDS and 53 of those died from complications related to HIV/AIDS. At the end of 2004 there were 1,063 people living with HIV, and 374 of these with full-blown AIDS. In 2004 alone, 260 people became newly infected with HIV, and 123 of these people are living with AIDS. According to 2004 figures from the national HIV/AIDS Commission, 50 percent of HIV cases are between 25 and 49 years old; and among teens, girls accounted for more than half of new HIV-positive infections reported.

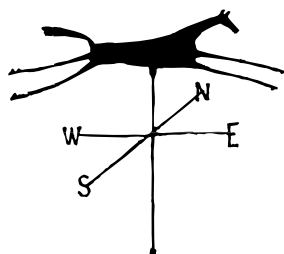
Though HIV prevalence rates are relatively low in Cape Verde, you will experience behaviors that may make you think twice about these figures. You will need to anticipate these situations and utilize resources available throughout your training and service to share information and convey messages, while maintaining your own emotional strength, so that 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 that you can continue to be of service to your community.

## NOTES



# 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 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, many Cape Verdeans crossed over to Guinea-Bissau to aid in the struggle.

In January 1973, Amilcar Cabral was assassinated in Guinea-Conakry. 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 abruptly 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 January 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 opposition Movimento para a Democracia (MPD) won and continued in power until 2000. In elections held in 2000 PAICV was returned to power. PAICV won elections again in 2006.

## **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 National Assembly ordinarily meets twice a year.

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.

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 an active and growing sector, and much of the land is still privately owned.

## **Economy**

Despite a relatively 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 \$1,500, and recently graduated 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 nearly 45 percent of the population lives in rural areas. About 90 percent of the country's food is imported. The fishing industry has potential, yet it has not been fully exploited. Cape Verde annually runs a high trade deficit, which is financed by foreign aid and emigrants' remittances, which represent approximately 30 percent of the country's GDP. In 1998, the National Assembly approved a wide-ranging liberalization of the economy. The constitution was changed to remove state control from all 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 tourism and to increase fishing were made. Development has been limited due to the shortage of skilled labor; the small size of the market; and by the country's division into a number of islands, which makes it difficult to achieve economies of scale and imposes substantial transport costs. The government continues to focus on developing the private sector and attracting foreign investment to diversify the economy.

## **People and Culture**

Around 71 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 the European and African extended to socio-cultural patterns and language as well. The social and cultural patterns of the population are similar to those of rural Portugal, but some African patterns remain. Many rural women still use the traditional African method of carrying children tied by scarves to 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.

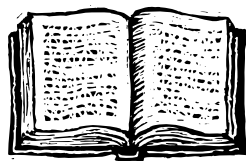
## Environment

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 spectacular islands, which boast some of the most beautiful beaches in the world, vary widely in terrain. A still-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 fields or banana plantations spread along the base of towering mountains. The climate is tropical, but the archipelago's location in the Sahel belt makes it the victim of periodic and devastating droughts, interspersed with years of greater, yet still less-than-adequate, rainfall.



# RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION



We offer a list of Websites for you to search for additional information about the Peace Corps and Cape Verde, or connect you to returned Volunteers. Please keep in mind that website links change. We have tried to make sure all these links are active and current, but 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 these sites, please also remember that you will find bulletin boards and chat rooms in which people are free to give opinions and advice based on their own experiences. The opinions expressed are not those of the Peace Corps or the United States government. You may also find opinions of people who were unhappy with their choice to serve in the Peace Corps. As you read these comments, we hope you will keep in mind that the Peace Corps is not for everyone, and no two people experience their service in the same way.

## **General Information About the Countries:**

### **[www.countrywatch.com](http://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.lonelyplanet.com/destinations](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations)**

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

**[www.state.gov](http://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.psr.keele.ac.uk/official.htm](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.

**Connect With Returned Volunteers and Other Invitees:**

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

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

**[www.peacecorpswriters.org](http://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.

## News Sites About Cape Verde:

**[www.umassd.edu/SpecialPrograms/caboverde/capeverdean.html](http://www.umassd.edu/SpecialPrograms/caboverde/capeverdean.html)**

This site, which came online in 1995, is a collaborative project of the world-wide Capeverdean community, hosted at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth.

**[www.virtualcapeverde.net](http://www.virtualcapeverde.net)**

virtual portal with many useful links including those to local radio stations

## 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; third edition, 2006.
4. 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, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

2. Rice, Gerald T. *The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.
3. Stossel, Scott. *Sarge: The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2004.

### **Books on the Volunteer Experience**

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



## NOTES



# 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 simply 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 air mail; 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 often mysteriously disappear in transit.

### ***Telephones***

Most Volunteers have phones in their homes. Peace Corps/Cape Verde includes money in the living allowance to cover the cost of local use.

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 Dialpad. You will 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 time of day 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. Since there is only one provider, phones and user fees are quite expensive.

### ***Computer, Internet, and E-mail 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 e-mail accounts. If you own a laptop, it may be useful for you to have your own Internet account. Peace Corps staff computers are not available for trainee/Volunteer use.

### **Housing and Site Location**

Your host agency will provide safe and adequate housing in accordance with the Peace Corps' site selection criteria (see chapter on 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 will not have to share with a host family. Volunteers will likely share an apartment or a house with another Volunteer or, in some cases, be placed in individual housing. You should come prepared to 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 will most likely have electricity, although perhaps not 24 hours a day. Some very remote areas may not have electricity; if at all, electricity may only be available 6 to 12 hours per day. To be a Volunteer here you will need to be very flexible in your housing expectations as there are no guarantees of continuous water or electricity.

Volunteers are expected to live at the level of their counterparts. Housing varies from site to site, depending on what your community has to offer. This varies from a beautiful and 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 dead-bolt locks, with peep hole in the main entrance door;
- Secure locks on windows/shutters (bars on first-floor windows if no wooden shutters);
- Located away from bar and/or discos (in separate building);
- Phone access (if there is access to phone lines);
- Smoke alarms;
- Walking distance to work and market areas; and
- Reasonable access to water source.

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

## **Living Allowance and Money Management**

As a Volunteer in Cape Verde, you will receive different types of 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 equivalent to \$320 to \$330 per month (varies according to the exchange rate) and is paid in local currency. It is paid every three months at the beginning of each fiscal quarter (October 1, January 1, April 1, and July 1). The living allowance covers such expenses such 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. The vacation allowance is paid in U.S. dollars. A one-time *settling-in allowance* is also provided to purchase household goods upon arrival at your site.

If you are requested by the Peace Corps to travel, you will be given additional money for transportation and meals as 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 out-of-country 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, travel agencies, and car rental agencies. You will not find retail stores where they can be used in Cape Verde. Volunteers set up bank accounts with 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 most 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 most of the year are potatoes, onions, tomatoes, manioc, cabbage, kale, and dried beans. Fruits like banana and papayas are available year-round, while others like mangoes and avocados are seasonal.

Fish is available at the markets during most of the year. Locally produced canned tuna is also available and very good. It is more difficult to find fish in the countryside.

Bread is available locally. There is also a choice of biscuits and cookies. Pastry shops can be found in 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 certain times of the year. 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**

Most of the transportation between islands is done by plane. There are regular flights to and from the major islands (Santiago, Sal and São Vicente), with less frequent flights to the other islands. Boat transportation is also available, though not widely used nor dependable (Volunteers should use life jackets to travel by boat, which are provided by Peace Corps). Volunteers are given the equivalent of one inter-island ticket per year.

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

In the 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; bicycles are available to Volunteers upon request. Volunteers who live in Mindelo and Praia, the two largest cities, are not authorized to have or ride bicycles.

Volunteers are not permitted to drive vehicles or to drive or be a passenger on a motorcycle.

## **Geography and Climate**

Cape Verde's climate is milder than that of the African mainland. Surrounded by the sea, temperatures are moderate, but it can get very hot in the rainy season 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 protection from the sun, which makes it even hotter. Cape Verde is part of the Sahelian arid belt and lacks the rainfall levels of West African countries. When it does rain, most of the rainfall occurs between August and October, with several brief, heavy downpours.

## **Social Activities**

With the exception of the larger cities, where there are a limited number of restaurants and nightclubs, most of your social activities will consist of community activities 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 the greatest reward of Volunteer service.

## **Professionalism, Dress, and Behavior**

One of the difficulties of finding your place as a Peace Corps Volunteer is finding a way 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 guidelines. You will be working as a representative of a professional entity in a professional setting; as such, you are expected to dress and behave accordingly. A foreigner wearing ragged, unmended clothing is more likely to be considered offensive. Long hair, body piercing, and earrings are not appropriate for men; wearing dreadlocks is considered inappropriate for men and women. Women should not dress in any way that could be considered provocative.

## **Personal Safety**

More information about the Peace Corps' approach to safety is outlined in the Health Care and Safety chapter, but it is an important issue and cannot be over-emphasized. As stated in the *Volunteer Handbook*, becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer entails certain safety responsibilities. Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment (often alone), having a limited understanding of local language and culture, and being perceived as a rich American are some of the factors that can put a Volunteer at risk. Many Volunteers, especially women, experience varying degrees of unwanted attention and harassment. Petty thefts and burglaries are common, and physical and sexual assaults have occurred in the past. Nonetheless, most Volunteers complete their two years of

service without experiencing any personal safety problems. The Peace Corps has established procedures and policies designed to help Volunteers reduce their risks and enhance their safety and security. These procedures and policies, in addition to safety training, will be provided once you arrive in Cape Verde. At the same time, Volunteers are expected to take responsibility for their own safety and well-being.

## **Rewards and Frustrations**

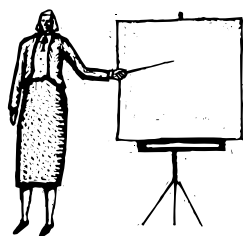
Although the potential for job satisfaction is quite high, like all Volunteers, you will encounter numerous frustrations. Due to financial or other challenges, collaborating agencies do not always provide the support promised, the pace of work and life is slower than what most Americans are accustomed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

You will be given a high degree of responsibility and independence in your work, perhaps more than any other job you have had or will ever experience. 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 co-workers, 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 that they have gained much more than they sacrificed during their service. If you are able to make the commitment to integrate into your community and work hard, you will 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 and 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 to Cape Verde. You will receive training and orientation in local languages (Portuguese and Cape Verdean Creole), cross-cultural communication, development work, health and personal safety, and technical skills pertinent to the Cape Verdean development context. 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 in Cape Verde. We will meet and work together as a group, and you will have the chance to experience local culture and customs with your host family and during technical field trips.

At the onset of training, the training staff will outline the goals 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 towards the highest possible achievement by providing feedback throughout training. After successfully completing

the pre-service training, you will swear in as a Volunteer and make final 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 community work. This includes sessions on economic, 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 the key 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 classes of four to five people. Language is also introduced in the health, culture, 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. Our goal is to get you to a point where you feel comfortable with basic social communication as a launching pad for developing your linguistic skills more thoroughly once at site. Prior to swearing in as Volunteers, you will work on strategies to continue 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 ease your transition into life in the country. Families have gone through an 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 will be covered to help improve your skills of perception, communication, and facilitation. Topics such as community mobilization, conflict resolution, diversity, gender and development, and traditional and political structures are also addressed.

### ***Health Training***

During PST, you will be given primary health training and information. Volunteers are expected to practice preventive healthcare 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.

## ***Safety Training***

Keeping safe is an important part of your Peace Corps service, and Peace Corps/Cape Verde takes this seriously. During the 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 sum, you will learn about your individual responsibility for practicing and promoting safety throughout your service.

## **Additional Trainings During Volunteer Service**

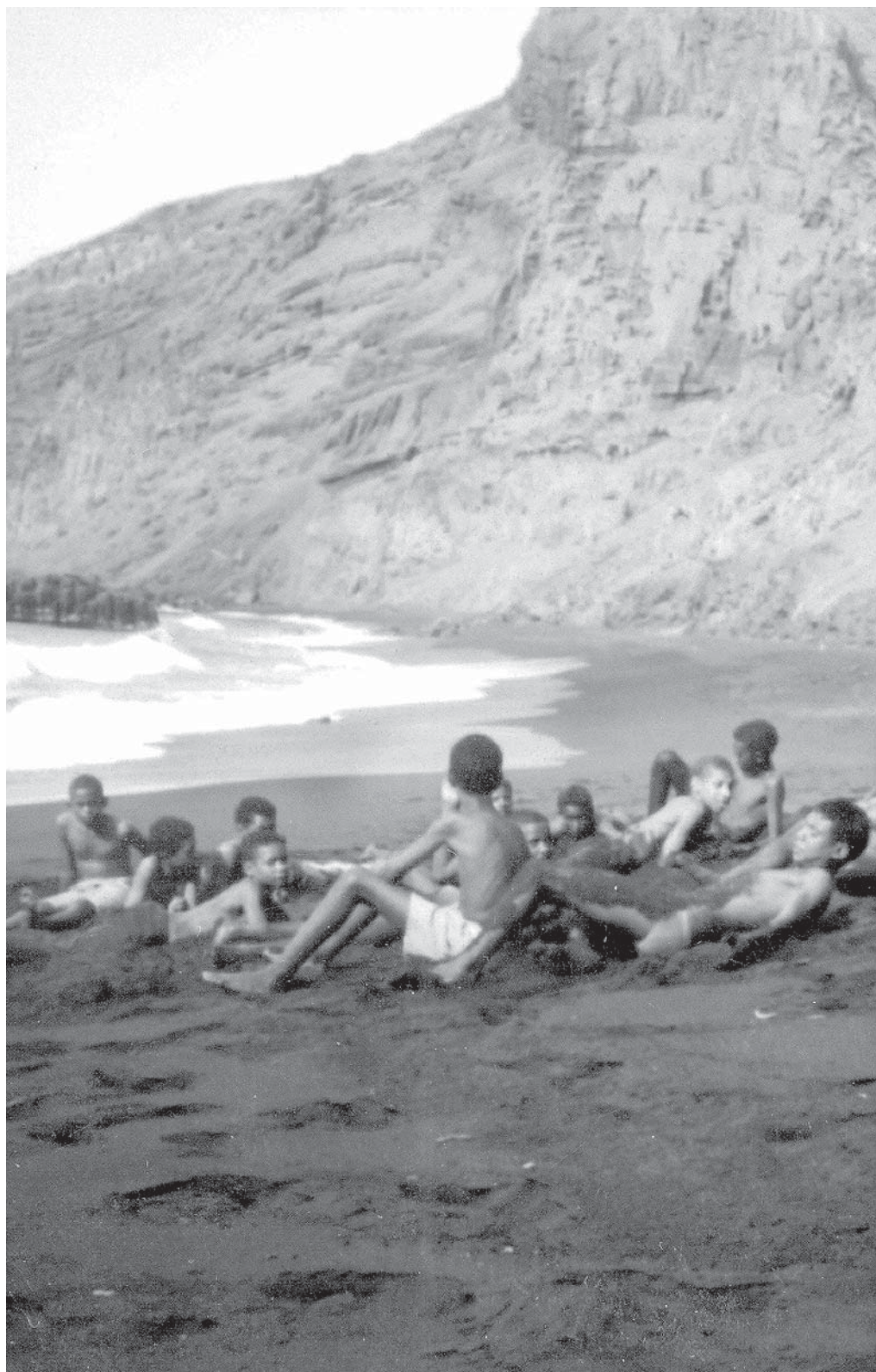
In its commitment to institutionalize quality training, the Peace Corps has implemented a training system which provides Volunteers with continuous opportunities to examine their commitment to Peace Corps service while increasing their technical and cross-cultural skills.

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

- *In-service training (IST)* 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 six months. This is usually combined with an All-Volunteer Conference to address broader Peace Corps and Cape Verde-specific topics with all Volunteers together.
- *Completion 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

system 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 staff, Peace Corps staff, and Volunteers.



# YOUR HEALTH CARE AND SAFETY IN CAPE VERDE



The Peace Corps' highest priority is maintaining the good health and safety of every trainee and Volunteer. Peace Corps medical programs emphasize the preventive, rather than the curative approach to illness and disease. The Peace Corps in Cape Verde maintains a clinic with a full-time medical contractor (an American nurse practitioner), who takes care of trainees'/Volunteers' primary healthcare needs. Some additional medical services, such as testing and basic treatment, are also available in Cape Verde at a local hospitals and health clinics. If a trainee or Volunteer becomes seriously ill and cannot be treated here, he or she will be transported to higher quality medical facility in the region and/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 the 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 larger hospitals in Cape Verde: one in Praia and one in Mindelo. Both hospitals have basic capabilities. The remainder of the healthcare system is divided into small regional hospitals and out-patient 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 necessary 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 its offices 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 health unit is a combined facility, used by both the Peace Corps and U.S. embassy staff. The unit is staffed by a Peace Corps medical contractor or officer (also referred to as a PCMO), who is a nurse practitioner. 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 her back-up, 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, crowns, root canals, and yearly cleanings 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. Volunteers who use 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](http://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 non-prescribed 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 healthcare plans, you may wish to consult an insurance specialist about unique coverage needs before your departure. The Peace Corps will provide all necessary healthcare 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 healthcare 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 thefts 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. In addition, more than 84 percent of Volunteers surveyed in the 2004 Peace Corps Volunteer Survey say they would join the Peace Corps again.

The Peace Corps approaches safety and security as a partnership with you. This *Welcome Book* contains sections on: Living Conditions and Volunteer Lifestyle; Peace Corps Training; and Your Health Care and Safety. All of these sections include important safety and security information.

The Peace Corps makes every effort to give Volunteers the tools they need to function in the safest and most secure 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 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.*

Based on information gathered from incident reports worldwide in 2004, the following factors stand out as risk characteristics for assaults. Assaults consist of personal crimes committed against Volunteers, and do not include property crimes (such as vandalism or theft).

- Location: Most crimes occurred when Volunteers were in public areas (e.g., street, park, beach, public buildings). Specifically, 43 percent of assaults took place when Volunteers were away from their sites.

- Time of day: Assaults usually took place on the weekend during the evening between 5:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m.— with most assaults occurring around 1:00 a.m.
- Absence of others: Assaults usually occurred when the Volunteer was unaccompanied. In 82 percent of the sexual assaults the Volunteer was unaccompanied and in 55 percent of physical assaults the Volunteer was unaccompanied.
- Relationship to assailant: In most assaults, the Volunteer did not know the assailant.
- Consumption of alcohol: Forty percent of all assaults involved alcohol consumption by Volunteers and/or assailants.

### ***Summary Strategies to Reduce Risk***

Before and during service, your training will address these areas of concern so that you can reduce the risks you face. For example, here are some strategies Volunteers employ:

#### Strategies to reduce the risk/impact of theft:

- Know the environment and choose safe routes/times for travel
- Avoid high-crime areas per Peace Corps guidance
- Know the vocabulary to get help in an emergency
- Carry valuables in different pockets/places
- Carry a “dummy” wallet as a decoy

#### Strategies to reduce the risk/impact of burglary:

- Live with a local family or on a family compound
- Put strong locks on doors and keep valuables in a lock box or trunk
- Leave irreplaceable objects at home in the U.S.
- Follow Peace Corps guidelines on maintaining home security

### Strategies to reduce the risk/impact of assault:

- Make local friends
- Make sure your appearance is respectful of local customs; don't draw negative attention to yourself by wearing inappropriate clothing
- Get to know local officials, police, and neighbors
- Travel with someone whenever possible
- Avoid known high crime areas
- Limit alcohol consumption

### ***Support from Staff***

In March 2003, the Peace Corps created the Office of Safety and Security with its mission to “foster improved communication, coordination, oversight, and accountability of all Peace Corps’ safety and security efforts.” The new office is led by an Associate Director for Safety and Security who reports to the Peace Corps Director and includes the following divisions: Volunteer Safety and Overseas Security; Information and Personnel Security; Emergency Preparedness, Plans, Training and Exercise; and Crime Statistics and Analysis.

The major responsibilities of the Volunteer Safety and Overseas Security Division are to coordinate the office’s overseas operations and direct the Peace Corps’ safety and security officers who are located in various regions around the world that have Peace Corps programs. The safety and security officers conduct security assessments; review safety trainings; train trainers and managers; train Volunteer safety wardens, local guards, and staff; develop security incident response procedures; and provide crisis management support.

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

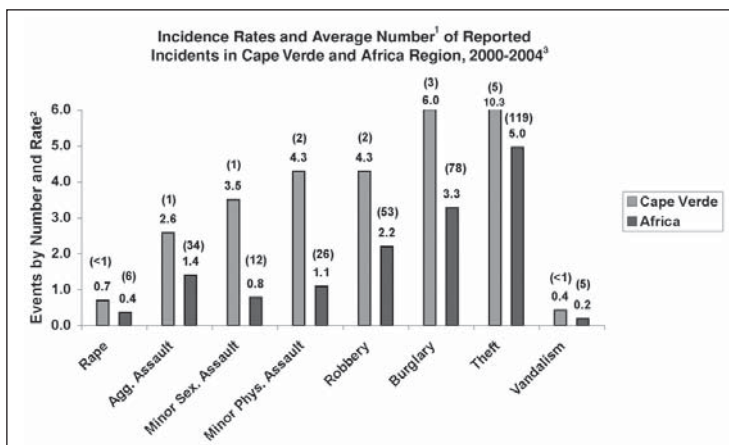
all posts in the aftermath of an incident is to ensure that the Volunteer is safe and receiving medical treatment as needed. After assuring the safety of the Volunteer, Peace Corps staff provide support by reassessing the Volunteer's work site and housing arrangements and making any adjustments, as needed. 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.

The country-specific data chart below shows the incidence rates and the average number of incidents of the major types of safety incidents reported by Peace Corps Volunteers/trainees in Cape Verde as compared to all other Africa region programs as a whole, from 2000–2004. It is presented to you in a somewhat technical manner for statistical accuracy.

To fully appreciate the collected data below, an explanation of the graph is provided as follows

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. An "incident" is a specific offense, per Peace Corps' classification of offenses, and may involve one or more Volunteer/trainee victims. For example, if two Volunteers are robbed at the same time and place, this is classified as one robbery incident.





<sup>1</sup>The average numbers of incidents are in parenthesis and equal the average reported assaults for each year between 2000–2004.

<sup>2</sup>Incident 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 minor sexual assaults. Numbers of incidents are approximate due to rounding.

<sup>3</sup>Data collection for Cape Verde began as of 2000. Source data on incidents are drawn from Assault Notification Surveillance System (ANSS) and Epidemiologic Surveillance System (ESS); the information is accurate as of 02/17/06.

The chart is separated into eight crime categories. These include vandalism (malicious defacement or damage of property); theft (taking without force or illegal entry); burglary (forcible entry of a residence); robbery (taking something by force); minor physical assault (attacking without a weapon with minor injuries); minor sexual assault (fondling, groping, etc.); aggravated assault (attacking with a weapon, and/or without a weapon when serious injury results); and rape (sexual intercourse without consent).

When anticipating Peace Corps Volunteer service, you should review all of the safety and security information provided to you, including the strategies to reduce risk. Throughout your training and Volunteer service, you will be expected to successfully complete all training competencies in a variety of areas including safety and security. Once in-country, use the tools and information shared with you to remain as safe and secure as possible.

## **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 with 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 towards 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.

## **Staying Safe: Don't Be a Target for Crime**

You must be prepared to take on a large responsibility for your own safety. Only you can make yourself less of a target, ensure that your house is secure, and develop relations in your community that will make you an unlikely the victim of crime. In coming to Cape Verde, do what you would do if you changed residence in the United States: be cautious, check things out, ask a lot of questions, learn about your neighborhood, know about where the more risky locations and which neighborhoods to avoid, 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 which are in place for your protection. Serving safely and effectively in Cape Verde may require that you accept some restrictions to your current lifestyle.

Volunteers attract a lot of attention in large cities and at their sites. However, they receive far more negative attention in highly populated centers where they are anonymous; in smaller towns, “family,” friends, and colleagues will tend to look out for them. While whistles and exclamations are fairly common on the street, this behavior can be reduced if you dress conservatively, avoid eye contact, and don't respond to such negative and unwanted attention. Some precautions a Volunteer should take include keeping money, jewelry, watches and other items that others may consider of value out of sight; and using an undergarment money pouch that stays hidden under clothing. Volunteers should not keep money or other valuables in outside pockets of backpacks, coat pockets, or in fanny packs. Finally, walking at night is not advised. It is best to take a cab and never walk alone.

## **Preparing for the Unexpected: Safety Training and Volunteer Support in Cape Verde**

The Peace Corps' approach to safety is a five-pronged plan to help you stay safe during your two-year 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. The Cape Verde in-country safety program is outlined below.

The Peace Corps/Cape Verde office will keep Volunteers informed of any issues that may impact Volunteer safety through **information sharing**. Regular updates will be provided in newsletters and in memoranda from the Country Director. In the event of a critical situation or emergency, Volunteers are contacted through the emergency communication network, which is part of the emergency action plan.

**Volunteer training** will include sessions to prepare you for 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 your two-year service and is integrated into the language, cross-cultural, health, or other training components.

**Site selection criteria** are used to determine safe housing for Volunteers before their arrival in-country. Peace Corps staff works closely with host communities and counterpart agencies to help prepare them for the Volunteer's arrival and to establish expectations of their respective role in supporting the Volunteer. Each site is inspected before the Volunteer's arrival to ensure placement in an appropriate, safe, and secure housing and work environment. Site selection criteria is based in part on any relevant site history; access to medical,

banking, postal, and other essential services; availability of communications, transportation, and markets; housing options and living arrangements; and other support needs.

You will also learn about Peace Corps/Cape Verde's detailed **Emergency Action Plan**, 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 that will include your address, main/alternate contact information, and a map to your house. If there is a security threat, Volunteers will gather at pre-determined locations until the situation resolves itself or the Peace Corps decides to evacuate.

Finally, to be fully responsive to the needs of Volunteers, it is imperative that Volunteers **immediately report** any security incident (big or small) to the Peace Corps staff. The Peace Corps has established **protocols for addressing safety and security incidents** in a timely and appropriate manner. The Peace Corps also 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 less 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, several 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, 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. Female Volunteers may have to work extra hard to make female friends, since they will often not have contact with women at work. If they do, it may be hard to socialize with them outside of work 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. 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 committee.

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 very often after the first month. Furthermore, in the local government office where I work, there are also 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. ”

#### ***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 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 *el 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 always 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 have found that 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; furthermore, 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.

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 and may sense a lack of understanding among Volunteers. Men will encounter a “macho” environment, talk of conquest, girl watching, and 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 the 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.”

***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. And 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. Peace Corps/Cape Verde staff will work with disabled Volunteers to make reasonable accommodations in training, housing, job sites, and other areas to enable them to serve safely and effectively.





# 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 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. Checked baggage should not exceed 80 pounds total with a maximum weight allowance of 70 pounds for any one bag. DUE TO REGULAR CHANGES IN AIRLINE BAGGAGE LIMIT POLICIES IN RECENT YEARS, PLEASE VERIFY THIS INFORMATION PRIOR TO 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 and cuts, which put a strain on voltage converters and appliances, so bring good quality items. The Peace Corps does not provide transformers. Batteries are available here, but their quality is sometimes questionable.

**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 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 charge quite 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 pre-service training. This gives the Peace Corps staff the opportunity to assess each trainee's technical and language skills prior to assigning sites, in addition to finalizing site selections with their counterparts. If feasible, you may have the opportunity to provide input on your 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 be at least one Volunteer based on seven of the nine inhabited islands, no one on Brava or Boavista and up to five Volunteers in the capital city.

### **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 your 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. 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?**

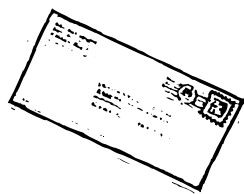
Cellphones are available and widely used in Cape Verde, however SIM cards are very expensive and services have not reached some remote areas. Your cellphone from the U.S. will not work here. Cellphones are targets for thefts. Use at your own discretion.

**Will there be e-mail and Internet access? Should I bring my computer?**

E-mail 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 your computer will be of limited use if you are posted in a remote site.



# WELCOME LETTERS FROM CAPE VERDE VOLUNTEERS



Congratulations on your invitation to beautiful Cape Verde!

I am a first-year 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, graspable information other than "you'll be going to somewhere in Africa in July." Well, although you'll find some of much-needed specific information in this packet, there will still be lots 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 that look different from people on other islands, and has completely different versions of Kriolu to name a few.

I work for a Câmara Municipal (municipality office) here in Paul. I came here with a job description that I will be helping the women of this town build their own small business, but it seems that my job will be what I want to make it to be. There seems to be lots 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 that I had a reasonable understanding of Kriolu after studying it for four hours a day all through 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 with electricity and (slow but still) Internet

access. I can do my banking and buy most things in next town of Ribera Grande, which is a 15-minute bush taxi ride away.

And 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, 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 invite 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 who is from driving city of Los Angeles where people rarely walk on streets.

So, even after staging, training, site announcement, and getting to the site, there are still plenty new findings and surprises. At first I was frustrated at 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. I'm not trying to confuse you more—I think you should do your research, and yet expect that things could be and will be very different from what you've heard or read.

Lastly but not least, 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), regretted not buying a memory stick but managed to get one, iPod is a great idea, blank CDs here are ridiculously expensive, 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 would be loved by your host moms and sisters (good can opener, veggie peeler, etc.). And, if all else fails, you can have your family send stuff for two to seven weeks. But I have yet to receive my M-Bag that



I had my roommate send to me five months ago. Congrats again, good luck, and hope to meet you soon!

—Kayo Shiraishi

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The effective Volunteer walks a circus high wire. She is an acrobat—flexible and courageous, but nervous and uncertain, too. It’s hazy under the big top, so she can’t quite tell what lies at either end of the wire. As she squints her eyes to get a better look, the starting point and destination flicker away, reappearing after a moment in new forms. In the beginning, the Volunteer-acrobat navigates from the U.S. to her country of service, then from training to swearing-in, to a new site, to the optimism and challenges of the first year, and beyond. She is fearless and ready for anything.

In Peace Corps service, she has taken on the ultimate balancing act, an exercise in patience, compromise, and commitment. The Volunteer-acrobat bursts with energy and new ideas, but she doesn’t want to force her way on anyone. She must practice self-restraint. She has a capacity to lead, tempered with an equal willingness to follow. Others have traveled this path before her, and she knows she has a lot to learn.

Throughout the journey, doubts creep about underfoot. “So here I am, walking this wire,” she thinks. She teaches English, or works for the local government, or plans programs at the youth center. “Big deal. How does that really help anyone in the long run?” She asks herself this and wonders what the heck compelled her up there in the first place. The initial rush of excitement wanes. She stumbles a bit, feeling inept and ashamed. Ever aware of the crowd’s watchful eyes, she is under tremendous pressure. Much of this pressure comes from within. “This has to be done perfectly,” she tells herself. “If I fall, I will disappoint them all.”

But the effective Volunteer-acrobat soon realizes that the crowd does not demand perfection. Rather, they’re on her side, rooting for her and working with her. What may have felt like a solo performance is really anything but. In the

crowd, and in her fellow performers, she finds the faces of her colleagues, counterparts, neighbors and friends, Peace Corps administration and staff, and other Volunteers. Together, they are the keys to her success.

With this understanding, she comes to see the high wire not as a constant threat or obstacle to overcome but as a bridge between two cultures and countless people. It has brought her to a new place, pieces of which she will carry forever, and where she will likewise leave behind pieces of herself. Thus, the high wire outlives each individual performance. It remains a vital connection even after the Volunteer-acrobat has stepped down from the wire and left the Peace Corps circus to pursue other adventures.

—Katie Mulhern

.....  
Hello there, future Volunteers!

My name is Amy, and I'm a "community development" (that is in quotation marks for a reason!) Volunteer in Praia, the capital. My community consists of about 80,000 people, which is not quite the remote island with a couple thousand people that I imagined.

The best thing about living in Praia is that there's always something to do; for example, go to one of the six discothèques, listen to live Mourn music, go to the movies (I saw *Fahrenheit 9-11* here last week!), attend a major cultural event like an AIDS march, a manifestation against the death penalty, a Youth Parliament, etc. The worst thing about living in Praia (and nothing is really that bad) is that there is less community. My site does not have just one road and everyone does not know my name, like many Volunteers experience. There is less diversity in Cape Verde than what I'm used to, but Praia, at least, has some variety. Praia has very affluent sections as well as slums. However, the rich-poor contrast is not as austere as I've seen in other developing countries, but it is there.

I share a spacious apartment with another Volunteer who teaches at Cape Verde's only public university, Instituto

Superior de Educacao (ISE). We have electricity about 96 percent of the time. The water seems to shut off about once a week (when the tank runs out), but it's usually back on the same day. Our house is comfortable. I would recommend bringing things from home to decorate your house. I brought, for instance, about 60 photos (which I have plastered all over the walls), an entire set of acrylic paints, a dream catcher, a Buddha statue, a tapestry to hang on the wall, and Tibetan prayer rugs. (Yes, my baggage was over-weight!!! But, I wasn't the worst.) Anyway, having these items around our house makes me feel at home, which is essential.

On a usual day, I get up at 7:00 a.m. and go for an hour run with a neighbor. Then, I have my Portuguese lesson from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. (My teacher/friend walks over from across the street.) Afterwards, if I have free time I usually lesson plan (Yep, even though I'm a community development Volunteer, I got suckered into teaching a few English classes), plan events for work, schedule meetings, buy groceries, and run other errands. I go to work around lunchtime and come home around 8:00 p.m. I sometimes work on Saturdays and Sundays, too. Friday is not a big night to go out here, but I make a point to always go out on Saturdays. I've found a nice size group of Cape Verdean friends and we take turns hosting a house party Saturday evenings, and around 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. we go dancing until dawn. Having Cape Verdean friends, for me, makes the experience worth it.

I came here anxious to discover what I would be doing professionally over the next 27 months. Peace Corps/Cape Verde does not tell you where you'll live or what you'll do until the fifth week of training. It's only now after five months that I'm really starting to perceive what my role is here in Praia as a community development Volunteer. I was placed at the youth center and spent about eight to nine hours a day for the first month at the center, mostly being disappointed about what little I had to do. Only later did I discover that we, as Volunteers, are by no means required to sit all day in an office with no work to do. (Although, you will find many

Cape Verdeans doing this; they have a big problem with overemployment.) I learned that I have the freedom to work on any community development issue anywhere in Praia, so long as I am still meeting the minimal commitments to my placement. Now, I work fewer hours, perhaps, but I am always working. I spend half of the day at an NGO that defends children's rights, I assist two other NGOs (when needed), I teach English at the youth center, I help to run its Volunteer group, and I do community mobilization. I have ever-changing professional roles, and I love it! People are starting to know me around Praia, and when they ask me to help their organization, I do, and that's pretty much how work goes.

The best way to describe the relationship between Volunteers and the Peace Corps is that of co-dependency. To put it bluntly, "You can't live with the Peace Corps, and you can't live without them," as the expression goes. Peace Corps is a huge bureaucracy. There are a lot of rules! Everything has to be approved by Washington, D.C. Volunteers have to constantly fill out forms, follow protocol, get authorization, etc. Peace Corps will check up on you at site with medical visits, security visits, job site visits, etc., etc. On the flip side, I always have money in my bank account and medicine when I'm sick. Peace Corps is always there to provide educational resources, advice, counseling, etc. They make sure that everything works in my house. There is free Internet access in the Peace Corps office, a transit house where you can lounge on the couch and watch movies, and a pool that you can swim in 24 hours/day (if you happen to be in Praia). I would not want to be here without the Peace Corps. I know that being a Volunteer has already helped me to grow personally and professionally. However, there are moments when the bureaucracy is overwhelming.

Friends, training will be difficult, not necessarily academically or intellectually, but emotionally. It will be a huge transition to live with a Cape Verdean family, regardless of how many study abroad programs you might have done. It's going to be hot as hell and as dry as the Sahara. As a

trainee, Peace Corps gives you very little freedom, and it will be frustrating. When you all become Volunteers, however, you will be treated differently. Bring a whole lot of patience. Learn to wait and wait and wait. Stay centered and focused. Remember what has brought you to Cape Verde. Things will not go as planned. Events will not happen on time. There will be confusion and misunderstandings. But, if you have the right attitude, all of this will take you to a higher place. Now that I've gotten over my adjustments, I've noticed that my tolerance has skyrocketed. I have become much more laid back, and I find it to be a blessing.

I'm happy to be in Cape Verde. Trust me, it's worth it! See you in July. Happy packing.

—Amy Rustan, PCV

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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, it 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 is no longer 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 as well as 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. and return after lunch at 2 p.m. and 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. There is a single-screen movie theater, salsa dancing classes, and free documentary showings at the cultural center. In addition, 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 & 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 sometimes 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 that 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.

.....

Dear Future Volunteers,

Looking back on my first months as a trainee/Volunteer in Cape Verde, one thing seems to come to mind....FEAR. Now when I say fear, I just mean that, yes, you as a Volunteer/trainee have left everything you have ever known and have voluntarily chosen to place on hold certain habits, luxuries, and relationships for two years. You chose to embrace a whole new culture that you never heard of and, for the most part, may not fully understand. So, the question that you will continuously ask yourself is: "is it all worth it?" So, I am

talking about the fear of the unknown.

As you arrive in Cape Verde, everything is new to you, and for the next nine weeks you are pretty much dependent upon someone else to do most of your thinking for you. Aside from that, you are anxious about the food, where you will be spending the duration of your service, the language, host families you are supposed to live with, etc, etc... It is almost a step back from those independent people we used to be when we were in the states.

Time progresses—and it will faster than you think—and you will find yourself becoming more and more confident with your language; so much that you will even attempt to have conversations about relationships, religion, and politics. The little things like riding in a *hiace* with certain livestock or having sat in mystery liquid, or having it spilled on you...just becomes apart of the experience that you no longer think of as strange, but you come to welcome it because it is apart of *your* experience as a trainee/Volunteer.

Within the first year, you find that you are no longer worried about time and when things will actually begin or take place; you have become relaxed and have adopted a more nonresistant attitude toward the everyday routine. The closer you get to the end of your service, you begin to look around and notice how far you have come as an individual. The little things that used to send you toward the edge of insanity are nothing more than funny stories to be e-mailed to family and friends.

The best thing about serving here in Cape Verde is that, although not all of your fears or apprehensions will subside, you find peace in knowing that you cannot control everything, but most of all, you don't have to. I have learned/ am learning to take life as it comes and to stop sweating the small stuff. After having been here for a little over a year, I finally understand what the Volunteers before me were trying to say.

Enjoy yourself!!!!

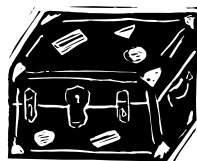
—Zakiya Johnson



## 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 almost anything you need in Cape Verde!*

## General Clothing

### ***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.
- Shorts: are acceptable for casual wear, but not for 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.

## ***Men***

- Pants: light cotton pants, khakis, or jeans for outdoor work, teaching, and evenings. A couple of nice pairs of slacks for dressier occasions. In Cape Verde, nice blue jeans are considered appropriate for work.
- 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 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.

## ***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
- 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.

- Umbrella or rainwear

## **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
- Makeup
- Scissors or other hair cutting device
- Lotions
- Chapstick: though this comes in your medical kit, you might want to bring your favorite brand or flavor
- 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
- Electronic gadgets with batteries (some of you may not have regular electricity)
- Laptop computer: probably usable, but bring at your own risk. Power surges are common, so bring a good surge protector. Be sure to purchase insurance coverage; the 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 (not CDs) to fix the problems. Since most computers now have USB ports, bringing 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.
- Shortwave radio: good for news; most Volunteers can tune into the BBC or the VOA quite easily
- Discman with speakers: difficult to find; when you do, they are of low quality and expensive
- Flashlight: an essential item

## **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
- Zip-lock baggies. Freezer bags are best.
- Good can opener
- Favorite spices
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Rubber spatula

## **Miscellaneous Items**

- Good-quality towels
- Anti-bacterial, no-rinse soap
- Handiwipes
- Extra batteries
- One or two sets of double-sized bed sheets, mattress cover, and pillow cases, preferably not white
- A compact umbrella

- Backpack for day trips
- A Swiss Army knife, 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 CDs or tapes
- Your favorite games (travel-size)
- Good hairbrushes
- Small sewing kit
- Musical instrument (bring extra strings, reeds, etc.)
- Mattress cover
- Compact sleeping bag
- 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 via the U.S. mail system)
- Sturdy water bottle (e.g., Nalgene)
- Sports bras
- Tea (if you have preferences)
- High fluoride (prescription) toothpaste







# 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 should call Peace Corps' Office of Special Services any time if there is a critical illness or death of a family member (telephone number: 1.800.424.8580, extension 1470; 24-hour duty officer 202.638.2574).
- ☐ Establish a power of attorney to handle your legal and financial issues.

## Passport/Travel

- ☐ Forward paperwork for Peace Corps passport and visas to the Peace Corps Travel Office.
- ☐ Verify that luggage meets the size and weight limits for international travel.
- ☐ Obtain 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 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 presently taking.

## **Health 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.

## **Personal Papers**

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

## **Voting**

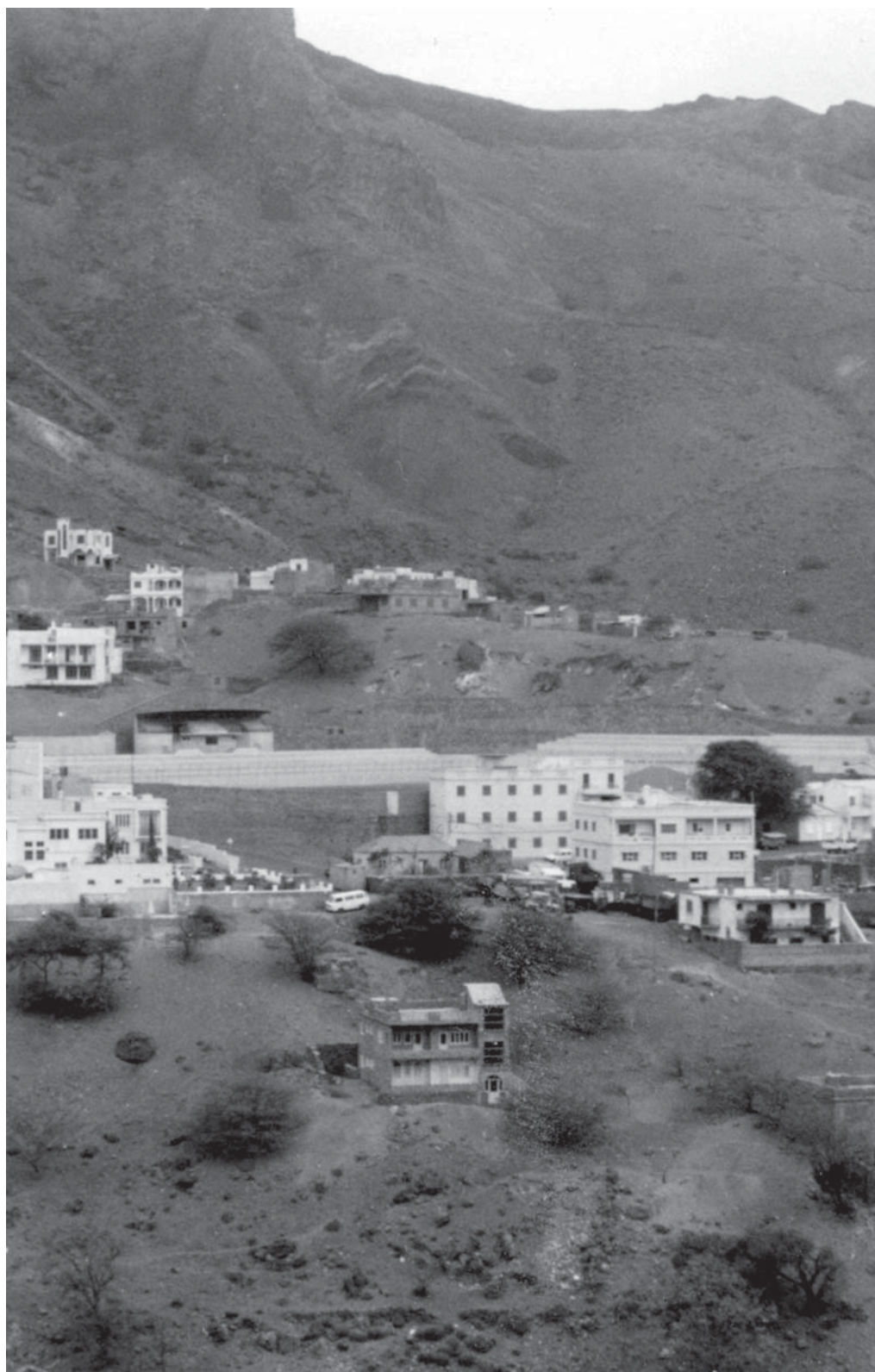
- ☐ Register to vote in the state of your home of record. (Many state universities consider voting and payment of state taxes as evidence of residence in that state).
- ☐ Obtain a voter registration card and take it with you overseas.
- ☐ Arrange to have an absentee ballot forwarded to you overseas.

## **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**

- ☐ 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 1.800.424.8580, 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:**

1.800.424.8580, 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

<b>For Questions About:</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Toll-free Extension</b>	<b>Direct/ Local Number</b>
Responding to an Invitation	Office of Placement Africa Region	Ext. 1835	202.692.1835
Programming	Country Desk Officer E-mail: capeverde @peacecorps.gov	Ext. 2317	202.692.2317
	Country Desk Assistant E-mail: 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 Services 9–5 EST	Ext. 1470	202.692.1470  202.638.2574 (after-hours answering service)

# PEACE CORPS

Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters

1111 20th Street NW · Washington, DC 20526 · [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov) · 1-800-424-8580