

Full Statement from the Peace Corps:

Since Peace Corps' inception in 1961, it has been the practice of the Peace Corps to keep Volunteers separate from any official duties pertaining to U.S. foreign policy, including the reality or the appearance of involvement in intelligence related activities. This practice has been re-affirmed consistently by each successive administration over the past 46 years.

Any connection between the Peace Corps and the intelligence community would seriously compromise the ability of the Peace Corps to develop and maintain the trust and confidence of the people in the host countries we serve.

Consistent with the policy of every administration since 1961, Director Ron Tschetter, himself a former Volunteer in India (1966-1968), has been very clear in re-affirming this long standing policy and, once again, stressing that Peace Corps Volunteers work on community service and nothing else.

Peace Corps policy against intelligence connections is based on the general authority of the Director of the Peace Corps, provided by section 5 (a) of the Peace Corps Act, to establish the terms and conditions of service of Volunteers, by the Foreign Service Act of 1980, and on long-standing agency policy prohibiting any connection between Peace Corps and intelligence activity first enunciated by Peace Corps Director Sargent Shriver in 1961.

Since the initial opening of the Peace Corps/Bolivia program in 1962, more than 2,500 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in Bolivia. After a hiatus that began in 1971, the government formally requested that the Peace Corps return to Bolivia, and the Peace Corps resumed operations in 1990. Today, there are approximately 130 Volunteers working in Bolivia in the areas of health, agriculture, business development, education, and environmental projects. Where appropriate, the Peace Corps also integrates information technology into projects to expand technology access for Bolivian youth, farmers, entrepreneurs, and municipalities.

The safety and security of Peace Corps Volunteers remains our highest priority. Given the environments in which we work, the Peace Corps focuses on minimizing risk and maximizing security while also providing a meaningful experience for Volunteers and their host communities. The Peace Corps is celebrating a 46-year legacy of service at home and abroad. Currently there are more than 8,000 Volunteers abroad, a 37-year high for Volunteers in the field. Since 1961, more than 190,000 Volunteers have helped promote a better understanding between Americans and the people of the 139 countries where Volunteers have served. Peace Corps Volunteers must be U.S. citizens and at least 18 years of age. Peace Corps service is a 27-month commitment.

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