

# INNOVATING THE PEACE CORPS

**Midterm Presentation**

CCTP-673

Creating a Culture of Innovation

October 26 2012

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# OUTLINE

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## Introduction

## Research and recommendations

- External challenges
- External solutions
- Internal challenges
- Internal solutions

## Concluding remarks

## INTRODUCTION

# ABOUT THE PEACE CORPS

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### **Vision:**

Promote world peace and friendship.



### **Mission:**

1. Provide developing countries with "trained men and women"
2. Promote better understanding of citizens of other countries among Americans
3. Promote better understanding of Americans among citizens of other countries

## INTRODUCTION

# ABOUT THE PEACE CORPS

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**200,000+**  
volunteers

**139**  
countries

**\$377m**  
FY13 budget

# **SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS**

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## **AmeriCorps**

Volunteers receive ~\$5k for college upon completion

## **United Planet**

Strong support structure before and after volunteer period

## **VSO**

Large and independent volunteer-driven organization, often called the U.K. version of the Peace Corps



INTRODUCTION  
**THE VISION**

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"Contributing  
**diverse**  
**sources**  
of  
energy  
and  
imagination..."

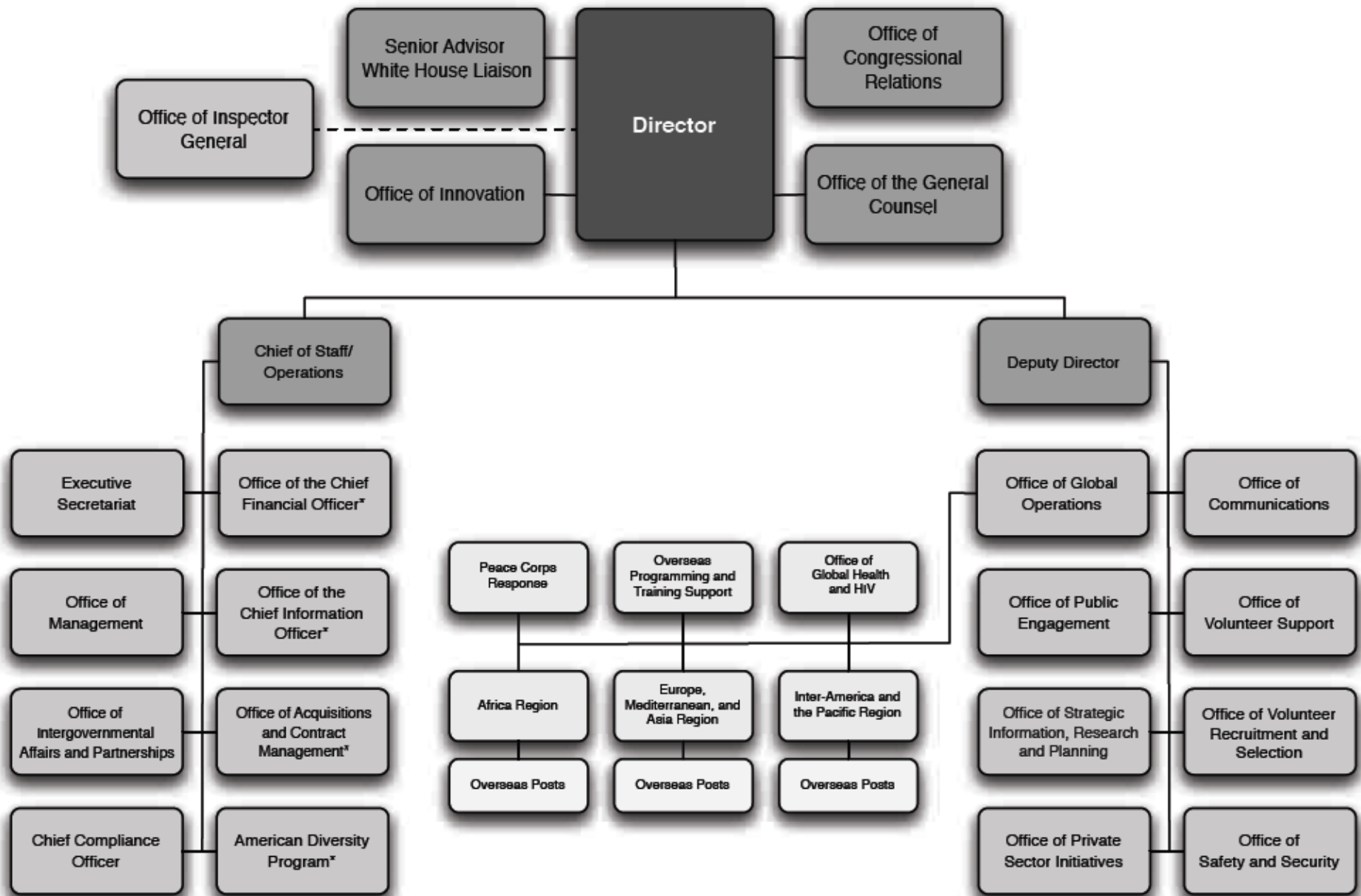


INTRODUCTION  
**THE REALITY**

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# Isolation







# METHODS FOR RESEARCH

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- For challenges:
  - External viewpoint
  - Focus on customer
  - Respect for history
  - Acknowledgement of new world
  - Deep understanding
- For solutions:
  - Associational thinking
  - Flow of knowledge
  - Tenets of "open innovation" and innovation communities
  - Solution-centered mindset

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# **External Challenges**

# EXTERNAL CHALLENGES: OVERVIEW

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- Advantages
- Vulnerabilities
- Challenges:
  - Effectiveness
  - Public perception

# EFFECTIVENESS

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*The failure of "personalized aid."*

- Unprepared volunteers
- Lack of specialized knowledge
- More volunteers is not the answer
- Lack of accurate or worthwhile evaluation
- Little to no partnership

The result: *isolated instances of effectiveness.*

# PUBLIC PERCEPTION

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High demand for volunteers in most areas, but:

- Distrust in some areas
- Confusion about goals
- Focus on one, not all, goals

*Demand comes from governments, not "consumers."*

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# **External Solutions**

# EXTERNAL SOLUTIONS: OVERVIEW

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- "MediaCorps"
- International partnerships
- Community radio
- Community-driven placement

# "MEDIACORPS"

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Develop a multimedia PR program in cooperation with AmeriCorps.

- **85,000** volunteers join AmeriCorps annually, some would enlist in MediaCorps
- Develop communications, media production skills

Challenge this addresses:

**Public perception**



# INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

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Develop campaigns with international NGOs around specific subjects.

- Example: CharityWater + Peace Corps
- Host international seminars, raise awareness around issues relevant to PCVs

Challenge this addresses:

**Effectiveness**

# COMMUNITY RADIO

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Harness active radio networks to build trust and understanding between PCVs and community members.

- Radio stations are "90% community and 10% radio"
- Radio stations are deemed highly trustworthy by locals

Challenges this addresses:

Effectiveness

Public perception

# COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PLACEMENT

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Empower community members in the volunteer placement process to build meaningful relationships.

- **4bn** mobile subscriptions in developing world
- Use **EpiSurveyor**, **RapidSMS** to conduct mobile polls among local citizens

Challenges this addresses:

**Effectiveness**

**Public perception**

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# **Internal Challenges**

# INTERNAL CHALLENGES: OVERVIEW

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- Weak Institutional Memory
- Top - Down Bureaucratic Structure
- Lack of Peer to Peer Communication

# WEAK INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

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The Five Year Rule was put in place to create a fresh and innovative environment within the Peace Corps.

## Reality:

- Average tenure of a Peace Corps employee is 3 years
- Difficult to generate ideas, plan, test, execute innovative ideas

# TOP - DOWN BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURE

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Peace Corp volunteers and support staff lack agency and so it is difficult for them to make positive changes within the organization.

- Many processes and procedures that make it difficult to implement projects
- Leadership constantly changing

## INTERNAL CHALLENGES

# LACK OF PEER TO PEER COMMUNICATION

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Peace Corp volunteers who are victims of sexual assault and violence, are unable to voice their concerns due to a lack of peer to peer communication.

- Over 1000 women have been raped or sexually assaulted in past 10 years
- Peace Corps many times ignores safety concerns and blame women for initiating attacks



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# **Internal Solutions**

INTERNAL SOLUTIONS

# END THE FIVE-YEAR RULE

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Challenges this addresses:

**Weak institutional memory**

# DEVELOP WIRELESS MESH NETWORKS (WMNs)

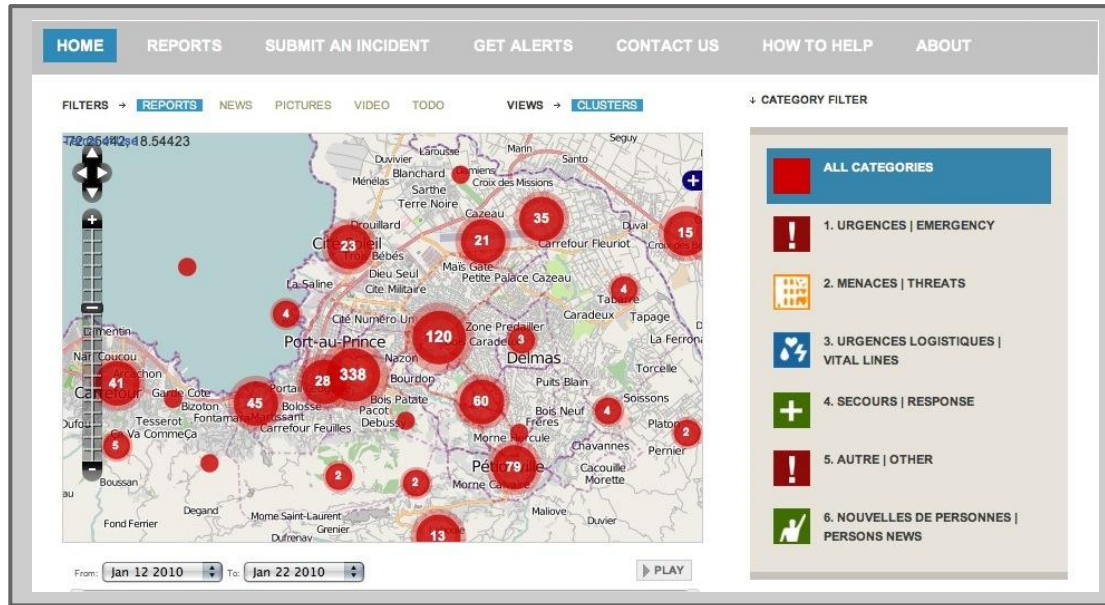
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- Network of devices that connect to each other without prior infrastructure
- Collaborate with WMN developers
  - UC-Berkley
  - OpenBTS
  - VillageTelco

Challenges this addresses:

Top-Down Bureaucratic Structures  
Lack of Peer-to-Peer Communication

# CROWD-SOURCED INFORMATION SHARING



Challenges this addresses:

Top-Down Bureaucratic Structures

Lack of Peer-to-Peer Communication

# INTERNAL SOLUTIONS: OVERVIEW

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- Mesh Networks
  - Collaborate with engineers and manufacturers to build infrastructure
- Crowd-Sourced Information Sharing
  - Utilize platforms like Ushahidi for monitoring and assistance

# REVIEW

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## Internal innovation

- "MediaCorps"
- Int'l partnerships
- Community radio
- Community placement

## External innovation

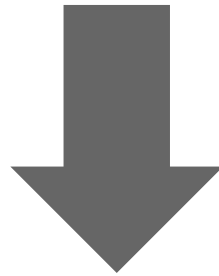
- No more 5 year rule
- Wireless mesh networks
- Crowdsourced information sharing

CONCLUDING REMARKS

# THE NEW PEACE CORPS

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Peace Corps



Peace Network

# REVITALIZING THE BRAND

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- Revive Kennedy's vision
  - Highest-rated modern Commander-In-Chief (85%)
- Leverage Millennials' enthusiasm
  - Emphasize idealism and ingenuity
- Formalize PC social network



Original Artwork by Shepard Fairey



# DISCUSSION

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