

learning languages

**in the
Peace Corps**

AMHARIC
ARABIC
ASAS MALAY
BENGALI
CEBUANO
DZERNA
EWE
FARSI
FRENCH
GUJARATI
HAUSA
HILIGAYNON
HINDI
IBO
ILOCANO
KANNADA
KRIO
MALAY
MARATHI
MENDI
NORWEGIAN
PASHTO
PUNJABI
QUECHUA
SINDHI
SOMALI
SPANISH
TAGALOG
TELEGU
TEMNE
THAI
TURKISH
URDU
VIETNAMESE
YORUBA



LEARNING LANGUAGES IN THE PEACE CORPS

Huhitajiwi kuelewa na lugha kigeni ili kuingia Peace Corps.

In Swahili, this means “You don’t have to speak a foreign language to join the Peace Corps.”

The Peace Corps expects you to come to training fluent in only one language—English. That’s the one thing all Peace Corps language programs have in common.

“I can’t learn languages,” college students often say. “I’ve taken three years of French and I still can’t speak it.”

Few people are capable of becoming fluent in any language through classwork alone. George Winchester Stone, Jr., Executive Secretary of the Modern Language Association of America, said:

“The most important laboratory for the teacher and the student of a modern foreign language is a country in which the language is spoken. There he can immerse himself totally in the language and culture, achieving a knowledge and a mastery that can be both a personal delight and a professional advantage.”

Your decision to join the Peace Corps should not depend on whether or not you think you can learn a foreign language. A language aptitude test is included in the Peace Corps Placement Test. This test will determine how quickly you can pick up a language, regardless of your previous language training, or lack of it. If the results show that you will probably learn a new language quickly, you may be invited to a country whose language is not usually taught in American schools. In this case, you will be starting from scratch, just like the other Volunteers in your project.

If you have previous training in a more common language, such as French or Spanish, chances are greater you will be invited to a country using that language. Most of the Volunteers in your group will also have had some experience in that language.

Some people simply cannot learn a new language. If the language aptitude test indicates that you will have difficulty with language, you are still not disqualified for Peace Corps service. You may be invited to one of the many countries where the teaching language is English. For example, the Philippines, Liberia, Nigeria and British Honduras are four of the countries where Volunteers use English in their work.

TRAINING

As a Peace Corps trainee, you will be given orientation and preparation for approximately three months in an American college, university or private institution. Much of this time will be devoted to language training.

If you are invited to India, Hindi may be your language, and one-third to one-half of your training period will be devoted to learning it. Chances are, no one in your group will have studied Hindi. You will have guest speakers from India teaching you and living with you. As you learn, you will find yourself speaking Hindi at the dinner table and in the evenings. You will use tapes made by native speakers and by trained teachers of linguistics. You may never be asked to write the language—most training is strictly conversational. You won't be fluent in Hindi when you arrive in India, but you'll know enough to learn it well during your two year stay.

Perhaps you've had some training in French or Spanish and have been invited to Latin America or French-speaking Africa. Many of the trainees in your group will have had training similar to yours. You will still be primarily concerned with conversational fluency. By the time you arrive in your host country, you will be ready to grasp the more complex aspects of French or





Spanish, and you will observe the all-important accent first-hand. You will probably come back to the United States fluent in your language.

Even if you go to an English-speaking country, you may have language training. Many countries incorporated several tribal dialects when they became independent and must use English as their language of trade. Their brand of English is often difficult to recognize though. One Volunteer was thanked by her English-speaking overseas counterpart for coming, "*We di glad plenta forsaka you come help we.*"

Languages taught by the Peace Corps include:

Afghan	Ibo	Sindhi
Amharic	Ilocano	Somali
Arabic	Kannada	Spanish
Bahasa Malay	Krio	Swahili
Bengali	Marathi	Tagalog
Cebuano	Mende	Telegu
Djerna	Nepali	Temne
Ewe	Nyanja	Thai
Farsi	Pashto	Turkish
French	Pidgin	Twi
Gujarati	Pizar Malay	Urdu
Hausa	Portuguese	Wolof
Hiligaynon	Punjabi	Yoruba
Hindi	Quechua	



ON THE JOB

If you are a language major or minor, a teacher of languages, or the kind of person who has an aptitude or taste for language not yet satisfied, you can fulfill your desire to learn through service as a Volunteer in the Peace Corps.

Wherever you serve—Asia, Africa, Latin America—you will live and work as a member of a community, not as a visitor or stranger.

Whatever your assignment—teacher, village-level worker or member of a team in an urban community action project—you will be part of that locality, its customs and social life.

Whether your assignment is to teach chemistry, physics, math, music, art, or English as a foreign language, you need to know the host country language. If you are asked to work out solutions with your overseas neighbors to problems of nutrition, health, agriculture, sanitation, housing or social services, you will be in situations in which your understanding of the host-country language will help you do a better job.

You will make mistakes. All Volunteers occasionally suffer slight embarrassment over the use of a wrong word in the wrong place. But the embarrassment passes quickly, and the Volunteer's ability to laugh at himself, once he has realized his mistake, often lays the foundation for a strong relationship with his co-worker.

The people with whom the Volunteer works are rarely critical of grammatical errors. When a Volunteer stumbles, his co-worker helps him. A Volunteer's effort to learn the new language is evidence of his desire to help.

As in all language programs, communication is the object of Peace Corps training. But there is more to communication than words. Communication does not necessarily demand language fluency and language fluency does not automatically result in communication.

In the Peace Corps, it's not how well you say it, it's *why* you say it.

TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER

- You must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old. There is no upper age limit. Good health is a necessary prerequisite but Peace Corps physical standards are flexible.
- Married couples with no dependents under 18 are encouraged to apply. Both must, however, qualify as Volunteers. They will be assigned to the same project.
- You do not have to know a foreign language.
- Don't be deterred because you think you lack necessary skills. Many people tend to underestimate their capabilities.
- Submit a Peace Corps Volunteer application. Submission of an application in no way obligates you. Your final decision will come at the time you are invited to train.
- Take the Peace Corps Placement Test. There is no passing or failing grade. It is a tool to aid the Peace Corps in evaluating your capabilities.

YOU WILL TRAIN . . . At an American college or university. Perhaps half of your normal 10 to 12-week training period will be concentrated on the language of the country in which you will serve. Modern laboratory techniques will give you a working fluency in one of 42 different languages, from Amharic to Swahili.

A NORMAL TOUR . . . Including training, will last from 24 to 27 months. If you choose, you may extend your service up to one year, or re-enroll for another two years in the same, or a different country.

YOU WILL BE PAID . . . An allowance to cover food, clothing, housing and incidentals. Medical care and transportation are provided by Peace Corps. For the duration of your service, you accumulate a readjustment allowance of \$75 monthly. You may allot from this allowance in some instances. The allowance is subject to U.S. taxes only.

MILITARY OBLIGATION . . . Is not satisfied by Peace Corps service. However, Volunteers are deferred for the duration of their assignments.

TO OBTAIN AN APPLICATION . . . Request one from Peace Corps, Washington, D. C. 20525; from the Peace Corps Liaison Officer on your college or university campus; from your Civil Service Commission Office; or from your local post office.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, WRITE:

Peace Corps
Washington, D.C. 20525

ATTN: OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS