Design a Peace Corps Project

"You are new to a community in Loropeni, Burkina Faso. Loropeni is a market town in southern Burkina Faso. Local features include pre-European stone ruins, made up of an array of stone walls, about which little is known. One theory is that they formed the enclosure of the courtyard of a Kaan Iya (king of the Kaan people) from antiquity. Another theory is that the ruins may have been a slave holding site for slave raids in the area.

The Loropéni ruins were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2009. The ruins are the country's first World Heritage inscription. Loropéni is the best preserved example of a type of fortified settlement in a wide part of West Africa, linked to the tradition of gold mining. It is seen as an exceptional testimony to the settlement response generated by the gold trade.

You are a new Peace Corps volunteer in eco-tourism in Loropeni and as an MI student, your interests lie in water supply and sanitation. The Peace Corps wants you to focus your work on improving national and international tourism to the area, with the stone ruins as the major attraction, and has you teamed up with the local mayor's office and board of tourism. You, of course, want to figure out what you can do to improve water supply to the town, which has many large neighborhoods that share communal hand-dug wells.

Attempting to put aside your preconceived notions of what your Peace Corps work/thesis work will have you doing in the next two years, you need to figure out what the community's needs and priorities are."

Workshop Exercise

Break down into groups of 3-4 and discuss how a Peace Corp volunteer would approach this assignment. Here is where you would utilize what you have learned about doing survey research to address this complex question.

Discuss how you would answer the following three questions:

1. What might be the motivation for using a survey methods with the local population?
2. What are the important factors that the survey should address?

3. Using the case study as an example, what are some of the potential strengths and weaknesses of using a survey?

4. Outline a specific plan for developing and implementing the survey, with justification. The plan should include the categories of questions you would ask, how they will be organized, how they will be presented, to whom they will be presented, and how the data will be analyzed and interpreted. (N.B. you need not write specific survey items).