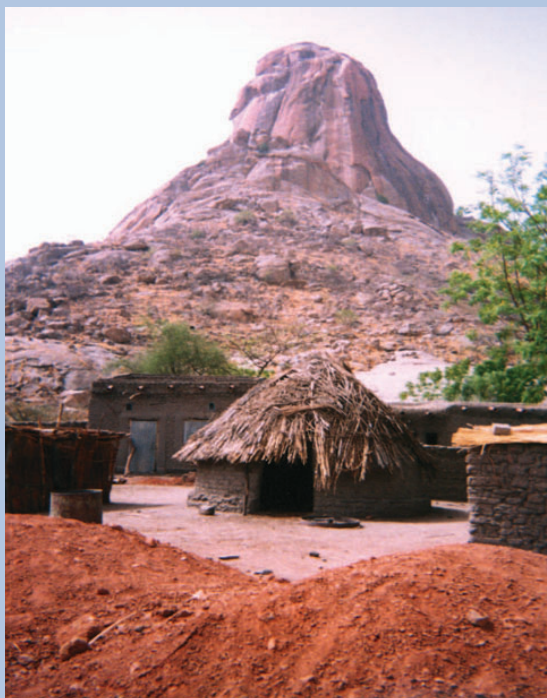


THE PEACE CORPS WELCOMES YOU TO

# CHAD



A PEACE CORPS PUBLICATION  
FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS



April 2005



# A WELCOME LETTER

Dear Future Volunteer:

Congratulations on your invitation to join the Peace Corps and for considering an assignment in Chad. My own Peace Corps service in neighboring Niger was more than 17 years ago, but I can clearly remember the excitement, anticipation, and nervousness I felt when it finally dawned on me that I had made a commitment to head off to Africa for two-plus years. Serving in the Peace Corps is an experience that is certain to have a significant impact on your life, so the decision to accept this invitation should not be taken lightly. I hope that the materials you have received in your invitation packet will help you decide whether an assignment in Chad is the right thing for you at this time.

Living and working in Chad is an experience that will transform you in more ways than you could possibly imagine right now. Peace Corps service here will, in all likelihood, include bouts of frustration, boredom, discomfort, loneliness, and self-doubt. However, if you are like the vast majority of Volunteers who have served in Chad, you will have an overwhelmingly positive experience. You will make a small but substantive contribution to the socioeconomic development of your community while becoming adept at working effectively in a completely new culture. You will learn languages, make friends, and become a real person, rather than an unknown foreigner, in the eyes of your community. When you leave at the end of your service, it will be with a sense of achievement, a great deal of sorrow, and a much better understanding of the world.

You are no doubt aware that Chad is a poor, hot, landlocked country with some of the world's most dismal socioeconomic indicators. Colonization by the French and long periods of internal strife have taken their toll on the people and development of Chad. Do not be fooled into thinking, however, that your service here will consist of two (or more) years of sweaty deprivation among people who have little to

offer the outside world. What you may not know, but will soon discover, is that despite chronic poverty and difficult living conditions, Chadians remain proud, dignified, enterprising, optimistic, tolerant, and hospitable. In addition, the cultural diversity and richness of Chad are amazing.

Lack of electricity and running water, learning a new language (or two), and the harsh climate are things that most Volunteers in Chad adapt to very quickly. The biggest challenges are related to isolation—from current information, American colleagues, friends and family, and all that these entail. We encourage you to think hard about these challenges as you consider your invitation to Chad.

Prepare yourself, friends, and relatives for a major reduction in the frequency and reliability of communications. Internet access is limited to the capital, and in addition to being extremely slow by U.S. standards, it is subject to frequent outages. E-mail and phones are not readily accessible to most Volunteers, and mail service is reliable but sporadic, so you must begin envisioning life without regular access to the Internet, telephones, and communication with friends and family.

Adjusting to being the only American in a village or town will be difficult, but one must make such an adjustment to be effective as a Volunteer. The happiest and most productive Peace Corps Volunteers worldwide are those who spend the maximum amount of time in their assigned communities establishing meaningful relationships with colleagues and neighbors. Envision yourself getting together with other Volunteers relatively infrequently (every three to four months) during your service.

The quality of your Peace Corps experience is largely in your hands. You should begin to prepare yourself now by learning more about Chad and its people, reviewing or beginning to study French, and studying both the *Volunteer Handbook* and the material in this welcome book. We look forward to seeing you in N'Djamena should you decide to accept the assignment in Chad.

Nelson Cronyn  
Country Director

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Map of Chad

<b>A Welcome Letter</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Peace Corps/Chad History and Programs</b>	<b>7</b>
History of the Peace Corps in Chad	7
History and Future of Peace Corps Programming in Chad	7-8
<b>Country Overview: Chad at a Glance</b>	
History	11-12
Government	12
Economy	12-13
People and Culture	13-14
Environment	14-15
<b>Resources for Further Information</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Living Conditions and Volunteer Lifestyle</b>	<b>23</b>
Communications	23-24
Housing and Site Location	24-25
Living Allowance and Money Management	25-26
Food and Diet	26
Transportation	26-27
Geography and Climate	27
Social Activities	27-28
Professionalism, Dress, and Behavior	28-29
Personal Safety	29
Rewards and Frustrations	30

<b>Peace Corps Training</b>	<b>33</b>
Overview of Pre-Service Training	33-36
<i>Technical Training</i>	34
<i>Language Training</i>	34-35
<i>Cross-Cultural Training</i>	35
<i>Health Training</i>	35-36
<i>Safety Training</i>	36
Additional Trainings During Volunteer Service	36-37
 <b>Your Health Care and Safety in Chad</b>	 <b>39</b>
Health Issues in Chad	39
Helping You Stay Healthy	40
Maintaining Your Health	40-42
Women's Health Information	42
Your Peace Corps Medical Kit	42-43
Before You Leave: A Medical Checklist	43-45
Safety and Security—Our Partnership	45-51
<i>Factors that Contribute to Volunteer Risk</i>	46-47
<i>Summary Strategies to Reduce Risk</i>	47-48
<i>Support from Staff</i>	48-51
Security Issues in Chad	51-53
Staying Safe: Don't Be a Target for Crime	53-54
Preparing for the Unexpected: Safety Training and Volunteer Support in Chad	54-55
 <b>Diversity and Cross-Cultural Issues</b>	 <b>57</b>
Overview of Diversity in Chad	58
What Might a Volunteer Face?	58-62
<i>Possible Issues for Female Volunteers</i>	58-59
<i>Possible Issues for Volunteers of Color</i>	59-60
<i>Possible Issues for Senior Volunteers</i>	60
<i>Possible Issues for Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Volunteers</i>	60-61
<i>Possible Religious Issues for Volunteers</i>	61
<i>Possible Issues for Volunteers with Disabilities</i>	61
<i>Possible Issues for Married Volunteers</i>	61-62

<b>Frequently Asked Questions</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Welcome Letter From Chad Volunteer</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Packing List</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Pre-departure Checklist</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Contacting Peace Corps Headquarters</b>	<b>83</b>





# PEACE CORPS/CHAD HISTORY AND PROGRAMS



## History of the Peace Corps in Chad

The Peace Corps first sent Volunteers to Chad in 1966 and since then has provided many years of assistance in the areas of education, health, well construction, and forestry. In 1979, the Peace Corps withdrew from Chad because of a tenuous political situation and civil strife. During the hiatus, Chadians fondly remembered the assistance that the Peace Corps had provided and, as a result, invited Volunteers to return in 1987. The program was suspended again briefly in December 1990 because of a change in the government. The Peace Corps then resumed functioning in Chad with solid programming and strong collaboration with the government. Because of concerns over Volunteers' safety, however, the program was suspended once again in 1998. Despite these suspensions, Volunteers created lasting bonds with Chadian communities throughout the country. Following an assessment in 2002, the Peace Corps restarted the Chad program in September 2003 when a group of 20 trainees began work on a TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language) project. There are presently 30 Peace Corps Volunteers serving in Chad and over the years, approximately 670 Volunteers have served here.

## History and Future of Peace Corps Programming in Chad

Chadians recognize that education is an important means to help the country achieve its long-term goals. The Chadian education system is well established in cities and larger towns, where the availability of Chadian teachers is adequate. The situation differs in rural areas, where there is a great need for

schools and qualified teachers of the English language. The government of Chad has requested that the Peace Corps send Volunteers to teach English in underserved (primarily rural) schools.

Volunteers teach English at the secondary school level, help Chadian teachers improve their English teaching skills and methods, participate in the development of English teaching materials for secondary schools, and strengthen the linkages between schools and communities.

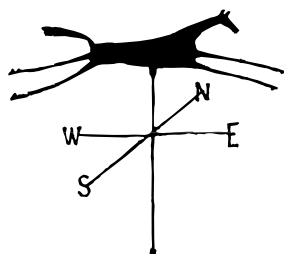
After six to eight months of experience in the field, Volunteers are likely to branch out into sectors such as water and sanitation. The thousands of deep wells with mechanical hand pumps installed by a variety of organizations are in various states of disrepair. A goal of the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources is to assess the number and location of these pumps and to determine the repairs or replacements and materials needed to bring them back into operation.

The government of Chad has identified maternal and child health as one of the other areas of critical need. The AIDS epidemic has led the government to shift Chad's national health priorities, in particular to focus on difficulties facing women, who have long suffered from a lack of access to education and proper health care. With the help of outside donors, the government has developed a national health strategy and a national AIDS control strategic plan, which the World Bank is supporting with \$41.5 million for a health sector support project and \$24.6 million for a population and AIDS control project. The Peace Corps' future involvement in the health sector will be undertaken in collaboration with Chadian government officials.

## NOTES



# COUNTRY OVERVIEW: CHAD AT A GLANCE



## History

A team of Chadian, French, and American paleontologists recently discovered the skull of the earliest known hominid in the Djurab Desert, northeast of Lake Chad. This exciting find, named *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* (and nicknamed Toumai, “hope of life” in the Goran language), is 6 million to 7 million years old and has shed new light on the complexity of human origins.

The first records of settlement in what is now Chad go back 2,500 years, when the Sao people migrated from Egypt. Living in walled cities, they became known for fine pottery and bronze goods. The area soon became a crossroads for two caravan routes carrying minerals and slaves, which brought new cultural influences to Chad. The growing influence of Islam, which first appeared in the area in the 1200s, set the stage for a cultural division that has pitted nomadic Arab speakers from the north against the south’s sedentary Sara people.

Tensions between the south—which controlled the presidency and a majority of positions in the new government—and the north revived after Chad became independent from France in 1960. The country quickly slipped into civil war. The situation was exacerbated when neighboring Libya joined the fighting, hoping to capture the uranium-rich northern border area called the Aouzou Strip. The civil war continued into the 1980s, and the situation became so bad that 11- and 12-year-olds were conscripted into the army. Finally, in 1989, the north and south joined together to drive out the Libyans.

Since then Chad has moved toward democracy, though the political situation is far from peaceful. Insurgent groups continue to operate, especially in the northwest, and violent clashes erupt sporadically. Negotiations between the government and rebel groups have ended some of the disputes, and a more comprehensive peace is not out of the question. Another hopeful sign is a new oil pipeline that will allow Chad to exploit its petroleum reserves. Nonetheless, Chad is a very poor country that is heavily reliant on foreign, especially French, aid. The civil unrest in the Darfur region of neighboring Sudan does not currently affect the Peace program in Chad.

## **Government**

Under the terms of a Constitution adopted by national referendum in March 1996, the president is directly elected for a five-year term and holds executive power, with assistance from an appointed prime minister and cabinet. Legislative power is vested in a bicameral legislature, comprising the 125-strong National Assembly, who are directly elected to four-year terms in a mixture of single-member and multimember constituencies, and the Senate, whose members are elected for six-year terms.

## **Economy**

Fishing, subsistence farming, and cotton cultivation are the main economic pursuits.

Over 80 percent of Chad's population relies on subsistence farming and the raising of livestock for livelihood. The economy has long been handicapped by Chad's landlocked position, high energy costs, and history of instability, which have led to heavy dependence on foreign assistance and

capital for public and private sector investment projects. Cotton, cattle, and gum arabic provide the bulk of Chad's export earnings. Chad ranked 167 of 177 on the United Nations Human Development Index Report in 2004. The primarily agricultural economy will be boosted by major oil field and pipeline projects that started in 2000 and began production in late 2003. A consortium led by two U.S. companies is investing \$3.7 billion to develop oil reserves in southern Chad estimated at 1 billion barrels.

## **People and Culture**

With over 100 languages and more than 200 ethnic groups, three major religions, three climatic zones, and an ancient history, the culture of Chad is rich, diverse, and complex.

In the northern third of the country, in the heart of the Sahara, the Toubou people are the majority. They are descendants of Berber migrants and, like the Arabs to the south, are Muslim. As herders and nomads, they are fiercely independent, strong in battle, and extremely clan-oriented. Each clan has access to specific wells, pastures, and oases. Despite their relatively small population, the Toubou and other primarily livestock-dependent ethnic groups in the north have played a significant role in Chadian politics since independence.

Another group with a distinct cultural influence is the Arabs, who are concentrated in the middle third of Chad, extending far into the north, and make up one-third of Chad's population. Chadian Arabs are mostly semi-nomadic, grazing their herds over the Sahel. There are a variety of ethnic groups among the Arab population.

Another set of distinct cultural practices is dominant in the far south, where the people are mostly African and non-

Muslim. About one-sixth of them are Roman Catholic, with most of the remainder practicing indigenous faiths. About 30 percent of Chad's population is composed of the Sara from this region. During the past 500 years, this group has been subjected to some of the most inhumane treatment of any Africans on the continent. Traditional cultural systems broke down over centuries of forced labor, single-crop (cotton) farming, and tax collection that undermined village chiefs. Yet the Sara have exhibited fierce survival skills: The women used to artificially elongate their lips to make themselves unattractive to slave raiders. In addition, the Sara enthusiastically embraced the meager educational opportunities offered by the French and now occupy most of the positions in the civil service.

## **Environment**

Chad has four climatic zones. The Saharan zone in the north averages fewer than eight inches of rainfall annually. The sparse human population is largely nomadic, with some livestock, mostly small ruminants and camels. The Sahel zone in the center receives approximately 24 inches of rainfall and has vegetation ranging from grass and shrub steppe to thorny open savanna. The southern zone, often referred to as the Sudanian zone, receives about 39 inches of rainfall, with woodland savanna and deciduous forests as vegetation. Annual rainfall in the Guinea zone, located in Chad's southwestern tip, is approximately 47 inches.

The country's topography is generally flat, with the elevation gradually rising as one moves north and east away from Lake Chad. The highest point in Chad (and the Sahara Desert) is Emi Koussi, a mountain that rises 11,400 feet in the northern Tibesti Mountains. The Ennedi Plateau and the Ouaddaï highlands in the east complete the image of a gradually

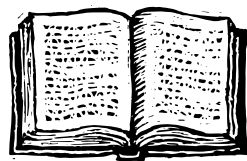


sloping basin that descends toward Lake Chad. There are also highlands in the central Guera region that rise to 4,900 feet.

Lake Chad is the second largest lake in West Africa and contains some of the most important wetlands on the continent. Home to 120 species of fish and at least that many species of birds, the lake has shrunk dramatically in the past four decades because of increased water use and low rainfall. Bordered by Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon, Lake Chad now covers only 540 square miles (1,350 square kilometers), down from 10,000 (25,000 square kilometers) in 1963. The Chari and Logone rivers, both of which originate in the Central African Republic and flow northward, provide most of the water entering Lake Chad.



# RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION



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

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

## **General Information About Chad**

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

On this site, you can learn anything from what time it is in N'Djamena to how to convert from the dollar to the CFA franc. Just click on Chad and go from there.

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

Visit this site for general travel advice about almost any country in the world.

**[www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)**

The U.S. State Department's website issues background notes periodically about countries around the world. Find Chad 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 worldwide.

**[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, and each country page contains links to other sites, such as the Library of Congress, that contain comprehensive historical, social, and political background.

**[www.cyberschoolbus.un.org/infonation/info.asp](http://www.cyberschoolbus.un.org/infonation/info.asp)**

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

**[www.worldinformation.com](http://www.worldinformation.com)**

This site provides current and historical information on 228 countries.

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

**[www.rpcv.org](http://www.rpcv.org)**

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

**<http://www.rpcvwebring.org/>**

This site is known as the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer

Web Ring. Browse the site and learn what former Volunteers are saying about their service.

**[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 of their Peace Corps service.

## **Online Articles/Current News Sites About Chad**

**[www.allafrica.com/chad/](http://www.allafrica.com/chad/)**

Brief news stories on Chad

**<http://hmnet.com/africa/1africa.html>**

Site of the Africa Information Center

## **International Development Sites About Chad**

**[www.afdb.org/african\\_countries/home\\_chad.htm](http://www.afdb.org/african_countries/home_chad.htm)**

The African Development Bank Group

**[www.td.undp.org/](http://www.td.undp.org/)**

United Nations Development Programme in Chad (in French)

## **Recommended Books**

1. *Africa South of the Sahara*. London: Europa Publications (annual).
2. Azevedo, Mario (ed.). *Cameroon and Chad in Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (African Studies Series, vol. 10). Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989.

3. Chapelle, Jean. *Le peuple Tchadien: ses raciness, sa vie quotidienne et ses combats*. Paris: Harmattan, 1980.
4. Collelo, Thomas (ed.). *Chad: A Country Study* (Area Handbook Series). Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1990.
5. Joffe, George, et al. *Chad* (World Bibliographical Series, vol. 177). Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO Press, 1995.
6. Kelley, Michael P. *A State in Disarray: Conditions of Chad's Survival*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986.
7. Kelley, Michael P. *The Viability of the Chadian State: Threats to Its Survival*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986.
8. Wright, John L. *Libya, Chad and the Central Sahara*. Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble Books, 1989.

### **Books About the Peace Corps**

1. Banerjee, Dillon. *So You Want to Join the Peace Corps: What to Know Before You Go*. Berkeley, Calif.: Ten Speed Press, 2000 (paperback).
2. Herrera, Susana. *Mango Elephants in the Sun: How Life in an African Village Let Me Be in My Skin*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1999.
3. Hessler, Peter. *River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2001.
4. Hoffman, Elizabeth Cobbs. *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000 (paperback).

5. Thomsen, Moritz. *Living Poor: A Peace Corps Chronicle*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969, 1997 (paperback).
6. Tidwell, Mike. *The Ponds of Kalambayi: An African Sojourn*. Guilford, Conn.: Lyons Press, 1990, 1996 (paperback).





# LIVING CONDITIONS AND VOLUNTEER LIFESTYLE



## Communications

### *Mail*

Few countries in the world offer the level of mail service considered normal in the United States. If you anticipate U.S. standards for mail service, you will be in for some frustration. Mail generally takes two to four weeks to get to N'Djamena from the United States, and a week or so more to get to Volunteer sites. Some mail may simply not arrive (fortunately this is not a frequent occurrence, but it does happen). Some letters may arrive with clipped edges because someone has tried to see if any money was inside (again, this is rare, but it does happen).

Advise your family and friends to number their letters for tracking purposes and to include "Airmail" and "Par Avion" on their envelopes. Also let them know that the Peace Corps has no control over the international mail system.

During training, people can send letters and packages to you at the following address:

PCT, "Your Name"  
Corps de la Paix  
B.P. 1323  
N'Djamena, Chad  
Central Africa

Once you are at your site, letters can be mailed directly to your address there. Note that in the event of a serious problem, Peace Corps/Chad would notify the Office of Special

Services at the Peace Corps' headquarters in Washington, which would then contact your family. Advise your family that in the case of a family emergency, they should also contact the Office of Special Services. During normal business hours, the number of the office is 800.424.8580; select option 2, then extension 1470. After normal business hours and on weekends and holidays, the Special Services duty officer can be reached at 202.638.2574.

### ***Telephones***

Local telephone service is unreliable and expensive. You can generally arrange for your family to call you once you learn where you will be posted, depending on your location in the country. Chad is six hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (five hours ahead of Daylight Savings Time).

### ***Computer, Internet, and E-mail Access***

You can access the Internet at cybercafes in N'Djamena. Internet access in other large towns, however, is unreliable because of the quality of telephone lines. The Peace Corps office has a limited number of computers available for work-related use by Volunteers. Adjusting to life in Chad will be significantly easier if you begin preparing yourself, your friends, and your family for sporadic and infrequent communication by Internet or telephone.

## **Housing and Site Location**

The ministry you will be working for, in collaboration with Peace Corps staff, decides where you will be posted. Members of Peace Corps/Chad staff review proposed sites for appropriateness, safety, and security. You are unlikely to know your post until the last few weeks of pre-service training because staff members need time to evaluate work sites and get to know each trainee individually before making placement decisions.

Sites range from large administrative towns to small villages. Peace Corps/Chad arranges for housing, relying on the resources available in each community. It tries to ensure that Volunteers have lodging that allows for independence and privacy, but you have to be flexible in your housing expectations. You may be lodged in a small, one-room hut within a family's compound. Your house may have walls made of concrete or mud bricks and a tin or thatched roof. A typical Volunteer house consists of a sitting room, a bedroom, and a cooking area. Some houses have inside toilets and shower areas while others have nearby pit latrines. You probably will not have running water and electricity, which means that your water will come from a well or river and that you will spend your evenings reading by a candle or lantern.

## **Living Allowance and Money Management**

The local currency is the CFA franc (for *Communauté financière de l'Afrique*, or African Financial Community), whose exchange rate is about 500 CFA to the U.S. dollar. You will receive a monthly living allowance to cover the cost of living simply but adequately while serving in Chad. The living allowance covers the cost of utilities, domestic help, household supplies, clothing, food, work-related transport and supplies, and modest entertainment and recreation expenses. In addition, you will receive \$24 each month as a vacation allowance and additional money to pay for transportation and lodging on official trips (i.e., trips made at the request of the Peace Corps).

After you are sworn in as a Volunteer, you will get a one-time settling-in allowance to purchase household items such as furniture and kitchen supplies. The amount is based on a survey of Volunteer expenses. Volunteers are encouraged to purchase items that are available locally and to restrict their

purchases to genuine needs. In all cases, equipment and furnishings should be consistent with local usage. The Peace Corps will provide a mountain bike and helmet, if one is required for your work; a mosquito net; and a water filter.

## **Food and Diet**

Drinking water needs to be boiled or filtered. Fruits and vegetables are somewhat limited, with only one or two local fruits or vegetables available in any given season. Local lettuce, green peppers, okra, and tomatoes are available almost year-round. Fruits like oranges, pineapples, and bananas are imported from Cameroon.

Chadian meals are simple but tasty and nutritious. A typical meal in the northern part of the country consists of a staple food like millet or sorghum served with meat sauce made from beef or sheep. In the south, the staple food is sorghum, rice, or maize served with a fish or meat sauce.

## **Transportation**

Air travel within Chad is possible via two private charter agencies, Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF) and the Esso oil company. Air Chad, the national airline, ceased operations in 1999.

Railway services have never existed in Chad. The most common means of transport in Chad are privately owned trucks, minibuses, and a variety of four-wheel-drive vehicles, all of which are used to haul everything from livestock to people (frequently together). Chad has only 310 miles (500 kilometers) of paved road, so travel from one point to another—particularly in the rainy season—usually takes considerable time.

Because of safety and security concerns, Volunteers are not allowed to own or drive any type of motorized vehicle (including motorcycles) in Chad. The only exception to this rule is in the event of a life-, limb-, or sight-threatening emergency involving a Volunteer.

## **Geography and Climate**

Landlocked Chad borders Libya in the north, Sudan in the east, the Central African Republic in the south, and Cameroon, Nigeria, and Niger in the West. It has an area of 485,600 square miles. Because of the desert climate of the Sahel in the northern two-thirds of the country, Chad's population, estimated at just over 9.5 million in 2004, resides mainly in the south. Seventy-seven percent of the population lives in rural areas (in clusters of fewer than 5,000 inhabitants) as subsistence farmers or herders. The capital, N'Djamena, is home to approximately 700,000 people; other major cities include Sarh (50,000) and Moundou (75,000) in the south, and Abéché (35,000) in the north.

Chad has three seasons: rainy, hot, and cool. During the rainy season from June to October, the temperature ranges between 75 and 105 degrees Fahrenheit with relatively high humidity. The dry, cool season extends from November to February, when temperatures range from 60 to 100 degrees. During the hot season from March to June, daily temperatures exceed 110 and rarely drop lower than 90 degrees, and humidity gradually rises as the rains approach.

## **Social Activities**

Social activities vary according to where you are located and range from sitting and talking with friends and neighbors to going to the market to taking part in local festivals. The

cultural diversity of Chad means that there is always something of interest going on in the village that you can learn from, be it drumming and dancing or planting peanuts.

Forming relationships with members of a community is both challenging and gratifying. Chadians are hospitable and generous, and their extended family structure results in an open-door policy and a welcoming attitude to visitors. Demonstrating an interest in the local culture greatly speeds the integration process and helps you establish credibility as a member of the community. The most satisfied Volunteers integrate into their communities—eat the local food, speak the local language, and attend important village ceremonies such as baptisms, funerals, and marriages—while maintaining a good sense of who they are as individuals. Although the majority of social activities occur in their village or community, Volunteers also form a tightknit community and do a good share of socializing at provincial or national meetings and on certain holidays.

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

One of the difficulties of finding your place as a Peace Corps Volunteer is fitting into the local culture while maintaining your own cultural identity and acting like a professional all at the same time. It is not an easy thing to resolve. You will be working as a representative of a Chadian government ministry or a professional nongovernmental organization (NGO) and as such you will be expected to dress and behave accordingly. Your Chadian co-workers will generally dress very well and will expect you to dress appropriately too. Being neat and cleanly dressed is a sign of respect and pride. A foreigner who wears unkempt or old clothes is likely to be considered an affront. Trousers (for men, and women in some regions), blouses/shirts, skirts (below the knee), and dresses are

appropriate wear for work. Wearing shorts, halter tops, short skirts, form-fitting or low-cut blouses, military attire, or dirty or torn clothing in public is not appropriate.

The Peace Corps expects Volunteers to behave in a way that will foster respect within their community and reflect well on the Peace Corps and on citizens of the United States. You will receive an orientation to appropriate behavior and cultural sensitivity during pre-service training. As a Volunteer, you have the status of an invited guest and thus must be sensitive to the habits, tastes, and taboos of your hosts.

## **Personal Safety**

More information about the Peace Corps' approach to safety is outlined in the "Health Care and Safety" chapter of this *Welcome Book*, but it is an important issue and cannot be overemphasized. Becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer entails certain safety risks. Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment (oftentimes alone), having a limited understanding of local language and culture, and being perceived as well-off are some of the factors that can put a Volunteer at risk. Many Volunteers experience varying degrees of unwanted attention and harassment. Petty thefts and burglaries are not uncommon, and incidents of physical and sexual assault do occur, although most Chad Volunteers complete their two years of service without personal security incidents. The Peace Corps has established procedures and policies designed to help you reduce your risks and enhance your safety and security. These procedures and policies, in addition to safety training, will be provided once you arrive in Chad. At the same time, you are expected to take responsibility for your safety and well-being.

## Rewards and Frustrations

Although the potential for job satisfaction in Chad is quite high, like all Volunteers, you will encounter numerous frustrations. Collaborating agencies are not always able to provide Volunteers the ideal degree of support. In addition, the pace of work and life is much slower than what most Americans are accustomed to. For these reasons, the Peace Corps experience of adapting to a new culture and environment is often described as a series of emotional peaks and valleys.

You will be given a high degree of independence in your work—perhaps more than in any other job you have had or will have. Depending on how you approach your work, you are also likely to have a great deal of responsibility. You will often find yourself in situations that require an ability to motivate yourself and your co-workers with little guidance from supervisors. You might work for months without seeing any visible impact from, or without receiving feedback on, your work. Development anywhere in the world—including disadvantaged areas in the United States—is slow work that requires perseverance. You must possess the self-confidence, patience, and vision to continue working toward long-term goals without seeing immediate results.

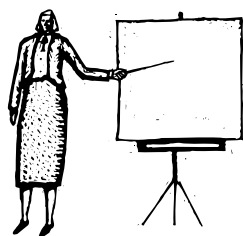
To overcome these difficulties you will need maturity, flexibility, open-mindedness, and resourcefulness. The Peace Corps/Chad staff, your Chadian friends, and fellow Volunteers will support you during times of challenge as well as in moments of success. If you are able to make the commitment to integrate into your community and work hard, you will be a successful Volunteer.



## NOTES



# PEACE CORPS TRAINING



## Overview of Pre-Service Training

Training is an essential part of Peace Corps service. Our goal is to give you enough skills and information to allow you to live and work effectively in Chad. In doing that, we build on the experiences and expertise you bring to the Peace Corps. We anticipate that you will approach your training with an open mind, a desire to learn, and a willingness to become involved. Trainees officially become Volunteers after successful completion of training.

The 11-week training will provide you the opportunity to learn new skills and practice them as they apply to Chad. You will receive training and orientation in language, cross-cultural communication, the history of Chad and its people, development issues, health and personal safety, and technical skills pertinent to your specific assignment. The skills you learn will serve as the foundation upon which you will build your experience as a Volunteer in Chad.

Training will combine structured classroom study, directed study, and independent study, with the maximum possible number of hours spent out of the classroom. At the outset of training, the training staff will outline the training goals that each trainee has to reach before becoming a Volunteer and the criteria that will be used to assess achievement of those goals. Evaluation of your performance during training is a continual process based on a dialogue between you and the training staff. The training director, along with the language, technical, and cross-cultural trainers, will work with you toward the highest possible achievement of training goals by providing you with feedback throughout your training. After

successful completion of pre-service training, you will be sworn in as a Volunteer and make the final preparations for departure to your site.

### ***Technical Training***

Technical training will prepare you to work in Chad by building on the skills you already have and helping you develop new skills in a manner appropriate to the needs of the country. The Peace Corps/Chad staff and local Chadian experts will conduct the training program. 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 include sessions on the general economic and political environment in Chad and strategies for working within such a framework. You will review your technical sector's goals and will meet with the Chadian agencies and organizations that invited the Peace Corps to assist them. You will be supported and evaluated throughout the training to build the confidence and skills you need to undertake your project activities and be a productive member of your community.

### ***Language Training***

As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you will find that language skills are the key to personal and professional satisfaction during your service. These skills are critical to your job performance, they help you integrate into your community, and they can 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. Chadian language instructors teach formal language classes five days a week in small groups of four to five people.

Your language training will incorporate a community-based approach. In addition to classroom time, you will be given assignments to work on outside of the classroom and with your host family. The goal is to get you to a point of basic social communication skills so that you can practice and develop language skills further on your own. Prior to being sworn in as a Volunteer, 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 Chadian host family. This experience is designed to ease your transition to life at your site. Families have gone through an orientation conducted by Peace Corps/Chad staff to explain the purpose of pre-service training and to assist them in helping you adapt to living in Chad. Many Volunteers form strong and lasting friendships with their host families.

Cross-cultural and community development training will help you improve your communication skills and understand your role as a facilitator of development. You will be exposed to topics such as community mobilization, conflict resolution, gender and development, nonformal and adult education strategies, and political structures.

### ***Health Training***

During pre-service training, you will be given basic medical training and information. You will be expected to practice preventive health care and to take responsibility for your own health by adhering to all medical policies. Trainees are required to attend all medical sessions. The topics include preventive health measures and minor and major medical issues that you might encounter while in Chad. Nutrition, mental health, safety and security, setting up a safe living

compound, and how to avoid HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are also covered.

### ***Safety Training***

During the safety training sessions, you will learn how to adopt a lifestyle that reduces your risks at home, at work, and during your travels. You will also learn appropriate, effective strategies for coping with unwanted attention and about your individual responsibility for 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 that provides Volunteers with continual opportunities to examine their commitment to Peace Corps service while increasing their technical and cross-cultural skills. During your service, there are usually three training events. The titles and objectives for those trainings are as follows:

- *In-service training*: Provides an opportunity 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.
- *Midterm conference* (done in conjunction with technical sector in-service): Assists Volunteers in reviewing their first year, reassessing their personal and project objectives, and planning for their second year of service.
- *Close of service conference*: Prepares Volunteers for the future after Peace Corps service and reviews their respective projects and personal experiences.

The number, length, and design of these 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/Chad staff, and Volunteers.





# YOUR HEALTH CARE AND SAFETY IN CHAD



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

## **Health Issues in Chad**

Major health problems among Volunteers in Chad are rare and are usually preventable. The most common minor health issues are similar to those found in the United States, such as colds, diarrhea, constipation, skin infections, sinus infections, headaches, dental problems, minor injuries, STDs, emotional problems, and alcohol abuse. These problems may be more frequent or compounded by life in Chad because certain environmental factors raise the risk or exacerbate the severity of illnesses and injuries.

Major health concerns in Chad include malaria, amoebic dysentery, hepatitis, and HIV/AIDS. Because malaria is endemic in Chad, taking antimalarial pills is mandatory. You will be vaccinated against hepatitis A and B, meningitis A and C, tetanus/diphtheria, typhoid, and rabies. You can prevent amoebic dysentery by thoroughly washing and drying fruits and vegetables and by drinking only boiled and filtered water.

## **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 Chad, you will receive a medical handbook and a medical kit with supplies to take care of mild illnesses and first-aid needs. The contents of the kit are listed later in this chapter.

You are responsible for providing your own supply of prescription medications during training. Please bring a three-month supply of any prescription drugs you require, since they may not be available here and it may take several months for shipments to arrive.

You will have physicals at mid-service and at the end of your service. If you develop a serious medical problem during your service, the medical officer in Chad will consult with the Office of Medical Services in Washington, D.C. If it is determined that your condition cannot be treated in Chad, you may be sent out of the country for further evaluation and care.

## **Maintaining Your Health**

As a Volunteer, you must accept a certain amount of responsibility for 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 diagnostic and treatment facilities are not up to the standards of the United States. The most important of your responsibilities in Chad is to take preventive measures for the following:

You will be serving in an area where malaria, a mosquito-borne disease, is prevalent. To suppress malaria, you must take an

approved antimalarial drug, usually mefloquine. Mefloquine comes in 250 mg tablets to be taken on the same day once a week. The antibiotic doxycycline can also be used for malaria prophylaxis but is not as effective as mefloquine. You must begin taking antimalarial medication before you leave the United States, unless you have contraindications, and continue taking it throughout your service and for four weeks after you leave a malarial area. In addition, to eradicate any remaining malaria parasites you may have acquired, you must take another antimalarial drug (primaquine), once a day for 14 days, when you leave Peace Corps service.

Many illnesses that afflict Volunteers worldwide are entirely preventable if proper food and water precautions are taken. These illnesses include food poisoning, parasitic infections, hepatitis A, dysentery, Guinea worms, tapeworms, and typhoid fever. Your medical officer will discuss specific standards for water and food preparation in Chad during pre-service training.

Abstinence is the only certain choice for preventing infection with HIV and other 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 host country citizen, a fellow 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 officer about this important issue.

Volunteers are expected to adhere to an effective means of birth control to prevent an unplanned pregnancy. Your medical officer can help you decide on the most appropriate method to suit your individual needs. Contraceptive methods are available without charge from the medical officer.

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 officer know immediately of significant illnesses and injuries.

## **Women's Health Information**

Pregnancy is treated in the same manner as other Volunteer health conditions that require medical attention but 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 during pregnancy can be met.

If feminine hygiene products are not available for you to purchase on the local market, the Peace Corps medical officer in Chad will provide them. If you require a specific product, please bring a three-month supply with you.

## **Your Peace Corps Medical Kit**

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

### ***Medical Kit Contents***

Ace bandages

Adhesive tape

*American Red Cross First Aid & Safety Handbook*

Antacid tablets (Tums)

Antibiotic ointment (Bacitracin/Neomycin/Polymycin B)  
Antiseptic antimicrobial skin cleaner (Hibiclens)  
Band-Aids  
Butterfly closures  
Calamine lotion  
Cepacol lozenges  
Condoms  
Dental floss  
Diphenhydramine HCL 25 mg (Benadryl)  
Insect repellent stick (Cutter's)  
Iodine tablets (for water purification)  
Lip balm (Chapstick)  
Oral rehydration salts  
Oral thermometer (Fahrenheit)  
Pseudoephedrine HCL 30 mg (Sudafed)  
Robitussin-DM lozenges (for cough)  
Scissors  
Sterile gauze pads  
Tetrahydrozaline eyedrops (Visine)  
Tinactin (antifungal cream)  
Tweezers

## **Before You Leave: A Medical Checklist**

If there has been any change in your health—physical, mental, or dental—since you submitted your examination reports to the Peace Corps, 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 Office of Medical Services.

If you wish to avoid having duplicate vaccinations, contact your physician's office, obtain a copy of your immunization record, and bring it to your pre-departure orientation. 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 at your pre-departure orientation and shortly after you arrive in Chad. You do not need to begin taking malaria medication prior to your pre-departure orientation.

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

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

If you wear eyeglasses, bring two pairs with you—a pair and a spare. If a pair breaks, the Peace Corps will replace it, using the information your doctor in the United States provided on

the eyeglasses form during your examination. We discourage you from using contact lenses during your service to reduce your risk of developing a serious infection or other eye disease. Most Peace Corps countries do not have appropriate water and sanitation to support eye care with the use of contact lenses. The Peace Corps will not supply or replace contact lenses or associated solutions unless an ophthalmologist has recommended their use for a specific medical condition and the Peace Corps' Office of Medical Services has given approval.

If you are eligible for Medicare, are over 50 years of age, or have a health condition that may restrict your future participation in health-care plans, you may wish to consult an insurance specialist about unique coverage needs before your departure. The Peace Corps will provide all necessary health care from the time you leave for your pre-departure orientation until you complete your service. When you finish, you will be entitled to the post-service health-care benefits described in the Peace Corps *Volunteer Handbook*. You may wish to consider keeping an existing health plan in effect during your service if you think age or preexisting conditions might prevent you from reenrolling 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. Petty 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 83 percent of Volunteers surveyed 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 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 in the Volunteer's control.* Based on information gathered from incident reports worldwide in 2003, 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, 47 percent of assaults took place when Volunteers were away from their sites.
- Time of day: Assaults usually took place on the weekend during the late evening between 10:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m.—most often occurring around 1:00 a.m.
- Absence of others: More than 75 percent of crime incidents occurred when a Volunteer was unaccompanied.



- Relationship to assailant: In most assaults, the Volunteer did not know the assailant.
- Consumption of alcohol: Almost a third 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; and Emergency Preparedness, Plans, Training and Exercise. The safety and security team also tracks crime statistics, identifies trends in criminal activity, and highlights potential safety risks to Volunteers.

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.

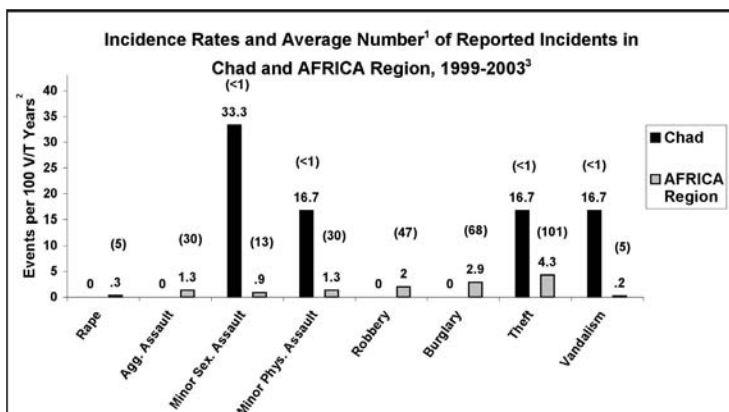
If a trainee or Volunteer is the victim of a safety incident, Peace Corps staff is prepared to provide support. All Peace Corps posts have procedures in place to respond to incidents of crime committed against Volunteers. The first priority for all posts in the aftermath of an incident is to ensure that the Volunteer is safe and receiving medical treatment as needed. After assuring the safety of the Volunteer, Peace Corps staff

provides 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 following 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 Chad as compared to all other Africa region programs as a whole, from 1999-2003. 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 1999-2003.

<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/T are calculated in rapes and minor sexual assaults. Numbers of incidents are approximate due to rounding.

<sup>3</sup>Data collection for Chad began as of 2003 when Peace Corps trainees entered the country for the newly re-opened program.

Source data on incidents are drawn from Assault Notification Surveillance System (ANSS) and Epidemiologic Surveillance System (ESS) as of 7/29/04.

The chart is separated into the eight most commonly occurring assault types. 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 Chad**

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 for crime. As with anywhere in the world, crime does exist in Chad. You can reduce your risk by avoiding situations that make you feel uncomfortable and by taking 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 in large towns, for instance, are favorite work sites for pickpockets. The following are safety concerns in Chad you should be aware of:

**Vehicle accidents.** These accidents are the single greatest risk to your safety in Chad. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to wear seatbelts whenever they are available and to avoid riding in overcrowded public buses or vans. Because of the poor conditions of roads in the interior of the country and the dangerous speed at which many vehicles travel, Volunteers are discouraged from traveling to N'Djamena except when absolutely necessary.

**Robbery/burglary.** The majority of incidents among Volunteers take place in N'Djamena and other large towns, and they almost all fall in the general category of purse snatching or pickpocketing. Volunteers can prevent these incidents by not carrying anything that resembles a passport pouch, fanny pack, or backpack when walking around downtown; always traveling with at least one other person; and never visiting

downtown after dark alone or on foot. Essentially, you must take the same precautions you would in a large city anywhere in the world.

Incidents at the village or town level are very rare and typically involve petty theft from a Volunteer's house while he or she is away. Establishing good relationships with neighbors, informing people when you are going to be gone, and locking windows and doors can minimize the occurrence of such incidents.

**Physical and sexual assault.** Assault occurs in Peace Corps countries worldwide, just as it does in the United States. As in the United States, you can avoid some of the risk by changing your own behavior. You will receive a thorough briefing on how to minimize your risks in Chad. The Peace Corps health unit is available to assist you if you are harassed or assaulted. It is important to report an incident to the health unit and receive appropriate care, including care for your emotional well-being. Medications are available that can reduce your risk of pregnancy and HIV infection after sexual contact, but they must be taken as soon as possible. The Peace Corps can also advise you about the options for prosecuting an attacker.

**Photography.** Most Volunteers enjoy bringing a camera, and we encourage you to take photographs if you are so inclined. A few cautions are in order, though. First, as valuable items, cameras are attractive to thieves. Obviously, the more expensive the camera, the more tempting it will be to steal. Second, you should never take, or pretend to take, photos of military installations, soldiers, or other areas considered security sensitive, such as airports (please do not take out your camera when deplaning). Also on the list are museum enclosures, the radio station, bridges, and certain government buildings. Third, give people ample time to get to know and trust you before you try to photograph them. Most people do

not like strangers coming up to them and pointing a camera in their face, especially when the person pointing the camera is a foreigner. As you get to know people in your community, you will probably find yourself welcome to take photos. You will receive additional guidance regarding photography during the first week of training. Until then, do not use your camera or other photographic equipment in public in Chad.

### **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 home is secure, and develop relations in your community that will make you an unlikely victim of crime. In coming to Chad, do what you would do if you moved to any large city in the United States: Be cautious, check things out, ask questions, learn about your neighborhood, know where the more risky locations are, use common sense, and be aware. You can reduce your vulnerability to crime by integrating into your community, learning the local language, acting responsibly, and abiding by Peace Corps policies and procedures. Serving safely and effectively in Chad may require that you accept some restrictions on your current lifestyle.

Volunteers attract a lot of attention both in large cities and at their sites, but they are likely to receive more negative attention in highly populated centers than at their sites, where “family,” friends, and colleagues 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 do not respond to unwanted attention. Keep your money out of sight by using an undergarment money pouch, the kind that hangs around your neck and stays hidden under your shirt or inside your coat.

Do not keep your money in outside pockets of backpacks, in coat pockets, or in fanny packs. You should always walk with a companion at night.

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

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

**Volunteer training** will include sessions on specific safety and security issues in Chad. 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, and other components of training.

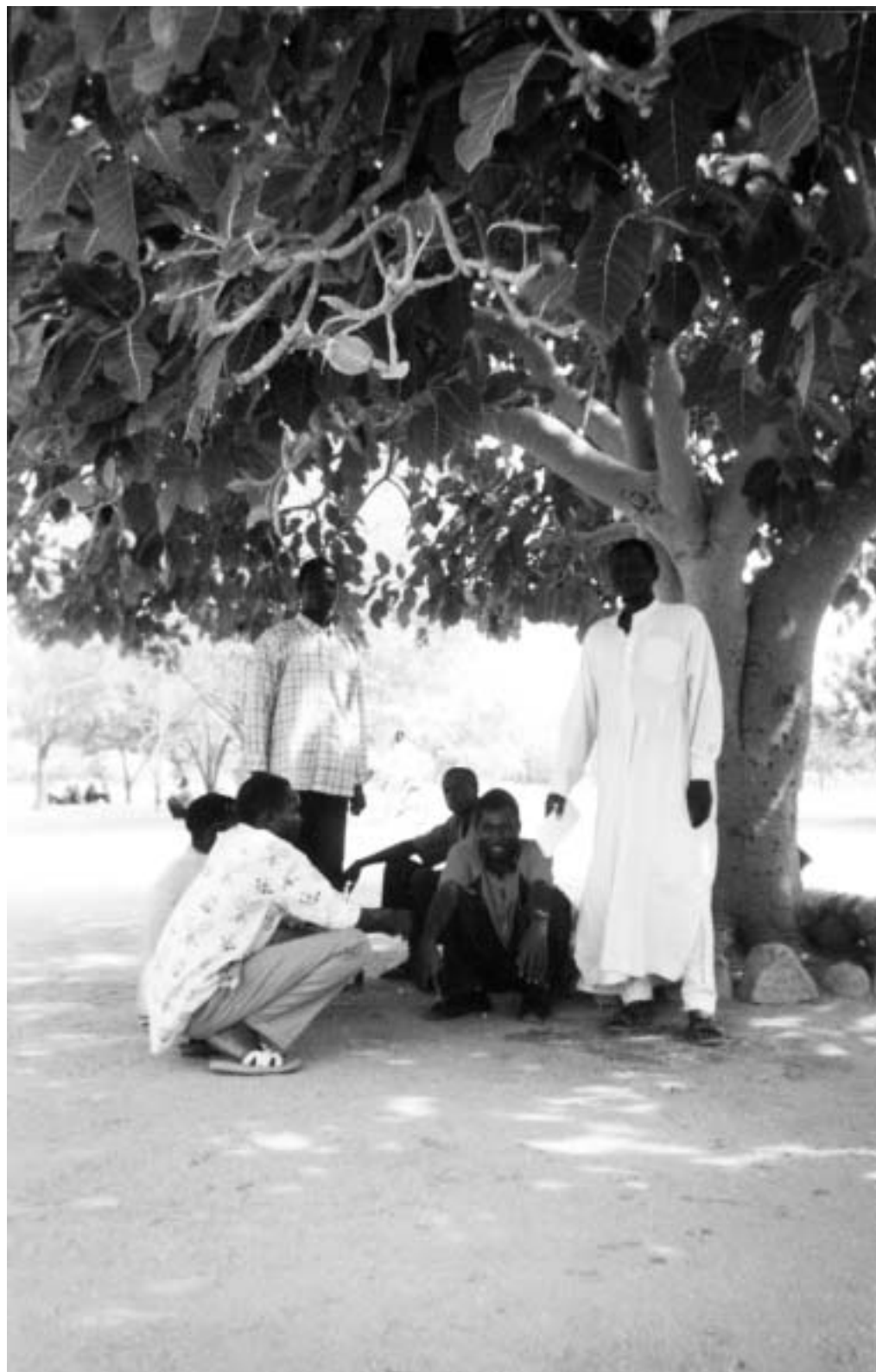
Certain **site selection criteria** are used to determine safe housing for Volunteers before their arrival. The Peace Corps staff works closely with host communities and counterpart agencies to help prepare them for a Volunteer's arrival and to establish expectations of their respective roles in supporting the Volunteer. Each site is inspected before the Volunteer's arrival to ensure placement in appropriate, safe, and secure



housing and work sites. Site selection is based in part on any relevant site history; access to medical, banking, postal, and other essential services; availability of communications, transportation, and markets; different housing options and living arrangements; and other Volunteer support needs.

You will also learn about Peace Corps/Chad's **detailed emergency action plan**, which is implemented in the event of civil or political unrest or a natural disaster. When you arrive at your site, you will complete and submit a site locator form with your address, contact information, and a map to your house. If there is a security threat, Volunteers in Chad will gather at predetermined locations until the situation is resolved or the Peace Corps decides to evacuate.

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



# DIVERSITY AND CROSS-CULTURAL ISSUES



In fulfilling the Peace Corps' mandate to share the face of America with our host countries, we are making special efforts to see that all of America's richness is reflected in the Volunteer corps. More Americans of color are serving in today's Peace Corps than at any time in recent years. Differences in race, ethnic background, age, religion, and sexual orientation are expected and welcomed 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, it poses challenges. In Chad, as in other Peace Corps host countries, Volunteers' behavior, lifestyle, background, and beliefs are judged in a cultural context very different from their own. Certain personal perspectives or characteristics commonly accepted in the United States may be quite uncommon, unacceptable, or even repressed in Chad.

Outside of Chad's capital, residents of rural communities have had relatively little direct exposure to other cultures, races, religions, and lifestyles. What people view as typical American behavior or norms may be a misconception, such as the belief that all Americans are rich and have blond hair and blue eyes. Foreigners appreciate the generous hospitality of the people of Chad; however, members of the community in which you will live may display a range of reactions to cultural differences that you present.

To ease the transition and adapt to life in Chad, you may need to make some temporary, yet fundamental compromises in how you present yourself as an American and as an individual. For example, female trainees and Volunteers may not be able to exercise the independence available to them in the United States; political discussions 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 limitations. The Peace Corps staff will lead diversity and sensitivity discussions during pre-service training and will be on call to provide support, but the challenge ultimately will be your own.

## **Overview of Diversity in Chad**

The Peace Corps staff in Chad 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 races, ethnic groups, ages, religions, and sexual orientations, and hope that you will become part of a diverse group of Americans who take pride in supporting one another and demonstrating the richness of American culture.

## **What Might a Volunteer Face?**

### ***Possible Issues for Female Volunteers***

Women's roles are very distinct in Chadian culture. Women are charged with caring for the family and work long, hard hours to prepare food, obtain water, and rear children. In addition, women do not enjoy the same level of equality as most women in the United States do. Few are educated—only 11 percent of women are literate—and very few hold responsible positions in government or other organizations.

Many men have several wives. In strict Muslim households, especially in the western part of the country, women are sometimes cloistered, i.e., required to stay in their homes unless accompanied by their husband. Certain tasks, including pounding millet and drawing water, are considered exclusively women's work and are not done by men. These cultural practices can be shocking to Volunteers. However, almost all find that they can work successfully with both women and men in Chad.

Female Volunteers have much more freedom than Chadian women and are not expected to strictly adhere to gender roles. This provides them with a unique perspective on Chadian life. As foreign women, they are allowed to participate in both male and female activities, whereas male Volunteers are limited to socializing only with other men. This does not mean, however, that female Volunteers are entirely free of expected gender roles. Although a female Volunteer is more accepted by men, she is still a woman and therefore considered different.

Chadian women usually marry between the ages of 13 and 18, unless they reside in cities. As a single woman living alone in a community, you may be approached by men who wish to court or date you. But there is less need for concern regarding sexual harassment or assault in Chad than in some other countries. Chadian culture greatly minimizes physical contact because of the influence of Islam, and the chief of a village will look out for a female as he would a daughter. Nevertheless, it is important to keep your relations as platonic as possible to ensure good working relationships with people in your community.

### ***Possible Issues for Volunteers of Color***

People of color may confront special challenges in Chad. One of the most common is being mistaken for someone from your

race's or ethnic group's country of origin. Along with this, Chadians may not believe that you are a U.S. citizen, as the majority of people from the United States they have seen or heard about are of European descent.

African-American Volunteers have found that being black in Africa has certain advantages as well as challenges. You may be more easily accepted by your community, since you may not be visibly different and thereby blend in more. However, villagers' expectations may be higher because of your race. They may expect you to be more like them and not afford you the same allowances in language learning and cultural adaptation that they grant to your Caucasian peers. In public places you may be taken for a Chadian and thus expected to conform to cultural norms, such as the Muslim dress code for women. Some African-American Volunteers have struggled with being told by their villagers that they are not truly black.

### ***Possible Issues for Senior Volunteers***

There have been Volunteers over 40 in Chad. The Peace Corps welcomes the experience and special skills of older Volunteers. Like others, you should be prepared for the harsh climate and basic living conditions, and need to take special care of your health because of the lack of medical facilities in Chadian villages. Because there are so few older Volunteers in Chad, you may find yourself missing the company of people of similar age.

### ***Possible Issues for Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Volunteers***

Chadian culture has been described as homophobic, and gay, lesbian, and bisexual Volunteers may find that hard. Because of the negative attitudes regarding homosexuality, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to maintain a positive working relationship with villagers and be open about your sexual orientation. You are likely to find a support system

within the Volunteer group, but you are unlikely to be able to be open outside that circle. Visit [www.lgbrpcv.org](http://www.lgbrpcv.org) for further information on serving as a gay, lesbian, or bisexual Volunteer.

### ***Possible Religious Issues for Volunteers***

Chadians may ask you about your religious affiliation or invite you to attend a community church. Volunteers who are 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 religion is not one of your choice. Yet many Volunteers find that attending church with their friends is a great way to meet members of the community and develop friendships.

### ***Possible Issues for Volunteers with Disabilities***

As a disabled Volunteer in Chad, you may find that you face a special set of challenges. In Chad, 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 very little of the infrastructure to accommodate individuals with disabilities that has been developed in the United States. Nevertheless, the Peace Corps' Office of Medical Services determined that you were physically and emotionally capable of performing a full tour of Volunteer service in Chad without unreasonable risk to yourself or interruption of your service. Peace Corps/Chad staff will work with disabled Volunteers to make reasonable accommodations in projects, training, housing, job sites, and other areas to enable them to serve safely and effectively.

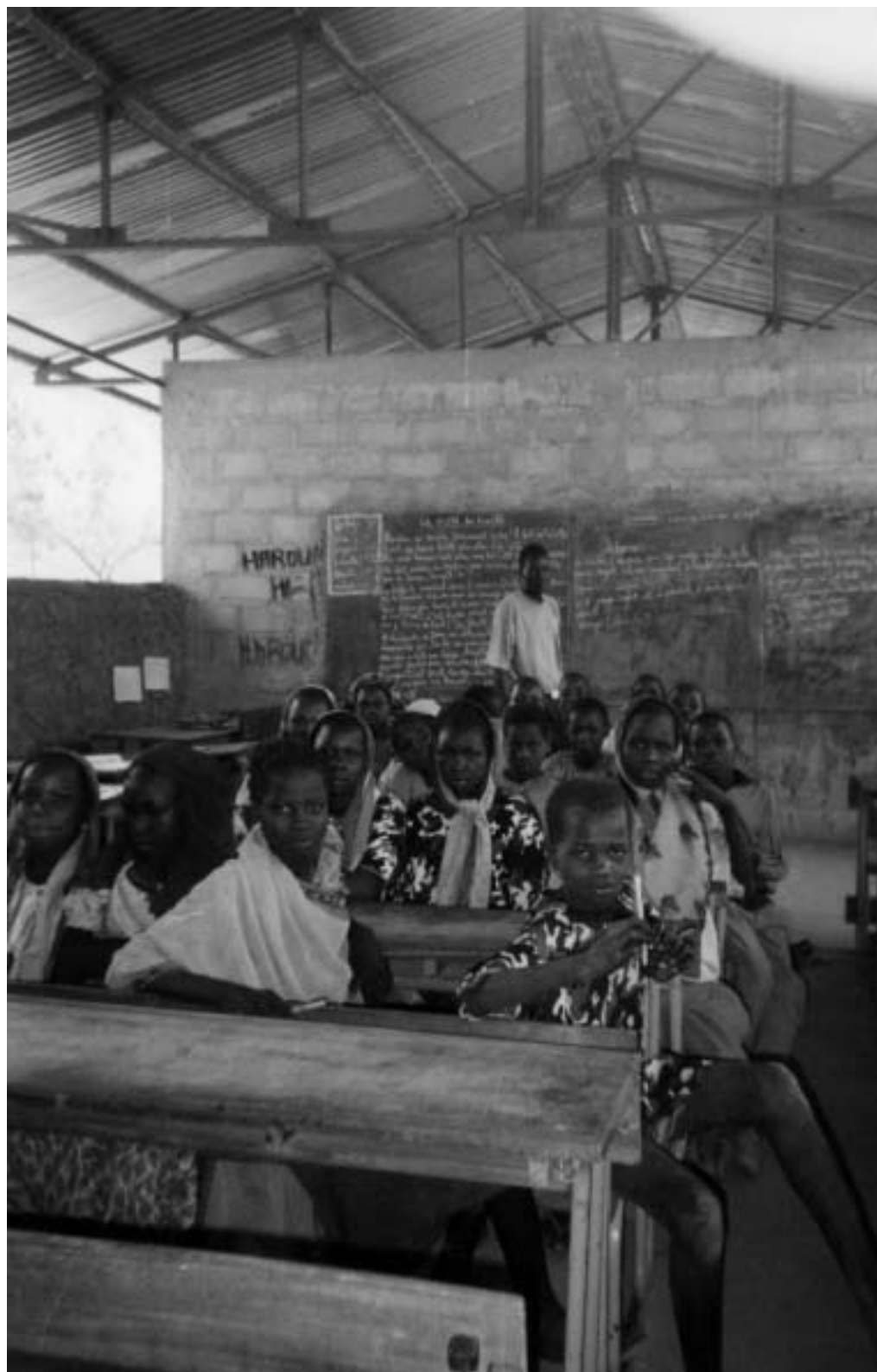
### ***Possible Issues for Married Volunteers***

Married couples who serve together in the Peace Corps are in a unique situation. While they benefit from having a constant companion to provide support, they may have differing expectations of service. One spouse may be more

enthusiastic, homesick, or adaptable than the other. Spouses often experience differing levels of language ability, acceptance by their community, or job satisfaction. A wife may be expected by Chadians to perform certain domestic chores and may find herself in a less independent role than she is accustomed to. A husband may feel cultural pressure to act as the dominant member in the relationship and to make decisions without considering his wife's views.



## NOTES



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS?

## **How much luggage am I allowed to bring to Chad?**

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 limits and will not pay the cost of transport for baggage that exceeds these limits. 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 50 pounds for any one bag.

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 Chad?**

It is 220 volts, 50 hertz (as opposed to 110 volts, 60 hertz in the United States).

## **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. Credit cards and traveler's checks are preferable to cash. If you choose to bring extra money, bring the amount that will suit your own 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 is not able to provide your visitors with visa, medical, or travel assistance.

**Will my belongings be covered by insurance?**

The Peace Corps does not provide insurance coverage for personal effects; Volunteers are ultimately responsible for the safekeeping of their personal belongings. However, you can purchase personal property insurance before you leave. If you wish, you may contact your own insurance company; additionally, insurance application forms will be provided, and we encourage you to consider them carefully. Volunteers are cautioned not to ship or take valuable items overseas. Jewelry, electronic equipment, 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 Chad do not need an international driver's license because they are prohibited from operating motorized vehicles. Most urban travel is by bus or taxi. Rural travel ranges from buses and minibuses to trucks, bicycles, and lots of walking.

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

This is not a requirement. A token of friendship is sufficient. Some gift suggestions include knickknacks 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.

**When will I be given my site assignment and how isolated will I be?**

Peace Corps trainees are not assigned to individual sites until they near completion of pre-service training. This gives 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 ministry counterparts. If feasible, you may have the opportunity to provide input on your site preferences, including geographical location, distance from other Volunteers, and living conditions. However, keep in mind that many factors influence the site selection process and that the Peace Corps cannot guarantee placement where you would ideally like to be. Most Volunteers live in small towns or in rural villages and are usually within one hour from another Volunteer. Some sites require a 10- to 12-hour drive from the capital.

**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 800.424.8580; select option 2, then extension 1470. After

normal business hours and on weekends and holidays, the Special Services duty officer can be reached at 202.638.2574. For nonemergency questions, your family can get information from your country desk staff at the Peace Corps by calling 800.424.8580; option 2 then extension 2329 or 2328.

**Can I call home from Chad?**

Yes, but international calls are very expensive (more than \$4 per minute). A cheaper alternative is to set up in advance a time and day when you can be called at a specified number at a hotel, private residence, cellphone, or post office.

**Should I bring a cellular phone with me?**

Cellular phone service is available only in the capital, and phones manufactured for use in the United States will not work in Chad. If you wish to bring a cellular phone, it needs to be GSM (for global system mobile) compatible, and you will need to purchase service through the local cellphone company (Celtel).

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

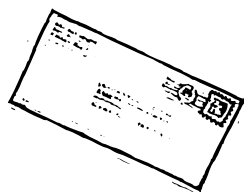
Access to the Internet and e-mail is available in N'Djamena, but it is slow and unreliable. Bringing a computer is a personal decision; computers are not required for your work, and the Peace Corps cannot provide repair or maintenance support for privately owned computers.

## NOTES





# WELCOME LETTER FROM CHAD VOLUNTEER



Mosques call their adherents to prayer. It is Ramadan. Muslims neither eat nor drink from sunrise till sunset in a place where daytime temperatures reach 110 degrees and the dust swirls, and it is time to labor to harvest rainy season crops. To get home to my village, Bousso, from the capital, I have ridden 14 hours in the back of an old Peugeot 404 pick-up truck with 30 other people, livestock, bicycles, and buckets attached with string, followed by a long walk through the sand and a ride in a dug-out canoe past hippos. Coming around a bend in the Chari River, the antiquated Sultan's Palace would come into view as herds of cattle drank along the banks and women wrapped in bright veils congregated in the market. People here often ask me, "*Vous n'avez pas peur?*" "You are not afraid?" There are *mami-wattas*, a soul-stealing sort of mermaid, and other spirits that live in the river, they say. "*Non*," I reply, and then I get them to tell me more supernatural stories. We live in the borderlands of the Sahara. The conditions are tough, life very intense and often frustrating, and you can never really let your guard down.

I began my Peace Corps service in Côte d'Ivoire, but was evacuated in September 2002 following political instability. I then transferred to Madagascar to reopen the Peace Corps program that had been suspended there. From Madagascar, the opportunity arose to join the group reopening Peace Corps/Chad. I lived in a village in central Chad teaching classes of 85 students during my first year here. Upper-level high school students typically had the academic capacity of sixth graders, and some of my seventh graders were over 30 years old. All of them were unaccustomed to singing and rapping and moving around in the classroom, but my English Club does a killer rendition of "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" in three parts now. My adult English class, dominated by the

health personnel with whom I often worked at the local hospital and clinic, turned into a forum for discussing all sorts of issues in health and development, although not always in English. I also co-taught my friend Lélé's Baguirmi's women's group how to read and write their names and those of their children, basic math skills, and how to have healthier babies while we sat around on mats eating *kissar* and drinking ginger-flavored coffee until the sun went down. I spent Saturdays at the tiny children's library on the Catholic nuns' compound playing games and building the French literacy skills of CP1 and CP2 (first and second grade) students. They loved *Les Trois Petits Cochons* (The Three Little Pigs), and took to acting it out under a big tree near the library. Trying to get populations to reinvest themselves in education, particularly girls' education, through clubs, camps, and scholarship initiatives has been one of my priorities in Peace Corps. Now, as a third-year Volunteer in Chad, I am program manager of the HIV/AIDS/STI Prevention Project at CARE International based in N'Djamena. I work with chauffeurs and transporters; career and transactional providers of sex; and the various populations in interaction with these groups, such vendors, youth, military personnel, and other frequent travelers. I love it.

From my experiences in three Peace Corps countries, I have learned patience and flexibility, cross-cultural adaptation and diplomacy, how to work at a true grass-roots level, to navigate sheer chaos, and the power of thinking positively—believing that somehow or another, everything will work out. I'm nearing the end of my Peace Corps service and getting ready to go back to America to pursue a Master of Public Health in graduate school. I've never known such loneliness as I've known in Peace Corps, but the past three years have been amazing and every moment has been worth it. The onslaught of daily challenges may be overwhelming at times, but I'll still have all my village children who call me "Mama," incredible friendships that span languages and traditions, and at night,

as I take my bucket bath, I'll be able to see the Milky Way  
stretching fantastically across the desert sky.

—Lori Babcock



# PACKING LIST



This list has been compiled by Volunteers serving in Chad and is based on their 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 obviously cannot bring everything we mention, so consider those items that make the most sense to you personally and professionally. You can always have things sent to you later. As you decide what to bring, keep in mind that you have an 80-pound weight limit on baggage. And remember, you can get almost everything you need in Chad.

## General Clothing

- Good-quality cotton tops (light colors show dirt quickly)
- Good-quality underwear, socks, and bras (elastic tends to wear out, so bring plenty)
- Rain jacket
- For men, sport coat or blazer and tie with slacks for the rare formal event
- Two to four pairs of comfortable lightweight pants
- Two button-down shirts
- For women, two nice dresses or skirts (below the knee)
- One or two sweaters or sweatshirts (it does get chilly in Chad)
- Comfortable jeans (without holes or rips!)
- One pair of sweatpants
- Shorts (though not acceptable in public, shorts can be worn around the house and while on vacation)
- Swimsuit or trunks
- Durable jacket (denim or fleece)

## Shoes

- Sandals for general use (e.g., Tevas)
- Nice and comfortable casual shoes
- Running shoes
- Good hiking boots for travel and the rainy season

## Personal Hygiene and Toiletry Items

- Antibacterial wipes or hand sanitizer (useful when traveling)
- Three-month supply of any prescription drugs you take
- Two pairs of prescription eyeglasses, if you wear them, plus straps and repair kit
- Sunglasses
- Hair clips or ties
- Good-smelling things like lotions, incense, soaps, and sachets
- An initial supply of toiletries and hygiene products; if there are favorites you think you cannot do without, bring a two-year supply

## Kitchen

- Measuring cups and spoons
- Plastic storage containers
- Minimalist cookbook (e.g., *More-With-Less Cookbook*)
- Swiss army knife or Leatherman tool
- Plastic storage bags
- Packaged mixes (sauces, salad dressing, soups, Kool-Aid, etc.)
- Good can opener
- Favorite spices
- Vegetable peeler

- Small kitchen knife

## **Miscellaneous**

- 12 passport-size photos (for visas when traveling on vacation)
- Sturdy backpacks of varying size (day packs are nice for work; medium packs are best for short trips)
- Maglite-brand flashlight with replacement bulbs or a good headlamp
- Travel games, e.g., Yahtzee, Scrabble, Uno, playing cards
- U.S. stamps for sending mail to home with returning Volunteers
- Address book with addresses of relatives, friends, and professional contacts
- Bandannas
- Hidden money pouch or belt
- Nalgene water bottle for traveling
- Travel alarm clock
- Screened tent for sleeping in the hot season (e.g., Long Road Travel, TropicScreen, MSR Bug Hut 2)
- A Walkman that records with durable headphones
- Duct tape
- Family pictures and other items that will make you feel at home (e.g., coffee mug, pillow, perfume, inexpensive jewelry)
- Hobby materials (musical instruments, art or knitting supplies, etc.)
- Shortwave radio receiver (for listening to BBC and VOA broadcasts)
- Camera and extra batteries
- French/English dictionary





# 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 does not include everything you should make arrangements for.

## Family

- ☐ Notify family that they can call the Peace Corps' Office of Special Services at any time if there is a critical illness or death of a family member (telephone number: 800.424.8580, extension 1470; after-hours duty officer: 202.638.2574).
- ☐ Give the Peace Corps' *On the Home Front* handbook to family and friends.

## Passport/Travel

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

## Medical/Health

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

## **Insurance**

- ☐ Make arrangements to maintain life insurance coverage.
- ☐ Arrange to maintain supplemental health coverage while you are away. (Even though the Peace Corps is responsible for your health care during Peace Corps service overseas, it is advisable for people who have preexisting conditions to arrange for the continuation of their supplemental health coverage. If there is a lapse in coverage, it is often difficult and expensive to be reinstated.)
- ☐ Arrange to continue Medicare coverage if applicable.

## **Personal Papers**

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

## **Voting**

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

## **Personal Effects**

- ☐ Purchase personal property insurance to extend from 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 the lender or loan service.
- ☐ Execute a power of attorney for the management of your property and business.
- ☐ Arrange for deductions from your readjustment allowance to pay alimony, child support, and other debts through the Office of Volunteer Financial Operations at 800.424.8580, extension 1770.
- ☐ Place all important papers—mortgages, deeds, stocks, and bonds—in a safe deposit box or with an attorney or other caretaker.



# CONTACTING PEACE CORPS HEADQUARTERS



The following list of numbers will 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 so they have them in the event of an emergency during your service overseas.

## **Peace Corps Headquarters**

### **Toll-free Number:**

800.424.8580, Press 2, then  
Ext. # (see below)

### **Peace Corps' Mailing Address:**

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

For Questions About:	Staff	Toll-free Extension	Direct/ Local Number
Responding to an Invitation	Office of Placement Africa	Ext. 1850	202.692.1850
Programming or Country Information	Desk Officer E-mail: <a href="mailto:chad@peacecorps.gov">chad@peacecorps.gov</a>	Ext. 2328	202.692.2328
	Desk Assistant E-mail: <a href="mailto:chad@peacecorps.gov">chad@peacecorps.gov</a>	Ext. 2329	202.692.2329

For Questions About:	Staff	Toll-free Extension	Direct/ Local Number
Plane Tickets, Passports, Visas, or Other Travel Matters	Travel Officer (Sato Travel)	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 Subcontractor		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	Ext. 1470	202.692.1470 9-5 EST  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