



Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning

Host Country Impact Study El Salvador



**Final Report prepared by
the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning**

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It is the mission of the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) to advance evidence-based management at Peace Corps by guiding agency strategic planning; monitoring and evaluating agency-level performance and programs; conducting research to generate new insights in the fields of international development, cultural exchange, and volunteer service; enhancing the stewardship and governance of agency data; and, helping shape agency engagement on certain high-level, government-wide initiatives.

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¹ Although these studies were a team effort involving numerous members of the OSIRP staff, we would like to give special recognition to Matthew Gallagher for his role as the study lead and for preparing the first draft of the report. Janet Kerley provided advice during the early stages of the fieldwork. Karen Van Roekel wrote the final report; Danielle Porreca and Ellen Kjoller formatted and copy-edited the report; and Leah Ermarth and OSIRP Director Dr. Cathryn L. Thorup reviewed and made the final substantive edits to the study.

² Partners include any individuals who may have lived or worked with a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Acronyms and Definitions

Acronyms

HCN	Host Country National
IST	In-Service Training
OSIRP	Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
PST	Pre-Service Training

Definitions

Adult beneficiaries	Individuals who receive assistance and help from the project; the people that the project is designed to help or support. In this project, this term is used for adult teachers, parents, and community leaders who benefitted from the Volunteers' presence in their communities. For this reason, references to this group will refer to these people as the 'adult beneficiaries' to distinguish them from the student beneficiaries.
Students	In this project, this is a special group of beneficiaries that includes boys and girls who were students in primary and secondary school or youth group members.
Counterparts/ Project partners	Individuals who work with Peace Corps Volunteers; Volunteers may work with multiple partners and counterparts during their service. Project partners also benefit from the projects; but when they are paired with Volunteers in a professional relationship or when they occupy a particular position in an organization or community (e.g., community leader), they are considered counterparts or project partners.
Host family members	Families with whom a Volunteer lived during all or part of his/her training and/or service.
Project stakeholders ³	Host country agency sponsors and partners. These include host-country ministries and local non-government agencies that are sponsoring and collaborating on a Peace Corps project, defining their needs and negotiating with Peace Corps staff to meet those needs. There may be a single agency or several agencies involved in a project in some capacity. Stakeholders are usually involved in the design and implementation of the project, but they do not work with Volunteers on a daily basis.

³ This definition, while narrower than the one commonly used in the development field, is the definition provided in the *Peace Corps Programming and Training Booklet I*.

Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2008, the Peace Corps launched a series of studies to determine the impact of its Volunteers on two of the agency's three goals: building local capacity and promoting a better understanding of Americans among host country nationals (HCNs). The Peace Corps conducts an annual survey that captures the perspective of currently serving Volunteers.⁴ While providing critical insight into the Volunteer experience, the survey can only address one side of the Peace Corps' story. The agency's Host Country Impact Studies are unique for their focus on learning about the Peace Corps' impact directly from host country nationals who lived and worked with Volunteers.

This report presents the findings from a study conducted in El Salvador in November and December of 2011. The focus of the research was the Youth Development Project. The findings from the local research team were shared with the post in a written report soon after completion of the fieldwork. This final report by the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) is based upon the data collected by the local team and contains a thorough review of the quantitative and qualitative data, supported by respondents' quotes, and presented in a format that is standard for all the country reports.

Purpose

El Salvador's Host Country Impact Study was initiated to assess the degree to which the Peace Corps was able: (1) to meet the needs of the host country in improving youth development outcomes; and, (2) to promote a better understanding of Americans among host country nationals. The study provides Peace Corps/El Salvador with a better understanding of the Youth Development Project and the impact it has had on local participants. In addition, the evaluation provides insight into what host country nationals learned about Americans and how their opinions about Americans changed after working with a Volunteer. Finally, the study identifies areas for improvement.

The major research questions addressed in the study are:

- Did skills transfer and capacity building occur?
- What skills were transferred to organizations/communities and individuals as a result of Volunteers' work?
- Were the skills and capacities sustained past the end of the project?
- How satisfied were HCNs with the project work?
- What did HCNs learn about Americans?

⁴ Peace Corps surveyed Volunteers periodically from 1975 to 2002, when a biennial survey was instituted. The survey became an annual survey in 2009 to meet agency reporting requirements.

- Did HCNs report that their opinions of Americans had changed after interacting with the Peace Corps and Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs)?

The evaluation results from this study will be aggregated and analyzed alongside the results from other Host Country Impact Studies to assess the agency's broader impact on local partners and participants across a variety of posts around the world.

Evaluation Methodology

This report is based on data provided by counterparts, adult beneficiaries⁵, stakeholders, students, and host family members associated with the Youth Development Project during interviews with the research team. The study included interviews with:

- 28 Counterparts
- 12 Adult beneficiaries
- 65 Students
- 14 Host family members
- 7 Stakeholders

The study reached 126 respondents in 20 communities. All interviews were conducted in November and December of 2011.⁶

Project Design

The purpose of the Youth Development Project is to provide Salvadoran youth with the necessary tools and resources to become active community members and have success in their family life and the world of work.⁷ In 2005, it became clear to staff that Volunteers in Peace Corps/El Salvador's three existing sectors (Health, Agriculture/Environment, and Municipal Development) were consistently working with youth as part of their primary and/or secondary projects. That same year, El Salvador's Ministry of Education launched *Plan 2021* to improve the youth development and education sectors of the country. Of the ten programs designed to reach the objectives of *Plan 2021*, the Ministry of Education formally requested support from Peace Corps in five areas.

To meet this request, Peace Corps/El Salvador designed and launched the Youth Development Project in June 2005. Upon review in May 2007, the project plan was modified slightly, with

⁵ In this project, the term 'adult beneficiaries' is used for adult teachers, parents, and community leaders who benefitted from the Volunteers' presence in their communities even though they were not the Volunteers' counterparts. References to this group are worded as 'adult beneficiaries' in this report in order to distinguish them from 'student' beneficiaries.

⁶ A full description of the methodology is found in Appendices 1 and 2. Please contact OSIRP for a copy of the interview questionnaires.

⁷ Information on the Youth Development Project in El Salvador comes from the two project plans that span the timeframe of this impact study: *Peace Corps/El Salvador Youth Development Program Framework*, Peace Corps, June 2005, and *Peace Corps/El Salvador Youth Development Project Plan*, Peace Corps, May 2007.

minor changes made to the wording of some activities and updated targets to be achieved by the expected end date of December 2011, but the project goals remained the same. The impact study covers these two project plans for El Salvador's Youth Development Project.

Project Goals

As explained in the previous section, the project framework identified the following areas in which the Peace Corps Volunteers' could work:

1. English instruction
2. Information and communications technology (ICT)
3. Life skills and job skills training
4. Special education
5. School and community networking

Specific activities were outlined in the Youth Development Project Plan to address these areas. (Please refer to pages 20-21 for the complete list of activities by project goal.)

Evaluation Findings

The evaluation findings indicate that the intended outcomes of the Youth Development Project were met to varying degrees. Due to the lack of contact information for both counterparts and adult beneficiaries, the number of people who were interviewed was low, thereby limiting the conclusions that can be drawn about each group individually. The low numbers of respondents made it necessary to combine these two groups for some portions of the analysis into one group of 'project participants.' Additionally, due to the low number of respondents, some intended outcomes were not analyzed (for example, individual-level changes related to specific types of teaching skills).

The project had the greatest impact in terms of change, sustainability, and meeting community and individual needs in four main outcome areas:

- 1) Teachers demonstrating strategies that created a more participatory classroom
- 2) Youth participating in extracurricular activities (such as youth groups and student clubs)
- 3) Youth making healthy lifestyle choices (such as staying out of gangs and in school)
- 4) Youth taking active roles as community leaders and role models

Project participants were in agreement that teachers who were demonstrating strategies to create a more participatory classroom had the greatest impact in the communities where Volunteers served.

Additionally, 65 percent of students reported that improved class attendance and participation was the most visible change attributed to the work of the Volunteer. They reported that they responded positively to the dynamism the Volunteer brought to their classroom.

Twenty-three percent of project participants stated that extracurricular activities were the most positive and lasting changes of the project.

As a result of working and living with the Peace Corps Volunteers, the respondents changed the way they perceived people from the United States, developing a more positive opinion of Americans. Respondents based their perception of people from the United States on the example set and values exhibited by Volunteers.

While the report provides a detailed analysis of the results of the study, the key findings are listed below:

Goal One Findings

Volunteer Activities

- Volunteers carried out all activities outlined in the Youth Development Project Plan.
- Volunteers carried out two of the intended activities consistently: recreational and cultural activities, which include youth groups and extra-curricular activities; and career preparedness activities, which includes English teaching, information and communication technologies (ICT) training, and career preparation classes.

Project Participant Training

- Counterparts (50%) and adult beneficiaries (75%) reported receiving training in one or more areas of the project. Many counterparts also received an orientation by Peace Corps/El Salvador staff.
 - 78 percent of the project participants (counterparts and adult beneficiaries) who reported receiving training said that it had contributed significantly to their skills.

Intended Outcomes: Community Capacity Building

- Some outcomes were reported as community changes by large proportions of respondents:
 - 62 percent of project participants stated that youth participation in extra-curricular activities was 'much better.'
 - 55 percent of project participants reported that youth choosing healthy lifestyles was 'much better' in their communities.
 - 53 percent of project participants stated teachers' strategies to create a more participatory classroom were 'much better' in their communities.
 - 53 percent of project participants reported that teachers incorporating ICT into their lessons was 'much better.'
- In some cases, project participants' observations of change did not align with student/youth observations:
 - Project participants (counterparts and adult beneficiaries) frequently mentioned parents' involvement in the lives of their children and community youth as a

positive outcome of the project (84%), while students hardly mentioned this outcome at all (2%).

- The proportion of counterparts and adult beneficiaries who reported improvement in the capacity of youth to be role models for other youth was much higher (97%) than the proportion of youth reporting this (11%).
- Peace Corps' youth development work was considered to be more effective than comparison groups:
 - 52 percent of project participants stated that Peace Corps' work was 'much more effective' than other youth development groups operating in their communities, and 35 percent said that it was 'somewhat more effective.'
- Community changes were reported as sustained by respondents who had seen positive changes at varying levels:
 - 73 percent of project participants stated that youth participation in extra-curricular activities was fully sustained.
 - In contrast, the outcome that was reported to be fully sustained by the fewest project participants was youth engagement in income generation activities (at 45%).
- The outcomes largely met community needs:
 - The range of project participants who reported that particular outcomes met the communities' needs varied from 65 percent to 88 percent.
 - The strongest results were found among project participants who expressed the opinion that the Volunteers' work with teachers on creating more participatory classrooms met their needs (88%) and among project participants who indicated that the Volunteers' work with youth on taking active roles as community leaders met the communities' needs 'completely' or 'largely' (81%).

Intended Outcomes: Individual Capacity Building

- Outcomes showed moderate rates of individual change:
 - 68 percent of project participants reported that their dedication to being a role model for youth was 'much better.'
 - 67 percent of project participants stated that their involvement in the lives of their children and/or community youth was 'much better.'
 - Project participants reported that their capacity to help youth make healthy choices was 'much better' due to the work of the Volunteers (56%), as was their ability to organize and lead extracurricular activities (43%).
 - 37 percent of project participants stated that their ability to create income generation activities with youth was 'much better' due to the work of the Volunteers.

- Use of new skills was reported by a clear majority of counterparts and adult beneficiaries:
 - In their professional lives, 64 percent of counterparts and 58 percent of adult beneficiaries use their new skills on a daily basis. On the other hand, 24 percent of counterparts and 17 percent of adult beneficiaries reported that they ‘never’ use their new skills in their professional lives. (These respondents may not have gained any new skills as they did not report having received any training.)
 - In their personal lives, 60 percent of counterparts and 67 percent of adult beneficiaries use their new skills on a daily basis. On the other hand, 24 percent of counterparts and 25 percent of adult beneficiaries ‘never’ use their new skills.
- Individual changes were sustained:
 - 83 percent of the project participants who reported improvements related to being a role model for youth also said that the improvements were sustained.
 - 75 percent of the project participants who reported improvements related to involvement in the lives of their children and/or community youth also said that the improvements were sustained.
- The outcomes largely met individual needs:
 - 92 percent of project participants stated that the Volunteers’ work with them on serving as role models for youth met their needs.
 - 83 percent of project participants reported that the Volunteers’ work with them on involving themselves in the lives of their children and/or community youth met their needs.

Unintended Outcomes: Community Integration

- Counterparts and adult beneficiaries reported that the extracurricular activities that the Volunteers developed and implemented served as community socializing activities. The activities not only provided a positive outlet for youth, but also provided a social outlet for the families of the youth involved. Project participants stated that these extracurricular activities, while focused on youth, taught them how to organize these types of activities and positively affected their relationships with neighbors whose children were also involved in these activities.

Factors Contributing to Project Success

- According to respondents, the project’s success was derived from a combination of two factors: community-wide support for the Volunteers’ youth-centered activities and the Volunteers’ knowledge, capacity, and approach to their work.
- Respondents expressed a strong sense that the relationships they built with Volunteers were the primary source of change, as ideas for community activities could only be implemented once bonds of trust had been built.

- The Volunteers' consistent interactions with their communities provided space for them to assess the needs of the community, and to then organize, motivate, and drive community members to move forward to address those needs as they evolved.

Factors Hindering Project Success

- According to respondents, several factors limiting project success included a lack of community support for the Volunteers' work (particularly in the event of a mismatch between the developmental needs perceived by the community and the activities offered by the Volunteer), a lack of economic resources for purchasing materials for school clubs and extracurricular activities, and challenges related to the Volunteer's linguistic or cross-cultural skills.

Satisfaction with Peace Corps Work

- 46 percent of counterparts, 80 percent of adult beneficiaries, and 70 percent of students were very satisfied with the changes resulting from the project.
- 82 percent of counterparts, 83 percent of adult beneficiaries, and 97 percent of students expressed a desire to work with another Volunteer.

Goal Two Findings

Changes in Understanding and Opinions of Americans

- Prior to meeting a Volunteer:
 - A large majority of respondents stated they had previous knowledge of Americans, primarily from conversations with family members living in the United States.
 - 54 percent of counterparts, 50 percent of adult beneficiaries, 22 percent of students, and 29 percent of host family members had a very positive opinion of Americans.
- After interacting with a Volunteer:
 - 57 percent of counterparts indicated that they had a 'more positive' or 'somewhat more positive' opinion of Americans.
 - 60 percent of adult beneficiaries indicated that they had a 'more positive' opinion of Americans.
 - 86 percent of students indicated that they had a 'more positive' or 'somewhat more positive' opinion of Americans.
 - 57 percent of host family members indicated that they had a 'more positive' or 'somewhat more positive' opinion of Americans.

Causes of Change in Opinions of Americans

- In work situations, respondents stated that they changed their opinions of Americans through their observations of how the Volunteers were willing to share their knowledge, approached their work with great interest and commitment, were respectful and inclusive, and committed themselves to assisting youth in the community.

- In social situations, respondents stated that they changed their opinions because they saw that Volunteers were simple, honest, and positive people. The respondents expressed surprise at the Volunteers' ability to adapt to El Salvador and how easy it was to relate to them and form relationships.
- The Volunteers' positive demeanor and behavior inspired many host family members to describe them as 'family.'

Changes in Behaviors and Outlook on Life

- Counterparts, adult beneficiaries, students, and host families who reported a more positive opinion of Americans reported that they had changed their own behavior or outlook on life in the following ways:
 - They are more motivated to set and achieve personal goals, including committing themselves to their education or profession.
 - They are more social and inclusive. They participate more in school and community activities, attend community events, and share ideas, opinions, and knowledge with community members.
 - They are more organized, collaborative, unified, and dedicated in their efforts to affect positive change as a community.
 - Overall, they have more confidence and an improved outlook on life, in terms of embracing the philosophy that personal and community change will occur when a sustained effort is made to overcome all challenges.

The Volunteer as a Youth Role Model

- Students stated that they now try to emulate the Volunteers' positive approach to life, kindness, respect, and easygoing manner in terms of making friends regardless of race, age, gender, or economic class. In terms of their approach to work, students reported that they strive to model how the Volunteers first organized themselves to approach a problem or task, and then confidently and diligently applied themselves until the desired outcome was achieved.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

The Peace Corps traces its roots and mission to 1960, when then-Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. Peace Corps grew from that inspiration into an agency of the federal government devoted to world peace and friendship.

By the end of 1961, Peace Corps Volunteers were serving in seven countries. Since then, more than 215,000 men and women have served in 139 countries. Peace Corps activities cover issues ranging from education to work in the areas of health and HIV/AIDS and community economic development. Peace Corps Volunteers continue to help countless individuals who want to build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities.

In carrying out the agency's three core goals, Peace Corps Volunteers make a difference by building local capacity and promoting a better understanding of Americans among the host country participants. A major contribution of Peace Corps Volunteers, who live in the communities where they work, stems from their ability to deliver technical interventions directly to beneficiaries living in rural and urban areas that lack sufficient local capacity. Volunteers operate from a development principle that promotes sustainable projects and strategies.

Peace Corps' Core Goals

Goal One - To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.

Goal Two - To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.

Goal Three - To help promote a better understanding of other people on the part of Americans.

The interdependence of Goal One and Goal Two is central to the Peace Corps experience, as local beneficiaries develop relationships with Volunteers who communicate in the local language, share everyday experiences, and work collaboratively on a daily basis.

The Peace Corps conducts an annual survey of currently serving Volunteers; however, it can only address one side of the Peace Corps' story.⁸ In 2008, the Peace Corps launched a series of studies to better assess the impact of its Volunteers. The studies are unique for their focus on learning about the Peace Corps' impact directly from the host country nationals (HCNs) who lived and worked with Volunteers.

⁸ Peace Corps surveyed Volunteers periodically from 1975 to 2002, when a biennial survey was instituted. The survey became an annual survey in 2009 to meet agency reporting requirements.

Purpose

This report presents the findings from the impact evaluation conducted in El Salvador in November and December of 2011. The project studied was the Youth Development Project. The study documents host country nationals' perspectives on the impact of Peace Corps Volunteers on skills transfer to and capacity building of host country counterparts, adult beneficiaries, students, and stakeholders, and changes in their understanding of Americans.

The major research questions addressed in the study are:

- Did skills transfer and capacity building occur?
- What skills were transferred to organizations/communities and individuals as a result of Volunteers' work?
- Were the skills and capacities sustained past the end of the project?
- How satisfied were HCNs with the project work?
- What did HCNs learn about Americans?
- Did HCNs report that their opinions of Americans had changed after interacting with the Peace Corps and Peace Corps Volunteers?

The information gathered will inform Peace Corps staff at post and headquarters about host country nationals' perceptions of the projects, the Volunteers, and the resulting impact. In conjunction with Volunteer feedback from the Annual Volunteer Survey and a new Counterpart Survey, this information will allow the Peace Corps to better understand its impact and identify areas for performance improvement. For example, the information may be useful for Volunteer training and outreach to host families and project partners.

This information is also needed to provide performance information to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the United States Congress. As part of the Peace Corps Improvement Plan, drafted in response to its 2005 Program Assessment Rating Tool review, the Peace Corps proposed the creation of "baselines to measure results including survey data in countries with Peace Corps presence to measure the promotion of a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served."⁹

Feedback from three pilot studies conducted in 2008 was used to revise the methodology rolled out to nine more posts in 2009, eight posts in 2010, and four posts in FY 2011. A total of 24 posts across Peace Corps' three geographic regions—(1) Africa; (2) Inter-America and the Pacific; and (3) Europe, Mediterranean and Asia—have conducted host country impact studies. Taken together, these studies contribute to Peace Corps' ability to document the degree to which the agency is able to both meet the needs of host countries for trained men and women, and to promote a better understanding of Americans among the peoples served.

⁹ Office of Management and Budget, *Program Assessment: Peace Corps. International Volunteerism, 2005. Improvement Plan.*

The Youth Development Project in El Salvador

The purpose of the Youth Development Project is to provide Salvadoran youth with the necessary tools and resources to become active community members and to have success in their family life and their work.

In 2005, it became clear to staff that Volunteers in Peace Corps/El Salvador's three existing sectors (Health, Agriculture/Environment, and Municipal Development) were consistently working with youth as part of their primary and/or secondary projects. That same year, El Salvador's Ministry of Education launched *Plan 2021* to improve the youth development and education sectors of the country. Of the ten programs designed to reach the objectives of *Plan 2021*, the Ministry of Education formally requested support from Peace Corps in the following areas: English instruction, information and communications technology (ICT), life skills and job skills training, special education, and school and community networking.

To meet this request, Peace Corps/El Salvador designed and launched the Youth Development Project in June 2005. Upon review in May 2007, the project plan was modified slightly, with minor changes made to the wording of some activities and updated targets to be achieved by the expected end date of December 2011, but the project goals remained the same. The impact study covers these two project plans developed for El Salvador's Youth Development Project.

Project Goals

The goals of the Youth Development Project cover four different social groups: youth, teachers, parents, and youth service providers. By including Volunteer activities directed at all of these social groups, the project's four goals aim to strengthen and support the human, financial, and social capital of Salvadoran youth. These are key elements for future success in family life and work.

As stated above, the impact study covers two project plans developed for El Salvador's Youth Development Project. The first project plan was launched in June 2005, and the second was initiated in May 2007. As the 2007 project plan goals remained identical to those in the 2005 plan, these goals are presented below. Slight wording modifications were made to the 2007 plan, so the activities presented for each goal are drawn from the 2007 plan. Each of these goals was intended to be accomplished by Volunteers in collaboration with their counterparts.

Goal 1: Personal Development: Youth will lead healthy lifestyles and therefore be better prepared for the challenges of adult life. The two activities for this goal are:

1. Train youth in life skills.
2. Coordinate recreational and cultural activities for youth.

Goal 2: World of Work: Youth will develop strategies to navigate the work force and generate income. The two activities for this goal are:

1. Train youth in career preparedness skills.
2. Train youth in vocational skills and basic business concepts.

Goal 3: Teacher Support: Ministry of Education teachers and other community educators will develop knowledge and skills in the areas of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and Special Education in order to prepare youth for success. The three activities for this goal are:

1. Train Ministry of Education teachers and other community educators in ICT skills and in strategies to integrate technology into their classes.
2. Train Ministry of Education teachers and other community educators in English language skills and in participatory teaching techniques.
3. Train Ministry of Education teachers and other community educators to identify typical behavior patterns and specific learning needs of Special Education students and effective strategies to educate them.

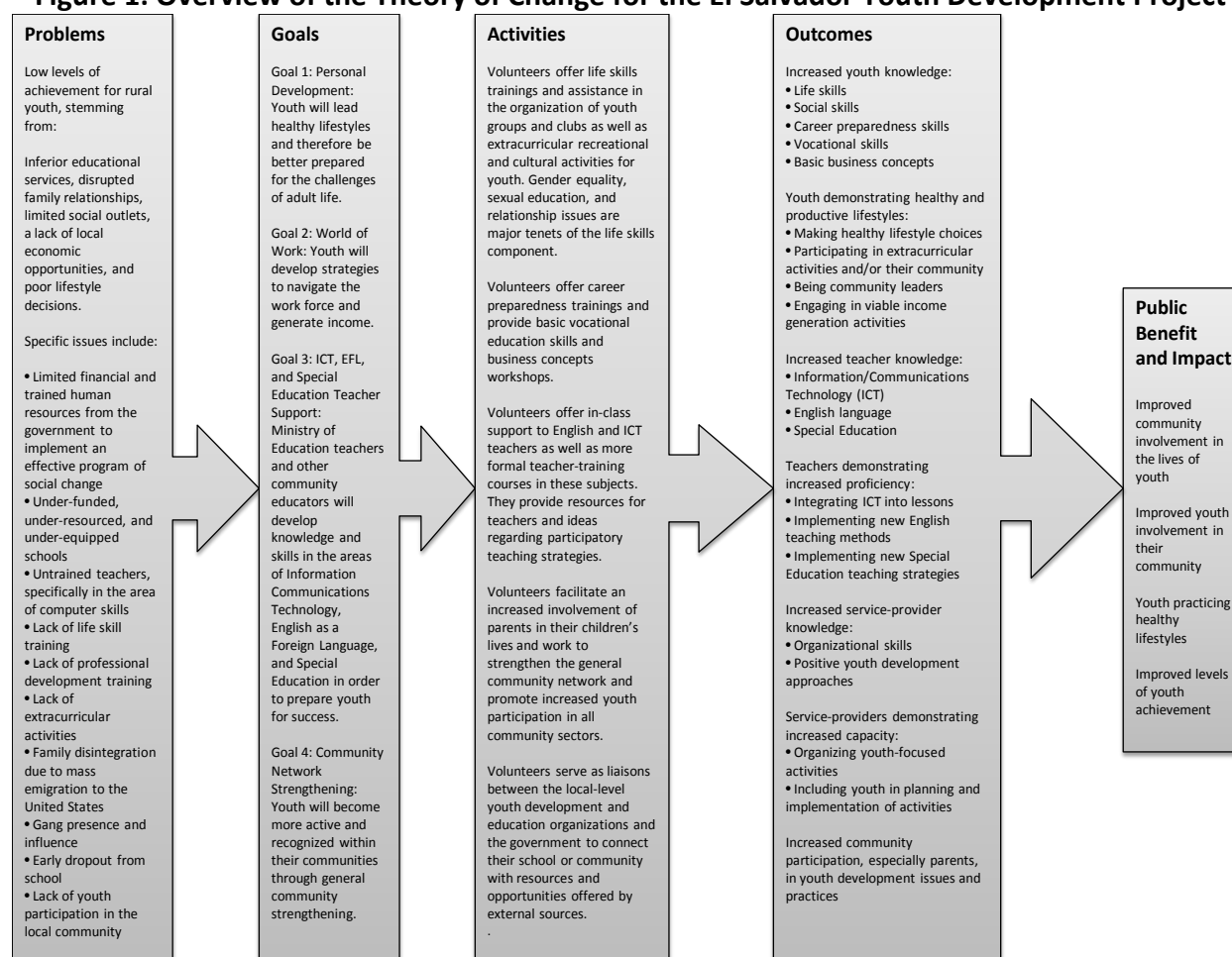
Goal 4: Community Network Strengthening: Youth will become more active and recognized within their communities through general community strengthening. The two activities for this goal are:

1. Train parents in adult life skills, including parenting skills.
2. Train service providers in organizational skills, positive youth development approaches, youth-specific issues, and participatory teaching techniques.

The theory of change¹⁰ underlying this project approach is presented in Figure 1. This model provided the foundation for the impact evaluation.

¹⁰ A theory of change is a conceptual model used to understand the relationships between the problems a program is designed to alleviate and the assumptions made regarding how program activities will address those problems.

Figure 1: Overview of the Theory of Change for the El Salvador Youth Development Project¹¹



Evaluation Methodology

In 2008, the Peace Corps' Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) initiated a series of evaluation studies in response to a mandate from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to evaluate the impact of Volunteers. Three countries were selected to pilot a methodology that would examine the impact of the technical work of Volunteers, and their corollary work of promoting a better understanding of Americans among the people with whom the Volunteers lived and worked.

In collaboration with the Peace Corps country director at each post, OSIRP piloted a methodology to collect information directly from host country nationals about skills transfer and capacity building (Goal One), as well as changes in their understanding of Americans (Goal Two).

¹¹ Source: Adapted from the Peace Corps/El Salvador Youth Development Project Plan initiated in June 2005.

The research was designed by OSIRP social scientists and implemented in country by an experienced researcher and a team of local interviewers under the supervision of the local Peace Corps staff. The OSIRP team provided technical direction.

In El Salvador, the sites where 67 Volunteers had completed their service between 2007 and 2011 were identified as possible locations for the study. A representative, rather than a random, sample was drawn from this list of Volunteer assignment sites. The research team conducted 126 semi-structured interviews in Spanish in 20 of these communities. The interviews were conducted in November and December of 2011. Interviewers recorded the respondents' comments, coded the answers, and entered the data into a web-based database maintained by OSIRP. The data were analyzed by OSIRP researchers and the local research team.¹²

Study Limitations

The research team encountered difficulties in obtaining contact information for some groups of potential respondents, thereby limiting the number of interviews conducted. Within this report, any data from a respondent pool with less than twelve responses was excluded from the charts and graphs. However, input from small respondent groups is included in the narrative to present a more complete picture of the findings. (For example, due to the low number of respondents in Special Education (6 people), the outcomes related to change in teachers' capacity to incorporate Special Education teaching strategies into their classroom are only included in the text and not in the graphs.)

In addition, the relatively small number of adult beneficiaries (12 people) means that in some cases, this group is combined with the counterparts into one group, which is categorized as 'project participants.'

Some of the findings in the report compare and contrast the opinions of project participants and students. However, the lack of data on locations where people were interviewed does not permit Peace Corps to test these results to see if there are any patterns that might affect the interpretation of these results.

Respondents

Five groups of Salvadorans were interviewed (Table 1):

- **Counterparts:** Community leaders, school leaders, and youth service leaders who were paired with Volunteers in a professional relationship or who occupied a particular position in an organization or community (28)
- **Adult Beneficiaries:** Community leaders, teachers, and parents who benefitted from the Volunteers' presence in their communities (12)

¹² Appendix 1 contains a full description of the research methodology.

- **Host Family Members:** Families with whom the Volunteers lived and landlords of the Volunteers during all or part of their service (14)
- **Stakeholders:** National government officials, school directors, cultural center directors (7)
- **Students:** Primary school students, secondary school students, members of a youth group (65)

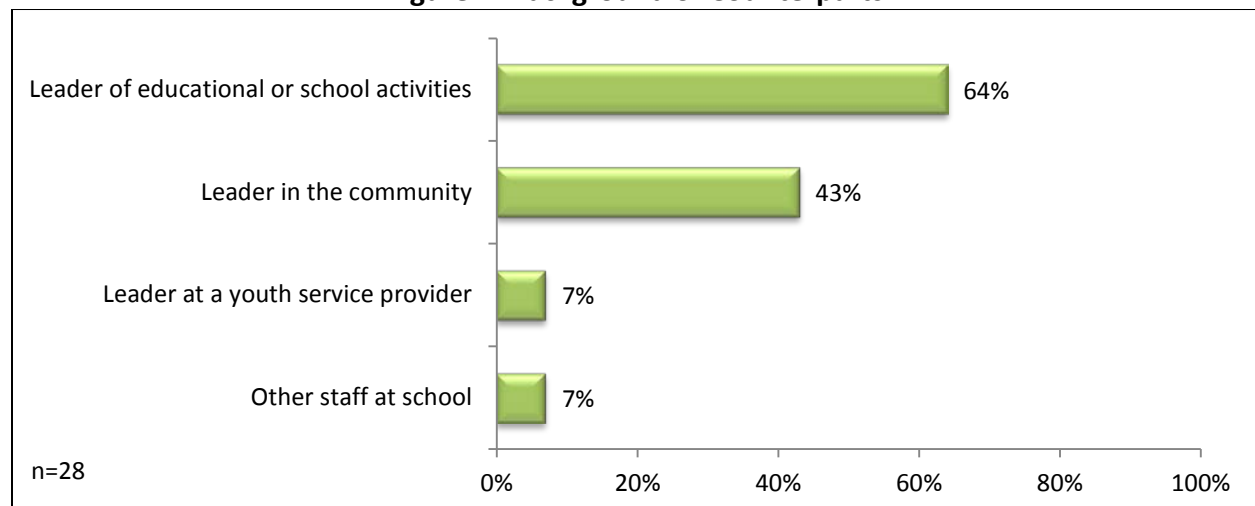
Table 1: Number and Type of Respondents: El Salvador Youth Development

Interviewee Type	Number of Respondents	Number of Sites
Counterparts	28	20
Adult Beneficiaries	12	20
Host Family Members	14	20
Stakeholders	7	7
Students	65	20
Total	126	20

The charts below provide a further breakdown on the background of each respondent group. Please note that percentages may add up to more than 100 percent as each respondent was allowed to choose more than one category based on his or her background.

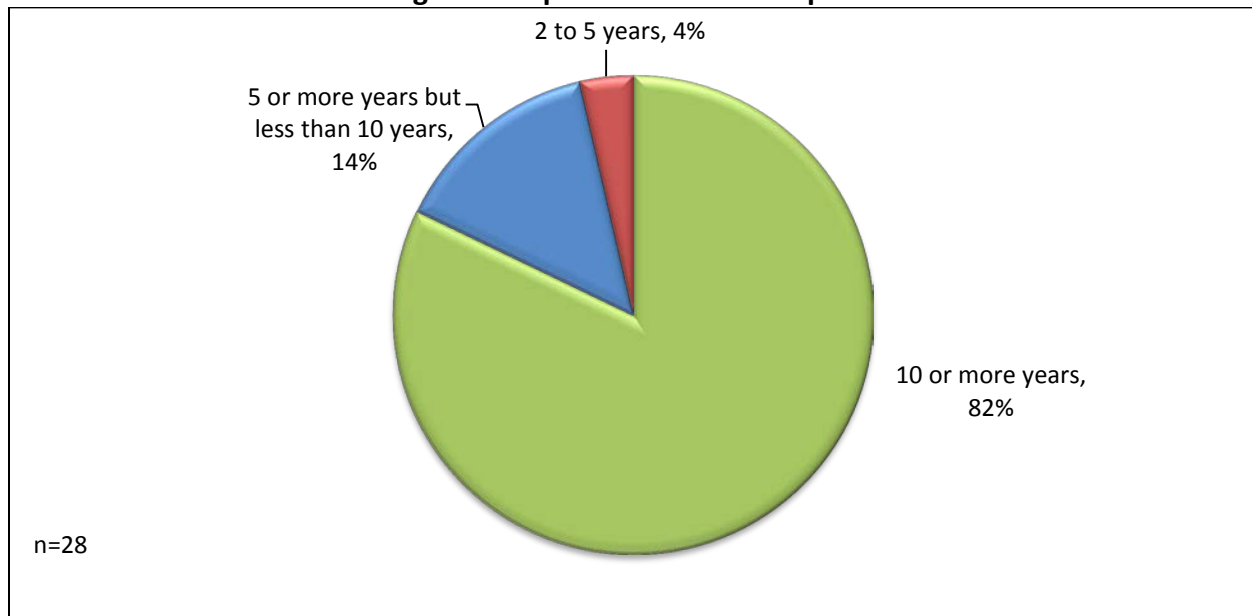
The majority of counterparts reported being a 'school leader' (64%, Figure 2), with an additional 7 percent stating that they were teachers in a school rather than the overall leader of the school. The second largest category of counterparts (43%) was comprised of community leaders such as government health workers or leaders of organizations (such as the water committee and a community association, among others).

Figure 2: Background of Counterparts



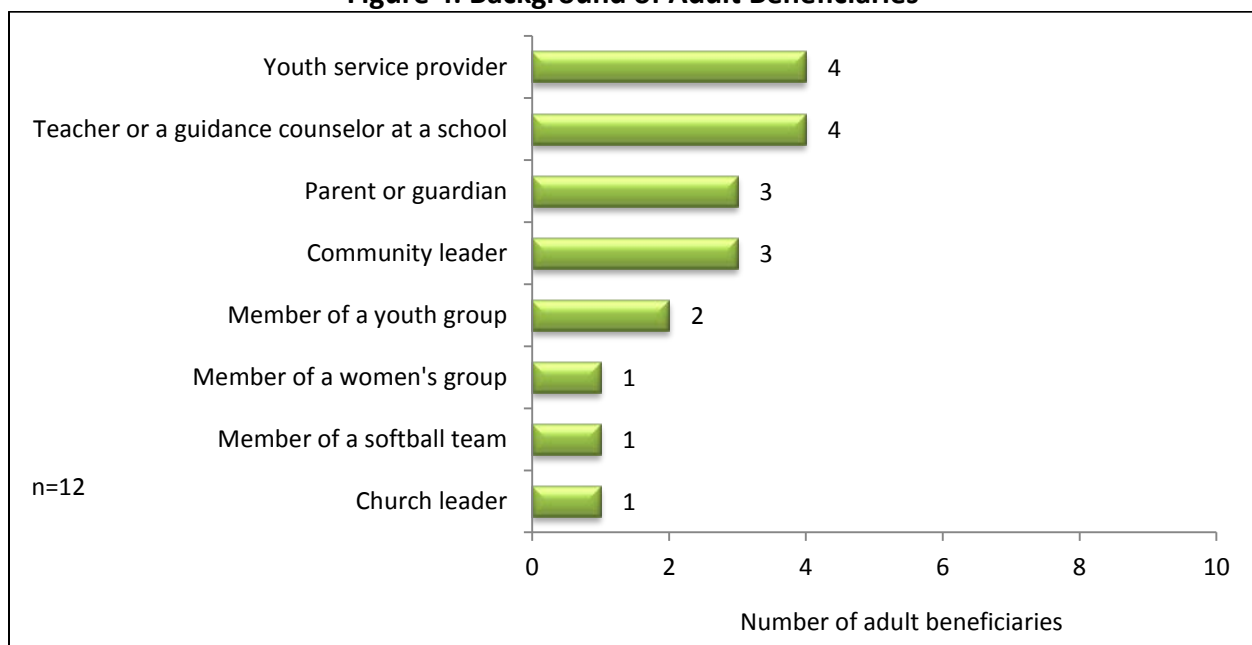
The cohort of counterpart respondents was quite experienced, with the highest percentage of respondents (82%) having spent 10 or more years in their field of work and another 14 percent having five years or more of experience (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Experience of Counterparts



Most adult beneficiaries who were interviewed were health service providers (4), teachers or other school officials (4), parents (3) or community leaders (3) (Figure 4).

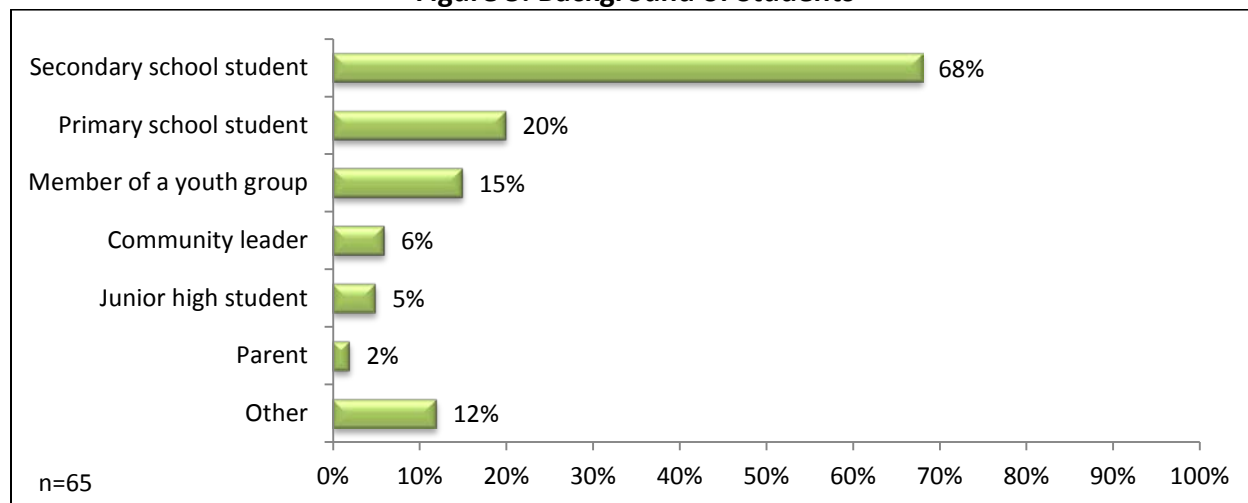
Figure 4: Background of Adult Beneficiaries



Note: The sum of the numbers in each row exceeds 12 because many adult beneficiaries reported having multiple roles.

Among the students who were interviewed, 68 percent were in secondary school, 5 percent were in junior high, and 20 percent were in primary school at the time the Volunteer was in their classroom (Figure 5). Fifteen percent were involved in youth groups. For the 12 percent of respondents who did not fit into one of the pre-coded categories (8 people), follow-up questions revealed that 2 were students in advanced degree programs, 2 were teachers of English or computer science, and 1 had taken a sewing class. Another former student reported having become the counterpart of the next Volunteer.

Figure 5: Background of Students

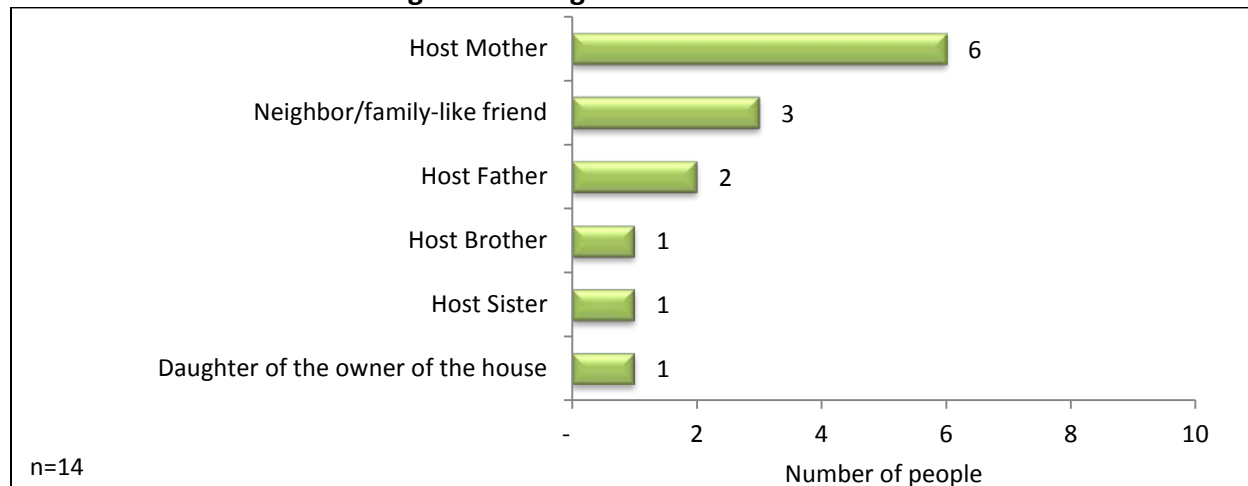


Note: The sum of percentages in each row does not total to 100% because many students reported having multiple roles.

Students were asked their age at the time of the survey, with all respondents being between the ages of 10-27 years old, with an average age of 16.

Host mothers comprised the largest group of host family respondents (6 out of 14) followed by neighbors/family-like friends (3), and host fathers (2). Two respondents reported being either a host brother or sister, and one indicated that she was the daughter of the owner of the house (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Background of Host Families



Peace Corps/El Salvador also chose seven stakeholders to be interviewed as part of the impact study. Four stakeholders were school directors, two were national government officials, and one was the director of a cultural center. Four of the stakeholders had held their positions for over ten years, and three had held their positions for two to five years. As stated in the Evaluation Methodology section on page 23, due to the low number of stakeholder respondents, their responses will not be broken out into charts. However, input from these seven stakeholders is included in the narrative to present a more complete picture of the findings.

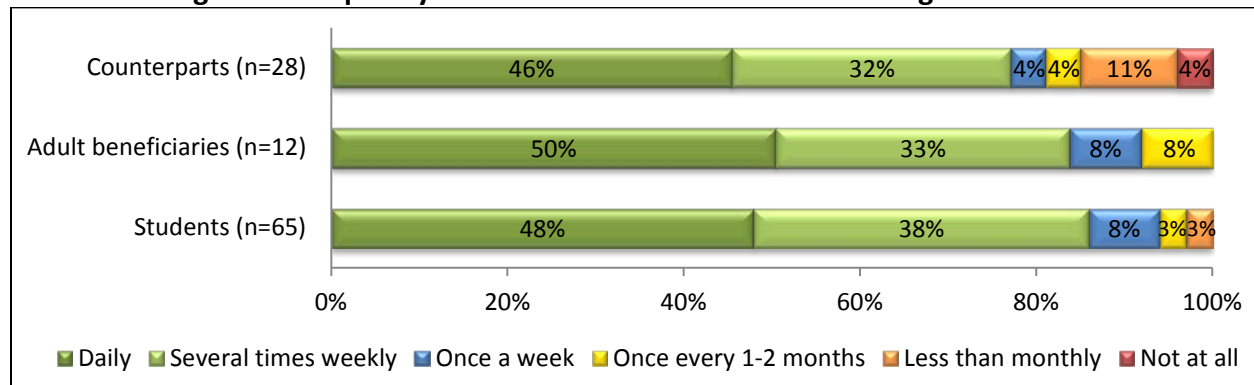
Chapter 2: Goal One Findings

All Peace Corps projects support the agency's primary goal of building the technical capacity of local men and women to improve their own lives and conditions within their communities. The primary goal of the Youth Development Project was to provide Salvadoran youth with the necessary tools and resources to become active community members and to have success in their family life and their work. In addition, the project sought to strengthen existing support networks between youth service providers, parents and youth, and to improve teachers' capacity to prepare youth for success. Volunteers working in this project were expected to achieve these goals through specific activities outlined in the project plan, as well as activities requested by their communities.

Frequency of Interaction with Volunteers

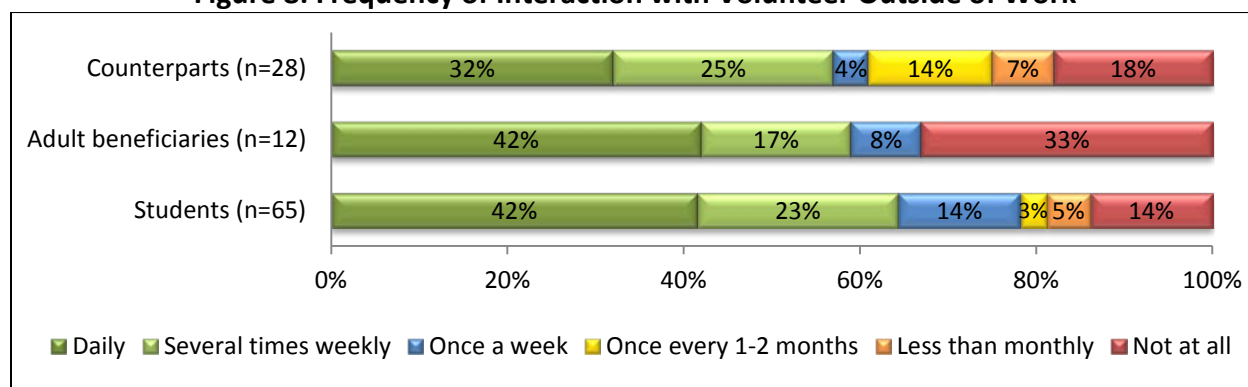
During work hours, a large majority of counterparts (78%) worked frequently with their Volunteers on either a daily basis (46%) or several times a week (32%). These percentages indicate a high level of interaction between the Volunteers and their counterparts. Among the 12 adult beneficiaries, a large majority reported having a high level of interaction with the Volunteers, with half indicating daily contact and another third reporting contact several times a week. Students had similarly high rates of interaction with the Volunteers, with 48 percent interacting on a daily basis and 38 percent interacting several times a week (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Frequency of Interaction with Volunteers during Work Hours



All respondent groups reported less frequent rates of interaction with the Volunteers outside of work (Figure 8), with 32 percent of counterparts and 42 percent of students reporting that they had contact with the Volunteers on a daily basis, and another 25 percent of counterparts and 23 percent of students seeing them several times a week. Similarly, 7 of the 12 adult beneficiaries saw the Volunteers at least several times a week if not daily. Eighteen percent of counterparts, 14 percent of students, and four of the twelve adult beneficiaries indicated that they never interacted with the Volunteer outside of work.

Figure 8: Frequency of Interaction with Volunteer Outside of Work



Of the seven stakeholders, four reported that they had known about Peace Corps projects and activities for more than ten years, and three indicated that they had known about Peace Corps projects for more than five years, indicating a high level of familiarity with the agency's mission and methods. Furthermore, five of the stakeholders reported that they communicated with Peace Corps staff at least once a month, and those five also indicated that their relationship with Peace Corps was very positive.

Assessment of the Intended Outcomes

Project activities are designed to produce specific outcomes that contribute to achieving project goals. Reviewing the activities that had been undertaken made it possible to assess the extent to which the Peace Corps project had met its primary goal of transferring technical skills and building local capacity. Performance under the Peace Corps' first goal was examined in three ways:

1. The extent to which HCNs observed community and personal changes, and reported gaining new technical skills.
2. The extent to which the capacity for maintaining the changes had been put in place by the time that the project ended.
3. The extent to which the project met the needs of the community and the personal needs of the local participants.

Training provided by Volunteers is one method for increasing the technical capacity of youth, parents, teachers, and social service providers; and it is one of the immediate outputs of any Peace Corps project. In the following sections of the report, the activities of the project are presented first, followed by what the counterparts and adult beneficiaries recall of their training in these areas, and the extent to which training enhanced their skills. Intended outcomes observed by the project participants at the community level are presented first followed by the individual-level changes reported by respondents who felt that each type of activity was applicable to their work or personal situation.

Project Activities

The project plan for the Youth Development Project outlined the nine major areas of work as follows:

1. Healthy lifestyle choices
2. Extracurricular activities
3. Income generation activities
4. English teaching methods
5. ICT teaching methods
6. Special education teaching methods
7. Participatory teaching methods
8. Community activities for youth
9. Parenting skills

The 105 counterparts, adult beneficiaries, and students who were interviewed were asked to describe the activities that the Volunteers implemented in their communities. The 103 respondents who answered this question reported that Volunteers implemented all nine intended project activities listed above and initiated six additional activities.

The following list presents the intended project activities in rank order by the proportions of respondents who spontaneously mentioned them when asked about the Volunteers' work:

- 71%–Recreational and cultural activities (includes youth groups and extracurricular activities)
- 61%–Career preparedness (includes English teaching, ICT training, and career preparation classes)
- 22%–Life skills (includes life skills, cooking, and sex education classes)
- 10%–Vocational skills and basic business concepts
- 10%–Train teachers in English
- 9%–Train teachers in ICT
- 9%–Train service providers in organizational skills and youth development
- 7%–Parenting skills
- 1%–Train teachers in Special Education

Counterparts, adult beneficiaries, and students also described six activities that do not appear in the project plan of the Youth Development Project. These activities (and the proportions of respondents who mentioned them) were:

- 10%–Community recycling campaign
- 7%–Health promotion
- 5%–Library development
- 3%–Tree planting/Reforestation
- 2%–Forming women's groups
- 1%–Rabies vaccination campaign

When asked to describe the activities that the Volunteers had implemented in their communities, stakeholders described the higher level goals of the Youth Development Project. What they mentioned most often was that the Volunteers worked with the local youth to develop their skills and capabilities through educational and extracurricular activities. In fact, the stakeholders focused exclusively on the youth-centered activities implemented by Volunteers; none mentioned activities that were teacher-, parent-, or service provider-focused.

Training Received

After the initial question that asked project participants to recall the activities in the project, a second question asked them to recall any specific training or mentoring that they had received. Data on this question were collected from the spontaneous recall of the project participants.

Fifty percent of counterparts and 75 percent of adult beneficiaries stated that they received training or mentoring in at least one aspect of the Youth Development Project (Figure 9). Among counterparts, the most frequently mentioned types of training were income generation (21%), developing English teaching methods (18%), developing ICT teaching methods (14%), and making healthy lifestyle choices (14%). Among adult beneficiaries, the most frequently mentioned types of training were developing English teaching methods, making healthy lifestyle choices, and parenting skills, all of which were mentioned by 25% of them.

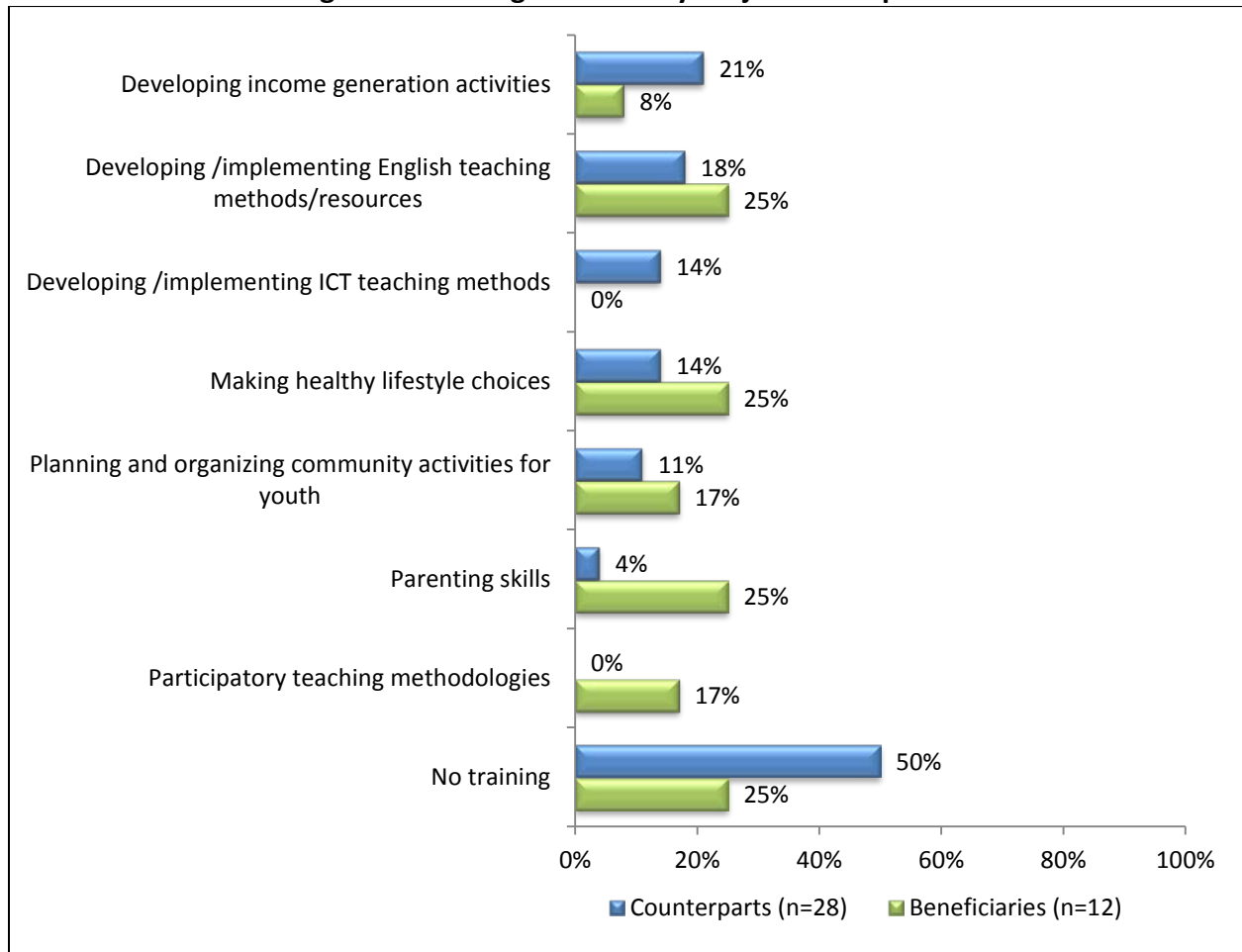
In addition to the specific project activities, some counterparts and adult beneficiaries responded that they received training in other areas including: the counterpart orientation provided by Peace Corps/El Salvador staff (8 respondents), recycling or the environment (5), using computers (4), leadership (3), cooking (1), cosmetology (1), music (1), and HIV/AIDS (1).

No respondents reported that they had received training in the area of developing and implementing Special Education teaching methods. This finding corroborates data collected from the respondents who reported that very few Volunteers implemented activities in this area, but it was not clear from the data that were collected whether Special Education was intended to be an element of the project in all locations.

There were also no respondents who indicated that they had been trained in the area of developing and implementing extracurricular activities. While 71 percent of respondents said that Volunteers had implemented these types of activities, the Volunteers apparently did not train others to conduct them.

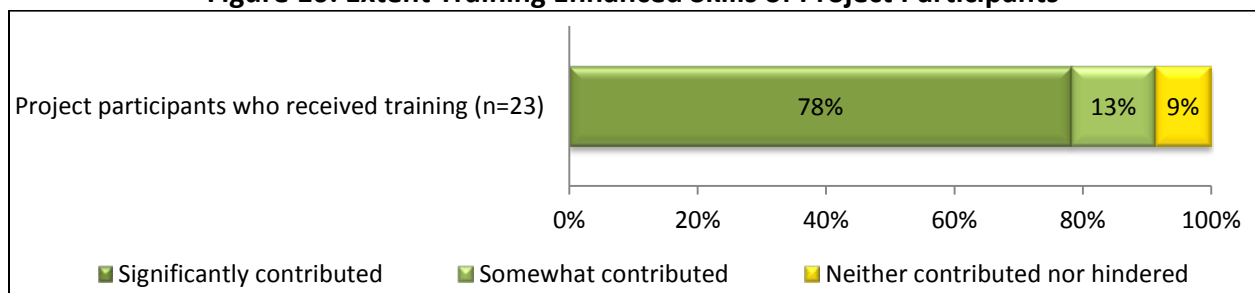
Finally, 50 percent of counterparts and 25 percent of adult beneficiaries indicated that they received no 'training' from the Volunteers at all.

Figure 9: Training Received by Project Participants



In summary across all project participants (i.e. counterparts and adult beneficiaries), 23 people reported having received some type of training. There was a universal perception that the training that they received had enhanced their overall skills among the 9 adult beneficiaries and a nearly universal perception among the 14 counterparts. Overall, 78% of the project participants who reported receiving training said that it had contributed significantly to their skills (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Extent Training Enhanced Skills of Project Participants



Community-Level Change

The project theory of change (see Figure 1 on page 22) generated a list of planned project outcomes. Counterparts and adult beneficiaries were asked about the following community-level outcomes:¹³

1. Youth participating in extracurricular activities, such as youth groups and student clubs
2. Youth making healthy lifestyle choices, such as staying out of gangs and in school
3. Youth taking active roles as community leaders and role models
4. Youth engaging in viable income generation activities
5. Teachers demonstrating strategies that create a more participatory classroom
6. Teachers incorporating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) into their lessons
7. Teachers' implementing new English teaching methods
8. Teachers demonstrating their capacity to incorporate Special Education teaching strategies into their classroom
9. Adults in the community being actively involved in the lives of youth
10. Youth service providers including youth in planning and implementing activities
11. Parents involving themselves in the lives of their children
12. Youth service providers organizing youth-focused activities in the community

Counterparts and adult beneficiaries were asked about these project outcomes through a matrix question. For each project outcome derived from the project plan, respondents were asked if changes had occurred and about the direction of those changes, whether the change had been maintained after the Volunteer departed, and whether the community's needs had been met. Students were asked a separate set of questions to assess changes within their classroom environments. Stakeholders, due to their limited interaction with Volunteers, were asked a more general set of questions.

Due to the high number of outcomes outlined in the project framework, as well as the broad range of people participating in the project activities (youth, teachers, families, and service providers), project outcomes are grouped and presented according to the four goals of the Youth Development Project Plan: Personal Development, World of Work, Teacher Support, and Community Network Strengthening.

Changes Resulting from the Project

In terms of Personal Development outcomes for youth, project participants observed the greatest positive change in youth participating in extracurricular activities, with 62 percent of respondents reporting that the Volunteers had made this 'much better.' An additional 26

¹³ Activities 1-3 relate to Project Goal 1 (Personal Development), and Activity 4 relates to Project Goal 2 (World of Work). Activities 5-8 relate to Goal 3 (Teacher Support), and Activities 9-12 relate to Goal 4 (Community Network Strengthening).

percent reported that participation in extracurricular activities was ‘somewhat better,’ for a total of 88 percent who reported some level of improvement.

“The Volunteer organized dance groups for the youth. The groups still participate in activities and have been invited to other departments to give presentations. There is also a group that cares for the school garden.” – Counterpart

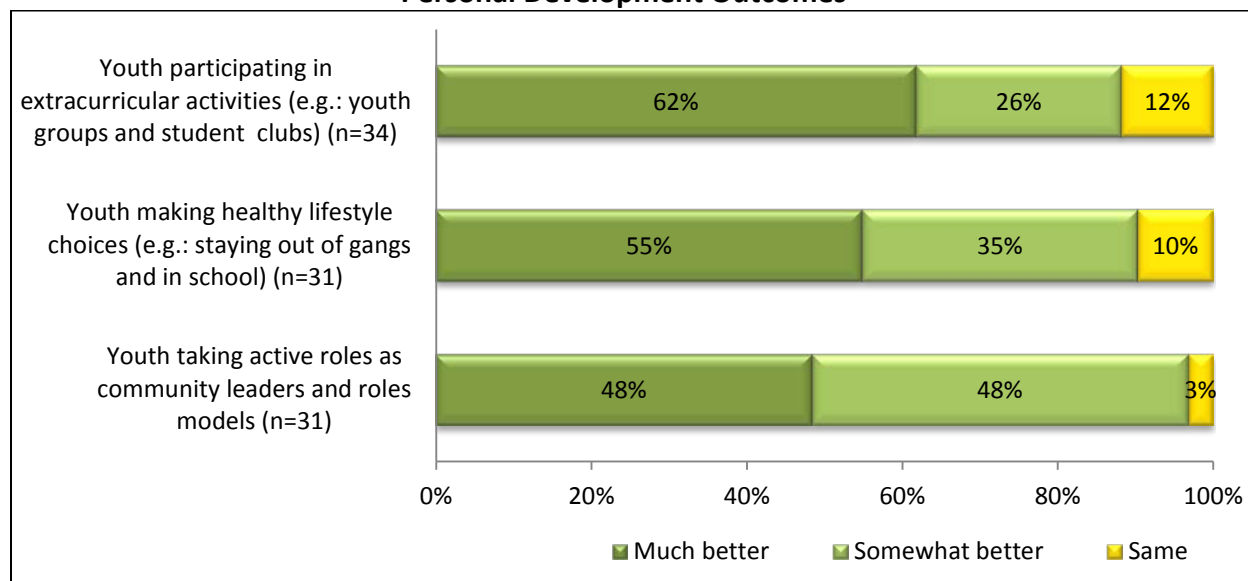
“The Volunteer formed some intramural activities. The effect is that the youth are still manageable and are not exhibiting the extreme rebelliousness as in the bigger cities.” – Counterpart

A little more than half of the project participants (55%) reported that the lifestyle choices of youth were ‘much better,’ and 35 percent said that they were ‘somewhat better,’ for a total of 90 percent who reported an improvement.

Almost all project participants (96%) reported that youth were taking more active leadership roles in their communities, with 48 percent observing this change as ‘much better’ and 48 percent stating the observed change was ‘somewhat better.’

Very few project participants reported that these three indicators had remained the same, and none reported that they were any worse (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Project Participant Assessment of Changes Related to Project Goal 1: Personal Development Outcomes¹⁴



¹⁴ These results exclude project participants who reported these outcomes were not applicable to them as follows: extracurricular activities (6), healthy lifestyle (9), and role models (9).

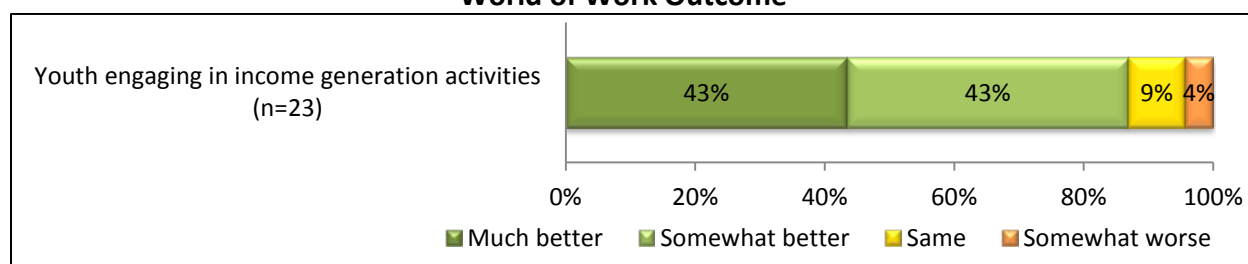
For World of Work outcomes, 86 percent of project participants reported a positive direction of change. This result was evenly distributed between 43 percent stating that youth engaging in viable income generation was ‘much better,’ and 43 percent stating the direction of change was ‘somewhat better’ (Figure 12).

“One of the youth sells pizza in order to afford college expenses.” – Counterpart

“Before the Volunteer came, the marimba group didn't play to collect money; but now they always do.” – Beneficiary

“The students learned to make some income by recycling plastic bottles, and with the money they constructed a basketball court.” – Beneficiary

Figure 12: Project Participant Assessment of Changes Related to Project Goal 2: World of Work Outcome¹⁵



For the Teacher Support outcomes, 95 percent of the project participants reported a positive direction of change in teachers demonstrating participatory classroom strategies (with 53 percent observing this outcome as ‘much better’ and 42 percent stating the outcome was ‘somewhat better’). The remaining project participants reported that participation was the ‘same’ (5%).

Fifty-three percent of respondents reported that teachers incorporating ICT into their lessons was ‘much better,’ and an additional 24 percent reported that it was ‘somewhat better.’ The remaining project participants reported that this outcome was either the ‘same’ (18%) or ‘somewhat worse’ (6%) after the Peace Corps project.

Similarly, most of the project participants reported positive change in relation to teachers implementing new English teaching methods, with 44 percent describing this aspect of the project as ‘much better’ and an additional 33 percent reporting that it was ‘somewhat better.’ The remaining project participants reported that it was either the ‘same’ (17%) or ‘much worse’ (6%, Figure 13).

¹⁵ These results exclude 17 project participants who reported that the income generation outcome was not applicable to them.

“Thanks to the Volunteer, we are the only school with a computer center. The Volunteer motivated us to have computers and then the next Volunteer after that followed up and made it a reality.” – Counterpart

“The Volunteer coordinated with the English teacher, and then the other teachers invited her to help them with student classroom participation.”
– Counterpart

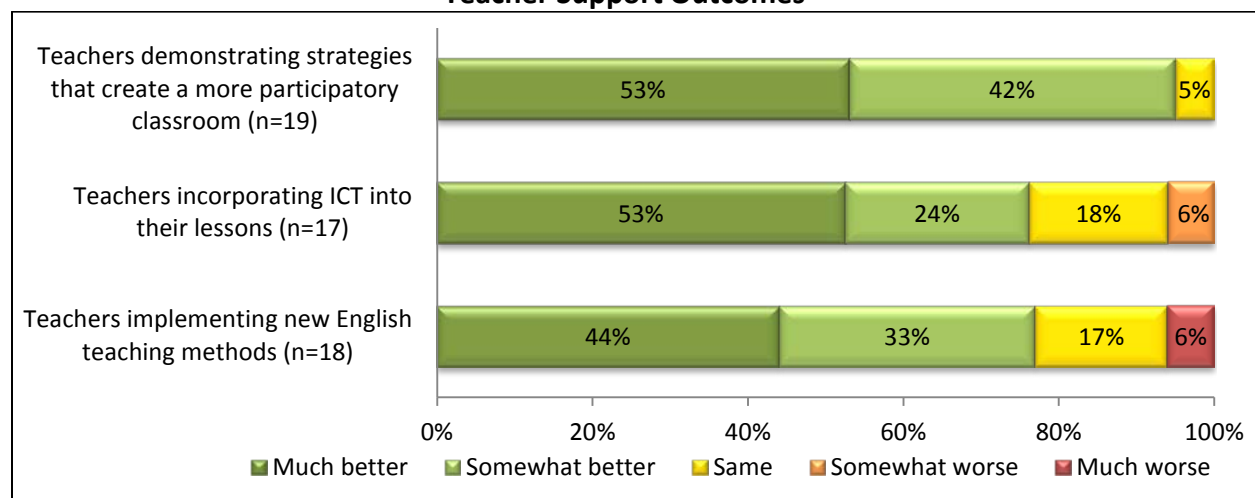
Overall, fewer project participants provided responses for the Teacher Support outcomes, which aligns with their earlier responses that Volunteers did not often engage in teacher support activities.

“The Volunteer did not work in this area [Teacher Support], she only worked with the youth in the community.” – Counterpart

Special Education was also a planned activity, but only six project participants mentioned it, with five of the six saying that it was ‘somewhat better’ and one saying that it was the ‘same.’ It is not clear from these results whether the Volunteers were adequately trained to provide capacity building in Special Education or whether they were even aware that the need existed.

“The Volunteer did not work in this area [Special Education] because we don't have this problem here. There is one girl that has problems, but she doesn't attend school.” – Counterpart

Figure 13: Project Participant Assessment of Changes Related to Project Goal 3: Teacher Support Outcomes¹⁶



¹⁶ These results exclude project participants who reported these outcomes were not applicable to them as follows: participatory classrooms (19), ICT (21), and new English teaching methods (19). The remaining respondents did not answer this question. Special education is not graphed in Figure 13 due to the fact that only 6 out of 40 respondents were able to comment on it. The rest of the respondents said that it was not applicable to their work.

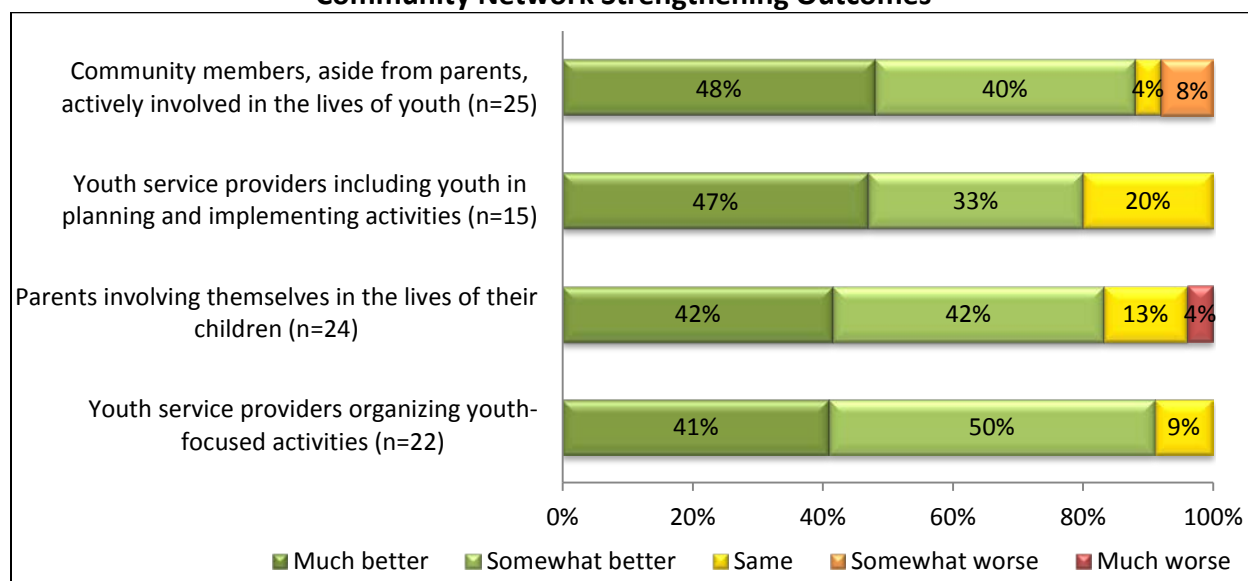
For Community Network Strengthening outcomes, a large majority of the project participants observed some level of positive change in each of the planned outcomes (Figure 14). As one counterpart observed:

“There has been a good change because Plan International and the local government consider us now.”

The two areas in which the highest numbers of project participants described the changes as ‘much better’ were: (1) community members becoming more actively involved in the lives of youth, with 48 percent of respondents stating that the change was ‘much better’ and 40 percent reporting it as ‘somewhat better’; and, (2) youth service providers including youth in planning and implementing activities in the community, with 47 percent of respondents reporting the change as ‘much better’ and 33 percent as ‘somewhat better.’ Project participants also described a positive impact in their own parenting practices:

“We are changing how we discipline our own children. Let's just say that in comparison to our own mothers who only knew how to yell and hit us, we are learning that there is another way to discipline.” – Beneficiary

Figure 14: Project Participant Assessment of Changes Related to Project Goal 4: Community Network Strengthening Outcomes¹⁷



In a separate question, counterparts and adult beneficiaries were asked to identify the *best* contribution that the Volunteers had made through their work in the Youth Development Project. The 39 responses were quite varied, indicating that the observed positive effects of the

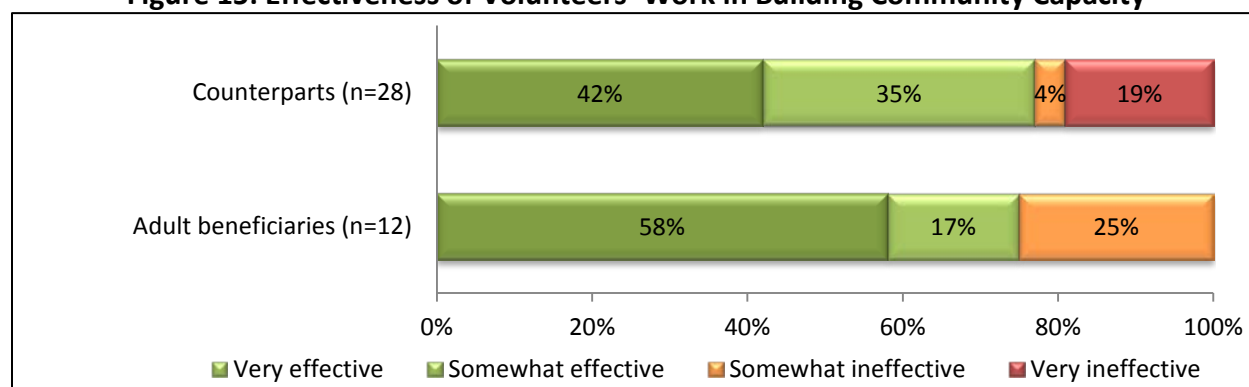
¹⁷ These results exclude project participants who reported these outcomes were not applicable to them as follows: community members involved with youth (14), providers involving youth in planning (25), parents becoming involved with youth (15), and providers organizing youth-focused activities (18).

Volunteers' work were not focused in any one particular area. Eight respondents stated that the best contribution was the English skills they gained from the Volunteers, an outcome that falls under the 'career preparedness' project activity. Six respondents indicated that an improved self-image for the youth was the Volunteers' greatest contribution. Five project participants reported that the computer education they received and overall community development were the greatest contributions. Other contributions that project participants noted were community recycling, sports and music clubs, library development, cooking skills, and friendship.

Six respondents stated that they could not identify the best contribution the Volunteers had made. In one case, there was a mismatch between the technical support in special education that the counterpart had expected and what the Volunteer was able to do. In another case, the communications style of the Volunteer was perceived as 'imposing' ideas on the community, so there was little acceptance of what was offered. Two other respondents did not report any lasting accomplishments, but they also mentioned that the Volunteer was at site for a short time.

Counterparts and adult beneficiaries were also asked two questions about the effectiveness of the Volunteers' work in addressing youth development concerns in their community. In the first question, counterparts and adult beneficiaries were asked how effective the Volunteers' work had been in helping the community to improve its ability to address concerns about youth development (Figure 15). Forty-two percent of counterparts and 58 percent of adult beneficiaries stated that the activities were 'very effective' in building their capacity. A further 35 percent of counterparts and 17 percent of adult beneficiaries stated that the activities had been 'somewhat effective.' Four percent of counterparts and 25 percent of adult beneficiaries, respectively, responded the Volunteers' work was 'somewhat ineffective' in building community capacity. The remaining 19 percent of counterparts stated that the Volunteers' work was 'very ineffective' in building community capacity to address concerns about youth development. Respondents who indicated that the capacity-building efforts were ineffective further specified that their individual Volunteer did not focus on sustaining these types of efforts, did not implement these types of activities, or that the community did not have evidence that capacity had increased.

Figure 15: Effectiveness of Volunteers' Work in Building Community Capacity

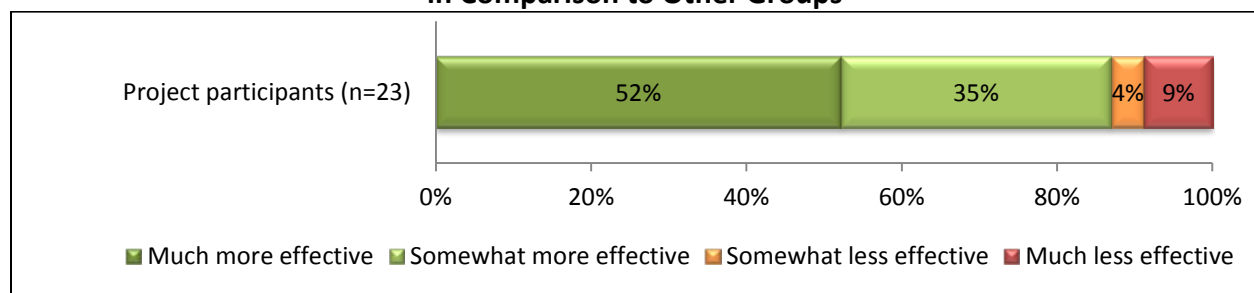


In the second question on effectiveness, counterparts and adult beneficiaries were asked how effective the Peace Corps' work was in comparison to the work done by other groups in addressing health issues in their community (Figure 16). Approximately half of the respondents in each group (for a total of 23 people) provided answers to this question; the rest had not observed the work of any group other than Peace Corps.

Fifty-two percent of the project participants who were able to compare Peace Corps to other organizations reported that Peace Corps' work was 'much more effective' than the comparison groups with which they were familiar. An additional 35 percent of these project participants responded that Peace Corps' work was 'somewhat more effective' in their community, for a total of 87 percent with a favorable opinion of Peace Corps compared to other organizations. These respondents noted that this greater level of effectiveness was a result of the Volunteers living in their communities long-term, which provides the Volunteers with an opportunity to listen and respond to community needs.

At the other end of this scale, 4 percent of the project participants reported that Peace Corps' work was 'somewhat less effective' than comparison groups and another 9 percent reported that it was 'much less effective.' These respondents stated that while Peace Corps Volunteers provided knowledge, the comparison groups provided financial resources, which they perceived to be preferable. These respondents also observed that Volunteers' effectiveness was linked to their ability to adapt to El Salvador. In their view, the effectiveness of Volunteers who were unable to adapt was, thus, compromised.

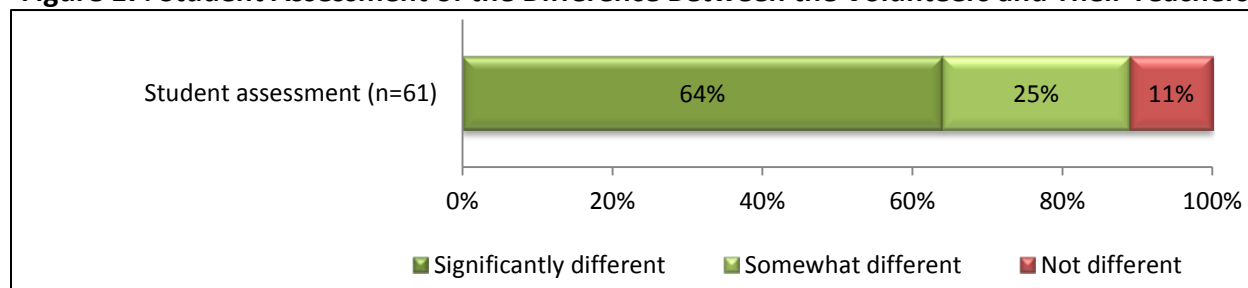
Figure 16: Project Participants' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Peace Corps' Work in Comparison to Other Groups



In addition to the data that were collected from counterparts and adult beneficiaries of this project, student beneficiaries were asked three questions to describe the changes they saw in their school environments due to the work of the Volunteers. First, students were asked to assess the difference between the Volunteers' approach to teaching and their local teachers' work (Figure 17). Sixty-four percent of the students stated that the Volunteers' teaching approach was 'significantly different.' Inside the classroom, the students stated that the Volunteers' classes were more dynamic as a result of the use of games, songs, and multimedia presentations. The students also remarked that the Volunteers encouraged students to ask questions, and they were willing to repeat the content if students did not understand. Outside

of the classroom, students observed the Volunteers to be more social and willing to share personal details about themselves. They stated that this, in turn, contributed to a more fun, personal, and interactive learning experience inside the classroom.

Figure 17: Student Assessment of the Difference Between the Volunteers and Their Teachers



Next, the students who were surveyed were asked to describe the changes they observed in their classroom, school, teacher, and community during the time that the Volunteers were working there (Figure 18). Sixty-five percent of students responded that there was higher participation and attendance in their classes while the Volunteers were there, which was consistent with earlier comments that students responded positively to the dynamism the Volunteer brought to their classroom. Thirty-seven percent of students reported observing improved life skills in themselves and their fellow students. A quarter of students described improvements in their grades, the availability of after-school activities, classroom resources, and new teaching methods being used by their teachers.

“Classes are more participatory now. We are motivated to attend classes and have a greater desire to learn.” – Secondary school student

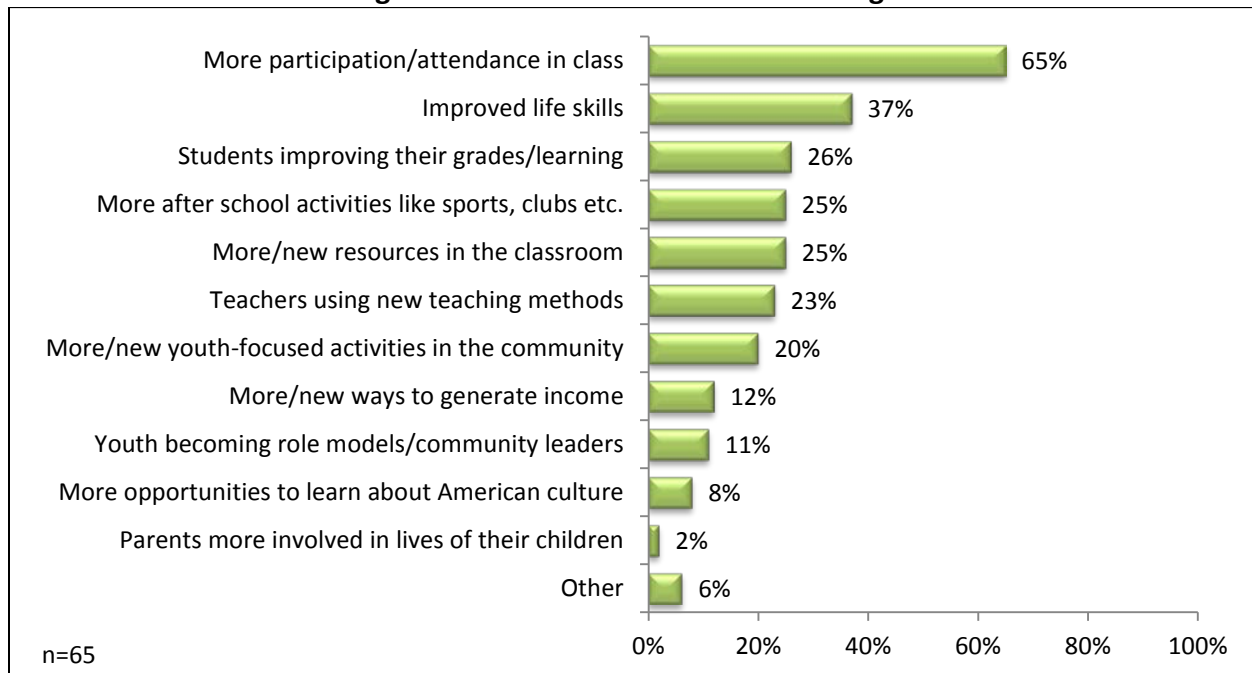
“It was different because it was very dynamic. She got excited about teaching, which was contagious, and so we got all excited about learning.” – Youth group member

“We keep the community clean, which we did not do before. We have also painted and planted trees.” – Secondary school student

“We have all changed. We all have more respect toward the school, and we don't trash it like before. She taught us to throw our trash in the trash barrels.” – Primary school student

Interestingly, in contrast to the responses from counterparts and adult beneficiaries seen in Figure 14 on page 37 (where 84 percent of the respondents reported that parents were involving themselves more in the lives of their children), only one student (2%) reported having parents who were becoming more involved in his/her life.

Figure 18: Student Assessment of Changes



Once the students had responded to the question on changes in their communities, those who had reported changes (59 people) were asked to assess the extent to which those changes were lasting (Figure 19). Each level of change was defined with both a description of the degree to which the change had been maintained and a percentage (e.g. ‘complete’ maintenance of a change was defined as 100%, while ‘largely’ was defined as 75% and ‘somewhat’ as 50%.) Responses were generally positive, with 85 percent of students stating that the changes had been maintained ‘completely’ (47%), ‘largely’ (17%) or ‘to some extent’ (20%). The remaining 15 percent reported that there had not been much change (12%) or any change (3%). Students again noted the dynamism of lessons, more interactive teaching approaches, and increased availability of extracurricular activities. Some of the positive comments were as follows:

“Attendance increased; all my classmates came to school.” – Secondary school student

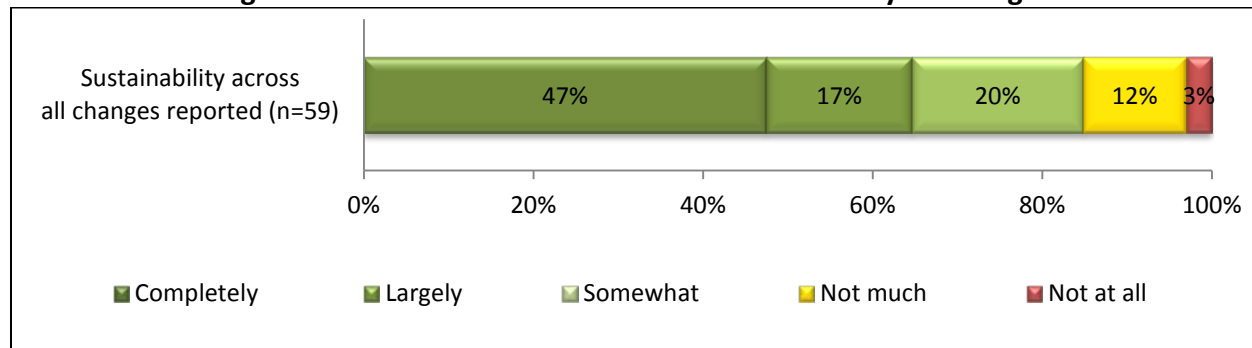
“Participation has improved due to her dynamic way of teaching us English and giving us confidence.” – Secondary school student

The other 15 percent of the students who had reported changes noted that while there may have been a change while the Volunteer was present, the changes did not last – a situation this report will explore further in the next section.

“Yes, some participated a lot, but now that the [Volunteer] is not here there is less participation because no one does what the [Volunteer] did.” – Secondary school student

“It changed a lot because everyone had interest in learning English and getting involved in other activities, but this has not lasted.” – Secondary school student

Figure 19: Student Assessment of the Sustainability of Changes



Of the planned outcomes in the Youth Development project, the seven stakeholders were asked to identify which one was the most critical to El Salvador’s communities. Two stakeholders responded that youth taking active roles as community leaders and role models was the most critical. Two other stakeholders stated that youth engaging in viable income generation activities was the most critical. The three remaining stakeholders saw three different outcomes as most critical: youth service providers including youth in planning and implementing activities, parents involving themselves in the lives of their children, and youth participating in extracurricular activities. When broken down by project goal, the outcomes deemed most critical by stakeholders are as follows: two in Personal Development (goal one), one in World of Work (goal two), none in Teacher Support (goal three), and two in Community Network Strengthening (goal four).

Stakeholders were also asked to identify which outcome was least critical to El Salvador’s communities. Six stakeholders provided responses. Two stakeholders agreed that youth service providers organizing youth-focused activities in the community was the least critical. The remaining four stakeholders saw four different outcomes as the least critical: teachers implementing new English teaching methods, youth participating in extracurricular activities, youth taking active roles as community leaders and role models, and youth making healthy lifestyle choices, such as staying out of gangs and staying in school.

Sustainability of Community Change

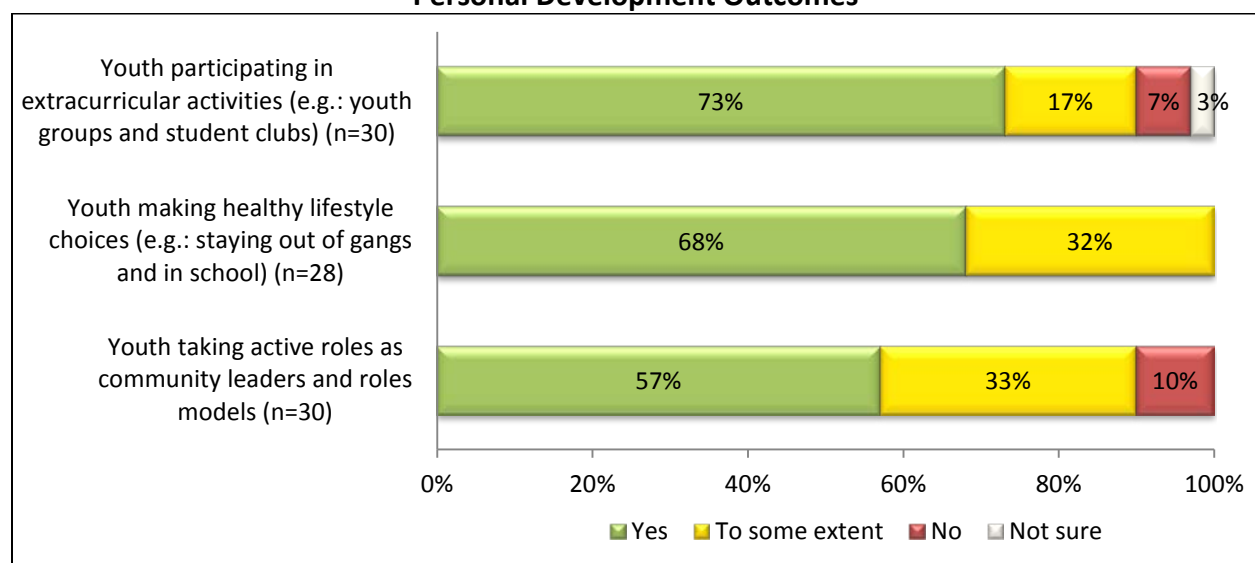
For each outcome that was studied, counterparts and adult beneficiaries who reported that a positive change had taken place¹⁸ were then asked to assess the extent to which the change had been maintained by the community on the following scale: 'yes', 'to some extent', 'no', or 'do not know/unsure.' Again, the two groups were combined for this analysis into one group of 'project participants.'

In terms of personal development outcomes, project participants agreed that youth participation in extracurricular activities was a sustained community change (73%, Figure 20). This outcome was cited by more project participants than any other outcome as a positive change resulting from the project. Earlier in this report, 71 percent of respondents reported that Volunteers had not provided training on developing or implementing extracurricular activities, but this lack of formal training does not seem to have negatively affected the extent to which these changes were sustained.

Respondents also reported sustained change in the area of youth's healthy lifestyle choices, with 68 percent of project participants responding that changes had been fully maintained.

Finally, youth taking active leadership roles in their community was rated as a sustained outcome by 57 percent of the project participants who had seen some level of change initially.

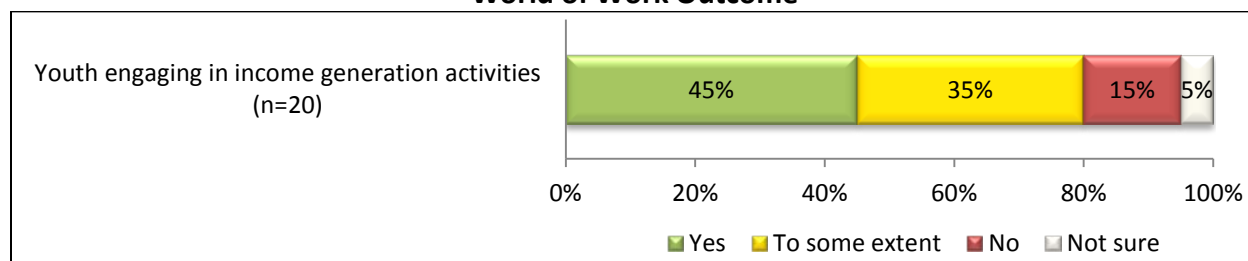
Figure 20: Project Participant Assessment of Sustainability of Project Goal 1: Personal Development Outcomes



¹⁸ Responses that indicated that the outcome that was tested was 'much better' or 'somewhat better' were considered to be evidence of a positive change.

For the project's World of Work outcomes, of the 20 project participants who had seen positive change, 45 percent reported that the changes had been 'sustained,' and 35 percent responded that the changes had been sustained 'to some extent' (Figure 21).

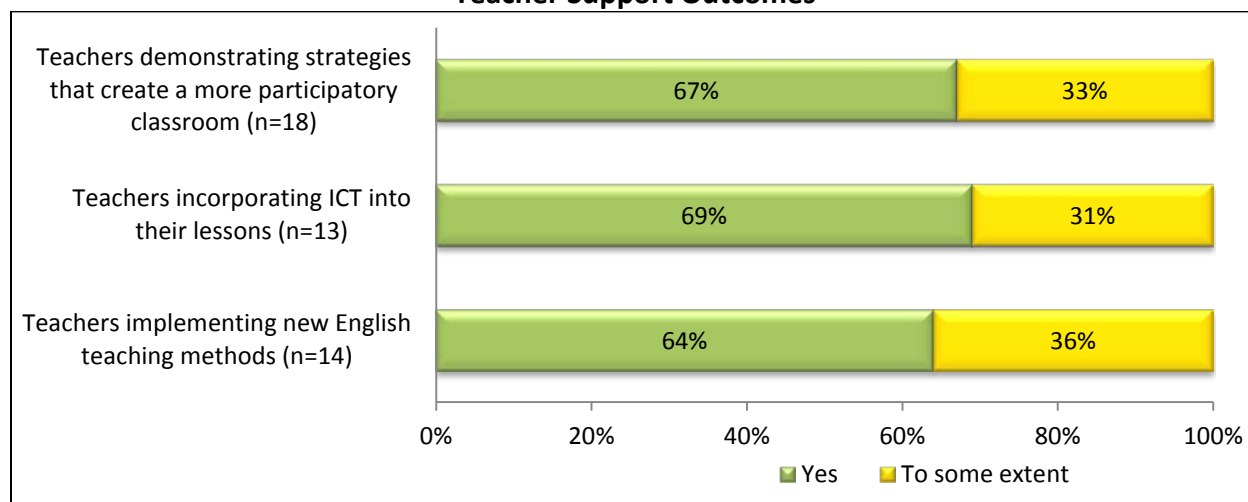
**Figure 21: Project Participant Assessment of Sustainability of Project Goal 2:
World of Work Outcome**



All three Teacher Support outcomes showed similar results, with all project participants reporting that changes were sustained at some level. About two thirds of the project participants who had initially seen a positive change saying that the change had been 'sustained' and the other third reporting that it was sustained 'to some extent' (Figure 22).

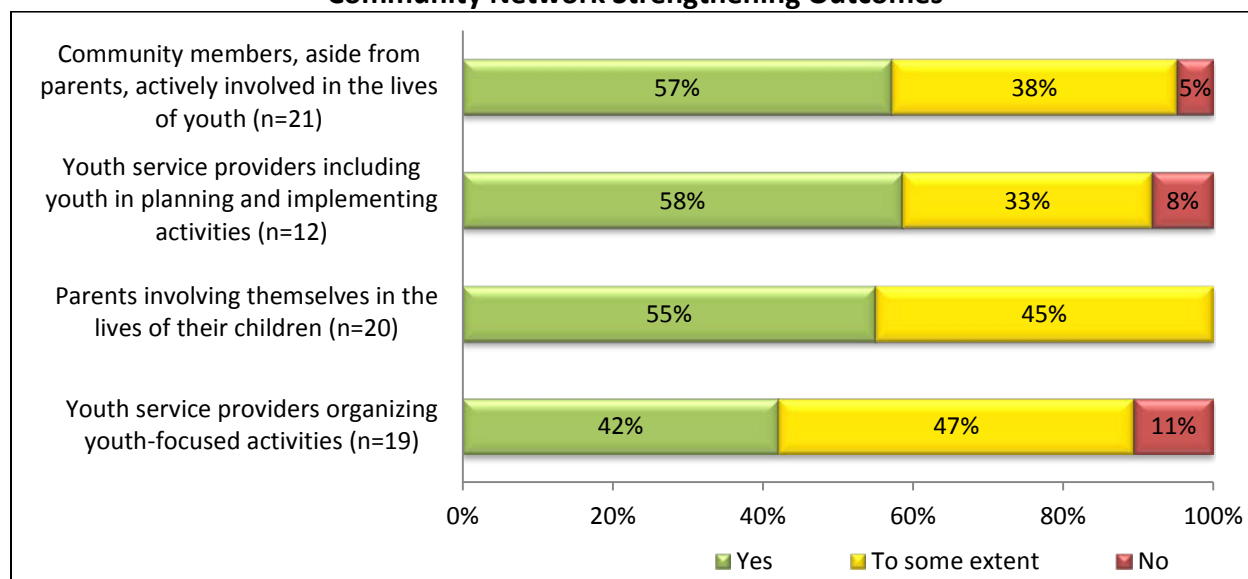
As reported earlier, strengthening special education was also a planned area of activity with teachers, but only six of the project participants who were interviewed for this study said that it was applicable to them. Five of the six reported that special education services were 'somewhat better' after the project. Of these five, two reported that the change was 'sustained,' one reported that it was sustained 'to some extent,' and two reported that it was not sustained. Due to the limited number of respondents, this result is not included with others that appear in Figure 22.

**Figure 22: Project Participant Assessment of Sustainability of Project Goal 3:
Teacher Support Outcomes**



For Community Network Strengthening outcomes, over half of the project participants stated that positive changes were sustained in the following areas: community members being actively involved in the lives of youth (57%), youth service providers including youth in planning and implementing activities (58%), and parents involving themselves in the lives of their children (55%, Figure 23). Forty-two percent of project participants stated that changes in youth service providers organizing youth-focused activities in the community had been sustained.¹⁹

Figure 23: Project Participant Assessment of Sustainability of Project Goal 4: Community Network Strengthening Outcomes



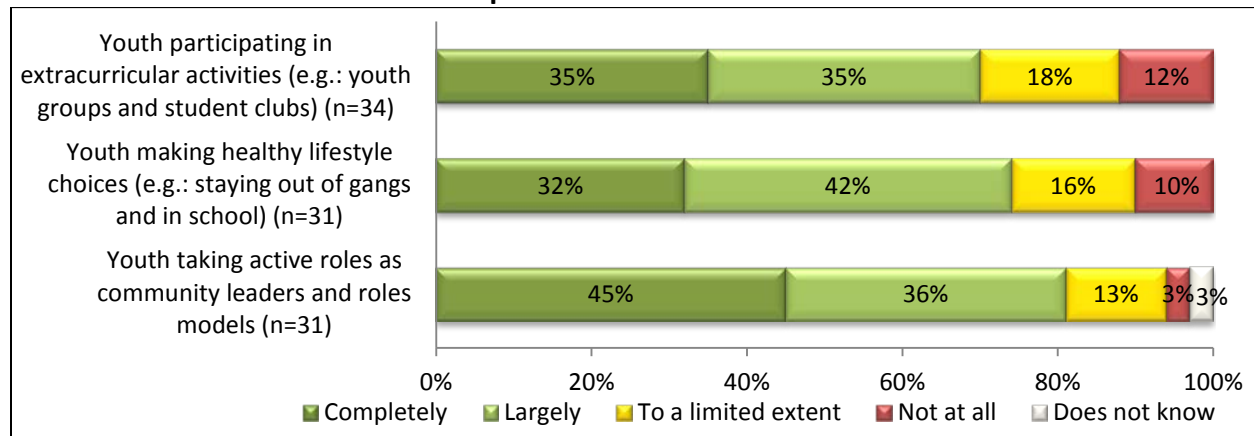
Extent to which Changes Met Needs

Finally, respondents were asked to assess how well the changes brought about by the project met the community's needs. The following analysis is based on all project participants who reported that an aspect of the project was applicable to their work and experience, regardless of their response on the question about whether they had seen any changes – positive or negative.

In the project area related to Personal Development outcomes, a large majority of project participants responded that the Volunteers' work 'completely' or 'largely' met their needs in all three outcomes of interest to the project: extracurricular activities, healthy lifestyle choices, and youth serving as community leaders and role models (Figure 24). The strongest results were seen in relation to project participants believing youth were taking more active roles as community leaders and role models, with 81 percent responding that this work met the community's needs 'completely' or 'largely.'

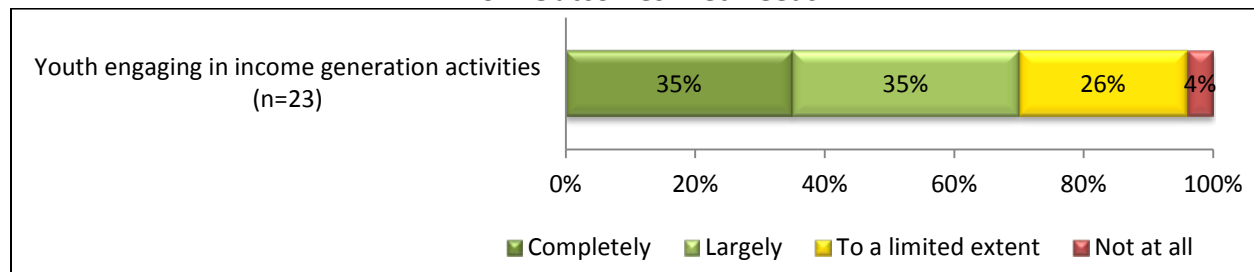
¹⁹ This result is based on the 19 project participants who responded to this question out of the 20 who had initially reported a positive change.

Figure 24: Project Participant Assessment of How Well Project Goal 1 Changes in Personal Development Outcomes Met Needs



For the World of Work outcomes, 70 percent of project participants stated that activities focused on engaging youth in viable income generation activities ‘completely’ or ‘largely’ met their needs (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Project Participant Assessment of How Well Project Goal 2 Changes in World of Work Outcomes Met Needs

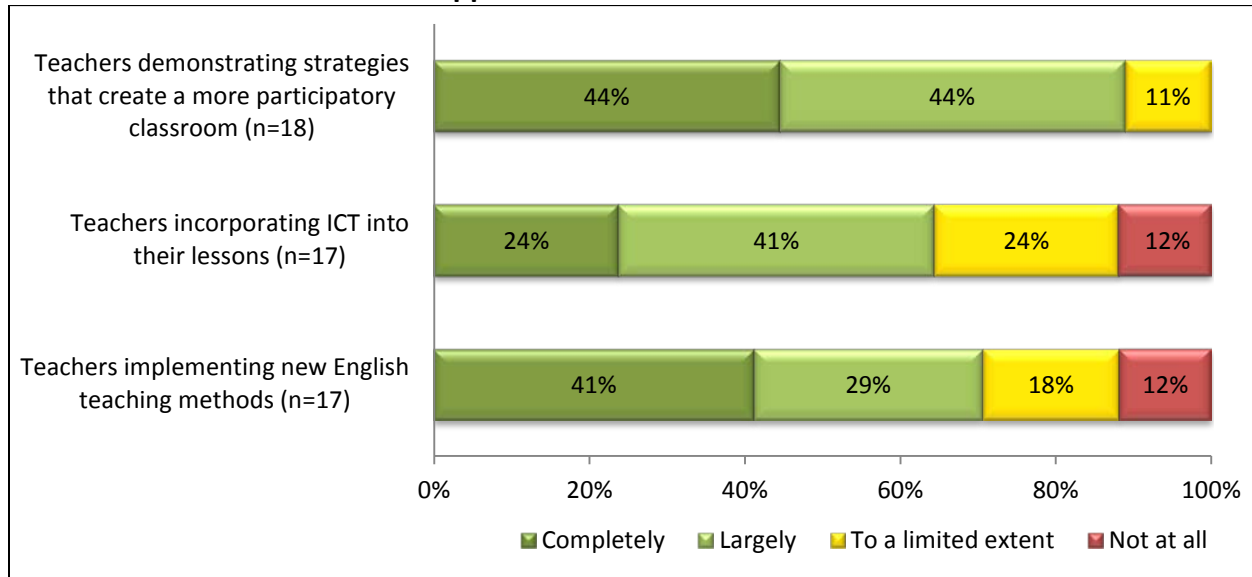


For Teacher Support outcomes, a large majority of project participants (88%) stated that Volunteer efforts to assist teachers in creating a more participatory classroom ‘completely’ or ‘largely’ met their needs (Figure 26). This finding is consistent with the students’ observation that increased attendance and participation was the most positive change resulting from the Volunteers’ work as reported earlier (see Figure 18 on page 41). Project participants also rated this outcome highly in terms of the positive nature of the change and sustainability, indicating that fostering classroom participation was well-received by the teachers.

In special education, of the six people who responded, only one reported that the project had ‘largely’ met the community’s needs. Three reported that the needs had been met ‘to some extent,’ while two reported that the needs had not been met at all.²⁰

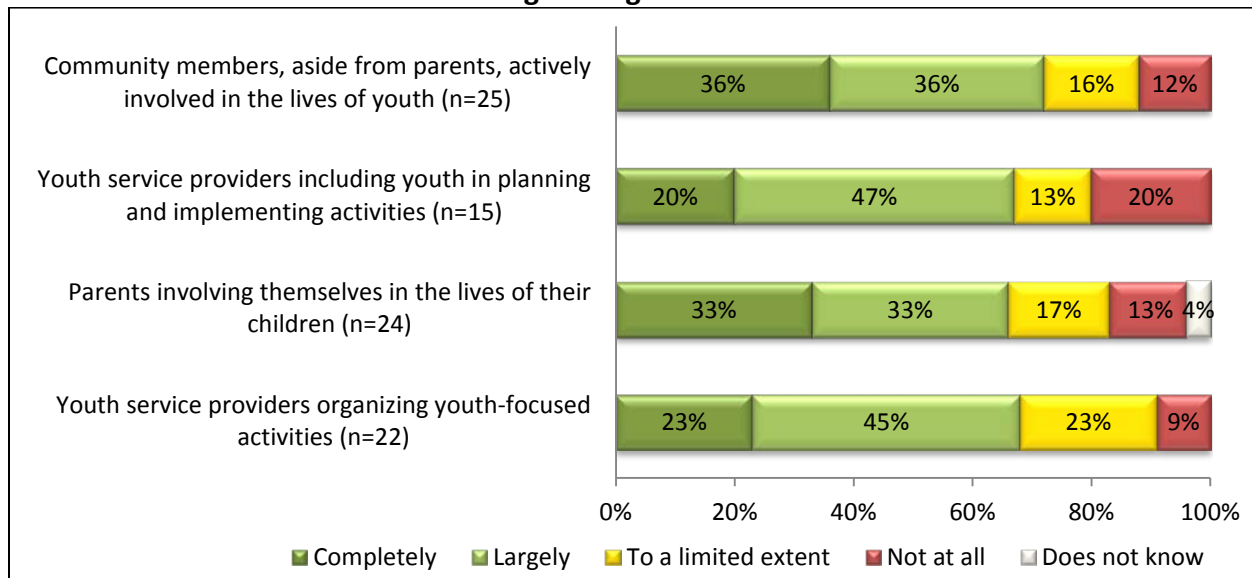
²⁰ The analysis of the individual components of the project does not include two project participants who did not respond on the question about special education.

Figure 26: Project Participant Assessment of How Well Project Goal 3 Changes in Teacher Support Outcomes Met Needs²¹



For Community Network Strengthening outcomes, two-thirds of the project participants stated that Volunteer efforts had ‘completely’ or ‘largely’ met their needs for each element of the project that was tested (Figure 27).

Figure 27: Project Participant Assessment of How Well Project Goal 4 Changes in Community Network Strengthening Outcomes Met Needs



²¹ The analysis of the individual components of the project does not include project participants who did not respond to the question on the direction of change as follows: participatory classrooms (2), ICT (2), and English teaching methods (3).

Finally, stakeholders were asked to identify other areas in which they think Peace Corps Volunteers could help the people of El Salvador. Of the seven respondents, three requested that Peace Corps Volunteers work in the area of agriculture, specifying a need for sustainable agriculture practices and animal husbandry. Other suggestions from stakeholders included: family and community violence prevention; tourism and promotion of natural resources; development of parks and green areas for families; and, literacy and library development.

Summary of Community Outcomes

Across all of the Youth Development Project goal areas, project participants viewed the following outcomes as having the greatest impact in terms of change, sustainability, and meeting community needs:

1. Teachers demonstrating strategies that create a more participatory classroom
2. Youth participating in extracurricular activities, such as youth groups and student clubs
3. Youth making healthy lifestyle choices, such as staying out of gangs and staying in school
4. Youth taking active roles as community leaders and role models

Project participants were in agreement that teachers demonstrating strategies that create a more participatory classroom had the greatest impact in the communities where Volunteers served. Additionally, as stated earlier, 65 percent of students stated that improved class attendance and participation was the most visible change attributed to the work of the Volunteer.

Project participants see the impact that a more participatory classroom has on the lives of both teachers and students. In light of this finding, it is important that Volunteers not only continue demonstrating classroom participation techniques during their service, but that they also train teachers on these techniques and how to apply them in order to sustain this positive outcome.

Consistently high proportions of adult project participants reported seeing improvements in personal development outcomes for youth; however, these findings contrasted with much smaller proportions of students who felt that improvements had been made. The contrast between the finding that 70 percent of project participants reporting increased involvement of youth in extracurricular activities compared to 25 percent of students is a clear example of this difference in a perception of a change. The difference between these groups may be influenced by the lack of training provided to project participants on developing and implementing extracurricular activities. Volunteers should continue to implement these activities during their service, while further strengthening training to develop and implement extracurricular activities.

Youth making healthy lifestyle choices was also rated highly as a positive, sustained change that met the needs of the community. Attending class, participating in class, and getting involved in extracurricular activities were all outcomes that contributed to the more general outcome of healthy lifestyle choices.

Counterparts and adult beneficiaries also observed a positive, sustained change that met the needs of youth taking on active roles as community leaders and role models. As a longer-term outcome of this project, this bodes well for the future success of the youth with whom Volunteers worked during their service.

Conversely, project participants reported that efforts to have youth service providers organize youth-focused activities in the community had the least impact. Indeed, the outcomes related to community network strengthening were all ranked in the bottom half of the project outcomes. The pre-service and in-service training offered by Peace Corps/El Salvador could be used to encourage Volunteers to make a concerted effort to emphasize activities that strengthen community support during their service.

Individual-Level Changes

The project theory of change model (see Figure 1 on page 22) generated a list of individual or personal-level project outcomes. Counterparts and adult beneficiaries were asked about the extent to which they saw changes in themselves related to each of the following outcomes:

1. Capacity to organize and lead extracurricular activities
2. Ability to influence youth to make healthy lifestyle choices
3. Ability to take on an active role as a role model for youth
4. Ability to create viable income generation activities with youth
5. For Teachers Only: Capacity to incorporate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) into lessons
6. For Teachers Only: Ability to create a more participatory classroom
7. For Teachers Only: Implementation of new English teaching methods
8. For Teachers Only: Capacity to incorporate Special Education teaching strategies into your classroom
9. For Service Providers Only: Inclusion of youth in planning and implementing activities
10. For Service Providers Only: Organization of youth-focused activities in the community
11. Involvement in the lives of community youth or the respondent's own children

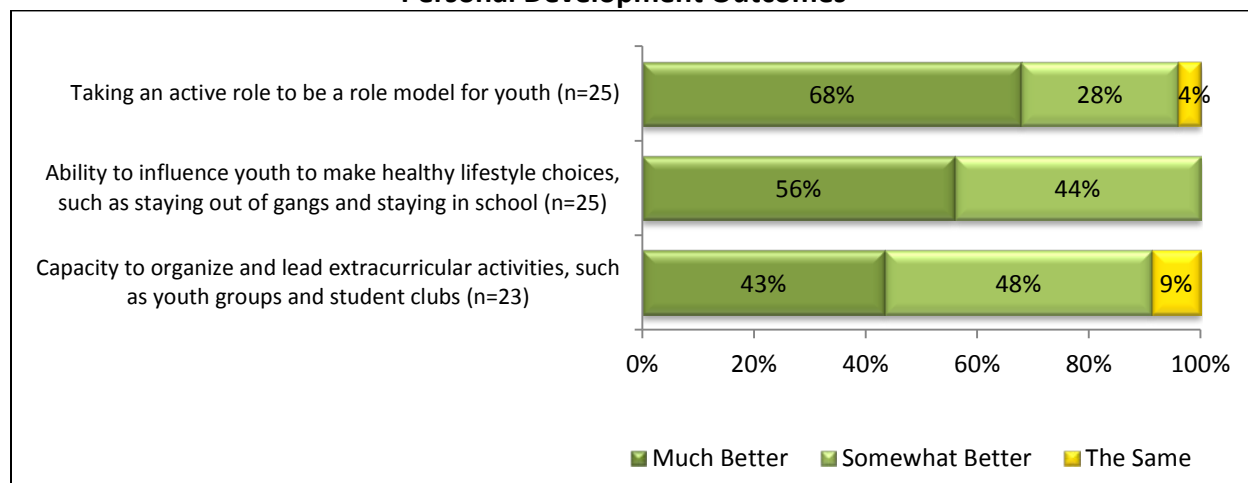
Counterparts and adult beneficiaries were asked about the specific individual-level project outcomes that related to their work through a matrix question. Again, the responses from counterparts and adult beneficiaries were combined into a single category of 'project participants.' For each individual outcome derived from the project plan, they were asked if changes had occurred, the direction of those changes, whether their needs had been met, and whether they had maintained the change after the Volunteer departed. Students were asked a separate set of questions to assess any personal changes. Stakeholders were not asked about individual-level changes since they did not work with the Volunteer on a daily basis.

Individual Changes Resulting from the Project

As a result of working with the Volunteers, project participants experienced a number of positive personal changes. One of the greatest was in the area of serving as a role model for

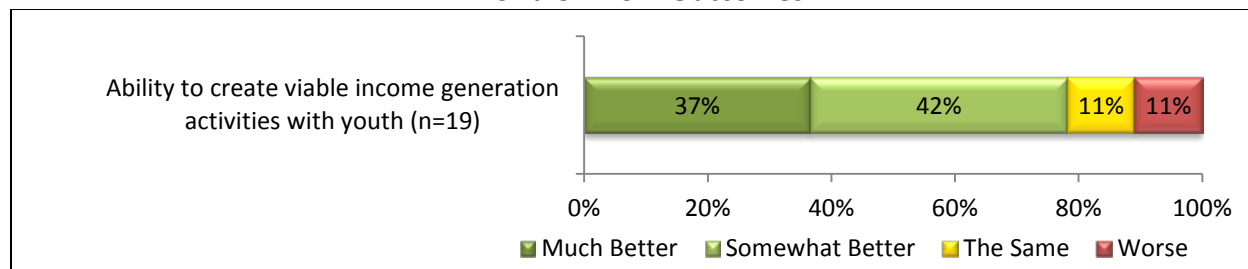
community youth, which 68 percent reported to be ‘much better’ than it had been before the project (Figure 28). Results related to influencing youth to make healthy choices and organizing extracurricular activities were also very positive with nearly all of the project participants reporting them to be at least ‘somewhat better.’

Figure 28: Project Participant Assessment of Individual Changes Related to Project Goal 1: Personal Development Outcomes²²



Compared to the results under the Personal Development goal, fewer project participants reported improving their ability to create viable income generation activities with youth. In the income generation area of the project, 37 percent reported that their skills were ‘much better’ after working with the Volunteers, while an additional 42 percent said that they were ‘somewhat better’ for a total of 79 percent reporting an improvement (Figure 29). This data correlates closely to community-level changes reported earlier (see Community-Level Change). Less than half of the counterparts and adult beneficiaries who reported improvements had received training in income generation, which may indicate that they were able to learn from the Volunteer even without formal training in this area.

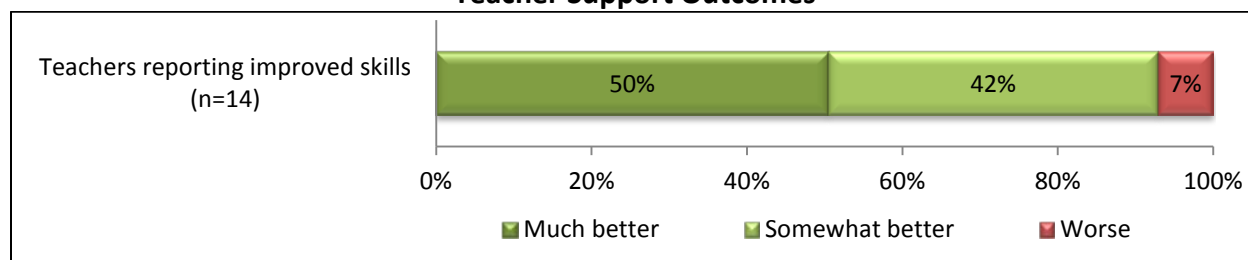
Figure 29: Project Participant Assessment of Individual Changes Related to Project Goal 2: World of Work Outcomes



²² The results in Figure 29 exclude project participants who said that the individual questions were not applicable to them as follows: becoming role models for youth (14), healthy lifestyle (15), and extracurricular activities (16). The remaining respondents did not answer the questions on role models and activities (1 person each).

In the project area of Teacher Support, all four outcomes were combined into a single analysis due to the low number of respondents (ranging from 2 to 9) on the individual items. In this way, a total of 14 respondents was available for analysis. In three cases, the teachers reported different levels of change on different outcomes. The two cases which were a mixture of 'much better' and 'somewhat better' were added to the 'somewhat better' group as was the third case which was a mix of 'same' and 'much better.' The resulting analysis showed that 50 percent of the project participants felt that some aspect of their teaching skills was 'much better' after the project, and an additional 42 percent reported that at least one aspect was 'somewhat better.' One person (7%) reported that their teaching skills were 'worse' (Figure 30).

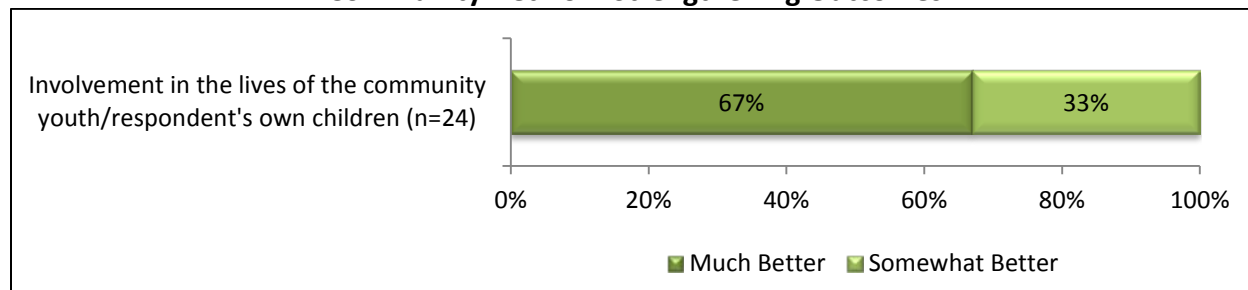
Figure 30: Project Participant Assessment of Individual Changes Related to Project Goal 3: Teacher Support Outcomes



In the project area of the Community Network Strengthening outcomes, the only measure which was applicable to more than three respondents was that of involvement in the lives of the youth in their communities. In this area, 67 percent of the project participants reported that they were 'much better' after working with the Volunteers, while an additional 33 percent said that they were 'somewhat better' for a total of 100 percent reporting some degree of improvement in their skills (Figure 31).

These results contrast with students' observations, however. For example, as seen in Figure 18, when describing changes in their lives due to the work of Volunteers, only 2 percent of the students stated that parents were now more involved in their lives. It is possible that project participants (including parents) perceive themselves as being more involved in the lives of their children and other community youth, but that the level of interaction may not be as high as youth expect. However, this hypothesis cannot be confirmed from the information gathered in this evaluation.

Figure 31: Project Participant Assessment of Individual Changes Related to Project Goal 4: Community Network Strengthening Outcomes



To complement data gathered from counterparts and adult beneficiaries, students were asked how their interactions with the Volunteers had changed them personally (Figure 32). Fifty-three percent of the students indicated that the interaction had changed them ‘greatly’, and another 34 percent of students reported that they were ‘somewhat’ changed by the experience for a total of 87 percent who reported a change.

Students responded to a question on the reasons for these personal changes with comments related to their studies and with changes in their personality. The comments related to their studies tended to describe their goals rather than specific changes. These included wanting to continue improving their English skills (8 students), becoming more interested in their studies (4), and continuing to be interested in computers (3). In terms of changes in their personality, the students reported feeling more social (8 students) and more confident (8); being better communicators (4) and more responsible (3); and, having higher self-esteem (3). The students offered these thoughts on their personal changes:

“I have greater confidence and am more dynamic in my HIV/AIDS training that I give to mothers and youth.” – Youth community leader

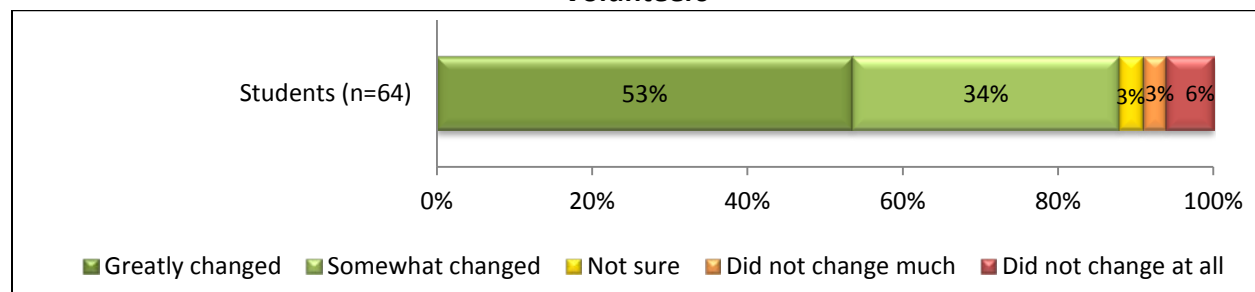
“I am more confident and my self-esteem is unbreakable.” – Secondary school student

“It has been a great change because I am very responsible now. They gave me more confidence, and I attained my position as the choir director.” – Secondary school student

“I feel motivated. I learned to cook new things with the [Volunteer], such as cheese quesadillas, chicken, and meat, and I sell them in the afternoon to make some money.” – Youth group member

“I have followed the [Peace Corps Volunteer’s] road by volunteering. I told myself, ‘If they come this far to help our community, why can’t I do the same?’” – Secondary school student

Figure 32: Personal Change among Students that Can Be Attributed to Interaction with Volunteers

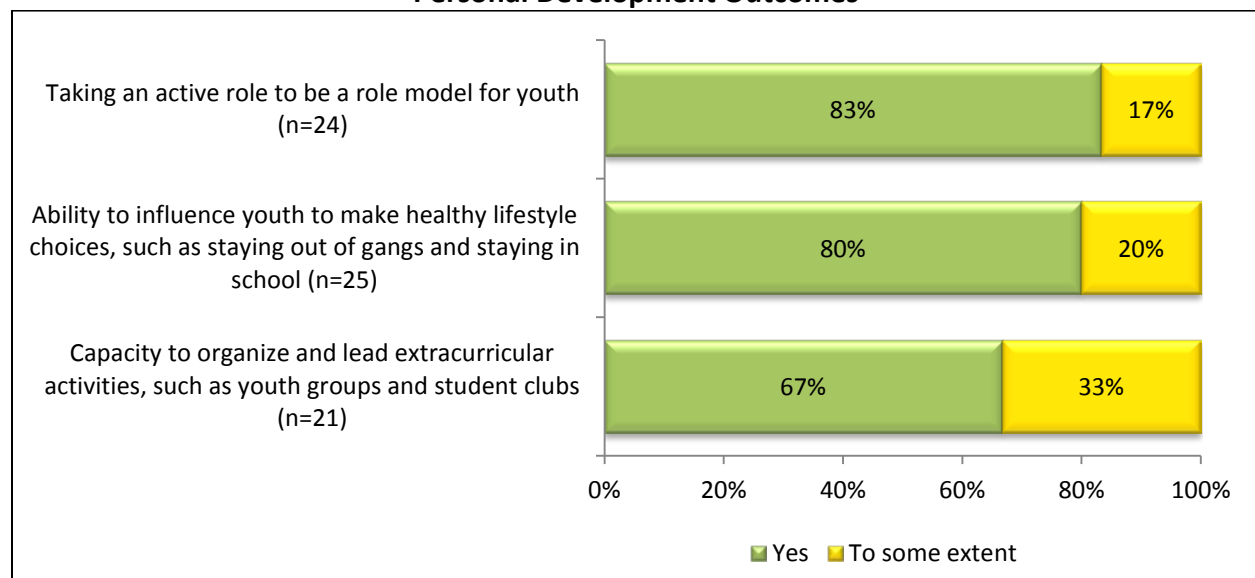


Sustainability of Individual Changes

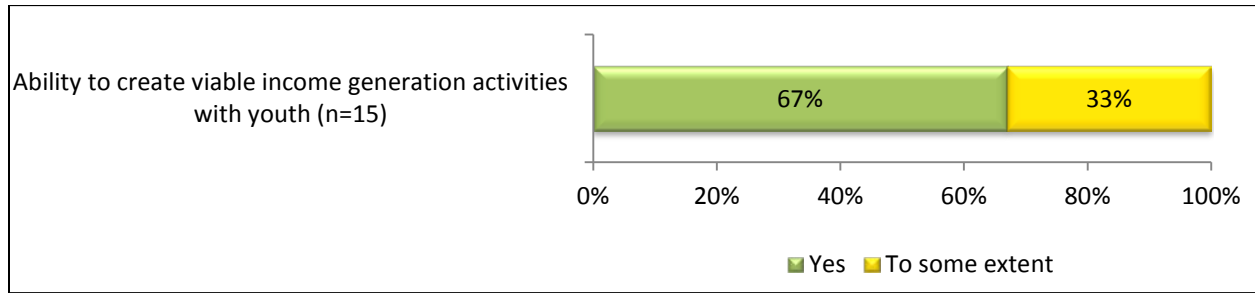
In this section, as in the section on community-level changes, the level of sustainability of the changes was measured among the project participants who reported that some level of positive change had achieved by the project. Project participants most often reported that their ability to serve as a role model for youth (83%) and to influence youth to make healthy lifestyle choices (80%) were the most sustained project outcomes (Figure 33). Respondents also observed high sustainability in terms of their involvement in the lives of their children and community youth (75%). Project participants also reported sustained change in relation to organizing extracurricular activities (67%) and creating viable income generation activities with youth (67%).

Overall, as the results in Figures 33-36 illustrate, nearly every project participant who had reported some level of positive change initially also said that the change was sustained at least to some extent. This was also the case with other aspects of the project where less change had been reported initially, such as creating more participatory classrooms, incorporating ICT into lessons, implementing new English teaching methods, organization of youth-focused activities, and incorporating Special Education strategies. These results suggest that creating the initial change presented a greater challenge than sustaining it long-term. The one exception to this finding of sustained change was the teacher who reported a mix of improvements and no change on individual elements. In that case, the teacher said that the change was not sustained.

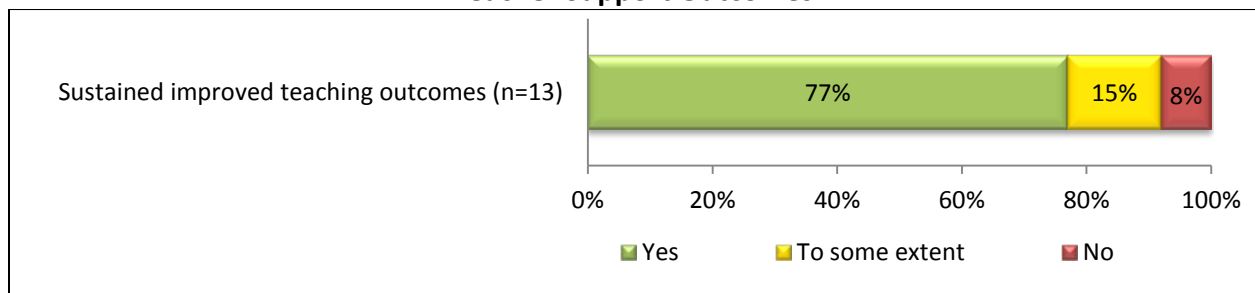
Figure 33: Project Participant Assessment of Individual Sustainability of Project Goal 1: Personal Development Outcomes



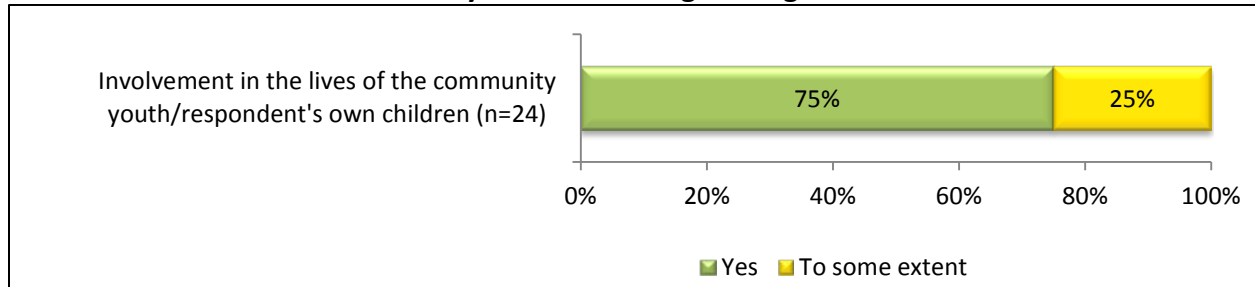
**Figure 34: Project Participant Assessment of Individual Sustainability of Project Goal 2:
World of Work Outcomes**



**Figure 35: Project Participant Assessment of Individual Sustainability of Project Goal 3:
Teacher Support Outcomes**



**Figure 36: Project Participant Assessment of Individual Sustainability of Project Goal 4:
Community Network Strengthening Outcomes**



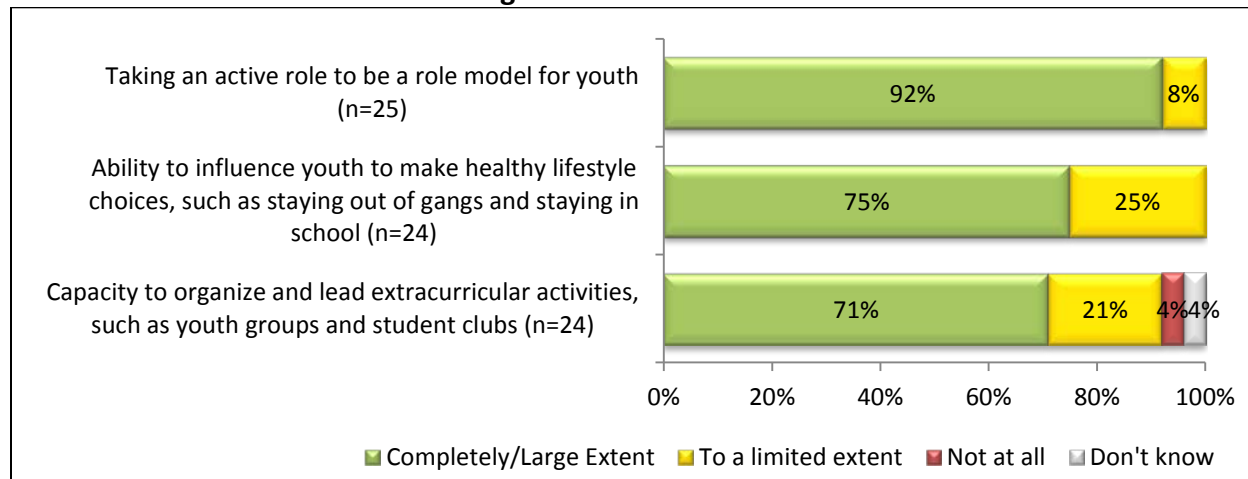
Extent to which Changes Met Individual Needs

In this section, as in the section on community-level changes, the extent to which the changes met individual needs was measured among the project participants who reported that this area of project work applied to them, regardless of whether they had seen any change, positive or negative.

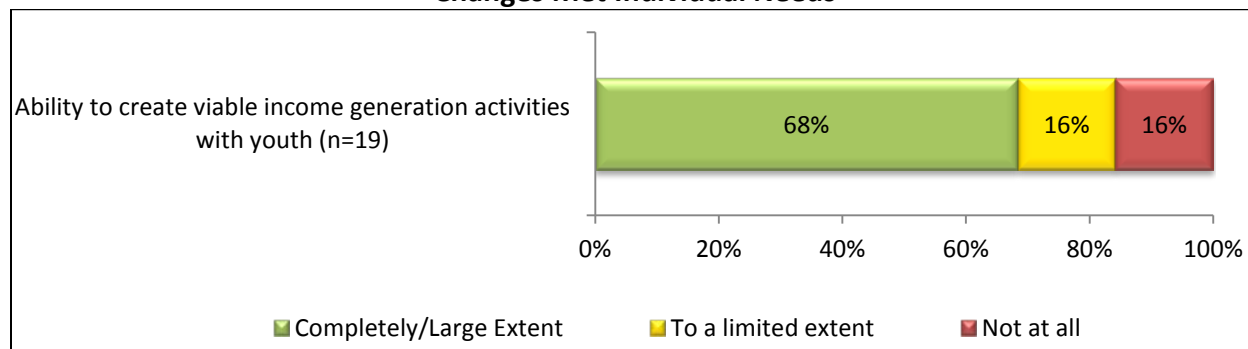
A majority of project participants responded that the outcomes of the Youth Development Project 'completely' or 'largely' met their individual needs (Figures 37-40). The project activities related to serving as a role model for youth best met the individual needs of the project participants, with 92% reporting that their needs were completely or largely met. It should be

noted, however, that there are differences between the outcomes which were perceived as best meeting the individual needs of the counterparts and the adult beneficiaries.

**Figure 37: Project Participant Assessment of How Well Project Goal 1:
Changes Met Individual Needs**



**Figure 38: Project Participant Assessment of How Well Project Goal 2:
Changes Met Individual Needs**



**Figure 39: Project Participant Assessment of How Well Project Goal 3:
Met Individual Needs**

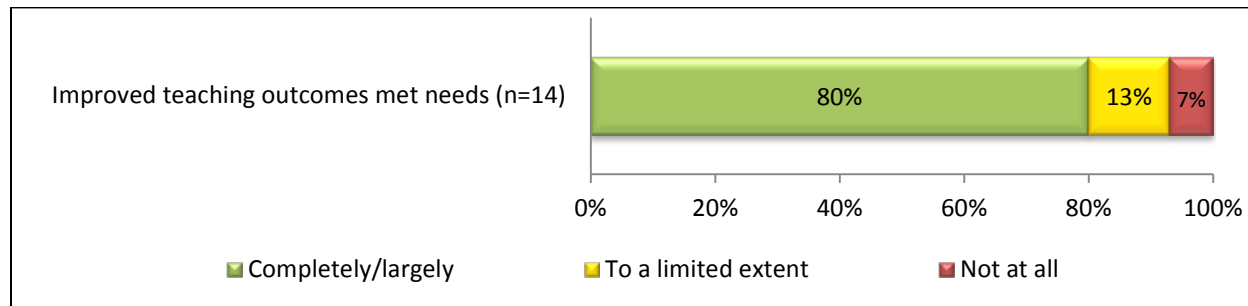
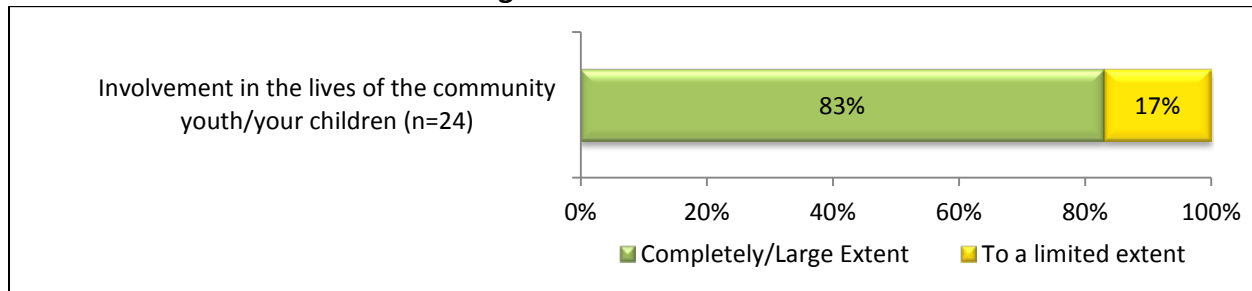


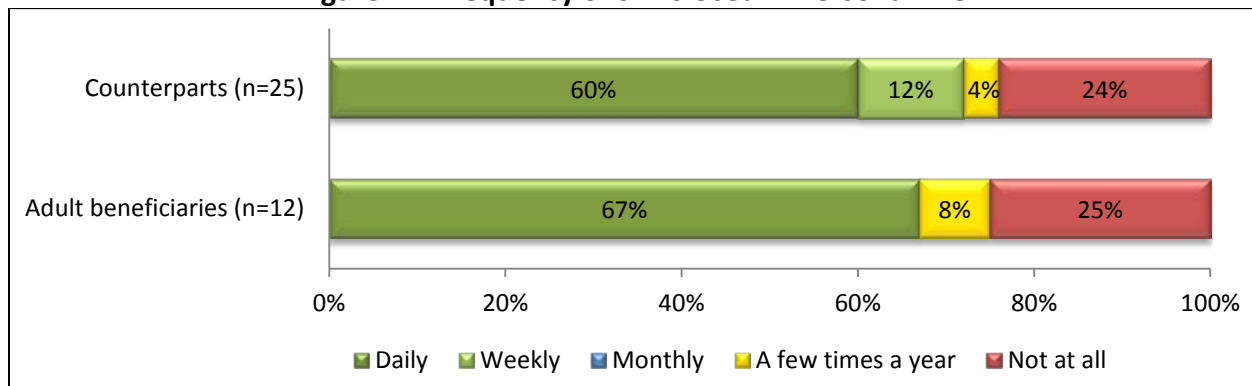
Figure 40: Project Participant Assessment of How Well Project Goal 4: Changes Met Individual Needs



How Often Skills are Used Personally and Professionally

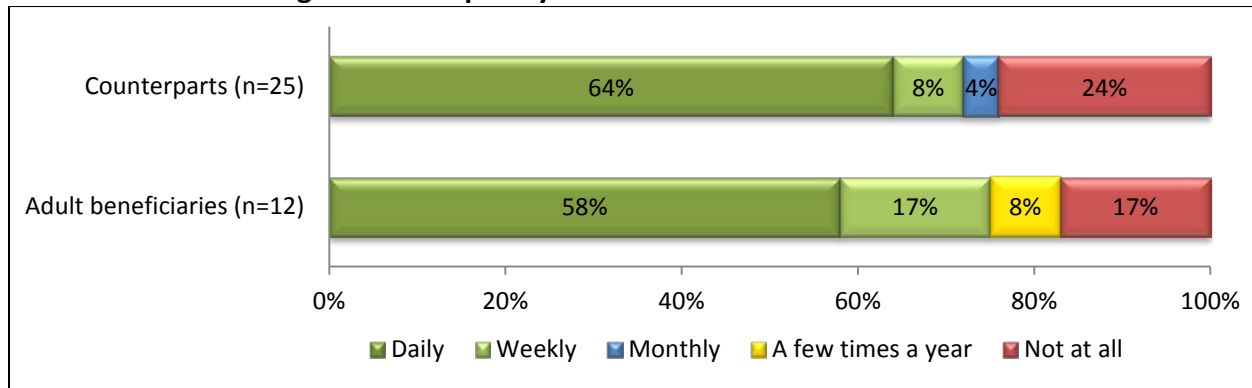
Counterparts and adult beneficiaries were asked how often they used the skills gained from the project in their *personal* lives. The results were divided between respondents who reported frequent use and respondents who reported no use at all. Sixty percent of counterparts and 67 percent of adult beneficiaries responded that they use their new skills on a daily basis, while another 12 percent of the counterparts use the skills at least weekly (Figure 41). On the other hand, a quarter of the project participants (both counterparts and adult beneficiaries) responded to the question on the frequency with which they use the skills they learned in their personal life saying that they never use them. It is important to note that the same people did not report having received any training; and, in general, they had not reported that the project had made much of a contribution in their communities.

Figure 41: Frequency of Skills Used in Personal Life



Counterparts and adult beneficiaries were also asked how often they used the skills gained from the project in their *professional* lives. Sixty-four percent of counterparts and 58 percent of adult beneficiaries use the skills they gained during the project on a daily basis, and another 8 percent of the counterparts and 17 percent of the adult beneficiaries use the skills at least weekly (Figure 42). Again, most of the project participants who had reported not using any new skills in their personal lives also responded that they never use them in their professional lives.

Figure 42: Frequency of Skills Used in Professional Life



Summary of Individual-Level Outcomes

Overall, most project participants who reported that these questions related to their professional or personal lives felt their individual skills related to working with youth had improved as a result of working with the Volunteer. All of them reported some level of improvement in outcomes related to being involved in the lives of their children and youth and promoting a healthy lifestyle; all but one reported increased skills in serving as a role model. Furthermore, all of the project participants who reported these improvements also reported that these were sustained changes which had met their needs. These outcomes can, thus, be considered as having had a substantial impact at the individual level.

When comparing the project participants' opinion on the youth taking on more active roles as community leaders and role models for other youth to the opinion of the students, it is clear that project participants had a more positive perception of the improvement that had been achieved (96%) than the youth themselves (e.g. the student respondents at 11%). It is unclear from the data collected if project counterparts and adult beneficiaries are simply overestimating the amount of change. Similarly, a high proportion of the project participants who were interviewed viewed their involvement in the lives of their children and community youth as a positive outcome of the project, while students did not perceive this same outcome to have been achieved to the same degree as shown in Figure 11 (page 34) and Figure 18 (page 41).

Other Changes and Accomplishments

Projects frequently produce unintended or unanticipated outcomes, both positive and negative. For this reason, the research team also asked respondents open-ended questions about other changes that might have resulted from work done by the Volunteers which had not been anticipated in the project design.

Many counterparts and adult beneficiaries reported that the extracurricular activities that the Volunteers developed and implemented served as social activities in the community. The activities not only provided a positive experience for youth, but also a social outlet for the

families of the youth who were involved. Project participants reported that extracurricular activities, while focused on youth, taught them how to organize community activities and positively affected their relationships with neighbors whose children were also involved in these activities. This interpretation of the data is reflected in the following observation by one adult beneficiary of the project:

“The extracurricular activities were socializing activities that strengthened interpersonal relations in our community.”

Increased attendance at social events may have been what led project participants to perceive themselves as being more involved in the lives of the youth in the community. At the same time, the simple fact that they were more involved in the particular *activities* with the youth may not have been perceived by those youth (including their own children) as evidence of any increased involvement in their *lives*.

Additionally, three project participants noted the positive economic effects arising from Volunteer activities: one beneficiary was saving money on haircuts for family members due to a cosmetology course he/she had attended and two adult beneficiaries were saving time and money on fuel by using the improved stoves they had constructed with the Volunteers in their communities.

Factors Affecting Outcomes

Respondents were asked a series of questions to ascertain what factors contributed to the success of the project, what factors hindered the project outcomes, the reasons why changes were not sustained, and the degree to which daily interaction with the Volunteer caused these changes. This section outlines these factors.

Factors Contributing to the Project’s Success

Community-wide support for the Volunteers’ youth-centered activities was mentioned frequently by counterparts and adult beneficiaries as the primary factor that had contributed to success in this project (17 respondents). Strong project outcomes were achieved when all sectors of society (including community leaders, teachers, students, and Peace Corps staff) provided support in the form of advocacy, funding, or labor for the Volunteers’ activities.

Respondents indicated that community support was generated from initial interest in the types of activities the Volunteer could offer and the subsequent relationship-building by the Volunteers as they were developing and implementing their activities (17 respondents). This information underscores the importance of having post staff train Volunteers to take the time to build and establish trust with their community members. This will produce an increased willingness on the part of the community to support and encourage their youth to participate in project activities.

“The Volunteer looked and looked for support, and she received it from the community.” – Counterpart

“She knew how to win people over, so they gave her their support voluntarily.”
– Counterpart

The Volunteer himself/herself was another key factor that counterparts and adult beneficiaries mentioned as critical to project success (16 respondents). Counterparts and adult beneficiaries reported that the Volunteers’ knowledge, capacity, and overall competency to plan, develop, and implement youth-focused activities contributed to project success. Four respondents specifically referred to the Volunteers’ commitment to inclusiveness, and attributed project success to including all generations of community members in planning, developing, and implementing activities.

Respondents also reported that the Volunteers’ initiative, determination, responsibility, respectfulness, and ability to adapt culturally were factors in project success:

“Her character and way of being. She went from house to house daily and had good relationships with everyone. She left us crying when she left our community.” – Beneficiary

“She sat down with the kids and approached both parents and children together in their homes. She didn't separate them but brought them together. Her self-discipline in taking action was also strong and sure.” – Counterpart

The Volunteer’s “... attitude, rapid adaptation to the community, new ideas, and respect. He was also very good at soliciting support.” – Counterpart

Factors that Hindered or Limited Project Outcomes

Counterparts and adult beneficiaries were also asked what obstacles or challenges hindered the project’s success. Their responses can be categorized into those related to community support, aspects of the project itself, and characteristics of the Volunteer.

Five project participants stated that an absence of community support (from youth organizations, schools, or the municipality) hindered the planned outcomes. Three other respondents reported that the Volunteers offered activities that did not fit community needs or the local culture.

“Their attitude was that of conducting their own activities without taking into consideration the real needs of the community. We wanted them to teach English on Saturdays but they were never willing to spend the night in the community.” – Counterpart

This lack of support from the community and lack of participatory planning from Volunteers resulted in a situation in which community members did not participate in the Volunteers' activities, thereby limiting the change that occurred. Finally, three respondents expressed the opinion that distrust of the Volunteers' 'credentials' or a lack of mutual understanding about their role led to a lack of participation in project activities.

"Peace Corps did not comply [with expectations] in sending a Volunteer to support us technically. In fact, it seemed that she came to supervise the teachers, which was not well received. The Volunteer did not achieve anything at the school." – Counterpart

"She felt frustrated by personalities in the community and by the youth who did not value her work or efforts." – Beneficiary

All of this information correlates with what counterparts and adult beneficiaries deemed to be the primary factor for project success: the interest, participation, and support of community members.

Certain characteristics of the project also posed challenges to success. Seven respondents noted a general lack of economic resources as an obstacle to achieving project success, particularly in the area of purchasing materials for school clubs and extracurricular activities. The need to either create materials from scratch or do without them may have both reduced the amount of change that occurred and restricted the amount of time the Volunteer spent with community members on activities.

"Economically, because in some projects we needed money to buy teaching materials and we didn't have any." – Counterpart

"Lack of money. Everything centers on money. If you have money, then there are activities, and if not, there aren't." – Counterpart

In terms of Volunteer characteristics, five respondents stated that a Volunteer's poor grasp of the Spanish language frustrated project participants and limited the pace of community change. An additional seven respondents referred to challenges with a Volunteer's adaptation to El Salvador, noting that the Volunteer simply did not understand the culture of the community enough to be able to implement sustainable change. These findings reinforce the importance of the efforts of post staff to develop project plans that outline youth-focused activities relevant to El Salvador's impoverished communities, as well as training Volunteers to accurately assess and prioritize their community's needs in order to ensure that activities are addressing those needs.

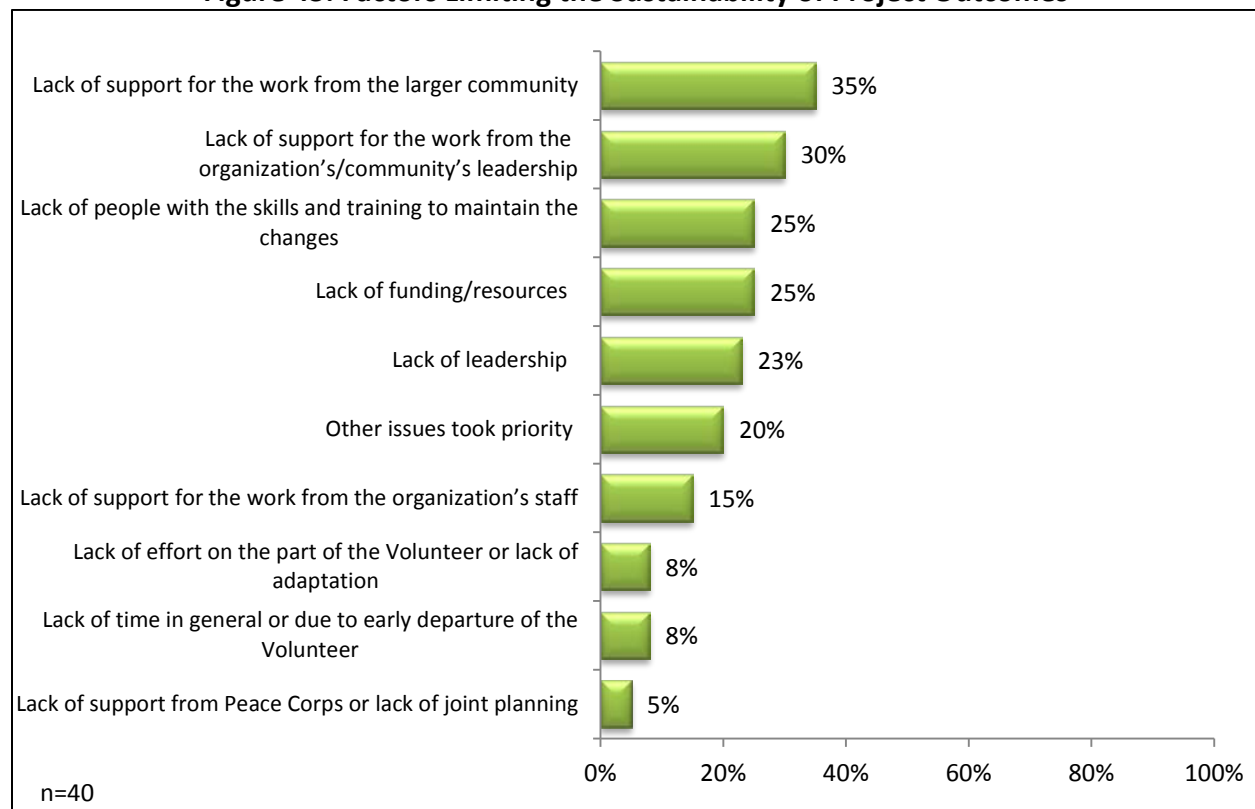
In some cases, the respondents mentioned aspects of the Volunteer's personality which clashed with community members and discouraged their participation.

“She never accepted the local culture or ideas of the community; and, for this reason, she never gained the trust of the members of the community. I do not even remember what she came here to do, but she did not end up working in the initial area to which she was assigned by the Peace Corps.” – Beneficiary

“A lack of personal commitment and lack of a good attitude from the Volunteer in a very demanding school.” – Counterpart

Counterparts and adult beneficiaries were also asked to list any factors that limited the community’s ability to maintain the changes. The most common responses are summarized in Figure 43. Lack of support from community members (35%), lack of support from community leadership (30%), lack of people with the skills to sustain the change (25%), and lack of funding (25%) were the most frequent, spontaneous responses.

Figure 43: Factors Limiting the Sustainability of Project Outcomes



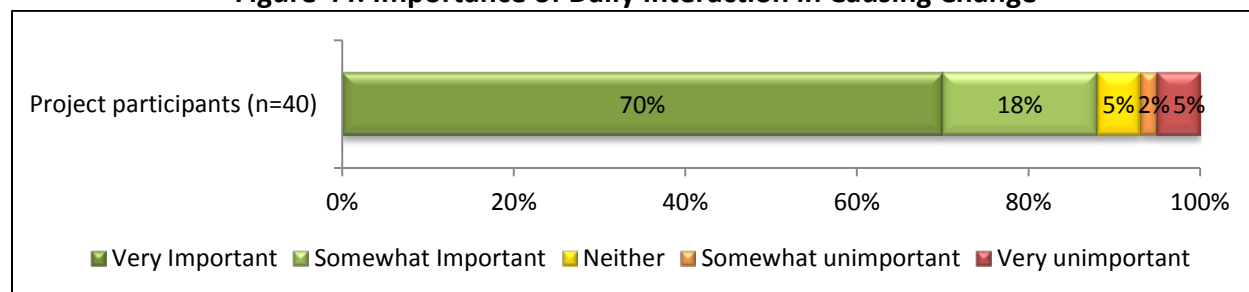
Degree to which Daily Interaction with Volunteers Caused Change

As stated earlier, the majority of project participants interacted with the Volunteer daily or several times a week (see Figure 7 and 8 on pages 28-29). Respondents were asked how important direct and daily interaction with the Volunteer was in producing the changes they had described.

A strong majority of the project participants indicated that consistent interaction was ‘very important’ (70%) or ‘somewhat important’ (18%) in facilitating community change (Figure 44). It is worth noting that the project participants who expressed the opinion that consistent interaction with the Volunteer was not important at some level (12%) – all of whom were counterparts – tended to be the same people who had a negative perception of the impact of the project in their communities. In these cases, the lack of perceived change may have influenced their response on the importance of interacting with Volunteers.

Through their qualitative comments, respondents expressed a strong sense that the relationships they built with Volunteers were the primary source of change, as ideas for community activities could only be implemented once bonds of trust had been built. Taking the time necessary to build this trust with the Volunteer was critical to project success.

Figure 44: Importance of Daily Interaction in Causing Change



Respondents also noted that the daily availability of the Volunteers was critical for a project that focused on youth. The Volunteers’ constant presence allowed them to have more time to engage with the youth.

“Yes, because youth get interested in becoming involved in activities at [school] or after school and the Volunteer is available to be with them.” – Beneficiary

Finally, the Volunteers’ consistent interactions with their communities provided space for them to assess the changing needs of the community as progress was made, and to then organize, motivate, and drive community members to move forward to address these evolving needs.

“Very important, because she was on top of the community, organizing and promoting within the community, which helps the community to move forward.” – Beneficiary

“It is an extra motivator for Volunteers to become even more involved in their 'own' community and therefore to demonstrate greater commitment to 'their' community.” – Counterpart

Satisfaction with Outcomes

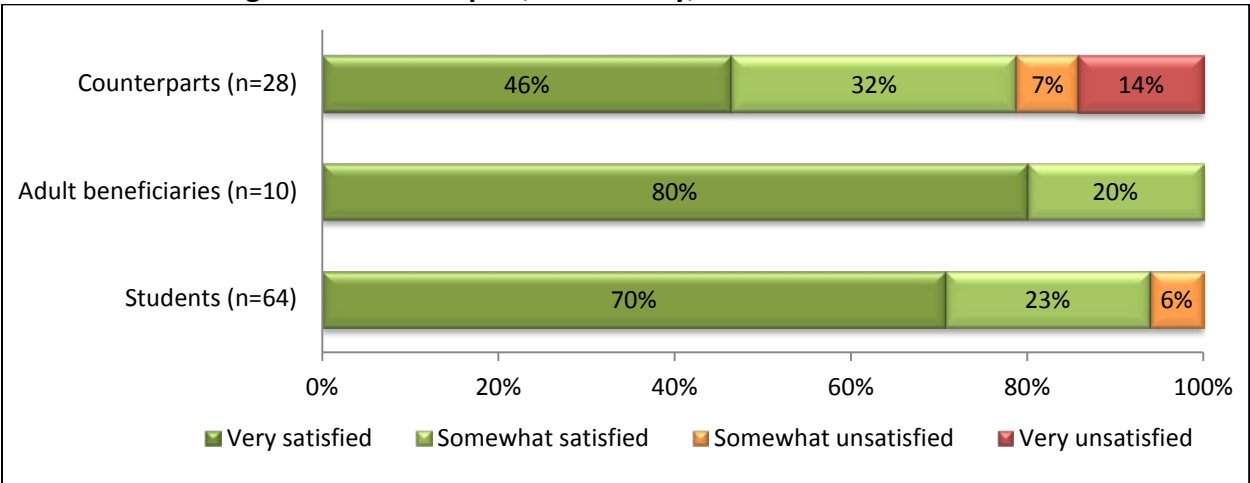
Researchers asked counterparts, adult beneficiaries, and students about their satisfaction with the project through two different questions. One directly asked about the level of satisfaction and reasons for satisfaction, while another asked if respondents would want to work with another Volunteer.

Overall Satisfaction

Counterparts, adult beneficiaries, and students reported that they were ‘very satisfied’ with the changes resulting from the project (counterparts: 46%; adult beneficiaries: 80%; and students: 70%). Another 32 percent of counterparts, 20 percent of beneficiaries, and 23 percent of students were ‘somewhat satisfied’ with the changes (Figure 45).

The respondents were primarily satisfied because they had acquired new knowledge that had produced positive change and improved their communities and personal lives. Respondents specifically mentioned their satisfaction with learning IT skills, how to turn their interests into income generating activities, participation in school clubs and extracurricular activities, and community beautification activities (including recycling campaigns).

Figure 45: Counterpart, Beneficiary, and Student Satisfaction



“Super content because she taught us so much in two years that we’ll carry with us our entire lives, and we’ll never forget it.” – Secondary school student

“Satisfied because what they taught us. We apply it and put it into practice in school, at home, and in the community.” – Secondary school student

“Very satisfied because the Volunteer was the beginning of many good things that have happened here.” – Counterpart

“Very satisfied because my life has changed and my way of seeing things too.”
– Secondary school student

“Very satisfied because I have learned about new places, and I have shared with other youth new things like technology, development, leadership, and why we should appreciate the environment.” – Youth group leader

The 21 percent of counterparts who stated they were unsatisfied with the changes resulting from the project reported that their Volunteer did not have the level of competence needed by the community or that their Volunteer was not accepted by the community due to frequent travel outside of the community.

Desire to Work with Peace Corps Again

Another measure of satisfaction is whether counterparts and adult beneficiaries would want to work with another Volunteer. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they wished to work with another Volunteer, with 82 percent of counterparts, 83 percent of adult beneficiaries, and 97 percent of students expressing this desire (Figure 46).

“Yes, because they help us with the organization, motivation, and relationship-building in the community. When there are no resources they do anything to get them. And because the Volunteer keeps youth occupied in things that will help them in the future.” – Counterpart

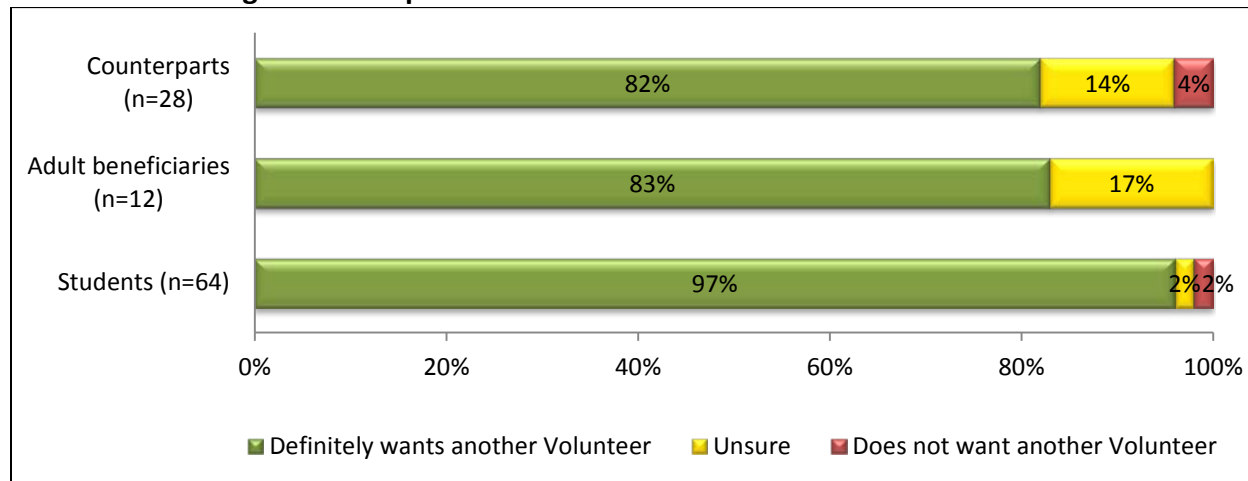
“Yes, because these are experiences that motivate youth. Besides, if they motivated us then we can motivate new generations as well.” – Secondary school student

“Yes, because they had the gift for getting the best out of us.” – Youth group member

The few respondents who were unsure about working with or did not want to work with another Volunteer reported being apprehensive because the next Volunteer might not be as skilled or friendly as the one with whom they had already worked. Furthermore, those who felt that the Volunteer had not implemented the desired activities of the community were reluctant to work with another one.

“Yes, but with a specialization or skills matched to our interests. Ask us before sending a Volunteer to ensure there's a fit with our interests and priority needs.”
– Counterpart

Figure 46: Respondent Desire to Work with Another Volunteer



Conclusion and Recommendations for Goal One

Overall, Volunteers implemented the nine activities outlined in the Youth Development Project Plan, while also implementing six additional activities. Both the counterpart and beneficiary groups felt that the training provided by the Volunteers had enhanced their overall skills to affect change in community youth development.

At the *community* level, the project had substantial impact in terms of change, sustainability, and meeting community needs in the following outcome areas:

1. Teachers demonstrating strategies that create a more participatory classroom

Project participants were in agreement that teachers demonstrating strategies that create a more participatory classroom had a substantial impact in the communities where Volunteers served. Indeed, 65 percent of students reported that there was higher participation and attendance in their classes due to the work of the Volunteer, and they reported that they responded positively to the dynamism the Volunteer brought to their classroom.

2. Youth participating in extracurricular activities, such as youth groups and student clubs

Consistently high proportions of respondents reported being satisfied with the direction of change, sustainability, and degree to which the work of the Volunteer met their needs for this outcome. When asked directly to name the most positive and lasting change of the Youth Development Project, project participants indicated that it was having youth participate in extracurricular activities.

3. Youth making healthy lifestyle choices, such as staying out of gangs and in school

Youth making healthy lifestyle choices was also rated highly for its direction of change, sustainability, and meeting the needs of the community. Attending class, participating in class, and getting involved in extracurricular activities were all outcomes that were highly appreciated.

4. Youth taking active roles as community leaders and role models

Counterparts and adult beneficiaries also observed a positive, sustainable change that met their needs in the area of youth serving as community leaders and role models. As a longer-term outcome of this project, this bodes well for the future success of the youth with whom the Volunteers worked during their service.

At the *individual* level, the project had a substantial impact in terms of change, sustainability, and meeting needs in the following outcome areas from the perspective of the project participants:

1. Youth serving as role models for other youth
2. Project participants being involved in the lives of their children and community youth

At the personal level, project participants reported that serving as a role model for youth had the greatest impact. When comparing the individual outcomes to the community outcomes, more project participants reported an increase in the capacity of the youth to be role models for other youth than did the youth when asked the same question. Similarly, a high proportion of project participants reported that their involvement in the lives of their children and community youth had increased, while very few students reported this change.

Many counterparts and adult beneficiaries reported that the extracurricular activities that the Volunteers developed and implemented served as social activities in the community. The activities not only provided a positive outlet for youth, but also provided a social outlet for the families of the youth. Project participants stated that these extracurricular activities, while focused on youth, taught them how to organize these types of activities and positively affected their relationships with neighbors whose children were also involved in these activities.

Overall, project success was derived from a combination of three factors: community-wide support for youth-centered activities, the relationship-building skills of the Volunteer, and the Volunteer's personality. This information emphasizes the importance of having Peace Corps country staff train Volunteers to take the time to build trust with their community members. This will lead to greater willingness to support the participation of youth in project activities. Having Peace Corps staff work with each community prior to the arrival of the Volunteer will help to ensure that the foundation for this support is established.

Volunteers should assess and prioritize their community's youth development needs in order to ensure that their activities are addressing those needs. Peace Corps staff can train Volunteers on the most effective way to conduct a community needs assessment to determine the most relevant youth development activities; to plan, develop, and implement dynamic youth-focused activities to maintain community interest; and, to engage with community leaders to ensure cross-sector support for project activities.

Conversely, project participants reported that efforts to have youth service providers organize youth-focused activities in the community had the least impact. Fewer project participants reported improvements in the four outcomes related to community network strengthening than other elements of the project. The pre-service and in-service training offered by the post could be used to encourage future Volunteers to make a concerted effort to emphasize activities that strengthen community support during their service.

In fact, the lack of community participation and support for project activities was mentioned as an obstacle to the success of the project and capacity building among local participants. Additionally, respondents stated that, in some cases, a Volunteer's poor grasp of the Spanish language frustrated project participants and limited the pace of community change. The lack of immediate results may be frustrating to Volunteers, so it would be worth clarifying for them that the slow pace of change at the community level is not only acceptable, but expected.

Respondents also cited numerous project-specific characteristics that posed challenges. Respondents noted a general lack of economic resources as an obstacle to achieving project success, particularly in the area of purchasing materials for school clubs and extracurricular activities. In relation to the Volunteers' interaction with community members, respondents noted in a few cases that the Volunteer simply did not understand the culture of the community well enough to be able to implement sustainable change or that their personalities clashed with community members in a way that discouraged their participation.

Respondents linked daily interaction with the Volunteer to change. They saw this as critical for a project that focused on youth, as the Volunteers' constant presence reassured youth that they would not be abandoned as well as providing space for the Volunteer to assess and react to the changing needs of the community.

Finally, the overwhelming majority of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the changes resulting from the project and the Volunteer's work. The fact that the vast majority of each respondent group reported wanting to work with another Volunteer provides a clear indication of their appreciation for this project.

Chapter 3: Goal Two Findings

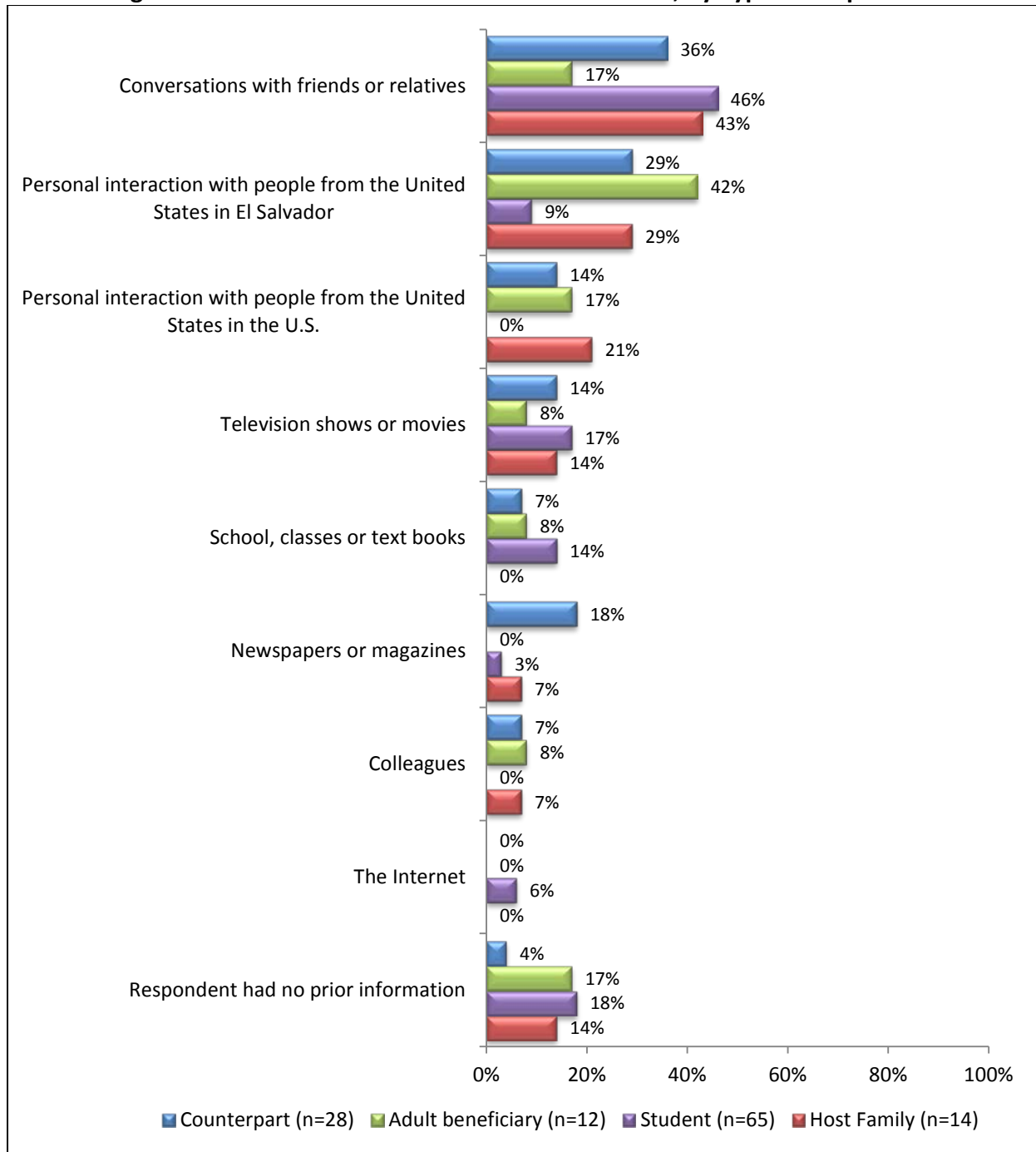
This section addresses how and to what extent Volunteers promoted a better understanding of Americans among the Salvadorans with whom they worked and lived. The section begins with a description of project participants' sources of information about Americans followed by what counterparts, adult beneficiaries, host families, and students thought about Americans prior to working with a Volunteer, how and why their opinions of Americans changed, and how much and in what ways they interacted with Volunteers. The section continues with a description of the impact on respondents' behaviors and outlook on life. The section ends with conclusions and recommendations based on the findings related to Goal Two.

Sources of Information about Americans

Prior to meeting a Volunteer, counterparts, adult beneficiaries, students, and host family members most often stated that they received their information about Americans from their family and friends, many of whom were living in the United States (36% of counterparts, 17% of adult beneficiaries, 46% of students, and 43% of host family members, Figure 47). Many of the respondents had also met other Americans in El Salvador, including tourists (29% of counterparts, 42% of adult beneficiaries, 9% of students, and 29% of host family members). The third most common source of information came from having visited or lived in the United States (14% of counterparts, 17% of adult beneficiaries, and 21% of host family members). Students were the only group of respondents in which none of the respondents reported having been to the United States. Television shows or movies, school or books, and newspapers or magazines were less common sources of information.

Low percentages of counterparts (4%), adult beneficiaries (17%), students (18%), and host family members (14%) responded that they had no prior information about Americans until they met the Volunteers in their communities.

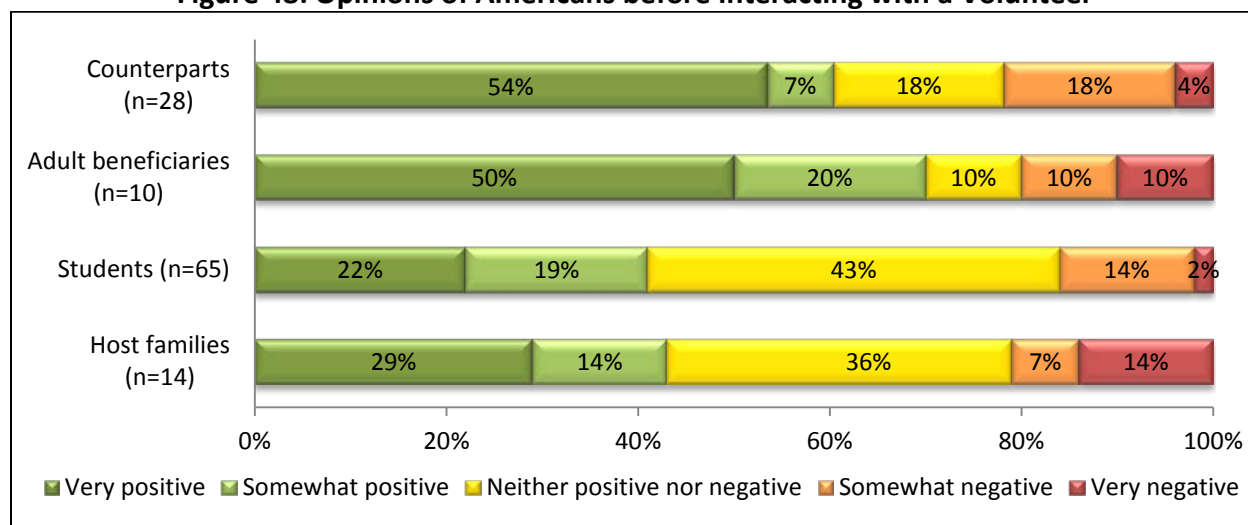
Figure 47: Sources of Information about Americans, by Type of Respondent



Changes in Opinions about Americans

When asked their opinion of Americans prior to working with a Volunteer, respondents' views varied. Approximately half of the counterparts (54%) and adult beneficiaries (50%) reported having a 'very positive' opinion of Americans, with another 7 percent and 20 percent, respectively, reporting a 'somewhat positive' opinion. Smaller proportions of students reported having a 'very positive' opinion of Americans (22%) or a 'somewhat positive' opinion (19%). Likewise, 29 percent of host families had a 'very positive' opinion of Americans and 14% had a 'somewhat positive' opinion. Sizeable groups of students (43%) and host families (36%) responded that their opinion was 'neither positive nor negative' (Figure 48).

Figure 48: Opinions of Americans before Interacting with a Volunteer



When asked to briefly describe their views of Americans prior to working with Volunteers, 91 of the 119 counterparts, adult beneficiaries, students, and host family members (76%) provided responses. Those who responded positively described Americans as good (11 respondents), helpful (9), nice (7), honest (6), hardworking (6), and positive (4). Eight respondents also stated that America was a land of opportunity for their family members who lived there, but seven respondents remarked that their family members in America described Americans as mean, unwelcoming, and discriminatory. Additional negative descriptions characterized Americans as preferring to be isolated from those different than themselves (16 respondents), dominating and imperialist in their actions (7), uncaring (4), and arrogant (4). The neutral descriptions offered by respondents described stereotypical physical characteristics of Americans, most notably that they are white (8 respondents), tall (5), and only speak English (3 respondents). Ten respondents stated that they could not draw conclusions about all Americans based on the little information they had about them.

After interacting with a Volunteer, more than half of each group of respondents reported having a 'more positive' or 'somewhat more positive' opinion of Americans. The results for

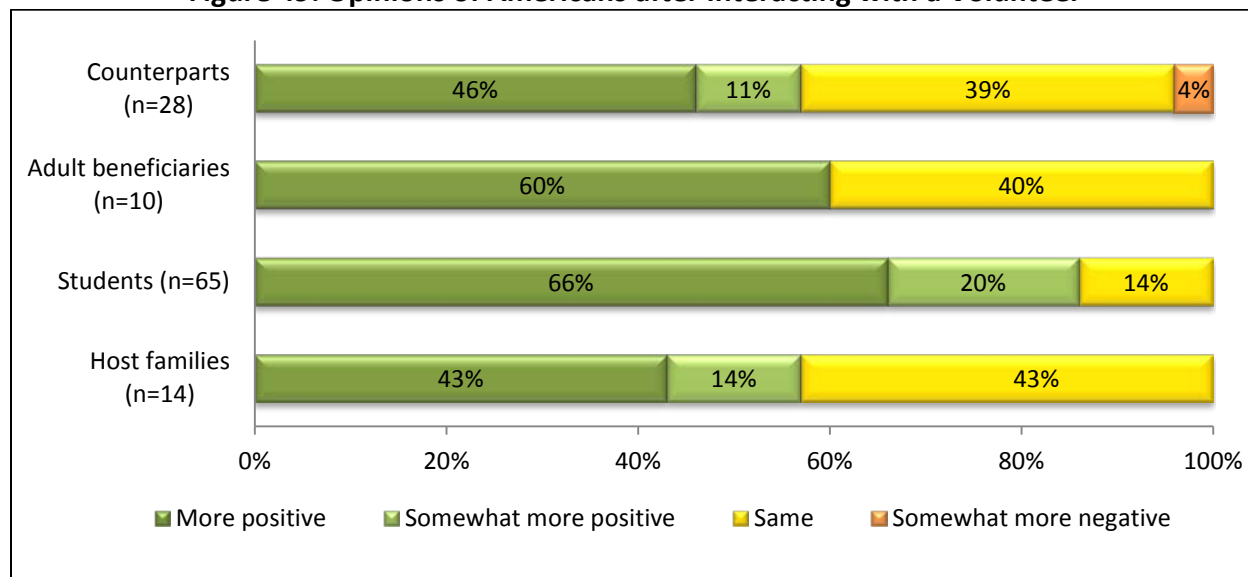
students indicated that they had the most positive change in their opinions, with fully 86 percent reporting at least somewhat more positive opinions of Americans (Figure 49).

These results were further explored at the level of the individual respondents to see how their opinions changed. Nine of the ten students who had a neutral or negative opinion before the project reported that their opinion was at least 'somewhat more positive' after it. The remaining person reported continuing to have a 'very negative' opinion, but this person also went on to describe Americans saying that, "They are generous and help in every way that they can. They are helpful, sensitive toward poverty and human suffering." It is possible that the data were miscoded in this case.

Among the counterparts, all but one of 17 counterparts who reported having a positive opinion of Americans before the project reported that they had the same positive opinion or an even more positive opinion after working with the Volunteers. The only exception in this group was one counterpart with a 'very positive' opinion of Americans before the project who reported that it had become 'somewhat more negative' after the project because the Volunteer was seen as 'imposing' his or her ideas. Another counterpart who had reported having a 'very negative' opinion of Americans did not change this opinion after working with the Volunteers. This person reported that the negative opinion persisted because the particular Volunteers who served in his/her community were using drugs and alcohol.

Among adult beneficiaries, the two respondents with a negative opinion prior to working with a Volunteer reported that their opinion had become more positive. Similarly, among host family members, the three people with negative opinions before the project all reported that they were 'more positive' after it.

Figure 49: Opinions of Americans after Interacting with a Volunteer



Asked to describe their views of Americans after interacting with a Volunteer in their own words, 88 of 119 counterparts, adult beneficiaries, students, and host families (74%) provided responses that trended in a much more positive direction. In terms of their overall characteristics, respondents now described Americans as good (15 respondents), friendly (13), kind (8), nice (8), and social (8) people. When reflecting on the Volunteers' service in El Salvador, respondents noted that Americans are helpful (16) and altruistic (6) people. Respondents described the approach that Americans take towards their work as willing to share their knowledge (9), collaborative (6), dynamic (4), respectful (4), inclusive (3), and dedicated (3). Again, ten respondents explained that they could not draw conclusions about all Americans based on working or living with a Peace Corps Volunteer. Respondents who reported having more positive opinions after working with Volunteers said:

"What we think of them it is not true: they do not want to change our culture. They just want to help us and our country." – Secondary school student

"[My opinion] ... has changed a lot. I think they are humble, not selfish, and willing to share with us even if they know more than we do." – Counterpart

"My opinion has had a radical change because I realized that they were good people. They liked our town and our food. They were very kind and they collaborated with us." – Secondary school student

"[My opinion] ... is more positive now because they got involved helping people. They learned about us here and were very caring." – Youth leader

Causes of Changes in Opinions

Respondents were asked to discuss what caused the changes in their opinions. They responded by describing the way in which the Volunteers changed their opinions of Americans by interacting with them and by reflecting upon their memorable experiences. The themes and findings of their responses will be explored in this section for each group of respondents in turn: counterparts, adult beneficiaries, students, and host families.

What Volunteers Did to Change Opinions

Counterparts and adult beneficiaries who reported a more positive opinion of Americans stated that their opinions improved due to their observations of the Volunteers' work ethic and their personalities.

In work situations, counterparts and adult beneficiaries changed their opinions because they observed that Volunteers were willing to share their knowledge, they approached their work with great interest and commitment; they were respectful; and, they dedicated themselves to assisting the youth of the community.

“Despite not having support from the education center, he took the students to his house for youth group orientations.” – Counterpart

“The Volunteer approached the community about his work, and we valued this.” – Counterpart

“Everything they do, they do with lots of enthusiasm and effort.” – Counterpart

Counterparts and adult beneficiaries stated that they changed their opinions because they saw that Volunteers were simple, honest, and positive people. These respondents expressed surprise at the Volunteers’ ability to adapt to El Salvador and how easy it was to form a relationship with them.

“They are special people. They came here and taught us something that we didn’t know about the ‘gringos’ [Americans]: that they are our friends, not just for the moment but for life.” – Counterpart

Students who reported more positive opinions of Americans changed their opinion as a result of their interactions with the Volunteer both inside and outside the classroom. At school, students stated that Volunteers were dedicated, committed to building students’ confidence, and more patient with them compared to their Salvadoran teachers. In the community, students changed their opinions of Americans because they observed the Volunteers to be respectful, cheerful, and willing to take part in community activities.

“They helped me overcome my personal problems like low self-esteem.” – Secondary school student

“They concentrated on helping youth. They also motivated the teachers. The teachers were able to continue with the computer classes in school.” – Youth group leader

“We had a great friendship with the Volunteers. They were outgoing, kind, and thanks to them our school and our community stand out.” – Secondary school student

Host families who reported more positive opinions of Americans most often said that they changed their opinion through their observations of the Volunteer at work or from their overall demeanor and approach to life.

“The PCV was very collaborative and liked to help others. She was an excellent professional.” – Neighbor

Host family members also stated that they changed their opinions because they saw that Volunteers were friendly and helpful people who enjoyed talking and learning about Salvadoran

culture. The Volunteers' ability to adapt to Salvadoran culture while continuing to help their community also impressed the host family respondents and inspired them to describe the Volunteers as 'family.'

"We would sit and talk for 2-4 hours at a time. We talked about the war between El Salvador and the USA. The Volunteers were not aware of what these 'gringos' [Americans] did to us here and they were sad, embarrassed, and felt great indignation. But now they know and so we learned to value one another."
– Host Father

Most Memorable Experiences

When asked about their most memorable interactions with Volunteers, the responses that were given by counterparts, adult beneficiaries, students, and host family members related to work, the Volunteer's personality, and specific social events.

Counterparts most often talked about the positive experiences they had with the Volunteer when planning and implementing classroom lessons and youth-focused activities. These respondents shared memories about how the Volunteers approached their professional activities with enthusiasm and dedication, as well as anecdotes from implementing these activities:

"He conducted a clean-up campaign and gave prizes to those who picked up the most plastic trash." – Counterpart

"His integration with the youth. He organized youth groups and formed a soccer team that participated in competitions." – Counterpart

Adult beneficiaries reminisced about the Volunteer's personality, the activities implemented in their communities, and specific social events:

"Her friendship, sincerity, and love towards others." – Beneficiary

"She used very nice, constructive techniques in her teaching. She would always tell me, 'never to give up and continue to dream'. She (and most Americans I know) are very motivating." – Beneficiary

Students most often talked about how the Volunteer created a dynamic learning experience in their classroom, positive aspects of the Volunteer's personality, and specific events that occurred during their extracurricular activities.

"They worked side-by-side with youth. They were born leaders and worked in a family-like and very respectful manner." – Secondary school student

“One [Volunteer] worked with the community to build our basketball court and the community provided labor. The other [Volunteer] worked with the school garden and motivated students to learn about cultivating diverse harvests.” – Secondary school student

When asked about their most memorable activities, host family members most often cited positive aspects of the Volunteers’ personalities, such as their eagerness to help community youth and their desire to adapt to Salvadoran culture. Host family members also cited specific events from the Volunteers’ service, such as making pupusas and tortillas together and doing laundry in a wash basin.

“We prepared food together and she played with the children. She was a very good role model for the youth of our community.” – Neighbor

“They were like another son or daughter to us. We drank tea together. We cooked, baked cookies. We sang. We were always looking for points in common. They even gave a scholarship to a very poor little girl.” – Host Father

What Project Participants Learned about Americans

When asked what had they learned about Americans from the Volunteers, 91 respondents provided a variety of answers. From the perspective of ‘work ethic,’ respondents learned that Americans are achievement-oriented (8 respondents), hardworking (6), collaborative (5), punctual (5), organized (3), and enjoy sharing their knowledge (7). In terms of personality, respondents learned that Americans are friendly (11), helpful (8), intelligent (8), and social (5). Respondents also noted that they learned specific cultural details about Americans, such as the fact that everyone cleans up after a meal regardless of gender; they expect direct answers to their questions; and they leave their parents’ home at a young age to pursue higher education opportunities.

Impact of the Changes on Participants’ Behavior and Outlook on Life

Respondents were asked how they had changed their behavior or outlook on life as a result of interacting with the Volunteer. The ones who had reported a more positive opinion of Americans (see Figure 49 on page 72) stated that:

- They are more motivated to set and achieve personal goals, including committing themselves to their education or profession.
- They are more social, inclusive, and participatory, in terms of involving themselves in school and community activities, attending community events, and sharing ideas, opinions, and knowledge with community members.
- They are more organized, collaborative, unified, and dedicated as a community in their efforts to affect positive change.

- They have improved confidence and outlook on life, in terms of embracing the philosophy that personal and community change will occur when a sustained effort is made to overcome all challenges and realize their goals.

“I am very participatory—I am a volunteer at my school. I am motivated to continue with my studies. All of this is thanks to the values the Volunteer instilled in me.” – Secondary school student

“I have more vision. I know what I can achieve, and that makes me more accessible to my students. I can do things no matter what other people think or say.” – Counterpart

“Treat people as equals no matter what their nationality is.” – Beneficiary

The Volunteer as a Youth Role Model

Finally, students were asked how the Volunteer became a role model for them. Students’ responses can be organized into two categories: (1) student admiration of different characteristics of the Volunteers’ personality, and (2) appreciation of their approach to their work. In terms of the Volunteers personalities, students stated that they now try to emulate the Volunteers’ positive approach to life, kindness, respect, and easygoing manner in terms of making friends regardless of race, age, gender, or economic class. In terms of their approach to work, students reported that they strive to emulate how the Volunteer first organized themselves to approach a problem or task, and then confidently and diligently applied themselves until the desired outcome was achieved.

“She always accomplished what she proposed. She was a fighter and she never gave up.” – Secondary school student

“The way they help no matter the conditions of the population – like whether they have money or not.” – Secondary school student

Conclusion and Recommendations for Goal Two

Prior to meeting a Volunteer, counterparts, adult beneficiaries, students, and host family members most often stated that they heard about Americans from family members who lived in the United States. Low percentages of counterparts (4%), adult beneficiaries (17%), students (18%), and host family members (14%) responded that they had no prior information about Americans.

After interacting with a Volunteer, more respondents reported having positive opinions about Americans. After living and working with a Volunteer, project participants described Americans as good, friendly, kind, and social people who were willing to share their knowledge and were helpful, altruistic, respectful and collaborative.

In work situations, respondents stated that they changed their opinions of Americans as a result of their observations of the way in which the Volunteers were willing to share their knowledge, approached their work with great interest and commitment, and committed themselves to assisting the youth of the community. In social situations, respondents stated that they changed their opinions because they saw that Volunteers were simple, honest, and positive people. The respondents remarked on the Volunteers' ability to adapt to El Salvador and how easy it was to form a relationship with them, even to the point of considering them to be 'family.'

Overall, project participants and host family members reported improving their understanding or developing more positive opinions of Americans through their interactions with Volunteers. This information correlates with a key component of Peace Corps' approach to community development: day-to-day interaction not only builds capacity and technical skills (Peace Corps Goal One); but it also deepens participants' understanding and knowledge of Americans (Goal Two).

Appendix 1: Methodology

Site Selection

In El Salvador, the team conducted interviews in 20 communities with youth development placements. The sample of sites at each post was based on a sample of sites from the list of Volunteer assignments that had ended since 2006. Sites that were extremely remote were excluded. Study sites were randomly selected from the remaining ones on the list. Individual respondents were then selected in one of three ways:

1. At many sites, only one counterpart had worked with a Volunteer. In those cases, once the site was selected, so was the counterpart.
2. To select adult beneficiaries and host family members (and in cases where more than one possible counterpart was available), post staff and/or the Volunteer proposed individuals known to have had significant involvement in the project or with the Volunteer. Within a host family, the person with the most experience with the Volunteer was interviewed.
3. In cases in which there were still multiple possible respondents, the research team randomly selected the respondent to interview.

Data Collection

The research questions and interview tools were designed by OSIRP staff and refined through consultations with the Country Director and regional staff at the Peace Corps.

A team of local interviewers – trained and supervised by a senior researcher contracted in-country – carried out all the interviews. The interviewers conducted face-to-face structured interviews with the following categories of Salvadoran nationals:

- **Partners/Counterparts:** community leaders, school leaders, youth service leaders (28)
- **Adult beneficiaries:** teachers, parents, community leaders (12)
- **Students:** primary school students, secondary school students, youth group members (65)
- **Host family members:** families that hosted or served as landlords to Volunteers during all or part of their service (14)
- **Stakeholders:** national government officials, school directors, cultural center directors (7)

The research teams also reviewed existing performance data routinely reported by posts in Volunteers' Project Status Reports. However, the results presented in this report are almost exclusively based on the interview data collected through this study.

One hundred and twenty-six individuals were interviewed in El Salvador for the study (Table 1).

This study used both quantitative research methods to generate summary statements on key findings as well as qualitative explorations of each topic for a deeper understanding of the respondents' perspectives.

Interviewers used written protocols specific to each category of respondents. The counterparts and adult beneficiaries were asked questions related to both Goal One and Goal Two. Host family members were asked only questions related to Goal Two. The categories covered for each of the three groups are shown below (Table 2).

Table 2: Summary of Interview Questions by Respondent Type

Respondent Type	Question Categories	Approximate Length of interview
Counterpart	<p>Goal One</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarification of the project purpose 2. Respondent's work history in the field and with the Peace Corps 3. Frequency of contact with the Volunteer 4. Project orientation 5. Project outcomes and satisfaction with the project 6. Community and individual-level changes 7. Sustainability of project outcomes <p>Goal Two</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Source of information and opinion of Americans prior to the Peace Corps work 2. Type of information learned about Americans from interaction with the Volunteer 3. Opinion of Americans after interaction with the Volunteer 4. Particular things that Volunteers did that helped improve respondent's understanding of Americans 	45 minutes
Beneficiary (including students)	<p>Goal One</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarification of the project purpose 2. Frequency of contact with the Volunteer 3. Project outcomes and satisfaction with the project 	30 minutes

Respondent Type	Question Categories	Approximate Length of interview
	4. Community and individual-level changes 5. Sustainability of project outcomes Goal Two 1. Source of information and opinion of Americans prior to the Peace Corps work 2. Type of information learned about Americans from interaction with the Volunteer 3. Opinion of Americans after interaction with the Volunteer 4. Particular things that Volunteers did that helped improve respondent's understanding of Americans	
Host Family Member	Goal Two 1. Source of information and opinion of Americans prior to the Peace Corps work 2. Type of information learned about Americans from interaction with the Volunteer 3. Opinion of Americans after interaction with the Volunteer 4. Particular things that Volunteers did that helped improve respondent's understanding of Americans 5. Behavioral changes based on knowing the Volunteer	30 minutes

Appendix 2: Methodology from the Host Country Research Team²³

Overview

The systematic methodology designed by OSIRP for other impact studies was adapted, translated and implemented for El Salvador's study by the research team upon beginning the assignment.

Selection of Participants

To launch the study, OSIRP created a data file containing all Volunteer assignments for the Youth Development Project over the past five years with Volunteers who completed at least one year of service, selecting a systematic sample of 20-25 sites. Approximately 5-10 people were targeted for interviews per site: Official counterpart(s); members of the host family (if the Volunteer lived with one); adult beneficiaries (non-student youth/members of youth groups/mother's group, local leaders, etc.); and students. PC/El Salvador staff was to provide all names and contact information to the research team for all field interviews.

Table 3: Categories of Host Country Individuals Interviewed

Host Country Individual	Definition
1. Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Government Official• School Directors• Cultural Center Director
2. Partners/Counterparts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community leaders• School leaders• Youth service leaders
3. Adult beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers• Parents• Community leaders
4. Host family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Host family or "family-like" friends at site• Landlords of the Volunteers during all or part of their service
5. Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary school students• Secondary school students• Youth group members

²³ This section was excerpted (with minor edits) from the research report developed by the in-country research team: Debra L. Gish, *Host Country Impact Study: Peace Corps El Salvador Youth Development Project*, pp. 7-8, 2012. As a result the formatting, language, and style vary slightly from those used in the body of the report.

Research Methods

The research relied on face-to-face interviews with individuals who had worked or lived with Volunteers. Interviewers used a structured interview guide specific to each category of respondent. Interviews were selected as the method for collecting data in order to gather information on knowledge, attitudes, awareness, and behavior. OSIRP's research questions were refined and validated by the research team in consultation with OSIRP and PC/El Salvador via a process of contextual translation from English to Spanish and piloting of the questionnaires among Peace Corps/El Salvador staff during the research team's training on October 17-20, 2011. Responses to all completed surveys were then coded, recorded, and entered into the Peace Corps' web-based database by the research team.

Geographic Coverage

The research team conducted field research among all 20 sample sites provided by Peace Corps from November 7 to December 8, 2011. Surveys were applied to host country individuals in relation to 24 different Peace Corps volunteers²⁴, resulting in a total of 20 sites located in 18 municipalities of 9 departments. Of the 20 sites, 13 (65%) are located in small rural villages and 7 sites (35%) are located in urban areas.

Demographic Coverage

The research team exceeded the projected sample goal of 100 respondents with 126 total respondents as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Number of Host Country Individuals Interviewed

Host Country Individuals	Number of Interviews
Stakeholders	7
Counterparts	28
Adult beneficiaries	12
Host Family Members	14
Students	65
Total interviews	126

²⁴ The work of two Volunteers was documented in three sites. In all other cases, the work of one Volunteer was documented per site.

Information Collection

The research relied on in-depth, face-to-face interviews with individuals who have worked or lived with a Peace Corps Volunteer. Interviewers used the specific structured interview guide that had been developed for each category of respondent. The interviews ranged from 30-90 minutes in length.

The research questions and interview guides were designed by OSIRP staff and refined in consultation with post and regional staff. Senior researchers were encouraged to provide feedback on the questionnaires as well. Two specific opportunities for comments were built into the research during the translation and piloting of the questionnaires.

In-depth interviews were selected as the primary method to collect the data because they are excellent tools for gathering information about general knowledge and attitudes.