

The Domestic Dividend of Peace Corps

How the U.S. Benefits When Peace Corps Volunteers Come Home



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Acronyms

CAST	Center for Assessment and Training
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COS	Country of Service
CREST	Center for Reassessment and Training
ERG	Employee Resource Group
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immune deficiency syndrome
IAP	Inter America and the Pacific
KSA	Knowledge, skills and attitudes
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPCA	National Association of Peace Corps
OSIRP	Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning
PC	Peace Corps
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
PCVL	Peace Corps Volunteer Leader
PST	Pre-Service Training
RPCV	Returned Peace Corps Volunteer
US	United States of America

Acknowledgements

PREFACE

In August of 2019, two of my 1960's PCV friends, Art Flanagan and Randy Adams, and I met on my back patio to discuss the upcoming 60th anniversary of the Peace Corps. We thought the time was ripe to explore the extent to which President Kennedy's idea in 1961 had been realized—that the Peace Corps would have a domestic benefit.

The implication was clear that President Kennedy expected the Peace Corps to show a return on the investment. We worked up a proposal to the NPCA to study the “dividends” that have been paid. It soon was approved, and a task force of RPCVs and former Peace Corps staff was developed to examine the question. Now, after four years and over a hundred meetings of the task force working diligently in a volunteer capacity, we are pleased to share the resulting report, **The Domestic Dividend of Peace Corps**.

We dedicate this survey to the American People who have supported this idea called Peace Corps. They have done so with their treasure and their sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, and grandparents, resulting in over 250,000 PCVs who represent every ethnicity, gender, and age in service to over 120 developing nations.

K. Richard "Dick" Pyle, Ph.D. | RPCV Jamaica, (1966-68); Peace Corps Field Assessment Officer/Training Center Director, Puerto Rico, (1969-72); Country Director, Eastern Caribbean, (1990-93); NPCA Board member and Board Chair, (1997- 2002); and Special Services Officer and Counseling Outreach Officer, (2002-12).

In Recognition

This report comes from the tireless efforts of the members of the task force. The following individuals are recognized for their contributions:

Glenn Blumhorst | Past President and CEO of the National Peace Corps Association, approved the task force and provided early guidance in defining our task. Glenn was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Guatemala (1989-1992) and President and CEO of NPCA (2011-2022).

Dan Baker | Acting President, and CEO of NPCA, was the primary NPCA liaison to the task force and provided significant insights and logistical support and coordination with the NPCA staff. Dan was a PCV in Bolivia (1999-2002) and East Timor (2002-2003). Until recently Dan served as Director of Programs and Business Development at NPCA.

Randolph Adams, Ph.D. | applied his significant expertise in PC programming and training to shaping the study and provided insightful analysis of the results. Randy was a PCV and PCVL in the Dominican Republic (1966-69). He also held several PC staff positions in the field and at PC Headquarters, including

as a trainer in Puerto Rico (1969-1971) and Peru (1973), and as a Senior Management Analyst with the Office of Planning and Management Information (1981-1983). He was also the Deputy Director of the Office of Training and Program Support (1983-1985), IAP Regional Program and Training Officer (1991-1996), Small Enterprise Advisor (2006-2008), and Chief of Evaluation and Training (2009-2011). He was also a member of the NPCA Board and Vice Chair (2015-2018).

Arthur Flanagan | PCV Peru (1968-70), provided his knowledge of the early years of the Peace Corps and with his substantial Peace Corps experience as Country Director in Romania (1992-1996) and the Dominican Republic (2011-2014). Art served in many other roles as a Recruiter/Manager (1971-76), IAP Program and Training Officer (1988-90), and Program and Training Officer in Poland (1990-91). He was particularly helpful in constructing the questionnaire and analyzing the open-ended survey responses.

Stephen Gastyer, Ph.D. | provided critical guidance in designing the survey items and supporting data collection, interpretation and writing. Stephen served as a PCV in Mali from 1987 to 1990. He is currently an Associate Professor of Sociology at Michigan State University.

Raymond A. Jussaume Jr., Ph.D. | was the primary academic adviser to the task force on survey methodology. In this role, he provided technical support in all areas of survey design and data analysis, including coordinating the use of QUALTRICS software, and in critiquing the final report. Ray was a PCV in Niger (1978-80). He is a Full Professor of Sociology at Michigan State University.

Janet Kerley | was a key evaluative member of our team. Janet's creativity and expertise contributed significantly to every aspect of the report. The task force is indebted to the major role she provided in all areas, but above all, in coordinating the data analysis and the report writing. Janet is the former Acting Director, Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning (OSIRP) (2008) and Chief of Evaluation (OSIRP) (2007-2012).

Kayleigh Ward, Ph.D. | provided invaluable and steady contributions in coding, analyzing, and visualizing the data and writing many sections of the report. Kayleigh was the team's Statistical Analyst and is now a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Northeastern University. She provided the task force voluntary service beyond her original graduate assistantship. We congratulate Kayleigh on completing her Ph.D. from Michigan State University during the final stages of the writing of this report. ■

Executive Summary

■ The Peace Corps on March 2, 2021, celebrated its 60th anniversary and the cumulative service both at home and abroad of over 250,000 RPCVs. In the summer of 2020, the NPCA formed a task force of RPCVs and former Peace Corps staff to develop a study of RPCVs from all decades of service to gain insight into the domestic impacts their Peace Corps service have had in their professional lives and home communities in the United States.

From its inception, the Peace Corps has sought to achieve three goals. The first two goals define the mission of the Volunteers' work abroad. The third sets up the aspirations for RPCVs' work upon returning home. These include,

- **Goal One** | Help the peoples of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.
- **Goal Two** | Help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
- **Goal Three** | Help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

These three goals of the Peace Corps have proven to be powerful guidelines in the agency's efforts to create true and lasting peace and are the framework for the questions in this study. President Kennedy envisioned both global and domestic benefits when the Peace Corps was founded in 1961. The goal of the study was to assess the degree to which the United States has received a domestic benefit from the RPCVs service in the Peace Corps.

The study focused on two specific questions.

One | How have the Volunteers benefitted from what they learned during their Peace Corps service?

Two | What has the US reaped as a result of RPCVs' experiences in terms of domestic benefits?

Task force members assumed, based on anecdotal evidence and earlier studies, that the Peace Corps is a transformative experience which changes RPCVs in positive ways and supports their ability to give back to their own country. The Task Force members designed a survey to assess this assumption. A second expectation was the study would identify the breadth and depth, where possible given the limitations of the survey, of the domestic benefits of RPCVs domestic contributions. The team hypothesized that Goal Three activities are but one of many domestic benefits.

This report builds on the small body of academic and policy literature about the impact of Peace Corps Volunteers in their host countries and the impact of Peace Corps service on Volunteers. Some historic studies examined RPCVs' goal three activities to share information about other cultures, but few focused on the larger scope of the domestic benefits.

This study is the largest, broadest, and most comprehensive endeavor to evaluate the domestic benefits of the Peace Corps Experience. This does not devalue historic work on PCV's and RPCV's experiences, impacts and skill development; this study helps to further clarify the effects of Peace Corps on RPCVs and the American Public.

A unique contribution of this study is evaluating the domestic benefits from RPCVs who span all six decades (1962-2021), enabling us to examine the paths of the earliest Volunteers over six decades as well as examine the contributions of those who have served recently.

The full report contains three main chapters and two annexes.

The Main Themes by Chapter are:

Chapter One | Learning from Service: What is the impact of Peace Corps service on Volunteers' personal growth and development?

Chapter Two | Bringing the Peace Corps back home: What activities have RPCVs undertaken related to their learning during service? How do they contribute to the U.S. in terms of social and economic benefits?

Chapter Three | The National Dividend: What are the benefits to the U.S of Peace Corps? How have RPCVs' activities led to domestic benefits and what are the unique features of the Peace Corps experience that explain these domestic benefits?

The task force designed and completed a survey instrument in September 2021 which was sent by email to 60,000 RPCVs using information from current NPCA member rolls. The questionnaire contained 43 questions to measure various skills gained from service and numerous ways in which they used these skills to achieve domestic impacts. We received 4,090 responses with 90 percent completion rate. The data were collected using Qualtrics software and analyzed with Strata. The methodology and the demographic data for survey respondents are described in Annex B.

The study focused on five major areas: (1) personal growth and development, (2) development of knowledge, skills, and attitude, (3) impacts from service on career choices, (4) impacts from service on civic engagement and volunteerism, and (5) influence on international work and entrepreneurialism.

Summary of Findings

Notably, RPCVs in our sample saw gains across the board on measures of personal development and skills development. The overall experience led individuals to reevaluate their goals and decisions for post-service. There was significant overlap between the project assignments RPCVs had in the field, and which careers they pursued in the United States upon returning home. Significantly, some RPCVs continued to involve themselves in international work.

At home, RPCVs delved into extensive volunteerism in their home communities and states, providing free labor, skills, and knowledge to non-profits, non-government organizations, and other civic groups. Also, a core portion of RPCVs went on to be small and large business owners. Overall, the study highlights that RPCVs use the skills they learn in the field when they return home in their careers and in service to the United States in multiple capacities, and that the new perspectives provided by the Peace Corps experience fueled many RPCVs desires to solve social and economic problems in the US and globally.

The findings of our study demonstrate that the benefits that US society reaps are multifaceted and have monetary value. The accomplishments of the RPCVs in business pursuits are substantial, as is the imputed value of volunteer service. However, the salient outcome of our study is that domestic benefits are both social and economic, are both tangible and intangible, and persist over the lifetime of RPCVs.

The Peace Corps Volunteers' impact, upon return, spans the local to the global, from serving their home communities in small but impactful projects, to leading federal agencies that improve our connections with the international community. They continue to uphold the Peace Corps' values throughout their lives to the benefit of the American people.

As a task force, we submit that these are the domestic benefits of the investment made in the sixty-year-old experiment in a genuine search for peace. ■

CHAPTER ONE | Peace Corps Background and Study Design

Introduction

On March 2, 2021, Peace Corps celebrated its 60th anniversary and the service of over 250,000 Americans who volunteered for overseas service in the Peace Corps. This milestone presented an opportune moment to pause and reflect on the scope and impact of the work of the Volunteers themselves and their contributions to US society in the years following their return.

In the summer of 2020, the National Peace Corps Association formed a task force of RPCVs and previous Peace Corps staff to develop a study of RPCVs to gain insight into the impacts of their international service on their professional life and in their home communities in the United States. In 1961, President Kennedy envisioned both global and domestic benefits when he spoke of the greater commitment of the American people to the US through becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer. Thus, the design of this study on the domestic benefits of RPCVs recognizes both the vision of President Kennedy, and the mission of the Peace Corps to the American public.

As President Kennedy asked, "How many of you who are going to be doctors are willing to spend your days in Ghana? Technicians or engineers: how many of you are willing to work in the Foreign Service and spend your lives traveling around the world? On your willingness to do that, not merely to serve one year or two years in the service [Peace Corps], but on your willingness to contribute part of your life to this country, I think the answer will depend on whether a free society can compete. I think it can! And I think Americans are willing to contribute. But the effort must be far greater than we have ever made in the past."¹

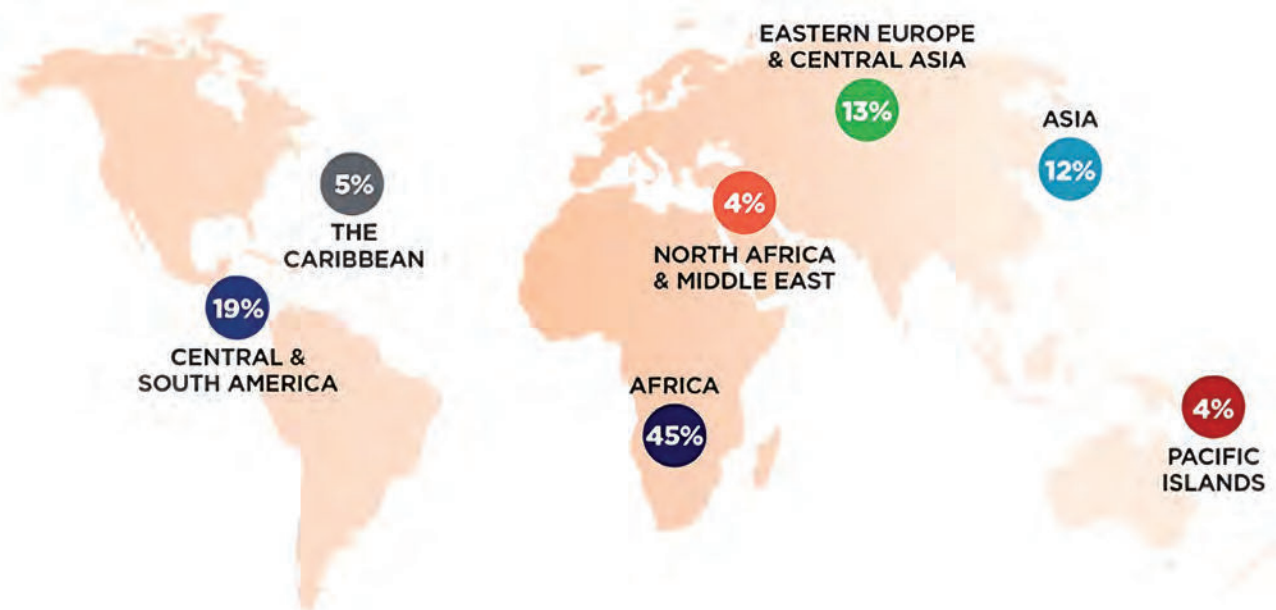
Purpose of the Peace Corps

The creation of the Peace Corps took place during one of the most tumultuous periods in US history (1960-72). During his Presidential campaign, Kennedy had challenged the "Average American" to engage with and serve people throughout the world. Kennedy's call to action was based on his firm belief that Americans were motivated by compassion, a spirit of cooperation and adventure, and boundless curiosity rather than by cultural suspicion, fear, and self-interest.

After his election on Sept. 22, 1961, Kennedy signed congressional legislation creating a permanent Peace Corps that would, "promote world peace and friendship." When reading Peace Corps related materials, it is good to recall that the Peace Corps' definition of peace is not merely the absence of violent conflict, but rather access to basic human needs, economic opportunities, and social justice. Prospectively, a taboo in Kennedy's Peace Corps would be that Volunteers could not involve themselves in the politics of their host countries. Similarly, Volunteers would not be U.S. officials—they would represent only themselves while carrying out their work—to establish and maintain a true "People to People Development Program."

In 1962, APeace Corps sent its first Volunteers to teach in Ghana. Over the next sixty years, the Peace Corps deepened its dedication to serving people throughout the world by expanding into a growing number of countries (Figure 1.1) and increasing the technical diversity of its development programs. Meanwhile RPCVs began engaging at home as President Kennedy anticipated.²

Figure 1.1. | Proportion of Peace Corps Volunteers by region, 2019



¹Presidential candidate John F. Kennedy during his campaign speech at the University of Michigan. October 14, 1960.

²Conference Proceedings from the first RPCV conference in 1964 testify to this immediate engagement of RPCVs following their service (See Ernest et al. 1965).

From its inception, the work of the Peace Corps Volunteers has embodied **three goals**. The first two goals define the mission of the Volunteers' work abroad. The third sets up aspirations for RPCVs' work upon returning home. These goals are the fundamental principles guiding the agency's efforts to create true and lasting peace and are the framework for this study.

- **Goal One** | Help the peoples of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.
- **Goal Two** | Help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
- **Goal Three** | Help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

Carrying out the Three Goals

Given the underlying principles, the task force examined how the Peace Corps has historically put these goals into practice through the training and development of Volunteers and through their work in local communities. This involved examining how Peace Corps programming evolved, particularly training structures and Volunteer development areas, as the sample of RPCVs spans from the 1960s to the present.

In brief, the Peace Corps' goals have broadly been accomplished at the community level by Volunteers in their diverse technical fields as requested by host countries. While the structure, delivery, and content of the Peace Corps training has evolved over time, the purpose has generally remained the same—to provide foundational skills of a local language or two, cultural orientation and integration, and enhanced competence in a technical skill.

Volunteers not only received training in areas that helped in the development of their own capabilities, but the Peace Corps also expected that Volunteers would hone these skills through practice. This practice would come from working at the grassroots level with the host national partners, providing local leadership and decision-making. The basic philosophy of Peace Corps service ensured that the Volunteers focused on assisting with, not directing, what host nationals wanted to do. In the early years during the fast start-up of the Peace Corps, Pre-Service Training (PST) was conducted primarily in the US, through universities, although private companies and nonprofits also participated in various forms.

Language instructors were predominantly natives of the host country. Volunteers were assigned to who could impart cultural values and behaviors through their language classes. Professors and other knowledgeable individuals taught the history and current the socio-economic and cultural context of the host countries. However, it was quickly decided that PST had to be taught closer to the countries and cultures where Volunteers would serve. As a result, a second model emerged, establishing regional training centers in Escondido, California, until 1971, the Virgin Islands until 1973, and Puerto Rico until 1974. These regional centers offered a "second" culture within the US, although still greatly removed from the eventual country postings.

The third model was a 12-week host family live-in training program first started in 1969 in Ponce, Puerto Rico. Higher costs led to the end of this training program shortly after 1971. By the mid-1970s, the fourth model emerged where all training occurred in the Volunteers' country of service. The duration of the training ranged from 10 to 16 weeks depending on the need for local language and/or skill enhancement training.

By 1995, the program would evolve a fifth and final time, settling on a community-based training model. Trainees were split into small groups, living with families in outlying communities from the training administrative center, with language and technical instructors commuting to the communities. This three-month intensive training program model focused on developing host country relationships to more quickly integrate trainees into the host country's culture.

As the Peace Corps' training of Volunteers rapidly developed between the 1960s and 1990s, the task force was sensitive to how Volunteer's skills and development would be measured in the survey. Especially as the emphasis of these different training programs focused on some skills more than others depending on technical areas. As a result, the task force considered a broad range of skills when conceptualizing possible areas of RPCVs personal development and skill development.

Purpose of the Study

The driving motivation of this study is to particularly examine Goal Three and the possible benefits resulting from Volunteers' assignments upon returning to the US. While the study was structured around Goal Three to identify the domestic benefits of the Peace Corps, aspects of goals one and two were present in the survey design (e.g. RPCVs personal development, RPCVs skill development). The task force recognized that it would be difficult to isolate the personal impacts of the Peace Corps experience on Volunteers from how those personal impacts manifested as domestic benefits. For example, the personal and skill development (e.g. more confidence or greater acceptance of diversity) of RPCVs during their service would likely influence which domestic activities they pursued upon returning to the US. Essentially the task force recognized it would not be useful to compartmentalize the Peace Corps experience. Thus the survey used broad categories to capture RPCV service experiences and their domestic activities. Similarly, it wouldn't be possible to properly assess domestic benefits without understanding how RPCVs' personal and skill development played roles in these impacts. Thus, the task force's investigation into Goal Three focused on two research questions:

One | How have the Volunteers benefitted from what they learned during their Peace Corps service?

Two | What has the US reaped as a result of RPCVs' experiences in terms of domestic benefits?

The task force anticipated that the study would confirm a sentiment from RPCVs that the Peace Corps is a transformative event that changed them in positive ways as a person and supported their ability to contribute to their own country. A second expectation was that the study may identify greater breadth and depth of the domestic benefits that RPCVs contribute to, compared to the narrower scope of Goal Three. Thus, the task force distinguished between the Peace Corps' focus of Goal Three activities (i.e., increase Americans' understanding of other countries and cultures) and the more expansive concept of domestic benefits. In other words, the task force conceptualized current Goal Three activities as only one form of domestic benefits, not the only.

Relevant Literature

This report builds on the small, but rich, body of study about the impact of the Peace Corps on Volunteers, their host countries, and to a lesser extent on RPCVs activities that RPCVs engaged in upon return. At the outset, impacts of service on the Volunteers and the impacts of Volunteers' host country work (i.e. Goal One) were the most broadly studied by the agency. Later studies focused on Goals Two and Three, although Goal Three remained under-examined.

The first report on RPCVs' activities came from the chronicles of the 1964 conference of RPCVs. Over the next 30 years, three major studies were conducted by Harris (1969), Winslow (1977), and Graul (1996) who used survey methods to reach a broad spectrum of RPCVs. The Harris, Winslow, and Graul studies delved into the impact of the Peace Corps life and work experiences on Volunteers, and each explored some aspects of Goal Three activities. Graul (1996) provided the most comprehensive insights into CVs' educational and professional development during service. Her study was the first to discuss the domestic benefits of the Peace Corps.

More recently, Kerley and Jenkins (2010) conducted a mega evaluation of ten evaluations of Goal Two, noting that these often focused on the interaction between Goal One and Goal Two (Kerley and Jenkins, 2010). Over the years targeted research documented the Peace Corp's impacts on the Volunteers by examining the quality of PCs' skill attainment and the application of these skills post-service (Goal Three-Pyle, 2020; McCauley, 2020), the impact of RPCVs in specific career fields (e.g., RPCVs in education) (Cross, 1988), and the presence of RPCVs in leadership positions in public and private service (Graul, 1996).

This study further elaborates on domestic benefits by identifying a broader range of activities supporting domestic benefits. In comparison to the work done over the past 60 years, this study is the largest, broadest, and most comprehensive endeavor to evaluate the domestic benefits of the Peace Corps experience. A unique contribution of this study is evaluating the domestic benefits from RPCVs who span all six decades, enabling us to examine the paths of the earliest Volunteers as well as consider the contributions of those who have served recently.

Methodology

The study set out to assess the domestic benefits from RPCVs who served between 1962 and 2021. The survey included questions on RPCVs' perception of personal growth and development and specific project work during service. Then the survey presented questions on post-PC service life, about educational attainment, professional development, current career fields, including a focus on entrepreneurialism, and a series of questions on international work. Finally, a number of questions sought information on continued volunteerism and civic engagement, and other domestic impacts to US society. The survey focused on one specific area of professional life that has not been covered in previous studies, that being the participation of RPCVs in developing businesses, both for profit and non-profit.

In September 2021, the survey was emailed to over 60,000 RPCVs from NPCA member rolls. It is important to note, that as the survey was distributed through NPCA member roles, that respondents who completed the survey may be more likely to express positive sentiments about their service. As a result, some outcomes of the study may show that Peace Corps service continues to foster positive long-lasting effects on the Volunteers rather than disparate outcomes.

The survey included 43 questions to measure various RPCV experiences, multiple skills, and various impacts of their PC service. In addition, two open-ended questions provided space for RPCVs to elaborate in detail on the impacts of their service on their lives and on the US public. Of the 60,000 distributed surveys, 4,090 were returned with at least a 90 percent completion rate. The data were collected and processed using Qualtrics software and Strata. The full methodology and demographic data for RPCVs who responded to the survey is provided in Annex B.

Given the expansive scope of the study, it is not possible to cover in detail all the impacts the various aspects of the Peace Corps experience had on RPCVs nor all the activities the RPCVs have engaged in at home and abroad over the years. Following this general report, a series of in-depth reports will be prepared on topics, including RPCV's professional work in specific fields, civic engagement, teaching and education, volunteerism, entrepreneurialism, and international work. If you wish to be notified about future reports when published, contact the National Peace Corps Association at npc@peacecorpsconnect.org.

Organization of the Report

This report summarizes RPCVs' responses around three main areas. We begin first by providing results on the impacts of the Peace Corps experience on Volunteers' personal growth and skill development. The nature of the new skills and changed perspectives gained from RPCVs' service experience is discussed in Chapter 2. Second, we provide insights from connections between Volunteers' service and their post-service careers and activities across various categories, including civic engagement, volunteering, international work, and entrepreneurialism. The application of these skills and attitudes is found in Chapter 3. Lastly, we review and conceptualize the overall domestic benefits of RPCVs' activities based on this study before concluding with a final discussion on what the outcomes of this study mean for Goal Three. ■

CHAPTER TWO | RPCVs Personal Growth and Development

Introduction

The theme of this chapter is understanding the personal growth and development commonly associated with Volunteers' Peace Corps service. RPCVs' were presented three sets of statements about the ways in which their Peace Corps service may have (i) contributed to personal growth and development (Tables 2.1-2.3) (ii) enhanced skills (Table 2.4), and (iii) increased their interest in a number of career and life choices post-service (Table 2.5). Further, RPCVs were asked if they used these new skills in their post-service career(s) and personal life. The application of these skills and attitudes is further elaborated on in chapter 3.

Impact of the Peace Corps Experience and Service on RPCVs

Personal Growth and Development

To assess the changes Volunteers may have experienced during their service, the respondents were first presented with a series of statements related to personal growth and development and were asked to respond using a 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' scale (Table 2.1).

For this set, strongly agree and agree responses were combined into a single agree category. As the *strongly disagree* category was extremely small (<1 percent), it was collapsed into a single *disagree* category. Respondents who selected neither *agree* nor *disagree* are reported in the neutral category.

Table 2.1. | Percent of respondents reporting positive growth and development from their Peace Corps experience

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I developed greater intercultural awareness	96	2	1
I developed more confidence in my ability to meet challenges	92	5	2
I became more accepting of diversity	87	12	2
I developed a greater interest in service (to community, to country, etc.)	86	11	2
I became more aware of the value of community	86	11	2
I became more aware of my professional goals	67	26	5.5

Source: Question 19. Because of my experience in the Peace Corps...

The vast majority of RPCVs indicated they had personal growth as a result of the Peace Corps experience (Table 2.1). At the top of the list, RPCVs overwhelmingly report having developed greater intercultural awareness (96 percent) and gained more confidence (92 percent) following their service. A majority of RPCVs indicated they became more accepting of diversity (87 percent), developed a greater interest in service (86 percent), became more aware of the value of community (86 percent), and had greater awareness of professional goals (67 percent).

The patterns of positive change and development were similar when compared by decade of service (Table 2.2), particularly on the percentage reporting positive change on intercultural awareness and confidence. These patterns also hold across gender as well, with women reporting similar positive rates as men (Table 2.3). While the survey population had a very small group of "other gender" identity RPCVs (total 39), they generally reported similarly to men and women, with more agreement on intercultural awareness and more disagreement on professional goals.

Table 2.2. | Percent of respondents reporting positive growth and development, by decade

Decade of Service	Intercultural Awareness			Confidence			Diversity Acceptance			Service interest			Community Value			Professional Goals		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1960-1969	97	2	1	93	6	1	89	9	2	89	10	1	83	15	2	69	27	4
1970-1979	98	1	1	94	5	1	88	10	2	88	11	1	87	12	1	71	25	4
1980-1989	96	2	2	92	5	3	87	11	2	86	11	3	87	10	3	69	26	5
1990-1999	96	2	2	93	4	3	86	12	2	88	9	3	89	8	3	71	21	8
2000-2009	97	2	1	93	4	3	83	14	3	83	14	3	89	9	2	63	30	7
2010-2020	97	2	1	91	6	3	78	20	2	80	16	4	90	7	3	61	30	9

Source: Question 19. Green represents agree. Yellow represents neutral. Orange represents disagree.

Table 2.3. | Percent of respondents reporting positive growth and development, by gender

Gender	Intercultural Awareness			Confidence			Diversity Acceptance			Service interest			Community Value			Professional Goals		
Women	97	2	1	92	6	2	86	12	2	86	12	2	88	10	2	67	28	5
Men	97	2	1	93	5	2	87	11	2	87	10	2	85	13	2	69	25	6
Other identity	100	0	0	73	24	3	76	21	5	76	21	3	85	15	0	53	34	13

Source: Question 19. Green represents agree. Yellow represents neutral. Orange represents disagree.

For the RPCVs in our sample, the influence of Peace Corps service trends positive over the years, regardless of the varied Peace Corps' training models experienced by their different cohort groups (i.e. training received by those in the 1960s compared to those in the 1990s). A comparison of responses by decade shows that both younger and older PCV cohorts generally reported positive growth and development. However, the younger cohorts do report less Peace Corps influence on the acceptance of diversity (89 percent in 1960-1969 vs 78 percent in 2010-2020). This decline may be attributed to the increased discussions about diversity as a value in American society and/or increased opportunities for short term international study and work abroad prior to applying for the Peace Corps. As a result, younger cohorts may be entering the Peace Corps with an already high acceptance for diversity, and thus do not experience higher gains in this category compared to their older peers. This same consideration could be a reason for why younger cohorts also tended to value community more than their older peers.

Skills Development

The second set of questions in this section measured the extent to which RPCVs reported changes in seven specific life skills: intercultural awareness, resiliency, problem-solving, communication, leadership, teamwork, and coalition building. The statements used a 'greatly enhanced' to 'did not change' scale for RPCVs to indicate how their service affected their skills. This scale also included a 'diminished' category, which had extremely low response rates (<1 percent) and is not shown in Table 2.4. These skills were chosen because they were taught in the various Peace Corps training models and were expected to be practiced throughout PCV's ensuing project assignment and post-service activities.

Intercultural awareness continued to be the attribute that RPCVs in our sample reported most highly. A majority of RPCVs reported that they greatly enhanced their intercultural awareness (84 percent), resiliency (74 percent), problem-solving (53 percent), and communication skills (52 percent). A minority of RPCVs enhanced their leadership (42 percent), teamwork (30 percent), and coalition-building skills (33 percent) (Table 2.4). When the two response choices greatly enhanced and somewhat enhanced are combined, into a general enhanced category, a majority of RPCVs across all skills enhanced them to some degree.

As was noted in chapter 1, it is important to note PCVs are more likely to already have some skills that synergize with the Peace Corps training models. Similarly, as PCVs and RPCVs are individuals who went into an agency focused on serving others, they may have already possessed or may already have developed some of these key skills prior to their service (e.g. leadership and teamwork) through other jobs or experiences. However, coalition-building is a very specific skill that may have only be available to a limited number of PCVs depending on their project assignments. As a result, it is important to consider that more in-depth studies are needed on further evaluating the level of skill Volunteers enter into the Peace Corps with, versus those they gain or develop during their service.

Table 2.4. | Percent of respondents reporting their Peace Corps experience enhanced personal skills

Skill	Greatly Enhanced	Somewhat Enhanced	Did Not Change
Intercultural awareness	84	14	2
Resiliency	74	22	4
Problem-solving	53	39	8
Communication	52	41	7
Leadership	42	45	12
Teamwork	39	44	16
Coalition-building	33	46	20

Source: Question 22. "Please share with us your assessment of the extent which you think your Peace Corps experience enhanced each of the following personal skills."

Finally, RPCVs were asked to rate (i) the extent to which their Peace Corps experience had influenced their interest in three concepts—global affairs, a desire to make a difference in the lives of others, and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and (ii) the Peace Corps' influence in supporting their interest in personal actions such as volunteering, interest in pursuing a specific career path and an interest in entrepreneurial skills. The statements were evaluated using a scale from directly influenced to did not influence.

Table 2.5 | Percent of respondents reporting their Peace Corps experience influenced their interest in...

Statement	Directly Influenced	Indirectly Influenced	Did not Influence
1 Following and/or understanding global issues	83	13	4
Desire to make a difference in lives of others	71	2	8
Interest in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in my community and place of work	58	30	12
2 Volunteering in my community	52	32	4
Pursuing a specific career path	46	31	23
Entrepreneurial skills	23	27	50

Source: Question 20. "To what extent, if at all, did your Peace Corps experience influence your development of the following?"

The Peace Corps influenced over eighty percent of the RPCVs' to have a sustained interest in global affairs (83 percent) and over seventy percent to have a continued interest in making a difference in the lives of others (71 percent). Slightly more than half (58 percent) noted the Peace Corps' influence on creating interest in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. However, less than half reported that the Peace Corps directly influenced their specific career path (46 percent). Far fewer (23 percent) said the Peace Corps directly influenced the development of their entrepreneurial skills. Combining 'directly influenced' and 'indirectly influenced' shows that most RPCVs feel the Peace Corps impacted them in some way.

VOICES FROM RPCVS | The Influence of the Peace Corps on Life Choices

While the above sections provide the statistics on the impacts of the Peace Corps on RPCVs' personal and skill development, their responses to the open-ended questions in the survey describe with detail and nuance the ways in which these impacts affected them.

When RPCVs were prompted to describe how their Peace Corps experience influenced their personal and professional lives, the soft skills, such as increased confidence and resiliency, new problem-solving abilities, humility, and enhanced interpersonal communication skills, emerged as being very important. RPCVs frequently explained that a combination of key skills honed through their experience, rather than a singular one, impacts their life choices post-service.

Several examples are provided from the open-ended responses below.

"I learned how to connect with people in a genuine way and how to build relationships that will move a mission forward, reach more people, and engage Volunteers, businesses, and elected officials in not only finding solutions, but understand why solutions are needed in the first place. As a RPCV, I am almost held to a higher standard in the places I have worked because my skills, knowledge, and experience [gained through Peace Corps] have prepared me better than most in the workforce to troubleshoot, problem-solve, and find real answers, solutions, and change."

—2007, Cameroon RPCV

"It [Peace Corps] influenced my flexibility, how I see the world, and how others see us. It's not really about my own personal goals for the community or organization, it's how I can utilize my experience to help the community or organizations achieve theirs. It's strengthened my resiliency and resolve."

—2019, Guyana RPCV

"I am an older professional with diverse experience, AND the Peace Corps stretched me in new ways and challenged me to adjust and apply my professional and personal skills [with]in a cultural context and adapt my approaches to 'getting things done'."

—2019, Fiji RPCV

"My Peace Corps experience provided an opportunity to live and work within another culture and learn a language. Both culture and language informed me of how different perspectives on life result in different values and actions. And that local socio-economic environment, resources and leadership are crucial elements in understanding how people organize to identify and solve their challenges to meet their needs for a healthy, educated, and meaningful life."

—1966, Dominican Republic RPCV

Many credited the Peace Corps experience for transforming both small and major parts of their lives, as seen in the testimonies below. A newfound confidence established the foundation to learn a different language and culture, practice leadership and problem-solving skills, to weather uncertainty, and adapt to life and work in their host communities in a different culture. The impacts affected them individually and also impacted their careers, families, and communities. The overall experience led individuals to reevaluate their goals and decisions post-service. Their stories reveal the integration of a new way of thinking into their post Peace Corps life, as seen here:

"The Peace Corps was absolutely transformational in my personal and professional development. It directly enhanced my problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills, gave me confidence and understanding in how to address some of our most pressing challenges, and opened my eyes in ways I

could not have imagined without serving. I now serve domestically through local government work, and it is directly due to my Peace Corps service."

—2008, Bolivia RPCV

Although most RPCVs were keenly aware that they would respond to future life choices with a different perspective, they were less likely to leave Peace Corps with a clear vision of their future career path. For those in our sample the Peace Corps experience more often provided them opportunities to consider different jobs or careers. This interplay between Peace Corps service and impacts on RPCVs careers and domestic activities are discussed next. ■

CHAPTER THREE | Connections Between Peace Corps Service and Domestic Benefits

Introduction

RPCVs are actively supporting the core mission of Goal Three and are also engaging in a broad range of activities that are enriching US society. In this chapter, we describe the depth and breadth of the RPCVs' post-service activities and the ensuing domestic benefits. The chapter begins with a discussion of activities through which RPCVs share their Peace Corps experiences with the US public, commonly referred to as Goal Three activities. However, sharing information about their Peace Corps experience is only one way in which RPCVs contributed to the domestic benefit of Peace Corps Service. Goal Three, as we previously anticipated as a task force. Beyond RPCVs engaging extensively with the US public, RPCVs also impact their communities in the US, socially and economically through other activities beyond public speaking.

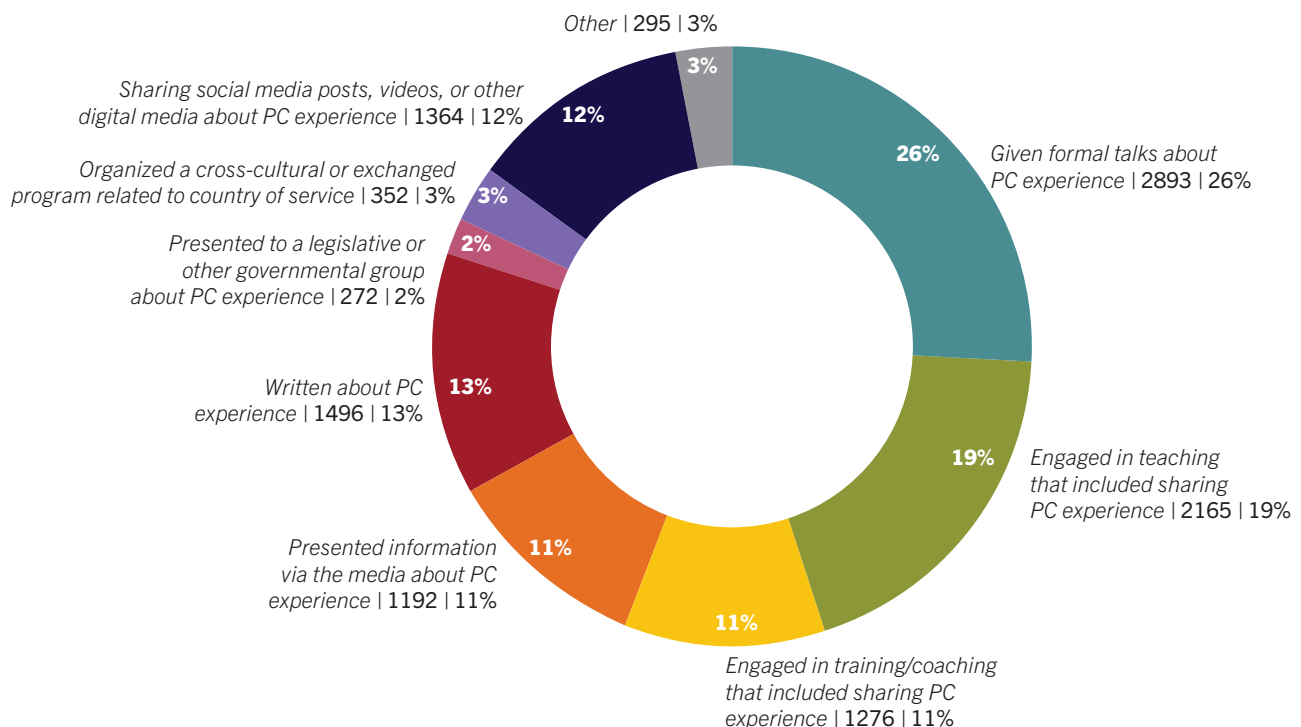
The subsequent sections describe the professional activities RPCVs are engaged in and the influence Peace Corps had on their career choices. Findings from the survey demonstrate the links between Peace Corps service and RPCV's life choices in four areas: (i) the links between Peace Corps assignments during service and current career choices, (ii) the application of skills acquired during Peace Corps to careers, (iii) case studies of two career fields, entrepreneurship and international work, and (iv) the other domestic benefits of civic engagement and Volunteer work.

Sharing the Peace Corps Experience with the US Public

The intent of Goal Three is for RPCVs to share their Peace Corps experiences about living and working within another culture and introducing Americans to the diversity of world views. As a result, the survey included questions to elaborate on which domestic activities RPCVs are engaging with to support this Third Goal.

Nearly all RPCVs in our sample shared their Peace Corps experiences with the US public (90 percent) (Figure 3.1). The question about RPCVs interactions with the US public was comprised of nine response categories representing activities sponsored by the Peace Corps, by community groups, universities, and the Volunteers themselves. Respondents could select more than one option from these activities. A quarter of the surveyed RPCVs gave formal presentations about their Peace Corps experiences (26 percent), and wrote about their experience (13 percent) and in other media (11 percent). Nearly a third of the RPCVs (30 percent) shared their Peace Corps experiences through their teaching (19 percent) and training/coaching work (11 percent). More recently RPCVs have emerged as users of social media to share their stories (12 percent). Approximately 81 percent of RPCVs participated in two or more different types of activities.

Figure 3.1 | Goal Three activities undertaken to strengthen US citizens' knowledge of other people



Links Between Peace Corps Service and Post-service Careers

A major portion of the survey was dedicated to identifying RPCVs' career choices and understanding how those choices were influenced by Peace Corps service. The task force anticipated that there may be connections between RPCVs skill development and their post-service careers, and that this connection would be important to examine when determining domestic benefits. This connection was evaluated initially by identifying the technical areas that best described their project assignment during their Peace Corps service and comparing those to the RPCVs' current professional area.

In doing so, the connections between RPCVs' project assignments in the field and the types of careers they pursued post-service were identified. During Peace Corps service, the responding RPCVs (4,056) worked in 11 different technical areas (Figure 3.2). Respondents could select more than one technical area. The majority (62 percent) were assigned to one sector during their service. Approximately 38 percent of RPCVs were assigned two sectors or more during their service.

Over a third of the RPCVs worked in the education sector (37 percent). The next largest groups with considerably smaller numbers of RPCVs, were concentrated in health, nutrition, and water sanitation (14 percent), agriculture, forestry, and fishing (13 percent), and community development and appropriate technology (11 percent).

RPCVs then were asked to choose the technical area (career field) that best represented their post-service professional work. Again, of these choices, respondents could select more than one option. In total, the 4,036 RPCVs who answered this question worked in 14 different career fields. Respondents could select more than one career field. The top five career fields were social services (16 percent), other (14 percent), youth (13 percent), public service, government, law, and policy (11 percent), and community development and outreach (11 percent) as shown in Figure 3.3. Approximately 66 percent of RPCVs pursued two or more career fields after their service, whereas a minority (34 percent) went into a single career field.

Figure 3.2 | Percentage of RPCVs by project area assignments during service

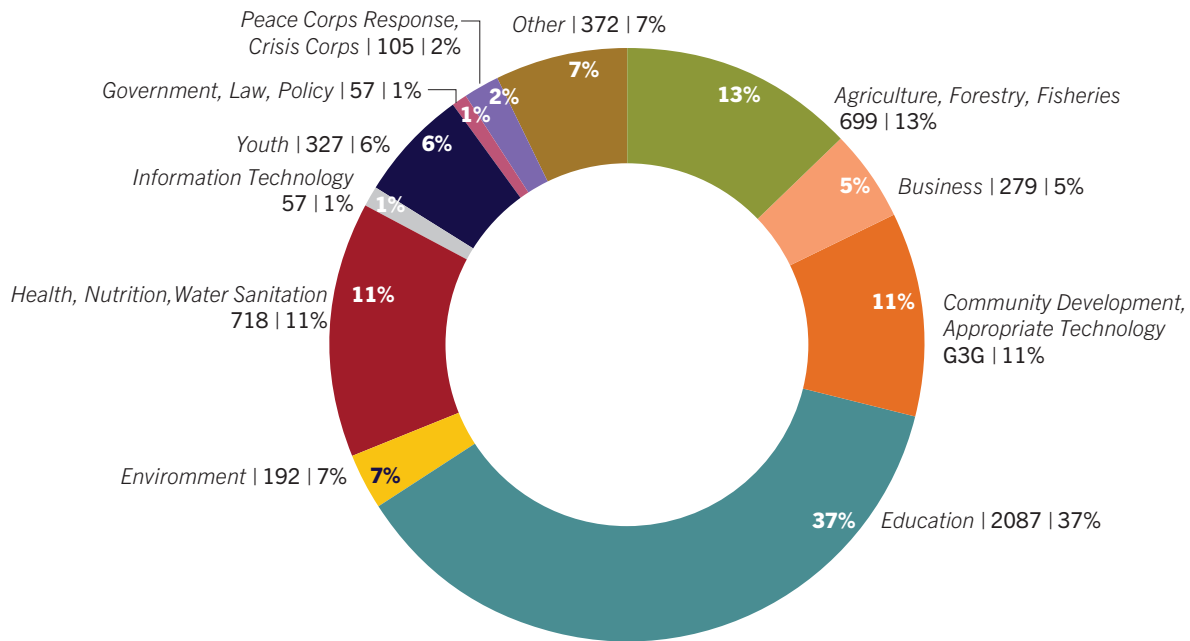
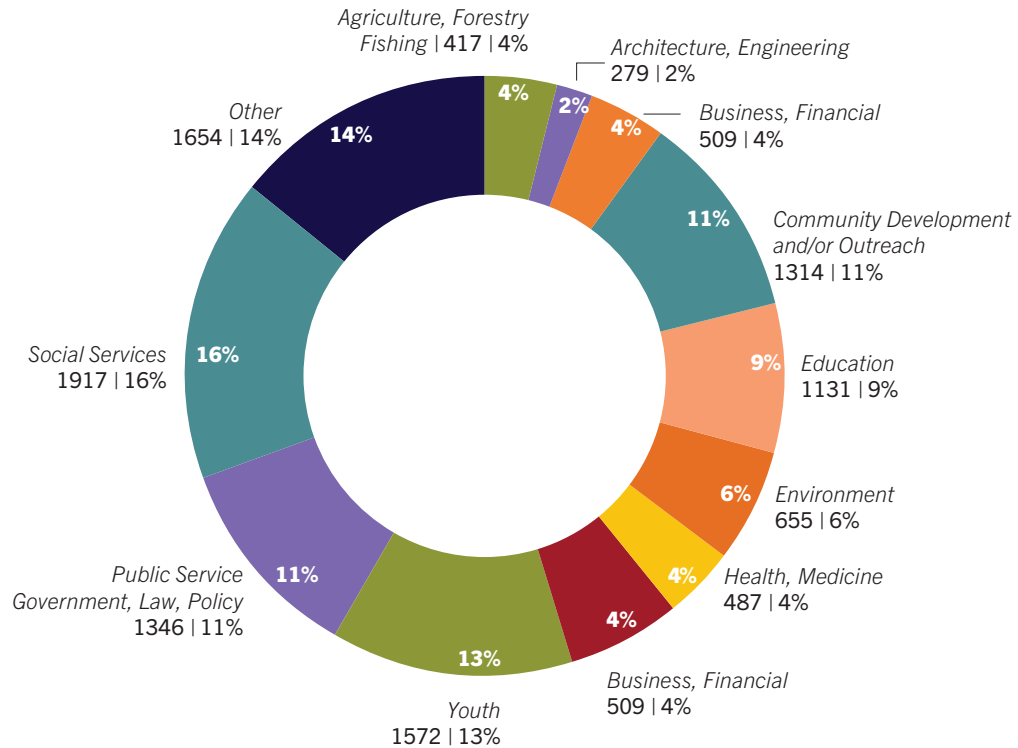


Figure 3.3 | Percentage of RPCVs by career fields post-service



Approximately half of the RPCVs across multiple sectors pursued a career field either directly related or associated with their Peace Corps project assignment. Overall, averaging across fields, 48 percent indicated they had worked post-service in a career field related to their project assignment. The percentage of overlap across areas fluctuated significantly though (Table 3.1). Notably, of this group, two thirds of the RPCVs who worked in public service during Peace Corps, continued into a related field (68 percent). This was similar for those indicating careers in education (63 percent), business (55 percent), and environment (54 percent).

These results highlight that although earlier in the survey RPCVs reported that the Peace Corps did not directly influence their specific career path as much as other areas of interest (see Table 2.5), there is indeed a significant overlap and influence between their service assignment and later professional interests. The findings from both their project assignments and career fields post-service indicate that PCVs and RPCVs should be evaluated in the Annual Volunteer Survey to indicate how closely their field placement and current career align, especially as the Peace Corps experience has a major impact in keeping RPCVs involved in government and public service, education, and business.

Table 3.1 | Percent overlap between RPCVs project assignment and career field post-service

Areas and associated areas	Overlap percent
Government/Public Service	68
Education	63
Business	55
Environment	54
Agriculture, fishing, and forestry	38
Health	47
Information/technology	47
Youth	35
Community development	27

Source: Peace Corps project assignment and post-service careers (Questions 8 and 9)

Application of New Knowledge to Careers

We asked RPCVs to consider the ways they applied four areas of knowledge acquired during their Peace Corps service to their professional life. The four areas included, use of language skills, knowledge of the economic system, political system, and cultural knowledge (of their host countries) (Table 3.2). RPCVs in our sample evaluated these based on how frequently they applied this knowledge, across a scale of 'daily,' 'weekly,' 'monthly,' 'less than monthly,' 'in the past,' or 'never.' RPCVs reported that they have used their knowledge in their profession to some capacity (74 percent) (average of all categories compared to the 'never' group).

Table 3.2 | Percent of RPCVs application of knowledge acquired from Peace Corps in their professional life

Area of Knowledge	Frequency of Application					
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	<Monthly	In the past	Never
Use languages in professional life	14	8	7	31	7	33
Use cultural knowledge in professional life	13	12	15	40	6	14
Use political system knowledge in professional life	7	9	13	37	6	28
Use economic system knowledge in professional life	7	8	13	37	5	30

Source: Question 26. How often, if at all, in your professional life have you made use of the following abilities that you may have developed during your Peace Corps Service?

The responses on the use of the cultural knowledge gained from Peace Corps in their professional life was the highest of the four specific knowledge areas, with 25 percent reporting they use it 'daily' or 'weekly.' The response on frequency of knowledge application of the political and economic systems and languages skills was relatively lower, even when combining 'daily' and 'weekly' categories. This may be explained by the fact that the majority of RPCVs in our sample pursued careers in the US, whereas a smaller proportion continued into international work (1,385 RPCVs), where they would be more likely to apply this knowledge. Similarly, as seen in Chapter 2, from RPCVs open-ended responses, RPCVs are more likely to value other sets of soft skills, such as those listed in Table 2.4

VOICES FROM RPCVS | Knowledge and Skills Influencing Post-Service Careers

VOICES FROM RPCVS | Knowledge and Skills Influencing Post-Service Careers

An analysis of the open-ended responses revealed additional elements of the RPCVs' service that were transferred to their careers over these four knowledge areas. The responses, though varied, gravitated to three primary elements:

(1) The Peace Corps providing an opportunity to be pushed to confront new and unique challenges and cultures was clearly seen as the most rewarding by a majority of the respondents.

(i) This was followed closely by being in situations that greatly enhanced their career development. This was due in large measure because of their unique status in a developing country, often in remote areas, where their skills were needed.

(ii) RPCVs were better able to fully use their talents and take on unique roles and leadership opportunities that would not have been possible within the US.

The direct testimonies from the RPCVs tell the story of how these newly acquired or enhanced attributes and skills, highlighted in Chapter 2 as areas of personal growth, were applied in their professional lives. A selection of these are provided below highlighting the connections between the careers listed in Figure 3.3. and the soft skills indicated by RPCVs in Table 2.4.

"Ultimately, Peace Corps allowed a tremendous amount of personal growth which in turn enhanced my professional life. This can be in regard to effective communication, self-awareness and awareness of others, teamwork, overcoming challenges, and much more."

—2019, Ethiopia RPCV

"The Peace Corps experience is one of the best things I have done in my life in terms of personal growth and maturation. The benefit to society has been in all my dealings with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures. I am far more open, tolerant, and welcoming to diverse people and I am able to find the common ground we all share."

—1999, Jamaica RPCV

"Peace Corps both gave me the required experience and opened doors in my career in international conservation.

I am convinced that it played a huge role in my career and overall job satisfaction."

—1994, Eswatini RPCV

"I am much more patient and can see more possible paths to reach my goals. I have a great sense of whimsy and a heartier sense of humor. I see greater strength in others and probably myself, too. I am more hopeful of the future. Best decision I ever made."

—1984, Paraguay, Ghana, & Uganda RPCV

"I work with 27 Tribal Nations in the western US to protect drinking water. My Peace Corps experience has been so valuable in my working across cultures and governments."

—1985, Western Samoa RPCV

"(When I got) out of Peace Corps, I went into a career in international conservation and community development, which was directly related to Peace Corps. Also based on my assignment at the National Zoo of Costa Rica, I first learned about heritage interpretation and went on to become an internationally known expert with many articles and books on the topic."

—1993, Costa Rica RPCV

"I had a Bachelor's in Fine Arts. After seeing the effects of people on the environment for two years in another country, I got a master's degree, a job and eventually a Ph.D. in a sustainability field. I learned to communicate and work with a community in a way I never had before. Joining Peace Corps directed my life in ways I never expected. It also changed the lives of my friends and colleagues in the States."

—2008, Albania RPCV

"Peace Corps made me acutely aware of the importance of environment to citizens' well-being and enhanced my understanding of the global impact of local decision making. After taking advantage a job at the US EPA, I strengthened my commitment to public service by acquiring an MPA, and then turned to local environmental through work at a large public drinking water and sewer agency. I actively serve as a Deputy COD, giving me frequent opportunities to think globally, act locally and directly advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion, actions I can trace to my Peace Corps experience."

—1981, Sierra Leone RPCV

Cases Studies of Special Career Fields

This current survey highlighted two specific areas of career interest that have not been previously studied in detail. The two areas are RPCVs who went into business post-service, and RPCVs who continued with international work. These two cases are particularly interesting because the level of interest and success in these areas by RPCVs has not been documented in previous research. As a result, we discuss RPCVs' business ventures and international work experiences in depth below.

Entrepreneurialism

RPCVs are active contributors to the US economy through their entrepreneurial activities. In this section, the discussion focuses on the types of businesses that RPCVs founded, the influences Peace Corps service may have had on the RPCVs who followed this career path, and the domestic benefits the US received from this manifestation of an entrepreneurial spirit and skills. Nearly a quarter (24 percent) of the responding RPCVs (933 of the 4,090 respondents) indicated that they started a single or multiple successful ventures post-service (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 | Number of businesses founded by RPCVs, by profit and nonprofit

Founded a for-profit business	399	43%
Founded a non-profit business	447	48%
Founded both	87	9%
Total	933	100

Most often these ventures were connected to their Peace Corps experiences and interests and built upon skills they learned and/or improved while in service. Individuals who founded a business venture fall into two groups in terms of how the Peace Corps contributed to their decision and success. The categorization of this set of RPCVs was based on an analysis of their responses to venture related questions, as well as open-ended responses that elaborated on their decisions.

The first group of RPCVs reported that their Peace Corps experience directly influenced their decision to create a for-profit non-profit business in the locations they served or in their home communities in the US. RPCVs in this first group often created businesses and/or nonprofits that derived from an issue they saw in the field or service they provided (i.e., schooling, health, natural resource management). As such, the impetus for these ventures came from a basis of service, such as addressing a social or economic problem, rather than simply being created for financial gain. This is important because these successful non-profit and for-profit ventures had high impact in their communities and industry sectors.

The second group found the skills and knowledge they gained through their Peace Corps experience as instrumental in creating their nonprofit and/or for-profit. In this case, social networking and other on-the-ground knowledge from their Peace Corps service provided key resources for starting their venture. These RPCVs included references to the importance of the soft skills gained during service as well. While the overall economic impact of entrepreneurial RPCVs is significant, it is important to highlight the social drive and impact of these businesses and organizations. The RPCVs' narratives highlight the domestic benefit of RPCV business activities both at the social and economic level.

"I have been a lifelong entrepreneur involved in the startup of more than a dozen private business and non-profit entities in the US, Europe, and Asia. My Peace Corps experience I developed an interest and love for international work and also work in technology to advance the development of tools and systems to greatly enhance economic development. The entrepreneurial skills (I) employed as a pioneer Volunteer in a small village lead me to eventually be instrumental in creating four non-profit entities in my former hometown in rural US."

—1962, Brazil, RPCV

"What I experienced in rural, remote Costa Rica directly influenced my career path. It also made me question prevailing trends in community economic development (specifically micro-lending) and helped me pursue a career path in economic development that builds community (cooperative development). I have founded over 35 cooperatives in my home state. I founded the very first rural home care worker cooperative in the US and helped launch a national effort to replicate and improve upon the model."

—1988, Costa Rica, RPCV

"I developed the largest herbs company in the world. I presently own and operate a Network Marketing company in over 20 countries. I did not form but have been heavily involved in the building of Mission-5-Million (M5M) which feeds malnourished children across the globe. This is a direct result of my Peace Corps service."

—1962, Guatemala, RPCV

"My background in community development led me to convince the social service department of a pediatric teaching hospital to hire me to set up a program for non-English speaking families. I recruited Spanish speaking doctors and nurses and created a Clinica Hispana within the hospital, set up training programs for community health aides and ran a hospital-associated clinic in a multicultural neighborhood. I established a federal rural health clinic for pediatric patients in my county using a for profit private practice to emulate and provide many services of a community health center (social work, nutrition, and outreach). Not a day went by that I did not apply a lesson from my Peace Corps service."

—1968, Venezuela, RPCV

*All self-reported economic impact between 1 to 5 million

Entrepreneurial RPCVs were economically productive, in terms of the profitability, employment rate, and number of customers served by their ventures. It is important to remember when considering these economic impacts, that they are self-reported by the RPCVs, and that they represent a specific level of economic impact at a specific time during the running of their venture(s). Specifically, RPCVs in this sub-set were asked how much revenue their venture generated on a yearly basis at the height of its operation. As the task force was not expecting this level of entrepreneurialism from RPCVs the set of questions on ventures were not as detailed as could be in future studies of this set of RPCVs. As a result, while the economic impacts estimated below are not inconsequential, the task force cautions against over-generalizing from this small sub-sample of RPCVs and encourages others to undertake future work detailing the entrepreneurialism of RPCVs to understand the full economic contribution.

While most entrepreneurial RPCVs run successful small businesses, RPCVs have established clusters of larger, multinational businesses as well, grossing over \$10 million in yearly profit. The proportion of RPCVs reporting less than \$500k in profit was the largest of all income bracket tiers (64 percent). Further, in 2021, of the 933 who reported founding a venture, 724 remained in business. In terms of profitability, the ventures reporting making more than \$10 million, collectively make over \$560 million yearly. The yearly economic return of the total number of ventures was reported as between \$752 million and \$1.1 billion yearly. This range represents a rudimentary estimate of the minimum amount of self-reported profit and maximum amount of self-reported profit in a given year at the height of their ventures (Table 3.4). Due to the variability of the economic impact for the "less than 500k" bracket, it was excluded from Table 3.4 and from the range estimate cited above.

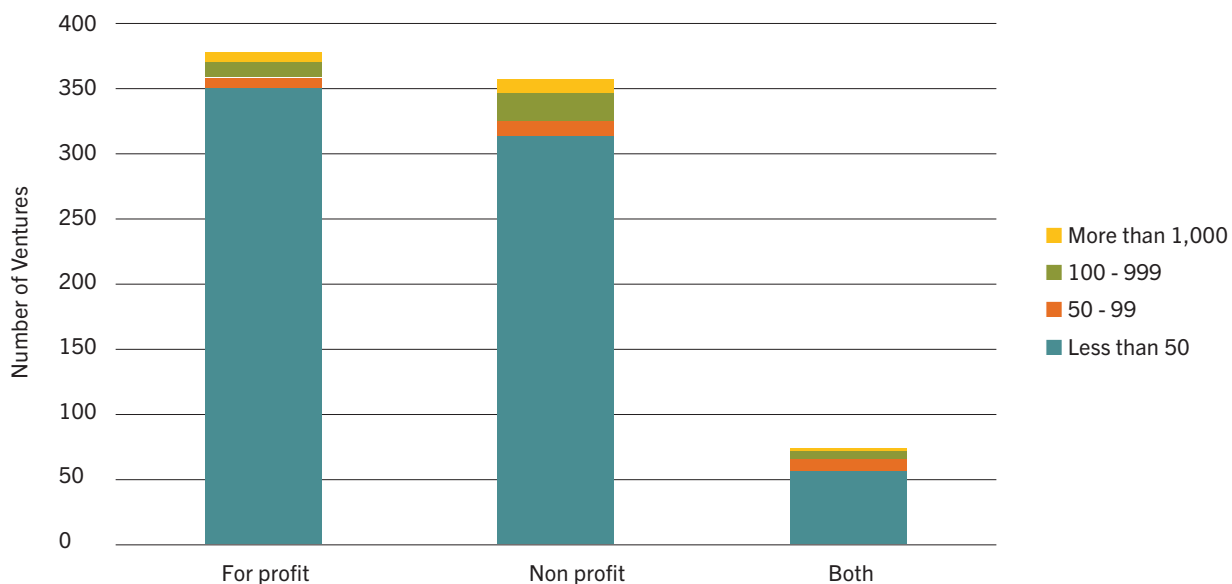
Table 3.4. | Yearly estimated economic impact of entrepreneurial RPCVs by income bracket and venture type

Range of Estimated Economic Impact by Venture	Income Brackets			
	500k to 999k	1 to 4.999 million	5 to 9.999 million	10+ million
Yearly (For-profit)	19.5 to 38.9 million	37 to 184.9 million	50 to 99.9 million	190+ million
Yearly (Non-profit)	12.5 to 24.9 million	19 to 94.9 million	35 to 69.9 million	270+ million
Yearly (Founded both)	2.5 to 4.9 million	12 to 59.9 million	5 to 9.9 million	100+ million
Yearly (Total)	34.5 to 69.7 million	68 to 339.7 million	90 to 179.9 million	560+ million

Note: estimates were created based on the number of RPCVs in each bracket, times the self-reported income range for their bracket

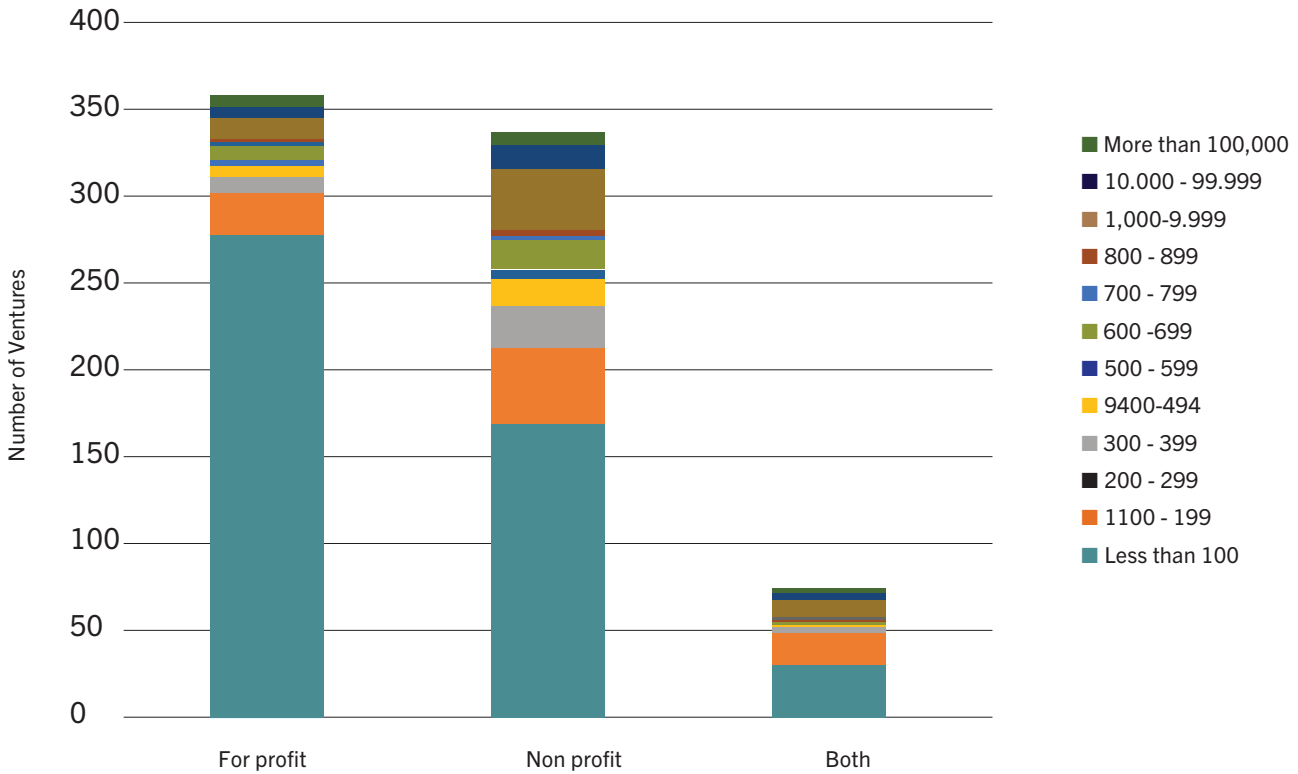
The statistics about entrepreneurial RPCVs below in figure 3.4, describe the number of employees and the number of customers served daily (both individual customers and other larger clients) by type of venture.

Figure 3.4. | Number of employees by type of venture employed by entrepreneurial RPCVs



Collectively, across all venture types, RPCVs employed thousands of individuals both domestically and internationally (self-reported). A conservative estimate is that entrepreneurial RPCV-owned businesses are actively employing between 41,600 to 78,800 people (Figure 3.4). As the majority of ventures were still in business as of 2021, indicating that RPCVs continued to provide employment opportunities to others, even during the covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 3.5. | Number of daily customers, by venture type served by entrepreneurial RPCVs



The largest group of entrepreneurial RPCVs had small to medium-size for-profit and non-profits businesses with some variation in their customer base. A more profitable business or successful non-profit did not necessarily mean they had a larger customer base, rather in some cases they had more affluent clientele, or in the case of non-profits, larger donors, or grantors. However, as seen in Figure 3.5, across the customers served daily, entrepreneurial RPCVs served between thousands to hundreds of thousands of customers a year (based on their daily rate) (self-reported). Customers could be mean an individual, a company or institution, or another group.

Overall, this record of the scope and value of businesses created by members of entrepreneurial RPCVs shines a light on a heretofore overlooked domestic benefit contributed by the Peace Corps. The economic impacts are felt in their home communities, nationally and internationally across a variety of sectors, from health and human services to technology. RPCVs have placed themselves in different industries and their contributions, both economically and socially, show that the impact of the Peace Corps experience is not limited to the cultivation of their own skills and knowledge, but the application of that to personal and professional development, infused with Peace Corps values, to enterprises as well.

International Work

The survey uncovered an unexpectedly high number of RPCVs who continue to work or have worked internationally. Nearly 20 percent of the RPCVs went on to a career in international work or spent some portion of their career in international work (1,385). RPCVs were asked specifically if they had worked internationally for the United States government, for a program funded by the United States government, Or a multinational organization. Some of the work RPCVs described in this section overlapped with their response to their career path post-service. So, while the sector may be similar, such as education, they are performing the work overseas.

This international work of RPCVs highlights the continued international connections or new international connections created from their service. The RPCVs integrated their interest in remaining active in global affairs with a career choice which utilized their cross-cultural understanding developed during service.

From the total survey sample, 1,385 RPCVs participated in six types of international work, of which they could select more than one option:

- Diplomacy (e.g., the US State Department)
- Government implementing partner (e.g., contracts or agreements with US State Department and USAID)
- International development or assistance as a federal employee (e.g., USAID, FAS, and Peace Corps staff)
- Working outside the United States for a multinational organization (e.g., UN, World Bank, and WHO)
- Deployed outside the United States with a branch of the US Military
- Other international work

The analysis of the large number of responses in the 'other international work' category identified eight additional discrete categories, including:

- Non-government organizations
- Education and education administration
- Business
- Journalism and media
- State agencies and departments
- Peace Corps, as trainers and staff, such as Peace Corps Response

After accounting for these 8 new categories, there were still 151 miscellaneous 'other international work' responses that were too diverse to move into a new or an already pre-existing category. So, in total, international work fell into fourteen reported categories.

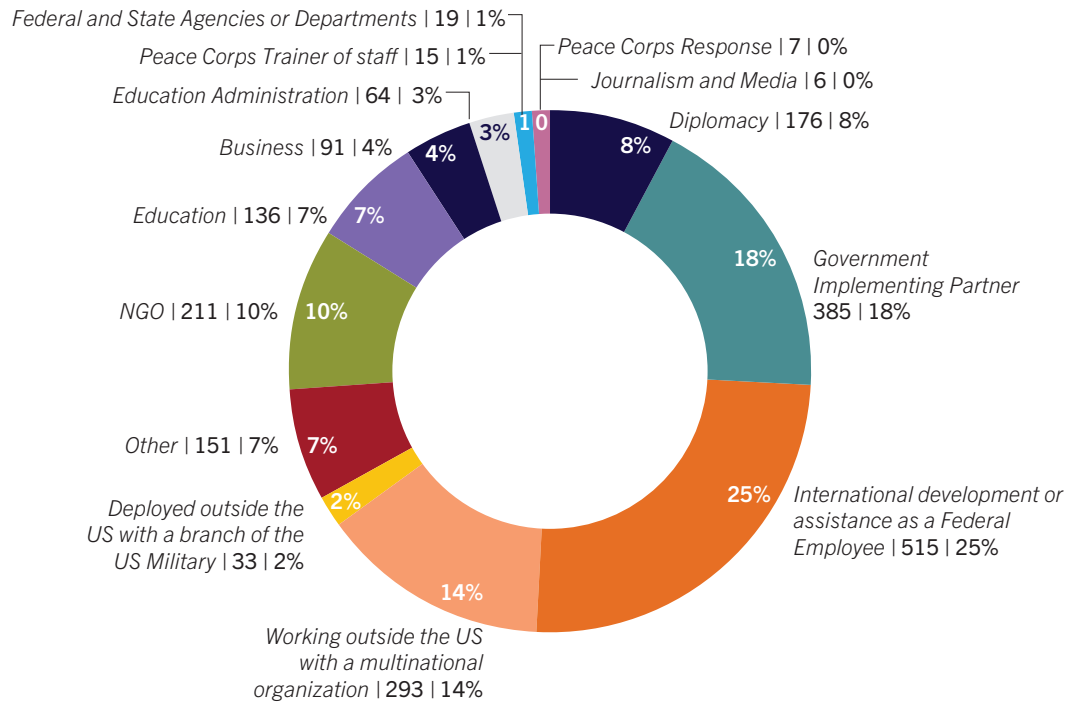
The large numbers of RPCVs serving in US government international programs, academic programs and NGOs provide a valuable benefit to the US. The RPCVs bring an understanding of global affairs based on practical experience that in fact becomes a domestic benefit for the US. RPCVs continue the spirit of Goal Three that is invaluable in bringing a clearer understanding of the US to the world while working within the international community. RPCVs showcase a high commitment to serving the US in various official government positions. However, their commitment to serve is not limited to federal work; RPCVs are amply represented in a multiplicity of work in non-government organizations, international business and education.

The top three types of international work represented were international development or assistance as a federal employee (25 percent), government implementing partner (18 percent), and work outside the US with a multinational organization (14 percent) (see Figure 3.3). Approximately 51 percent of RPCVs participated in 2 or more types of international work after their service, whereas 49 percent did one type of international work. The range and depth of international work activities listed by respondents in the 'other international work' category is truly extensive. Those in this category included an unexpected number (211) of RPCVs who worked with international NGOs.

The majority of this group's activities were in the sectors of health, education, youth development, disaster relief and reconstruction, agriculture, and economic development. The positions they held ranged from grassroots developers to those who were and are engaged in mid and upper-level management positions in international NGOs. The NGOs with whom the respondents work/worked are involved in a broad range of assistance activities including, but not limited to, disaster relief and reconstruction, community and municipal development, early childhood feeding, natal and prenatal health care, education, general health care, agriculture extension, and both micro and macroeconomic development activities.

The second highest ranked 'other international work' listed by respondents is in education and educational administration (200). Job activities included disciplines such as but not limited to overseas teaching (e.g., TEFL) and educational research, and Fulbright and/or educational administrative roles. Since education has always been a lead sector in the Peace Corps, it is not a surprise that many RPCVs have continued to work in international education. When the number of RPCVs who pursued a domestic career in education is combined with those who did so internationally, the impact of RPCVs on education domestically and abroad is significant. This is especially critical given that the need for high quality teachers is greater than ever with the current teacher shortfall in the US. As a result, a follow-up specialized report on RPCVs education career paths is planned.

Figure 3.6. | Percentage of RPCVs by types of international work



Volunteerism as a Domestic Benefit: Bringing Service Home

The high rate of volunteerism of RPCVs was anticipated (as compared with the unexpected high rate of business owners for example). While individuals who volunteer with the Peace Corps are assumed to be committed to serving others, the results of the survey show that RPCVs express an increased commitment to continue service following their PC experience. In Chapter 2, the results indicated that serving as a PCV has been shown to have had a major Impact on a majority of RPCVs personal growth. This pattern also extends to their civic engagement and volunteer activities post-PC. Further, RPCVs are three times more likely to volunteer than the average American, as reported in the 2015 survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This service is present in their work with different types of civic groups, extensive volunteer hours, sharing their Peace Corps experience with others, and in their participation on various for-profit and non-profit boards.

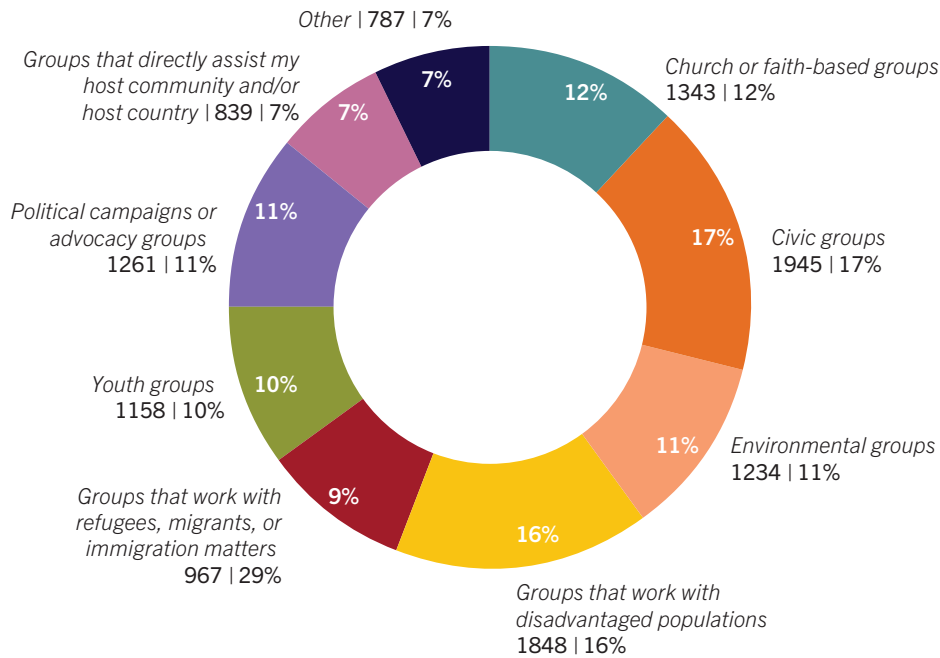
Civic Engagement and Volunteerism

Volunteering upon returning from service is a hallmark activity reported by both younger and older RPCVs cohorts. Individual RPCVs have volunteered their time in a rich and diverse set of activities and in so doing, have shared their Peace Corps related talents and experiences with others.

RPCVs were asked to indicate their types of volunteer work from a list of nine types of organizations and provide detailed information on the perceived impact of their volunteer activities. This civic engagement and volunteerism section is organized first by a discussion of civic groups, then on the impact of RPCVs volunteer hours, and finally RPCVs’ contribution to civic society through serving on various boards.

Eighty-six percent of the RPCVs (3,510) reported that they continued to volunteer, participating in nine different types of volunteer work, from which they could choose multiple types (Figure 3.7). The top three areas of participation were with civic organizations (17 percent), groups that work with disadvantaged populations (16 percent), and faith-based groups (12 percent). Approximately 88 percent of RPCVs participated in two or more types of volunteer work after their service, whereas 12 percent participated in only one type of volunteer work.

Figure 3.7 | Percentage RPCVs by Types of Volunteer Work



Regardless of RPCVs decade of service, the cohorts have similar rates of volunteerism, by average weekly hours (Table 3.5). Across the cohorts, the number RPCVs committing to less than 1 hour a week increased over the years. The majority (average 49 percent) were often committing between 1 to 5 hours weekly to volunteering. These hours of volunteer work were self-reported.

Table 3.5. | Percent of RPCVs Weekly Volunteer Hours, by Decade

Decade of Service	Weekly Volunteer Hours (percent)			
	Less than 1 hour	1 to 5 hours	6 to 9 hours	10 + hours
1960 to 1969	27	47	14	12
1970 to 1979	28	49	12	11
1980 to 1989	30	53	8	9
1990 to 1999	36	52	7	5
2000 to 2009	45	43	5	7
2010 to 2020	36	48	7	9

RPCVs provide significant unpaid work to organizations and the economic impact of this work is high, given the amount of volunteer hours served by RPCVs in our sample. As a whole, the reported volunteer work is worth well over \$1 million each year, even when considering the more conservative estimates of each bracket of volunteer hours. The estimate was calculated by taking the self-reported weekly range for the hours of volunteering, and multiplying the current minimum wage (\$7.25) by the number of RPCVs in each of the hourly brackets (see Table 3.6). This table specifically shows the impact of 2,368 RPCVs who reported between 1 hour to 10+ hours of volunteer work a week. Due to the time variability of other RPCVs doing less than 1 hour a week of volunteering (1,100 RPCVs), they have been excluded from the calculations shown in Table 3.6.

Considering there are now 250,000 RPCVs, the economic impact of the domestic volunteer work these individuals do is noteworthy. For example, collapsing the total yearly range across hourly brackets gives an estimate between \$2.4 million and \$5 million for this group of 2,368 RPCVs. Assuming only 50,000 RPCVs volunteer at similar levels, the estimated impact is well over \$100 million yearly.

Table 3.6. | Weekly, Monthly, and Yearly Estimated Economic Impact from Volunteered Hours

Range of Estimated Economic impact	Hour Brackets		
	1-5 hours	6 to 9 hours	10 or more hours
Weekly	\$12,078 to \$60,392	\$15,616 to \$23,424	\$24,505+
Monthly	\$48,000 to \$241,568	\$62,464 to \$93,696	\$98,020+
Yearly	\$576,000 to 2.8 million	\$749,568 to 1.1 million	1.1 million+

Note: estimates were created based on the number of volunteers in each bracket times the number of hours for their bracket. These totals were then multiplied by the current minimum wage. For example, 1,666 RPCVs are within the 1–5-hour bracket, so that is a range of 1,666 hours to 8,300 weekly hours multiplied by \$7.25 respectively

The rate of volunteerism among RPCVs has increased over time, based on a comparison with the rate of volunteerism reported in the three major impact studies of RPCVs noted in chapter 1. Eighty-six percent of the RPCVs continue to volunteer, nearly double the amount from the 1990s. Graul (1996) reported that 47 percent of the respondents in her study were volunteering, while Harris (1969) found that a quarter (27 percent) of RPCVs were volunteering. Moreover, in comparison to a 2015 survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, RPCVs are three times more likely to volunteer than the average American. The value of RPCVs' volunteer service in a wide variety of communities across the country and abroad is undeniably one of the largest domestic benefits provided by the RPCV community.

Lastly of the RPCVs who indicated doing continued volunteerism post-service, a majority have served in some capacity on boards of directors and/or advisory boards for non-profit and/or for-profit organizations (67 percent). For this question on board service, RPCVs could select more than one of following options, including:

- Never served on a board (33 percent)
- For-profit advisory board
- Non-profit advisory board
- For-profit board of directors
- Non-profit board of directors

Across the different options, most RPCVs either served a single board (38 percent), or two different boards (25 percent). A minority worked on three or more boards (4 percent). This level of board service was not wholly unexpected by the task force, but with 67 percent of RPCVs participating in this type of time-consuming service and contributing their Peace Corps experiences, skills, and perspectives to boards, it presents another topical area of study for future work on RPCVs' activities.

Overall, the social and economic value of the RPCVs' service across the spectrum is substantial. The value of RPCVs' volunteer service in a wide variety of communities across the country and abroad is undeniably one of the largest domestic benefits provided by the RPCV community. Given the diverse careers of RPCVs, their propensity to involve themselves in extensive volunteerism at high rates, their entrepreneurial spirit and their international work, the domestic benefits of the Peace Corps are vast, extensive, and indicate that RPCVs have sustained impacts on US society upon returning home. ■

CHAPTER FOUR | Bringing the Peace Corps Home: The Domestic Benefit

The voices of the RPCVS reflected in the survey provide evidence that the *Peace Corps experience is transforming the way former Volunteers think about themselves and their place in the world far beyond the boundaries of their host country*. RPCVs, from the first who undertook President Kennedy's challenge to those who did so more recently, gave detailed accounts of the ways in which the Peace Corps experience changed their lives and indicated as such through different sections of the survey.

In spite of the changing training models over the years, each prepared the different cohorts of Volunteers for the same opportunity—to (i) live and work in a new country and culture, (ii) in collaboration and service with host country community leaders (iii) to achieve commonly agreed upon goals, using the Peace Corps approach to community development.

First, as seen in Chapter 2, RPCVs acquired a greater understanding of and tolerance for cultural differences, a change also noted in previous studies. They also experienced personal growth, acquiring increased confidence to take risks, and communication and leadership skills.

Second, as discussed in Chapter 3, RPCVs reported applying many aspects of their Peace Corps experience to their careers and personal lives, providing tangible and intangible benefits to the US.

However, it was not an easy task to isolate the element that had more or less influence on post-PC choices. While some RPCVs mentioned specific skills, such as language acquisition, the soft skills, such as increased confidence and resiliency, humility and enhanced interpersonal communication skills, combined with new problem-solving abilities, emerged as especially important to the majority of RPCVs. The RPCVs' responses consistently indicated that combining new skills with life/work experience shifted perceptions and clarified future goals after Peace Corps service.

Volunteers learned that working at the grassroots level means working with local leadership and leaving decision-making to host national partners and the work of the Volunteer was accomplished by assisting, not directing. It was the *catalytic effect* of the Volunteer collaborating with host country nationals using their emerging leadership, problem solving skills, language, cross cultural skills that resulted in the most successful project outcomes in host countries.

This interplay among the major elements of the Peace Corps experience generates new insights into the transformative power of the Peace Corps experience that transcends the discrete components of the training and the work/life experience. Living in a new country provided the milieu for Volunteers to examine their own societal norms and beliefs. The new awareness became global awareness and a changed world view. The Volunteers' collaborations with their host country partners manifested into a renewed mission of domestic service upon returning to the US and an increased commitment to service to others.

Notably, many RPCVs emphasized that these changes extended well beyond their own personal development, affecting how they engaged with their families, workplaces, and communities upon their return. This ripple effect frequently inspired others to think more globally and act more compassionately, as RPCVs became conduits for cross-cultural understanding back home. Through advocacy, education, and public service, they translated their broadened perspectives into meaningful contributions within the United States, reinforcing the idea that the Peace Corps' impact endures long after Volunteers' overseas assignments have ended. The blending of new skills, philosophies, and aspirations fostered a sense of responsibility that expanded the very notion of citizenship and public service, helping to create a bridge between international experience and domestic enrichment.

CONCLUSION | The National Dividend

Knowing that RPCVs have and continue to benefit from the Peace Corps experience leads to the “essential” question of the study initially posed by Sargent Shriver. What does the US “get out of the investment in Peace Corps” upon the Volunteers’ return? We know from this study and its predecessors that we “get” US citizens who are more globally aware and committed to service. The results of this study demonstrate that the overwhelming majority were led by their changed perspective to solve problems in the U.S. and globally in their professional careers and public service.

- The benefits that U.S. society reaps are multifaceted and have a monetary value. For example, the accomplishments of the RPCVs in business pursuits are substantial, as is the imputed value of volunteer service. However, the salient outcome of our study is that domestic benefits are economic and social, tangible and intangible, and persist over the lifetime of RPCVs. This study demonstrates that the personal growth and development individuals acquired during Peace Corps service, combined with the skills and knowledge that Volunteers practice during their project assignments, does not remain left behind in their host countries of service.
- The benefits are real in terms of civic engagement. RPCVs continue their mission to serve after leaving their host countries. RPCVs volunteer at a higher rate than that of a comparable segment of the U.S. population, and the potential monetary value of this work, and the social impact of this work through the diverse communities they serve, is high.
- The benefits are real in terms of intangible effects. Often, the entrepreneurs built businesses and organizations to solve social and economic problems they first encountered as Peace Corps Volunteers. RPCVs acknowledge that their service as Peace Corps Volunteers had a direct influence on their life-long commitment to volunteer at home. The diversity and scope of their work, as reported in their written stories, are far ranging throughout U.S. society. And it is based on the values of serving others and giving back, as best described by one of these extraordinary RPCVs, the “Peace Corps experience embedded volunteerism into my daily life while doing ordinary things. Our experiences show society the value of volunteer service for a community and for the individual.”
- The benefits are real in terms of international influence. Thousands of RPCVs have dedicated their lives to working in the international arena, bringing a global perspective to their labor, while continuing to represent and serve the US.

While many RPCVs are exceptionally notable, the domestic impact of all RPCVs, as a collective, stretches far beyond this group. Thousands of less visible RPCVs are equally as remarkable and as dedicated to serving throughout all aspects of U.S. social, political, and economic life. Graul (1996) characterized RPCVs as cultural mediators, indeed an accurate descriptor and a critical role in much of the RPCVs’ activities, be it domestic work where their Peace Corps-acquired language skills bridge cultural divides, or internationally where cultural awareness opens communication among nations.

As a result of this study, we also see clearly that RPCVs are also catalysts, who as facilitators and motivators, share the search for peace by serving others and teaching those around them. They bring home the same respect for others learned in Peace Corps and achieve the same catalytic effect seen in the collaboration between Volunteers and host country nationals. It is this catalytic effect of 250,000 RPCVs serving in all walks of life that is quietly changing lives in the US.

The Peace Corps Volunteers’ impact upon return spans the local to the global, from serving their home communities in small but impactful projects, to leading federal agencies that improve our connections with the international community. They continue to uphold Peace Corps values throughout their lives to the benefit of the American people. This study builds on earlier RPCV studies by revisiting the impact of Peace Corps on its Volunteers. Yet, it reaches beyond the well-documented individual benefits to demonstrate the link between the RPCVs’ Peace Corps experience and the subsequent professional and personal contributions to their larger communities.

We submit that these are the domestic benefits of the investment made in the sixty-year-old experiment in a genuine search for peace. ■

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ANNEX B: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The survey instrument was completed in September 2021 and emailed to over 60,000 RPCVS. Of that group, 4,090 responses with at least a 90 percent completion rate were received and processed using the software Qualtrics and Stata. Other responses with less than a 90 percent completion rate were removed using case wise deletions (less than 10% of total responses) to reduce the number of missing responses. A list of RPCVs emails was obtained from NPCA membership rolls, and the anonymous survey was sent out directly by the NPCA. RPCVs were encouraged to complete the survey both through email and social media. Due to this distribution method, the task force did not have copies of RPCVs contact information, and their identities were kept confidential. However, due to this distribution method, it was not possible to follow up with respondents on their written answers in the survey for further information and detail.

The percentage of returned surveys falls just below the average range for a survey of this size (i.e., 9 percent compared to 10 percent). However, the completion rate of this survey was much higher than average (90 percent), given the length of the survey (43 questions), average response time (40 minutes), and the mix of question types.

The survey contained three question types (e.g., multiple choice, multi-select, written answers). The numerical data was analyzed in Strata. The qualitative data from the open-ended questions, which includes all "Other" option responses and the written answers to two questions, was reviewed and coded separately. These answers provide insight on how Peace Corps service substantively affected RPCVs and led to domestic benefits. However, the amount of qualitative data is extensive, and it was not possible to complete detailed analysis on all this material for this report. The task force team and NPCA will be preparing a series of specialized reports based on the qualitative data. The questionnaire is not included in this annex, due to the length of the survey. A copy of the questionnaire is available upon request through the NPCA.

An overview of the demographics of the survey participants follows. The areas included are participants' race/ethnicity, sex/gender, decade of service, years of service, age, education, and country/countries of service.

ANNEX B

DEMOGRAPHICS

Race/Ethnicity

The dominant group in the sample was Caucasians (88 percent). Participants' race and ethnicity were separated into three main groupings: Caucasian, non-Caucasian, and biracial/multiracial (Table B.1). The specific composition of the sample for each group is provided, in order to show the diversity of the group. The biracial/multiracial group includes anyone who selected two or more races/ethnicities.

Table B.1 | Racial and ethnic composition of the survey population

CAUCASIAN (88%)	3,558	NON-CAUCASIAN (9%)	356	BIRACIAL OR MULTI-RACIAL (3%)	132
White	3,558	Asian	72	Asian and Black or African American	1
		Black or African American	66	Asian, Black, or African American, and Native American or American Indian	1
		Hispanic or Latino	54	Asian and Hispanic or Latino	3
		Native American or or American Indian	3	Asian, Hispanic, or Latino, and Native American American or Indian	1
		Other	89	Asian, Hispanic, or Latino, and White	1
		Prefer not to answer	72	Asian and other	1
				Asian and White	19
				Asian, White, and Other	2
				Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino	3
				Black or African American and Native American or American Indian	3
				Black or African American and White	7
				Hispanic or Latino and Native American or American Indian	2
				Hispanic or Latino, Native American or American Indian, and White	32
				Hispanic or Latino, White, and Other	2
				Native American or American Indian and Other	2
				Native American or American Indian and White	19
				White and Other	30

N=4,046 (excludes missing data)

ANNEX B

Gender

In the sample, 52 percent were women, 48 percent were men, and 1 percent chose a different gender identity. When the gender breakdown is compared by cohorts, the younger cohorts (those since the 1980s) had significantly more women RPCVs (Table B.2). This difference is reasonably explained by the shift in the gender balance of PCVs over the decades from a majority male to a majority female population of Volunteers.

Table B.2. | Composition of the survey population, by decade of service and gender

DECADE OF SERVICE	GENDER			Total
	Woman	Man	Other Gender Identity	
1960-1969	533	808	5	1346
1970-1979	323	472	6	801
1980-1919	312	173	2	487
1990-1999	289	134	3	426
2000-2009	319	140	10	469
2010-2020	336	151	13	500

N=4,029 (excludes missing data)

Decade of Service

In the sample, RPCVs from the 1960s constitute a third of the respondents (33 percent) (Table B.2). The smallest cohort was from the 1990s at 11 percent. However, Peace Corps had its largest enrollment in the 1960s and 1970s. A smaller number of Volunteers served in the years following the 1980s, which is reflected in our sample size for cohorts post 1980. As a result, the smaller number of respondents from these decades is partially due to the overall smaller pool of RPCVs from these decades.

Years of Service

A majority of the respondents served for two years or more (69 percent), followed by those who served for 3 years or more (15 percent) (Table B.3.). The participants in our sample were a high serving group with some serving well over 10 years. It is important to note, that for our sample RPCVs may be interpreting “service” as including all types of their service, even beyond their host country assignments. As a result, RPCVs who indicated serving 4 or more years to 20 or more years, represent a very small minority of the sample (8 percent). These RPCVs are likely counting other Volunteer work they did for the agency even if by Peace Corps standards this may not be considered “service.”

Table B.3. | Service decade composition of the survey population

YEARS OF SERVICE	TOTAL	%
Less than a year	9	<1%
1 year or more	292	7%
2 years or more	2,773	69%
3 years or more	619	15%
4 years or more	151	4%
5 years or more	64	2%
6 years or more	18	<1%
7 years or more	3	<1%
8 years or more	5	<1%
9 years or more	4	<1%
10 years or more	27	<1%
20 years or more	53	1%

N=4,018 (excludes missing data and those who did not serve (2))

ANNEX B

Age

Most participants in the survey are between the ages of 70 and 80, although there was a wide range (Table B.4). The oldest respondent was born in 1928; the youngest was born in 2003. The number of respondents by birth cohort (decade) is found in (Table B.2). The largest cohort was born in the 1940s (42 percent), followed by the 1950s (20 percent).

Table B.4. | Birth cohort composition of the survey population

BIRTH COHORT	TOTAL	%
1920s	1	<1%
1930s	230	6%
1940s	1,670	42%
1950s	812	20%
1960s	438	11%
1970s	332	8%
1980s	366	9%
1990s	173	4%
2000s	1	<1%

N=4,023 (excludes missing data)

Education

RPCV's highest level of education for both prior to and after service was recorded. Participants were highly educated prior to joining the Peace Corps, with 91 percent of the Volunteers having earned a higher education degree (70 percent with a bachelor's degree and 24 percent with a post-graduate degree) prior to beginning Peace Corps service. Four percent had less than a bachelor's degree prior to joining

Table B.5. | Highest level of education prior to Peace Corps service

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	TOTAL	%
Less than a bachelor's degree	165	4%
Bachelor's Degree	2,843	70%
Other	81	2%
Ph.D.	105	3%
Post-Graduate Degree (M.A., M.S., MBA, J.D., etc.)	837	21%
Technical Certification/Credential	23	<1%

N=4,054 (excludes missing data)

ANNEX B

Post service, 46 percent of the RPCVs reported having obtained a post-graduate degree (Table B.6). The group with the greatest educational gains is those who held a BA prior to service. This group makes up the majority of post-service earned degrees or 2,171 (54 percent). The second largest group with education gains are those who held a post-graduate degree prior to service. This group post-service earned 444 degrees or (11 percent). Roughly a third of the sample did not earn any additional degrees after serving (29 percent).

Table B.6. | Degrees earned after Peace Corps service

DEGREE TYPE	TOTAL	%
Associate degree	23	1%
Associate degree and a bachelor's degree, Post-Graduate Degree (M.A., M.S., MBA, J.D., etc.), and/or Technical Certification/Credential	17	<1%
Bachelor's Degree	91	2%
Bachelor's Degree, and a Post-Graduate Degree (M.A., M.S., MBA, J.D., etc.), and/or Ph.D.	82	2%
Other	214	5%
Ph.D.	260	6%
Post-Graduate Degree (M.A., M.S., MBA, J.D., etc.)	1,857	46%
Post-Graduate Degree (M.A., M.S., MBA, J.D., etc.) and a Ph.D.	184	5%
Technical Certification/Credential	97	2%
Technical Certification/Credential and a bachelor's degree, Post-Graduate Degree (M.A., M.S., MBA, J.D., etc.), and/or Ph.D.	43	1%
None, did not earn any degrees after Peace Corp Service	1,161	29%

Country Or Countries Of Service By Region

The number of Volunteers by region served is found in Table B.7. Africa is the region which has hosted the largest number of Peace Corps Volunteers (1,485), followed by Asia (787), South America (456), Central America and Mexico (369), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (341), the Pacific Islands (218), North Africa and the Middle East (214), and the Caribbean (175). Participants could list up to three countries of service.

492 (12 percent) of the RPCVs served in one region. 131 (3 percent) of RPCVs served in more than one region. Over the decades the Peace Corps has used a variety of definitions for service regions. This study uses the NPCA's current definition.

A small number of Volunteers fail to complete two years of service and leave the Peace Corps prematurely. However, this study did not include any "early close of service Volunteers."

Table B.7. | Region of service of the survey population

REGION	1ST REGION SERVED	2ND REGION SERVED	3RD REGION SERVED
Africa	1,485	174	43
Asia	787	72	23
Caribbean	175	24	8
Central America and Mexico	369	53	5
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	341	40	15
North Africa and The Middle East	214	23	6
Pacific Islands	218	28	5
South America	456	53	14
Other	8	25	12
	<i>N=4,053</i>	<i>N=492</i>	<i>N=131</i>