



PEACE  
CORPS

# Paraguay HOST COUNTRY IMPACT STUDY

## Purpose

In 2008, the Peace Corps launched a series of studies to determine the impact of Volunteers in meeting two of the agency's three historic goals: building local capacity and promoting a better understanding of Americans among local people in host countries. These Host Country Impact Studies are unique in providing feedback from the people who lived and worked with Peace Corps Volunteers. A Paraguayan research team conducted this study in the summer of 2011, interviewing 218 respondents in 24 communities, and submitted a final report to the post upon completion of the field work. The Peace Corps Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning developed the methods and protocols, trained the local researchers, and has produced a series of reports from this and other Host Country Impact Studies.

## Study Focus: Rural Health and Sanitation Program in Paraguay

As of 2012, 3,691 Volunteers have served in Paraguay since Peace Corps opened in 1966. The goal of the Rural Health and Sanitation project is to improve the health, nutrition, and sanitation knowledge and practices of community members and service providers in rural Paraguayan communities, thereby leading to healthier lives.

### Peace Corps Goal One

*"To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women."*

### Findings

Health objectives achieved:

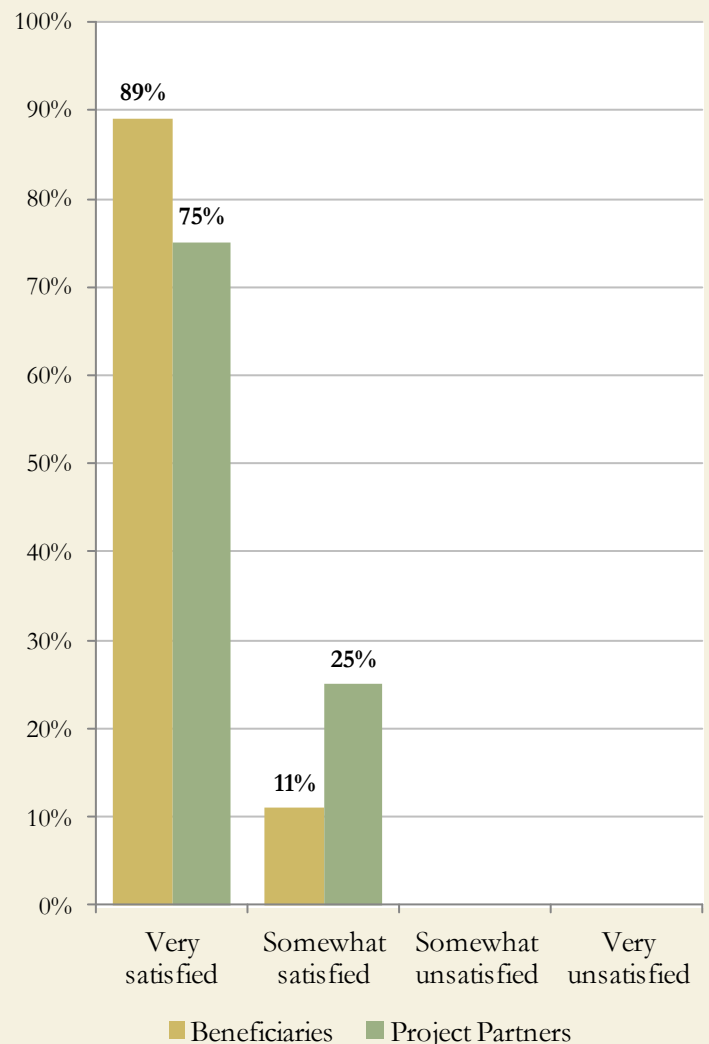
- 91 percent of project partners and 87 percent of beneficiaries said children's dental hygiene practices were much better after working with the Volunteer.
- 83 percent of project partners and 86 percent of beneficiaries reported that children's parasite prevention habits, such as washing hands and wearing shoes on a daily basis, were much better.
- 86 percent of project partners and 84 percent of beneficiaries stated the Volunteers' work was very effective in building their community's capacity to address health concerns.
- 93 percent of project partners and 96 percent of beneficiaries stated that Peace Corps' work was more effective than other health groups operating in their communities.

Sustainability:

- 86 percent of project partners and 87 percent of beneficiaries use the skills they learned from the Volunteers on a daily basis.
- 39 percent of project partners and beneficiaries stated that improved stoves—built with the Volunteers—are the most positive and lasting change from the project, and also noted their connection to a decrease in respiratory illnesses.

Beneficiary: *"The construction of sanitary latrines and improved stoves for all the homes - these have improved the living conditions of our community."*

### Satisfaction with Changes Resulting from Peace Corps Projects





## Peace Corps Goal Two

*“To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the people served.”*

### Findings

*Before* interacting with Volunteers:

- 49 percent of all project participants had no previous information about Americans.
- Paraguayans who had some knowledge described Americans as good, helpful, and intelligent people who were willing to share their knowledge.
- They also described Americans as bad people who thought they were superior to other countries, came to their country as spies, and resorted to violence to exert their power.

*After* interacting with Volunteers:

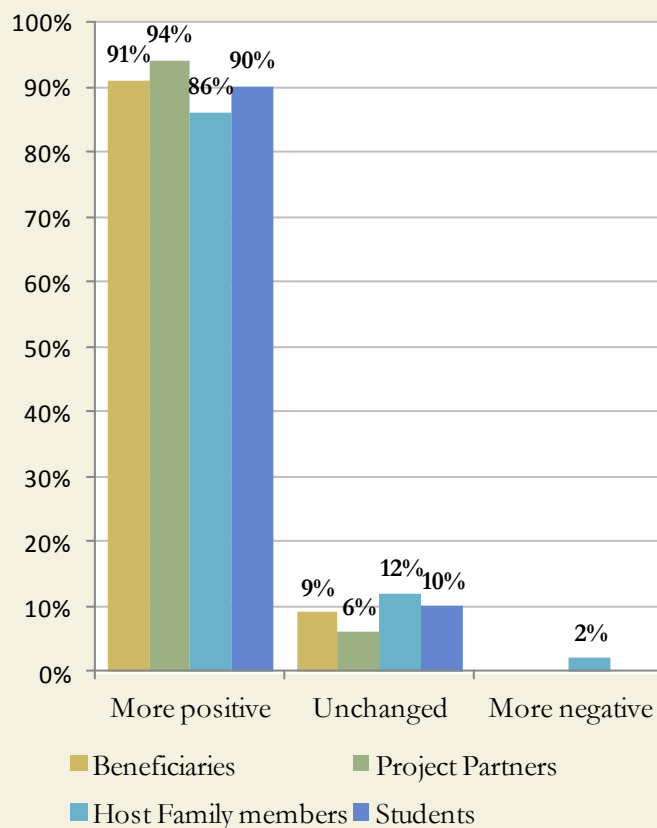
- 90 percent of all respondents, including project partners, beneficiaries, students, and host family members, had a more positive opinion of Americans.
- Paraguayans changed their opinions of Americans because they observed that Volunteers approached their work with humility and commitment, were respectful, did not discriminate against community members due to perceived differences, and were able to adapt to Paraguayan culture.
- Peruvians described Americans as friendly, hardworking, and dedicated people who want to engage in philanthropy to help disadvantaged communities.

Paraguayan respondent:

*“I see that [Americans] have a positive side. They want to help people and countries with less opportunity. I see that they are good people and have a heart. They can adapt to poor people and have a desire to help and work without asking for anything in return.”*

*“I had no knowledge of Americans, but now I know something: they are good people and like to help others, regardless of social class.”*

## Opinions of Americans after Interacting with Volunteers



Overall, project participants gained the necessary knowledge and learned basic habits to improve their hygiene, nutrition, and reproductive health, and increased their capacity to create and maintain a sanitary environment. Participants’ opinions about Americans became significantly more positive.