



PEACE
CORPS

Peru

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 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 Peruvian research team conducted this study in the winter of 2010, interviewing 269 respondents in 24 communities, and submitted a final report to the post at that time. The Peace Corps Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning developed the methods and protocols, trained the local researchers, and produced a series of analytical reports from this and other Host Country Impact Studies.

Study Focus: Community Health Project in Peru

As of 2011, 3,060 Volunteers have served in Peru since Peace Corps opened in 1962. The goal of the Community Health Project was to improve the health of families and youth living in low-income rural communities by promoting sustainable healthy lifestyle practices.

Peace Corps Goal One

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

Findings

Health objectives achieved:

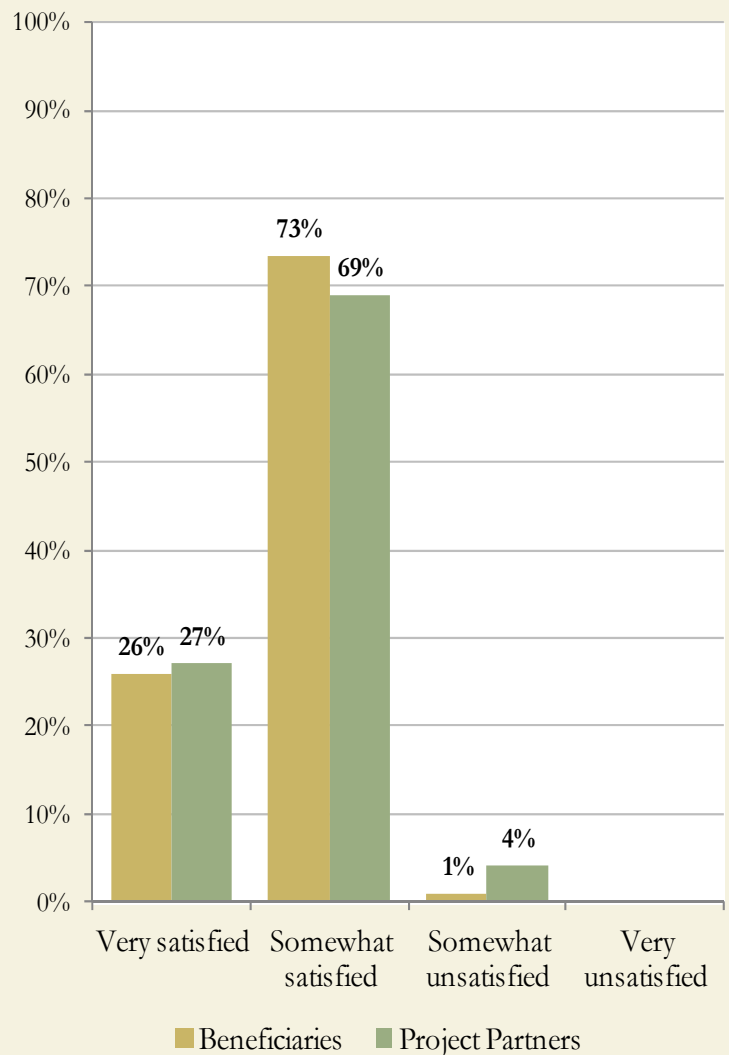
- 100 percent of project partners and 99 percent of beneficiaries (mothers with children under 5 years of age and youth 15-24) said their personal hygiene habits improved after working with the Volunteer, especially hand washing.
- 97 percent of partners and 93 percent of beneficiaries reported reduced incidences of diarrheal and gastrointestinal illnesses among children.
- 51 percent of project partners and beneficiaries specifically mentioned the benefits of the improved stoves built with the Volunteers, including fewer respiratory illnesses and increased consumption of nutritionally balanced meals.

Sustainability:

- 88 percent of project partners and 77 percent of beneficiaries use the skills they learned from the Volunteer on a daily basis.
- 81 percent of project partners and beneficiaries said the most lasting outcomes of the Volunteers' work were better overall hygiene, improved latrines, better nutrition, improved waste management, and improved cooking stoves.

Health Worker: *"We haven't stopped working since the Volunteer left. We keep on working with the families on health issues, animal farming, organic gardens, and children's nutrition."*

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:

- 62 percent of beneficiaries and 36 percent of project partners had no previous information about Americans.
- Peruvians who had some knowledge described Americans as good people from a developed country who were willing to engage in philanthropy.
- They also described Americans as large, tall, white, rich, English-speakers who felt they were superior to less developed countries.

After interacting with Volunteers:

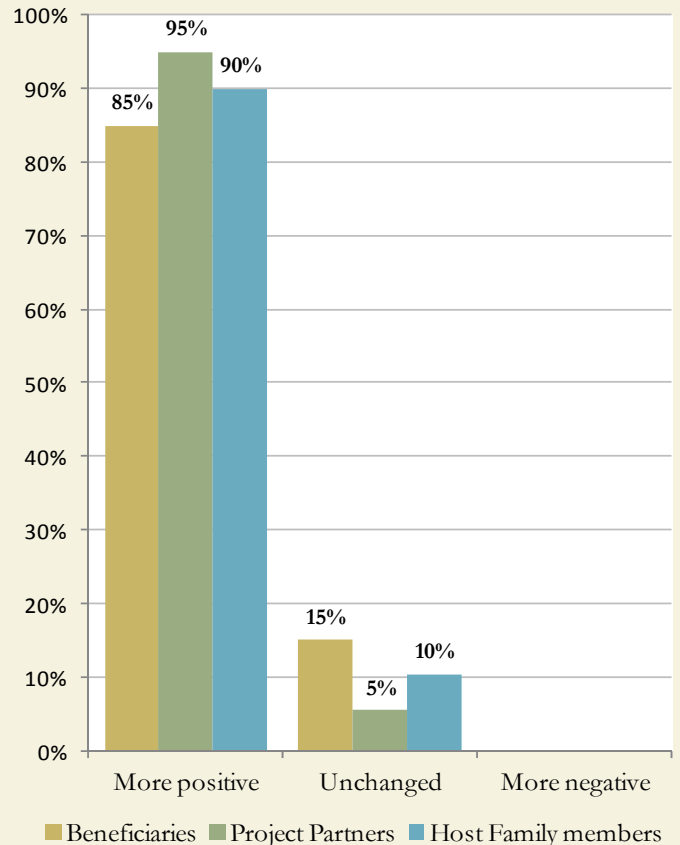
- 89 percent of project partners, beneficiaries, and host family members had a more positive opinion of Americans. Peruvians stated that they changed their opinions of Americans because they observed how the Volunteers approached their work with enthusiasm and dedication, instilled confidence in the local health promoters, did not discriminate against community members due to demographic differences, and enjoyed talking and learning about Peruvian culture.
- Project partners and beneficiaries described Americans as helpful, adaptable, friendly, kind, hardworking, inclusive, collaborative, and willing to share their knowledge.

Peruvian respondents:

“We found out that we were confused and [Americans] were not how we thought they were. They have great hearts; they leave their country to come help us.”

“[The Volunteers] were respectful, affectionate, responsible, and kind. Because of these reasons I have a more positive opinion about Americans.”

Opinions of Americans after Interacting with Volunteers



Overall, participants adopted improved hygiene and nutrition practices they learned from the training provided by the Volunteers. They have sustained these changes by adopting and maintaining improved stoves and latrines. Participants’ opinions about Americans became significantly more positive.