



# **Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning**

## **Host Country Impact Study Thailand**

### **Community-Based Organizational Development Project**



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

**About the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning**

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 planning, enhancing the stewardship and governance of agency data, strengthening measurement and evaluation of agency performance and programs, and helping shape agency engagement on certain high-level, government-wide initiatives.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Introduction .....	9
Purpose of the Host Country Impact Studies .....	9
Evaluation Methodology .....	10
Project Design .....	10
Evaluation Findings .....	11
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Background .....	15
Purpose of the Host Country Impact Studies .....	16
Thailand Community-Based Organizational Development Project .....	17
Evaluation Methodology .....	19
<b>CHAPTER 2: GOAL ONE FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>22</b>
Frequency of Interaction with Volunteers .....	22
Project Activities .....	23
Intended Outcomes .....	25
Unintended Project Outcomes .....	45
Factors Affecting Project Performance.....	48
Degree to which Daily Interaction with Volunteers Caused the Change.....	53
Satisfaction with Outcomes .....	55
Summary Goal One.....	57
<b>CHAPTER 3: GOAL TWO FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>59</b>
Sources of Information about Americans.....	59
Changes in Understanding and Opinions about Americans .....	60
Causes for Changes in Opinion .....	65
Impact of the Changes on Participants' Behavior and Outlook on Life .....	67
Summary Goal Two .....	68
<b>CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>69</b>
Goal One: Conclusions and Recommendations.....	69
Goal Two: Conclusion and Recommendations .....	70
<b>APPENDIX 1: OSIRP METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>71</b>
Site Selection .....	71
Data Collection .....	71
Types of Data Collected .....	72
<b>APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH TEAM METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>74</b>
Data Collection .....	74
Data Analysis .....	75

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Number and Type of Respondents: Thailand CBOD Project.....	20
Table 2: Summary of Interview Questions by Respondent Type .....	72

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Theory of Change for the CBOD Project: Thailand .....	18
Figure 2: Background of Counterparts and Beneficiaries .....	21
Figure 3: Experience Levels of Counterparts and Stakeholders .....	21
Figure 4: Frequency of Interaction with Volunteer during Work .....	22
Figure 5: Frequency of Interaction with Volunteer Outside of Work.....	23
Figure 6: Training Received by Counterparts and Beneficiaries .....	27
Figure 7: Extent Training Enhanced Skills of Counterparts and Beneficiaries .....	28
Figure 8: Counterpart Assessment of Community Changes Related to Project Outcomes.....	30
Figure 9: Beneficiary Assessment of Community Changes Related to Project Outcomes.....	31
Figure 10: Effectiveness of Volunteers' Work in Building Community Capacity .....	32
Figure 11: Counterpart Assessment of Sustainability at the Community Level.....	33
Figure 12: Beneficiary Assessment of Sustainability at the Community Level .....	34
Figure 13: Counterpart Assessment of How Well Changes Met Community Needs.....	35
Figure 14: Beneficiary Assessment of How Well Changes Met Community Needs.....	35
Figure 15: Counterpart Assessment of Individual Changes Related to Project Outcomes .....	37
Figure 16: Beneficiary Assessment of Individual Changes Related to Project Outcomes.....	38
Figure 17: Effectiveness of Volunteers' Work in Building Individual Capacity .....	38
Figure 18: Counterpart Assessment of Sustainability at the Individual Level.....	39
Figure 19: Beneficiary Assessment of Sustainability at the Individual Level.....	40
Figure 20: Extent to which Counterparts and Beneficiaries Maintained Changes .....	41
Figure 21: Counterpart Assessment of How Outcomes Met their Individual Needs.....	42
Figure 22: Beneficiary Assessment of How Outcomes Met their Individual Needs.....	43
Figure 23: Frequency of Skills Used in Professional Life .....	44
Figure 24: Frequency of Skills Used in Personal Life.....	45
Figure 25: Counterparts and Beneficiaries: Factors Limiting the Project Outcomes .....	52
Figure 26: Importance of Daily Interaction in Causing Change .....	54
Figure 27: Counterpart and Beneficiary Satisfaction .....	55
Figure 28: Stakeholder Satisfaction with Project Outcomes .....	56
Figure 29: Counterpart and Beneficiary: Want Another Volunteer.....	57
Figure 30: Counterpart and Beneficiary Sources of Information about Americans.....	59
Figure 31: Counterpart: Understanding of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer .....	60
Figure 32: Beneficiary: Understanding of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer .....	61

Figure 33: Host Family: Understanding of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer .....	61
Figure 34: Counterpart: Opinions of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer	62
Figure 35: Beneficiary: Opinions of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer ..	62
Figure 36: Host Family: Opinions of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer .	63

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The interest and support from the Peace Corps staff in Thailand were critical in this endeavor. Our sincere appreciation is extended to former Country Director John Williams, former Programming and Training Officer Peggy Seufert, Program Manager Jaree Kiatsuphimol, Director of Programming and Training Paula Miller, and former Administrative Officer Jake Sgambati.

The success of this study is due ultimately to the work of Senior Researcher Dr. Walaitat Warakul of Chiang Mai University and her research team, including Dr. Chalaad Chantrasombat and Dr. Sakchoroen Pawapootanont of Mahasarakham University, Dr. Piangchon Rasdusdee of University of Phayao, and the graduate and undergraduate students from Mahasarakham University, Chiang Mai University, and Chiang Mai Rajabhat University. These research teams skillfully encouraged the partners of Peace Corps Volunteers to share their experiences and perspectives.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Although this study was a team effort involving all members of the OSIRP staff, Kelly Feltault deserves special recognition as the study lead and primary author of this report. Janet Kerley, OSIRP's Chief of Evaluation, initiated the study with the post and served as the senior advisor to the project. Jessica Hwang provided data support, Laurel Howard copy-edited the report and OSIRP Director Cathryn L. Thorup reviewed and made substantive edits to the study.

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

## ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

### Acronyms

CBOD	Community-Based Organizational Development
DLA	Department of Local Administration
ESAO	Education Service Area Office
HCN	Host Country National
ICT	Information Communication Technology
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OSIRP	Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning
OTOP	One Tambon, One Product
PC/T	Peace Corps/Thailand
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
PLWHA	People living with HIV/AIDS
PST	Pre-Service Training
RTG	Royal Thai Government
SAO	Sub-district Administration Organization
TICA	Thailand International Coordination Agency

### Definitions

Beneficiaries	Individuals who receive assistance and help from the project; the people that the project is primarily designed to advantage
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

Host family members	Families with whom a Volunteer lived during all or part of his/her training and/or service
Project stakeholders	Host country agency sponsors and partners <sup>3</sup> and include host country ministries and local non-governmental agencies that are sponsoring and collaborating on a Peace Corps project. There may be a single agency or several agencies involved in a project in some capacity

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<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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, on the other hand, are unique for their focus on learning about the Peace Corps' impact directly from the host country nationals who lived and worked with Volunteers.

This report presents the findings from a study conducted in Thailand in the fall of 2010. The focus of the research was the Community-Based Organizational Development Project (CBOD).<sup>5</sup> The results of the findings of the local research team were shared with the post immediately upon completion of the field work. This OSIRP report is based upon the data collected by the local team and contains a thorough review of the quantitative data and the qualitative data and presented in a format that is standard for all the country reports.

## Purpose

Thailand's CBOD Host Country Impact Study assesses the degree to which the Peace Corps has been able to assist Sub-district Administration Organizations (SAOs) to improve community access to resources in business, services, and education.<sup>6</sup> The study provides Peace Corps/Thailand with a better understanding of the CBOD project and the impact it has had on local participants. In addition, the evaluation examines what host country nationals learned about Americans and how their opinions about Americans changed after working with a Volunteer.

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?

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<sup>4</sup>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.

<sup>5</sup> A companion study has been done on a second sector, the Teacher Collaboration and Community Outreach Project (TCCO).

<sup>6</sup> Information on the CBOD Project comes from *The Community-Based Organizational Development Project Plan*, Peace Corps, August 2007.

- How satisfied were HCNs with the project work?
- What did HCNs learn about Americans?
- Did HCNs' opinions of Americans change after interacting with the Peace Corps and Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs)?

The evaluation results will be aggregated and analyzed with the results from other Host Country Impact Studies to assess the agency's impact on local partners and participants across the world.

## **Evaluation Methodology**

This report is based on data provided by counterparts, beneficiaries, and stakeholders of the CBOD Project during interviews with the research team. The study reached 213 respondents in 25 communities, as follows:

- 88 Counterparts
- 61 Beneficiaries
- 22 Host family respondents
- 42 Stakeholders

Interviews were conducted from August 1 to September 30, 2010 (See Appendix 1 for a full description of the methodology. Please contact OSIRP for a copy of the questionnaires.)

## **Project Design and Purpose**

The CBOD Project was designed to respond to the decentralization of power in 1994 by the Royal Thai Government (RTG) under a new constitution. For the first time, the constitution gave administrative power to local people at the sub-district level and increased the responsibilities and activities of local government administrators.

Originally, the CBOD Project placed Volunteers with the sub-district offices to build the capacity of SAO staff. A project review in 2006 found that the SAO staff "were not viable primary clients for the project."<sup>7</sup> The project was restructured and community members became the primary beneficiaries, with the SAOs providing support to Volunteers while improving their own connections to communities. The project is implemented by the SAOs, the Department of Local Administration (DLA), and the RTG and Peace Corps

The project focused on improving local community groups' access to resources and opportunities as described in the three goals below:<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Peace Corps, Thailand, *The Community-Based Organizational Development Project Plan*, Peace Corps, pg 3, August 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Information on the CBOD Project cited in *The Community-Based Organizational Development Project Plan*, Peace Corps, August 2007.

1. Motivate community members, SAO and local government agency staff to network in order to develop and share information and opportunities that would optimize existing resources
2. Enhance personal and professional growth by strengthening participants' self-esteem; resilience; and problem solving, decision-making and goal-setting abilities through training - skill-building, career planning, and in business
3. Provide appropriate technical and organizational skills to community members and SAO staff to take advantage of personal, social, and economic opportunities in the delivery of quality services.

## **Evaluation Findings**

The evaluation findings indicate that the three goals of the project were largely met. The greatest change for community members was in the area of personal and professional growth - improved self-esteem, and increased problem solving and goal-setting skills. The project increased participants' awareness of health and environmental issues, and participants developed business skills and marketing opportunities. Volunteers raised awareness about HIV/AIDS and improved the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS, an unexpected and welcome outcome of the project.

As a result of working and living with the Peace Corps Volunteers, Thai participants changed their opinions of Americans. A majority now believe Americans are kind, have a good heart, and are hardworking.

While the report provides a detailed analysis of all the study findings, the key findings are discussed below.

### **Agency Goal One Findings**

#### **The project was largely implemented as it was designed**

- Volunteers implemented all project activities, except for creating training opportunities through the SAOs for community members. However, Volunteers provided a variety of training through other organizations.

#### **Training focused on professional development**

- Training included lessons in community needs assessments, income generation, marketing and product design, and teaching methods. Additionally, many Volunteers added teaching English to their workload, thus meeting other local needs while accomplishing the project's stated goals.

### **Community capacity building was largely achieved**

- The greatest and most sustained change was an increased awareness among all participants of health and environmental issues as reported by:
  - 91% of beneficiaries
  - 89% of counterparts
  - 88% of stakeholders
- 85% of counterparts reported communities were better able to support and sustain their own development priorities
- Over two-thirds of the participants (69% of counterparts, 64% of beneficiaries) said the communities improved their capacity to identify and solve their own problems
- 88% of stakeholders reported the Sub-district Administrative Organizations improved their ability to deliver services to communities
  - Service providers were better able to work with people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)
  - People living with HIV/AIDS felt more integrated into the community and had “hope to live, now”
- Teachers improved teaching methods as a result of Volunteers, including teaching English as an additional activity

### **Individual capacity building was largely achieved**

- *Counterparts* and *beneficiaries* felt their individual technical skills had improved as a result of working with the Volunteer
  - 85% of counterparts said their improved ability to optimize local resources was the greatest personal change
  - 92% of beneficiaries reported that using participatory project design and management was their greatest personal change
  - 88% of counterparts stated the Volunteers’ work was somewhat to very effective in building their individual capacity
    - 48% of counterparts use their new skills gained from working with the Volunteer on a daily basis for work
    - 25% use these skills on a weekly basis for work
    - 64% of beneficiaries report using their new skills gained from working with a Volunteer on a daily basis for work or in their personal lives

### **Some personal changes were largely sustained**

- Counterparts (95%) and beneficiaries (98%) reported their improved awareness of health and environmental problems had been sustained
- All the beneficiaries said they had fully (49%) to somewhat (51%) sustained their personal ability to optimize local resources. For example, respondents continued to use local ingredients to make food products

**Factors limiting sustainability**

- The primary factor was a lack of support from the local government
  - SAOs did not have a budget to support new projects by the Volunteer and often did not support community development activities
  - SAOs funded projects mandated by the government
- 52% of counterparts and 40% of beneficiaries reported communities still lacked the skills and training needed to sustain the project outcomes

**Factors Contributing to Success**

- Volunteers' professional skills such as working hard, and being dedicated and responsible
- Support from the community – participation and motivation – was a key factor contributing to the success of the project
- The Volunteers' ability to create harmonious relationships within and among the community members linked the Volunteer's professional skills with the community's support to create success

**Factors Hindering Success**

- Volunteers who could not speak sufficient Thai or who did not have the technical skills to conduct community development projects found difficulty
- Changes in leadership and staff at the SAOs led to decreased support for the Volunteers' work

**Satisfaction with the project was high**

- 98% of beneficiaries and 92% of counterparts want to work with another Volunteer to maintain the high level of community motivation sparked by the Volunteer:
- 62% of counterparts and beneficiaries were very satisfied with the changes resulting from the project including:
  - High satisfaction with the teaching methods and classroom resources developed by a Volunteer
  - High satisfaction with the increased community awareness of health and environmental issues, especially the decreased stigmatization of PLWHA

**Goal Two Findings****Project participants developed more positive opinions of Americans***Before working with a Volunteer:*

- 18% of beneficiaries and host families and 10% of counterparts reported no understanding of Americans

- 68% of host family members, 55% of beneficiaries, and 40% of counterparts reported a neutral opinion about Americans
- Thais described Americans as rich people who look down on or take advantage of developing countries

*After working with a Volunteer:*

- Nearly all respondents (beneficiaries: 97%, host families: 100%, counterparts: 95%) reported a moderate or thorough *understanding* of Americans
- 90% of host family members, 96% of beneficiaries, and 95% of counterparts reported a somewhat or more positive *opinion* about Americans

#### **Interaction with Volunteers led to changes in behaviors and outlook on life**

- Volunteers' work style facilitated the change in opinions of Americans
  - Participants described Volunteers as hardworking, confident, and willing to work with People Living With HIV and AIDS and poor communities

# 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. From that inspiration grew 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 200,000 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 to 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 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 tells only one side of the Peace Corps' story.<sup>9</sup> In 2008, the Peace Corps' launched a series of studies to better assess the impact of its Volunteers. These studies are unique for their focus on learning about the Peace Corps' impact directly from the HCNs who lived and worked with Volunteers.

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<sup>9</sup>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 study conducted in Thailand from August to September of 2010. The project studied was the Community-Based Organizational Development (CBOD) 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, beneficiaries, 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 opinions of Americans change 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 impacts. In conjunction with Volunteer feedback from the Annual Volunteer Survey, this information will allow the Peace Corps to better understand its impact and address areas for 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."<sup>10</sup>

Feedback from the three pilots conducted in 2008 was used to revise the methodology rolled out to six posts in 2009, ten posts in 2010, and five posts in 2011. A total of 24 posts across Peace Corps' three geographic regions (Africa; Inter-America and the Pacific; and 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.

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<sup>10</sup> Office of Management and Budget. *Program Assessment: Peace Corps. International Volunteerism, 2005. Improvement Plan.*



## Thailand Community-Based Organizational Development Project

In 1994, the Royal Thai Government (RTG) established Sub-district (Tambon) Administrative Organizations (SAOs) as part of the decentralization of power.<sup>11</sup> This change gave government administrative power to people at the sub-district level for the first time. The SAOs have a wide range of duties that focus on developing the economic, social and cultural aspects of the sub-district. In addition, each SAO has a judicial status with its own administration, personnel, sources of income, power, and authority under the supervision of a district chief officer and provincial governor.

The Department of Local Administration (DLA) is responsible for strengthening the SAOs capacity and has identified several areas for improvement:

- Increasing understanding of government protocols and laws
- Increasing direct connection to communities and their needs
- Improving project development and management skills

The Community-Based Organizational Development (CBOD) Project began in 2003, in response to these needs and for two years Volunteers worked directly with the SAOs. In 2006, the mid-term project assessment found, however, that Volunteers had primarily been working with community groups, schools, occupational/income groups, and other community-based entities. The SAO and its staff members had numerous competing priorities and the review determined that the SAO staff was not the primary beneficiary.

Peace Corps/Thailand revised the CBOD Project adding new goals and objectives to better reflect the role of the SAO in the project. In the revised project plan, Volunteers are still placed with SAOs, but now work directly with community groups. However, all CBOD Volunteers are supervised by SAO directors who are elected every four years.

The purpose of the current CBOD Project is to improve the access of local community groups to resources and opportunities in business, services, and education through increased confidence, skill acquisition, and training.

### Project Goals

Goal One: Motivated community members, the SAO, and local government will network in order to share and develop information and opportunities that will optimize existing resources. The two objectives for this goal are to:

1. Identify local resources and opportunities through needs assessments and other tools
2. Create networks, build liaisons, and share information across the sub-district

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<sup>11</sup> All project information was gathered from the *Community-Based Organizational Development (CBOD) Revised Project Plan*, September 2007.

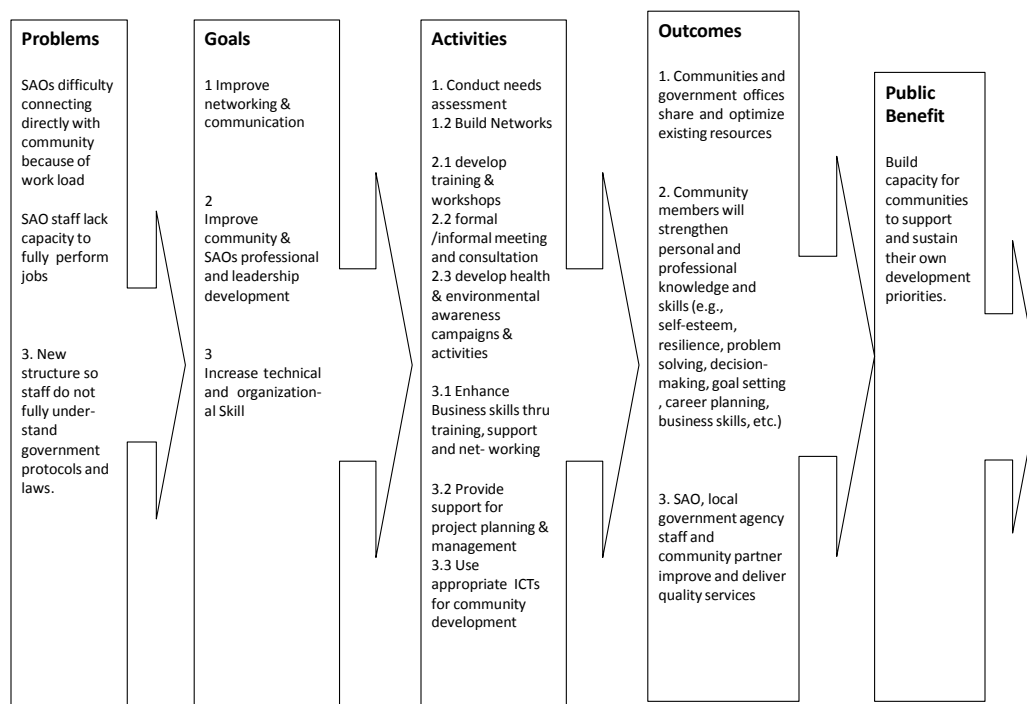
Goal Two: Enhance personal and professional growth by strengthening participant’s self-esteem, resilience, problem solving, and decision-making and goal-setting abilities through skill building, career planning, and business training. The three objectives are to:

1. Identify and develop training opportunities, both formal and informal
2. Create personal and professional development opportunities through formal and informal training, consultations, and workshops
3. Build health and environmental awareness in communities

Goal Three: Provide appropriate technical and organizational skills to community members and SAO staff in order to take advantage of personal, social, and economic opportunities in the delivery of quality services. The three objectives for this goal are to:

1. Provide training and support in business skills
2. Provide training and follow-up support in project planning and management to use in work
3. Develop opportunities for information communication and technology (ICT) to use in work

**Figure 1: Theory of Change for the CBOD Project: Thailand**



Source: Extracted from the *Community-Based Organizational Development Revised Project Plan*, September 2007.

## 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) that the agency evaluate the impact of Volunteers in achieving Goal Two.

Three countries were selected to pilot a methodology that would examine the impact of the technical work of Volunteers (Goal One), and their corollary work of promoting a better understanding of Americans among the people with whom the Volunteers lived and worked (Goal Two). 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, as well as changes in their understanding of Americans.

The research was designed by OSIRP social scientists and is implemented in country by a local senior researcher and a team of local interviewers under the supervision of the Peace Corps country staff. The OSIRP team provided technical direction. To ensure comparability across countries, the research used a standard interview protocol that also incorporated individual project goals. A web-based database was used to manage the questionnaire data and subsequent analysis.

In Thailand, Dr. Walaitat Worakul led the research team of professors, graduate and undergraduate students from four different universities. Teams, under the direction of the senior researcher and Professors Chalad Chantrasombat, Sakchoren Pawapootanont, and Piangchon Rasdusdee, conducted interviews in four regions of the country. OSIRP identified 106 Volunteer placements between 2005 and 2010 for possible participation in the study. A representative, rather than a random, sample was drawn from this list of Volunteer assignment sites.

The teams conducted a total of 213 semi-structured interviews in 25 communities across Thailand. The Thailand research team conducted the interviews between August 1 and September 30, 2010.

## Respondents

Four groups of host country individuals were interviewed (Table 1):

- **Counterparts:** SAO staff, day care teachers, primary school teachers, non-formal education teachers, district officers, health station staff, community leaders and members, leaders of HIV/AIDS groups, school directors, nurses, leaders of home stay groups, village health volunteers, and directors of child care centers (88)

- **Beneficiaries:** Non-formal/day care teachers, school teachers, SAO staff, health staff and volunteers, district officers, community leaders and members including leaders and members of weaving, wood carving, and organic fertilizer groups (61)
- **Host family Members:** Families the Volunteer lived next door to, rented a room or house from, or were very close to during all or part of their service (22)
- **Stakeholders:** Current and former SAO directors, DLA or other local officials, non-governmental organization (NGO) staff, school directors, local police, village chiefs, sub-district chiefs, community organization leaders, and ministry officials (42)

**Table 1: Number and Type of Respondents: Thailand CBOD Project**

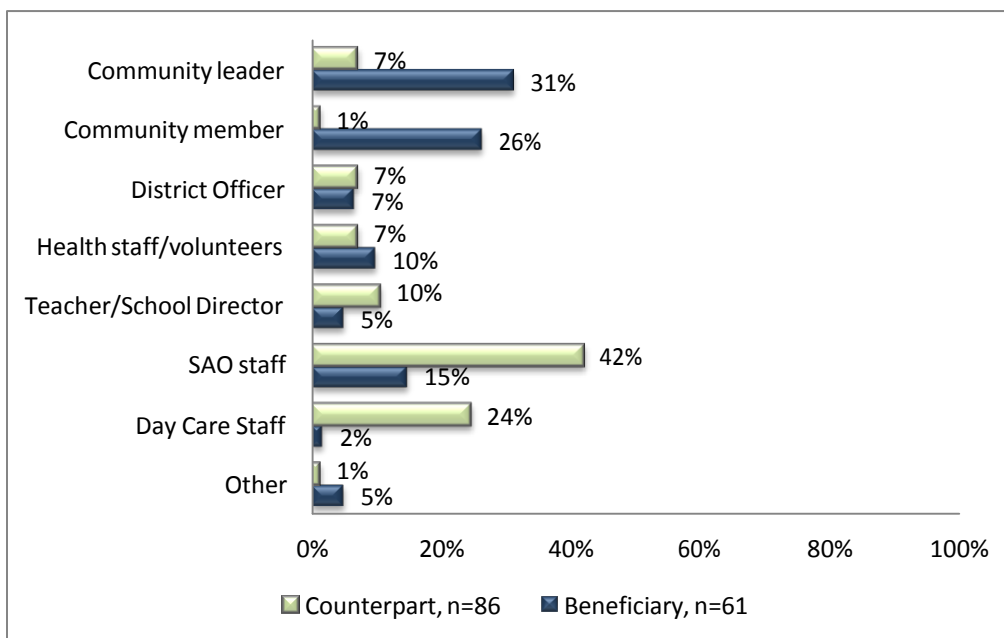
Interview Type	Number of Respondents	Number of Sites
Counterparts	88	25
Beneficiaries	61	25
Host Family Members	22	25
Stakeholders	42	Unknown
<b>Total</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>27</b>

Counterparts were primarily SAO staff (42%) and day care teachers (24%) (Figure 2).<sup>12</sup> Beneficiaries were members of the community (57%) working on the project as community leaders (31%) and community members (26%)(Figure 2). Community leaders included the heads of the lumber association, the women’s weaving group, and other associations. District officers and health staff fell into both groups. Students made up the majority of interviewees classified as “other.”

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<sup>12</sup> The percentages in this graph do not total 100 percent because respondents were allowed to mark “all that apply.”

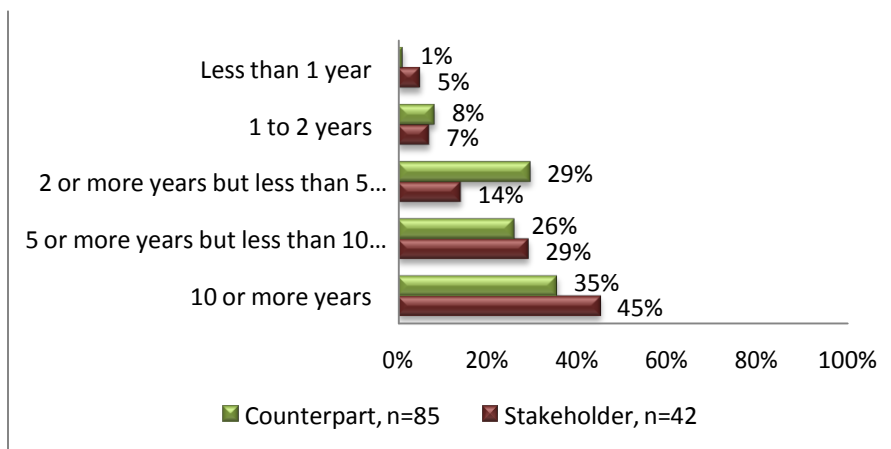
**Figure 2: Background of Counterparts and Beneficiaries**



Host mothers and fathers comprised the largest group of host family respondents (41%) followed by landlords and neighbors (36% each). The majority of stakeholders were SAO Directors (57%) followed by DLA or other local officials (26%).

Thirty-five percent of counterparts had ten or more years of experience in their field, as do forty-five percent of stakeholders. Thirty-eight percent of stakeholders had known about Peace Corps activities for one to two years, including eight respondents who had been in their field for ten or more years. Fifty percent of stakeholders had known about Peace Corps activities for two to ten years.

**Figure 3: Experience Levels of Counterparts and Stakeholders**



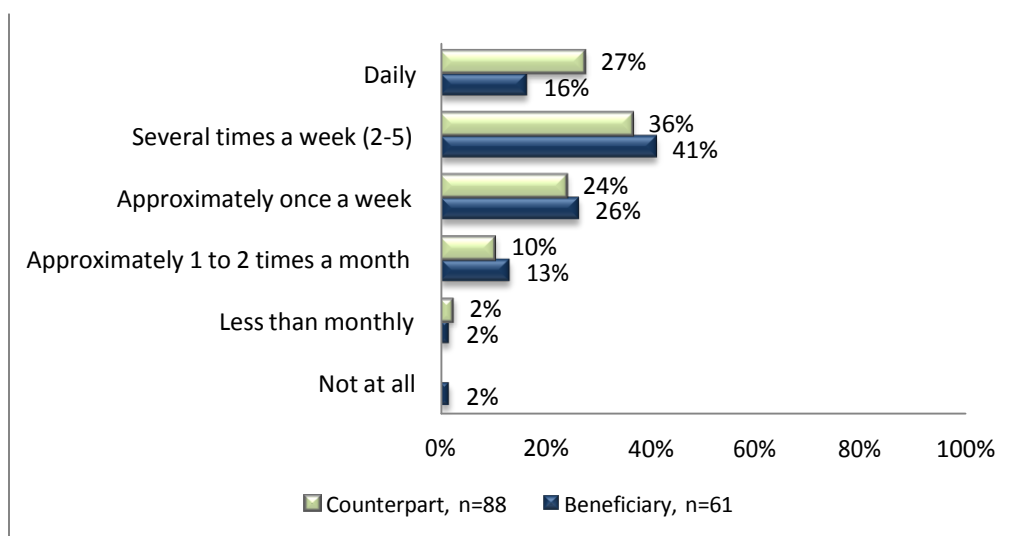
## CHAPTER 2: GOAL ONE FINDINGS

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 purpose of the CBOD Project is to improve communities' access to resources and opportunities in business, services, and education through increased confidence, skill acquisition, and training.

### Frequency of Interaction with Volunteers

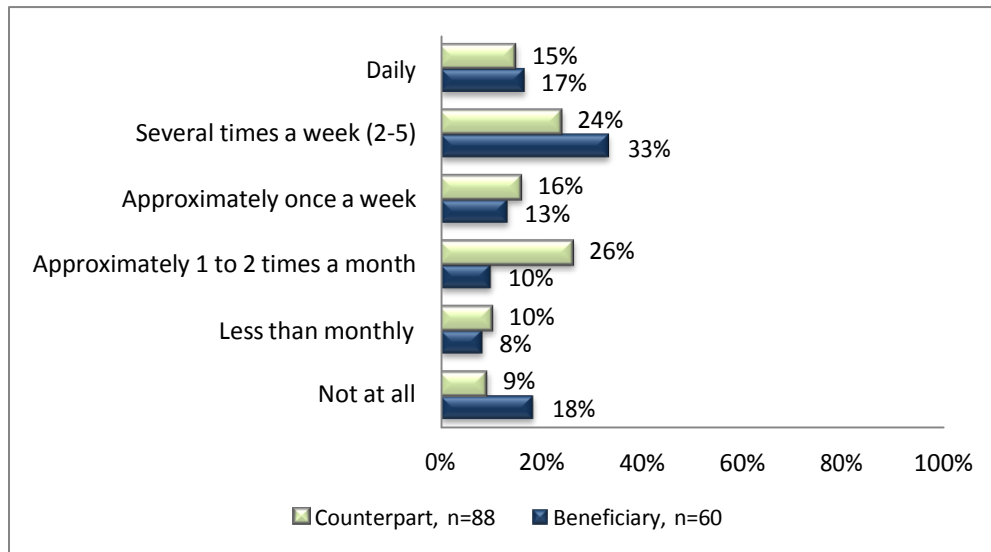
Whether at work or socializing outside of work, project participants interacted frequently with the Volunteers. The majority of counterparts (63%) and beneficiaries (57%) worked with the Volunteer either daily or two to five times a week (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Frequency of Interaction with Volunteer during Work**



Outside of work, the largest group beneficiaries interacted with Volunteers several times a week (33%) while the largest group of counterparts interacted with the Volunteer a few times a month (26%) (Figure 5). Twice as many beneficiaries (18%) never socialized with the Volunteer outside of work as the counterparts (9%).

**Figure 5: Frequency of Interaction with Volunteer Outside of Work**



## Project Activities

Volunteers working in the CBOD Project are expected to achieve the project goals through specific activities outlined in the project plan, as well as through community-generated activities at the grassroots level. These activities also strengthen the capacity building opportunities that support Goal One of Peace Corps.

The project plan outlines eight types of activities to support the project goals:

1. Networking and Communication
  - a. Conducting needs assessments
  - b. Network building to share resources
2. Professional and Leadership Development
  - a. Creating training opportunities through the SAOs
  - b. Providing consultation services in professional development
  - c. Building health and environmental awareness
3. Technical and Organizational Skill Building
  - a. Training and support for business skills
  - b. Training and support in project planning and management
  - c. Using ICT

According to *counterparts, beneficiaries* and *stakeholders*, Volunteers implemented seven of the eight project activities and initiated three additional activities. Over half of the respondents (53%) described Volunteers conducting professional and leadership development activities. Respondents most often described activities related to health and environmental awareness (63%). These activities included work with HIV/AIDS groups, drug and alcohol prevention camps, and nutrition classes.

Counterparts and beneficiaries described a variety of activities in these areas:

*[The Volunteer] set up a project to look after HIV-infected people, starting from a situational analysis, then writing[a] proposal to get funding, coordinating activities among concerned parties and developing a work plan together with district hospital staff.*

*[The Volunteer] organized life skills [classes] for drug abuse and HIV prevention camps, including content/activities on sexuality and sex education and alcoholic consumption.*

Environmental awareness activities centered heavily on waste management and reforestation projects.

Respondents reported that training opportunities for community members were not provided through the local SAO as outlined in the project plan. Instead, training was conducted independently of the SAOs.

Almost half of the respondents described working on technical and organizational skill building activities. Overwhelmingly, respondents reported activities that developed business skills and marketing opportunities (87%). Income generation activities included silk weaving, organic composting, starting a bakery, sewing, bee keeping, and woodcarving. Project planning (15%) and using information communication technology (5%) comprised the other activities in this goal. Volunteers delivered the business skills training directly to business groups and associations while project planning and using ICT were delivered primarily to SAO staff.

The business skills activities were reported by respondents as projects to create and use organic fertilizer, develop tourism opportunities, and work with producer groups, such as weavers, wood carvers, and food processing groups. For example, counterparts explained:

*[The Volunteer] collected survey[s] and recorded information about the number of foreign visitors to the community each year; conducted PR activities to promote tourism; set up home stay groups, and conducted marketing activities using information from the survey.*

*[The Volunteer] encouraged children and youth in the community to participate in community development activities such as planting more trees in community forests, collecting waste around the village area and playing sports.*

A few Volunteers worked with these groups to develop products that could be part of the *One Tambon, One Product* (OTOP) program developed by the RTG.



When asked to describe the activities of Volunteers, counterparts and beneficiaries did not mention activities related to networking or conducting needs assessments. However, respondents described these activities later in the interview when answering other questions. Beneficiaries felt the needs assessment allowed the Volunteer to work collaboratively with the community while also providing them a way to create “good relationships” that led to better participation. Community members with HIV/AIDS and health workers reported developing networks more often than other beneficiaries. Counterparts, who were primarily SAO staff, did not report any activities for this goal.

Eighteen percent of the respondents reported that Volunteers did not conduct any project activities. Of those respondents, most stated the Volunteer worked as a teacher at a day care center or primary school (67%). Teaching English was not part of the project plan, but according to respondents, many Volunteers worked in this area as their primary activity. In many cases, community members and SAO staff believed learning English from a native speaker was the greatest community need. For example:

*[The Volunteer] introduced activities to promote child development at day care centers such as \*...+ drawing, painting, paper cutting, pairing of objects/pictures and outdoor exercises.*

In other cases, counterparts reported that Volunteers did not have the technical skills or community development experience required to conduct the CBOD Project activities. In these cases, the counterpart assigned the Volunteers to teach English instead.

A few respondents described Volunteers who wrote grants or did “beautification” projects and Volunteers who only did cross-cultural activities, such as participating in traditional ceremonies. Some respondents described Volunteers who only did data entry at the SAO or “counted pills” at the health station. A small group of beneficiaries and counterparts connected with the SAO offices consistently remarked throughout their interviews that communities and SAO offices had already implemented many activities outlined in the project and the Volunteer only supported these existing efforts. For example,

*Communities had already implemented activities that were initiated by the SAO. The Volunteer played a supplementary role.*

In other words, some Volunteers did not contribute any new activities or changes to the community, according to respondents.

## **Intended Outcomes**

Project activities seek to produce specific outcomes that meet project goals, and in so doing highlight the extent to which Peace Corps’ meets its primary goal of transferring technical skills and building local capacity. Performance under the Peace Corps’ Goal One was examined in three ways based on the intended outcomes of the project:

1. The extent to which local participants observed community and personal changes, and reported gaining new technical skills.
2. The extent to which the capacity for maintaining the changes was in place once the project ended.
3. The extent to which the project met the community and personal needs of local participants.

Training provided by Volunteers is one method for increasing the technical capacity of community members and one of the immediate outputs of any Peace Corps project. The training received by counterparts and beneficiaries, and the extent to which training enhanced their skills, is presented first. Intended outcomes observed by the project partners at the community-level are presented second, followed by the individual-level changes respondents reported.

### **Training Received**

According to the project plan, training for counterparts and beneficiaries in the CBOD Project covers business skills, community needs assessment, environmental awareness, health, ICT and research, professional development, and project management.

Overall, most counterparts and beneficiaries received training in professional development, and health and environmental awareness (Figure 6). Professional development training included income generation, packaging design and other marketing techniques, and food preservation techniques.

One exception is notable, however. Counterparts most frequently mentioned receiving English training (41%, “Other”) (Figure 6). English language training was not part of the expected project training or activities, and Volunteers may not have received teacher training prior to arriving in site.

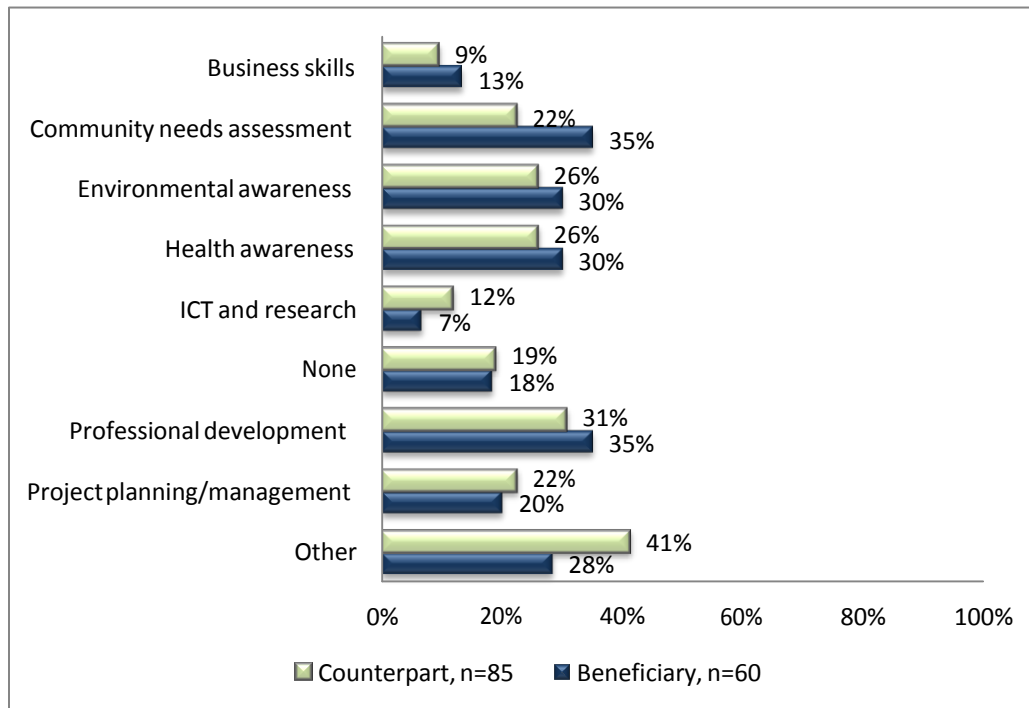
Nearly twenty percent of both counterparts, (19%) and beneficiaries (18%) stated they received no training. However, the Thai research team observed that a significant number of respondents explained their capacity had been built through on-the-job coaching and day-to-day contact with the Volunteers, a second way of transferring skills. According to the research team, “This face-to-face interaction allowed for mutual exchange of ideas, lessons, and modeling of good practices” with a focus on how to apply the knowledge in real work situations.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Dr. Walaitat Woraku. *Peace Corps Host Country Impact Assessment, Thailand Report. 2011.*

On-the-job coaching may have been the preferred method for Volunteers to teach business skills to small business owners or participants in income generation projects. A small portion of counterparts (9%) and beneficiaries (13%) reported training in business skill development despite the high rate of activities conducted by Volunteers in this area.

**Figure 6: Training Received by Counterparts and Beneficiaries**



The majority of respondents in both groups felt the training had enhanced their skills (Figure 7). Thirty-nine percent of counterparts and forty-five percent of beneficiaries believed their skills were significantly enhanced. An additional 41 percent of counterparts and 42 percent of beneficiaries reported the training somewhat enhanced their skills.

The skill most often cited as improving for both respondent groups was speaking English, which was not an intended outcome of the project. The outcome was reported by a diverse group of respondents including formal and non-formal teachers, SAO staff, as well as some community members working in tourism.

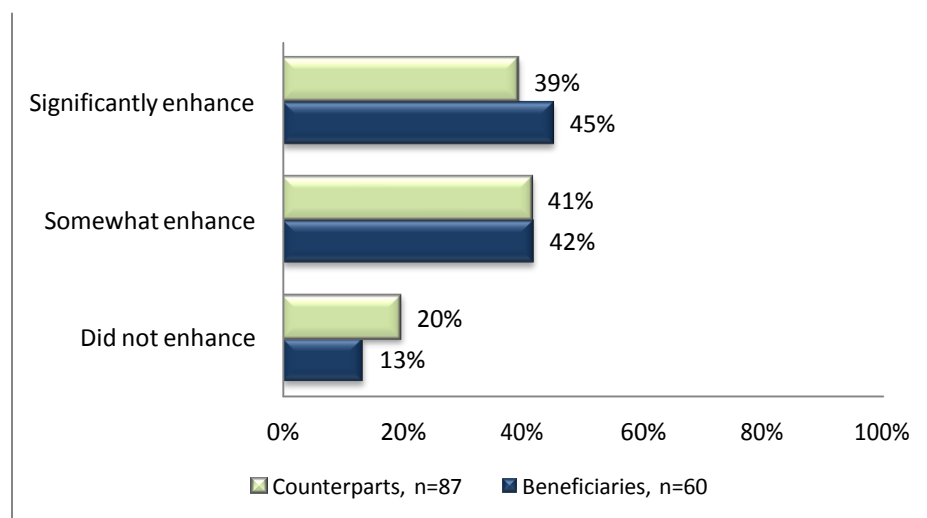
*Students' English skills have improved and they enjoyed learning with the Volunteer. For me, I personally improved my English pronunciations because the Volunteer helped correct me when I was wrong.*

However, many of the respondents also noted that their English skills declined after the Volunteer departed and they no longer spoke English.

The second most frequently reported area of skill improvement for counterparts was in project management, especially in developing youth camps, writing grants, managing day care centers, and in leadership and critical thinking. Beneficiaries' second most improved skill set was in business skills, including marketing, product design, developing and using websites, and bookkeeping. For example:

*Before [the training], our snack-making business got a very low margin. The Volunteer trained us how to analyze the causes of this problem and we were able to improve our weakness and develop our products to meet the One Tambon-One Product [OTOP] standard and increase our sale[s] volume and margins. –Beneficiary*

**Figure 7: Extent Training Enhanced Skills of Counterparts and Beneficiaries**



Twenty percent of counterparts and thirteen percent of beneficiaries reported the training did not enhance their skills (Figure 7). For example, many counterparts expected to learn English while others stated they passed their skills onto the Volunteer:

*Personally, I haven't gained any skills from working with the Volunteer. On the contrary, I coached the Volunteer on how to work in the rural Thai context. I didn't improve my English skills either because the Volunteer wanted to speak Thai all the time. – Counterpart*

*I never apply anything because I got almost nothing from the Volunteer. In fact, I taught the Volunteer to do the work most of the time. –Counterpart*

## Community-Level Change

The project theory of change (Figure 1) generated a list of project outcomes. Counterparts, beneficiaries, and stakeholders were asked about changes in the following community-level outcomes:

1. Ability of communities to support and sustain their own development priorities
2. Ability of communities to identify and solve their own problems
3. Ability of SAO or other government offices to deliver services
4. Awareness of health and environmental problems
5. Communities and government optimizing local resources
6. Using participatory project design and management

Counterparts, beneficiaries, and stakeholders were asked a series of questions about the project outcomes. For each project outcome, respondents were asked if changes had occurred and about the direction of those changes, whether the community's needs had been met, and, where applicable, whether the change had been maintained after the Volunteer departed.

## Changes Resulting from the Project

Counterparts and beneficiaries reported high rates of change for all project outcomes, especially improved awareness of health and environmental problems (Figure 8 and 9).<sup>14</sup> One beneficiary commented:

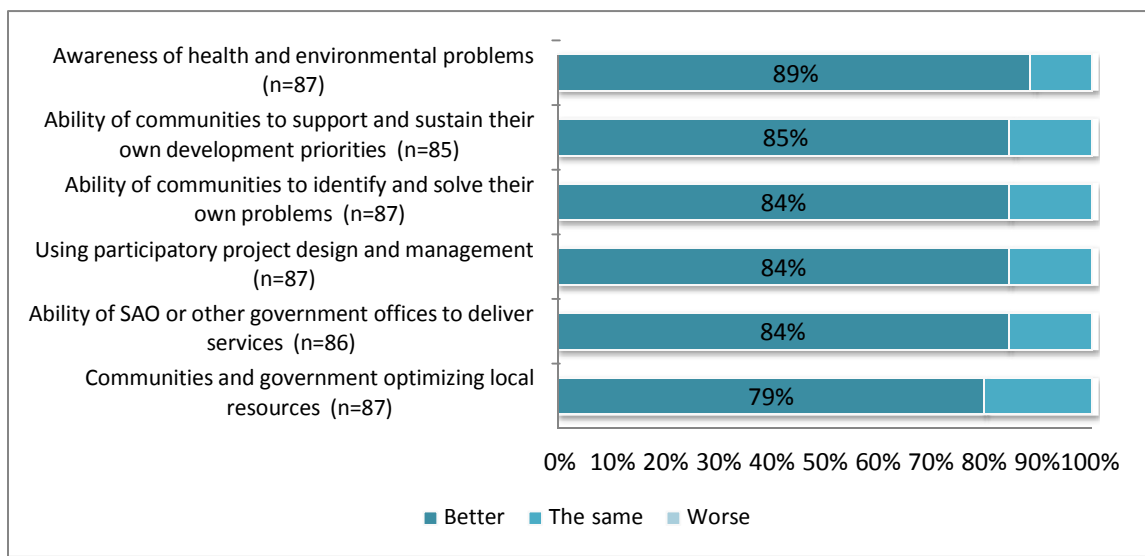
*Young people have increased awareness about drugs and HIV issues because we engaged people who were directly affected by the problems to share their experience in the training of young people.*

The consistency of these responses suggests that improved health and environmental awareness was the most significant change resulting from the project.

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<sup>14</sup> Respondents were asked about the extent to which they saw changes related to each outcome in their community, business, or government office on the following scale: much better; somewhat better; the same; somewhat worse; and much worse. OSIRP grouped the "much better" and "somewhat better" responses into one category called "better." The categories of "somewhat worse" and "worse" were grouped into a single category called "worse." This resulted in the following scale: better, the same, and worse.

**Figure 8: Counterpart Assessment of Community Changes Related to Project Outcomes**



However, counterparts and beneficiaries more often disagreed about the community-level changes and beneficiaries reported higher levels of change than counterparts. For example, counterparts (SAO staff) felt communities were better able to support and sustain their own development priorities (85%) and identify and solve their own problems (84%) (Figure 8). In contrast, beneficiaries (community members) did not rate these outcomes as high (Figure 9). In other words, the SAO staff felt communities were better able to identify and manage problems, set development priorities, and find solutions on their own while community members reported they still needed the support of the SAO. This discrepancy may indicate possible areas for conflict and misunderstanding between the SAOs and communities in terms of services provided to communities.

Counterparts (84%) also rated the ability of the SAO or other government offices to deliver services higher than beneficiaries. These counterparts give examples of the Volunteers' impact:

*The project to build up the capacity of SAO which the Volunteer initiated won the prize in the Inter-SAO Innovative Contest. Other SAOs became interested to get PCVs to work for them because most of them never had a project on good governance and administration.*

*In-depth analysis of the community's needs was conducted and activities were planned according to these needs.*

Counterparts, who were primarily SAO staff, believed they had improved their own ability to provide services while beneficiaries (75%) felt the SAOs only improved somewhat.

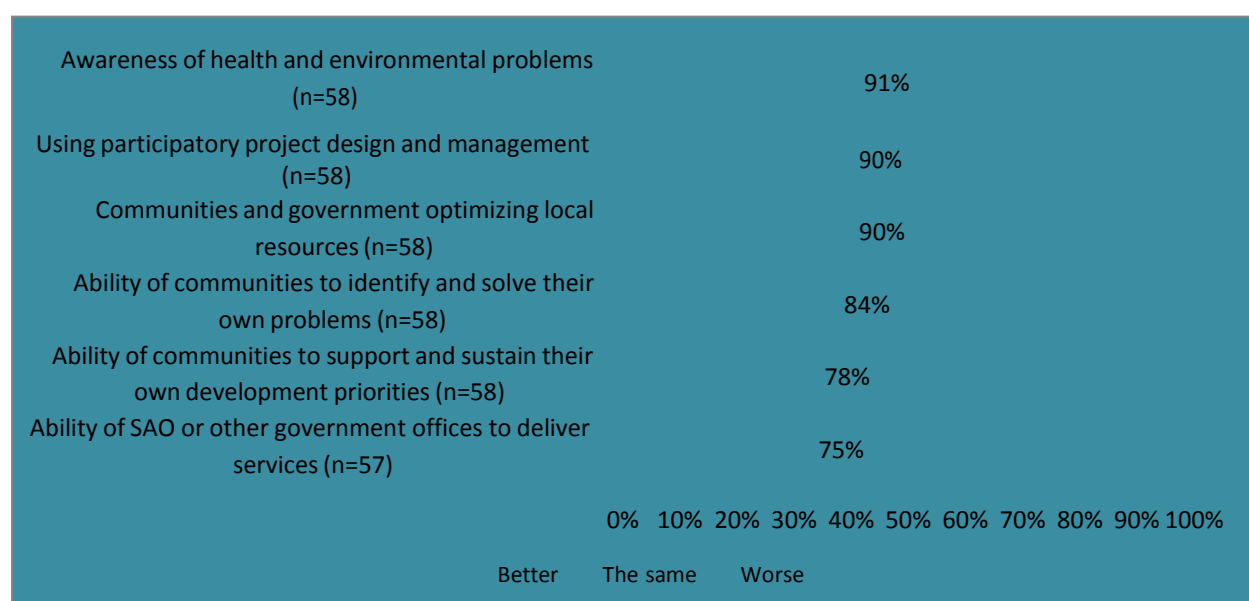
Beneficiaries reported significant changes in using participatory project design (90%) and communities and governments optimizing local resources (90%) (Figure 9). Beneficiaries described some of these changes:

*The SAO adopted participatory planning processes and used good governance principles to engage communities in managing eco-tourism projects.*

*Before our group produced only curry puff [appetizers], but the Volunteer motivated us to think of other local materials which could be used as raw ingredients for our group's product. So we ended up making bread with different kinds of fruit jam.*

These conflicting opinions highlight different expectations and needs between counterparts and beneficiaries.

**Figure 9: Beneficiary Assessment of Community Changes Related to Project Outcomes**



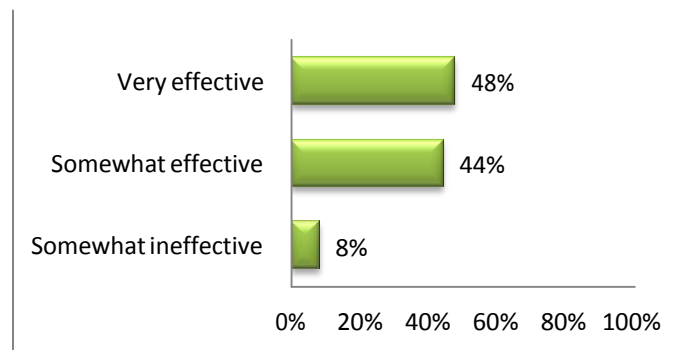
In a separate question, counterparts and beneficiaries were asked to name the most positive outcome of the CBOD project. The majority of counterparts and beneficiaries named improved teaching methods and English speaking skills.<sup>15</sup> Since English education was not part of the project plan, these responses suggest that communities viewed English skills as a significant community need.

<sup>15</sup> Respondents were not asked about outcomes related to speaking English during the matrix questions, since this was not an intended outcome of the project.

The second most cited positive change was improved health and environmental awareness, confirming that an increased awareness of health and environmental issues was the most significant change resulting from the project for all participants. Income generation activities, or improved business practices, was the third most significant change resulting from the project, according to beneficiaries and counterparts.

In another question, *counterparts* (n=86) were asked how effective Volunteers' work was overall in building community capacity (Figure 10). Ninety-two percent stated the activities were very effective (48%) or somewhat effective (44%) in building community capacity.

**Figure 10: Effectiveness of Volunteers' Work in Building Community Capacity**



### Sustainability of Community Change

Respondents were asked to assess the extent to which the changes had been maintained by the community on the following scale: yes, to some extent, and no.<sup>16</sup> Overall, *beneficiaries* felt the changes had been sustained to a greater extent than counterparts (Figures 11 and 12).

Counterparts and beneficiaries both reported that two changes had been sustained more than others: improved awareness of health and environmental problems, and communities and governments optimizing local resources. *Counterparts* (97%) and beneficiaries (98%) reported communities had sustained their awareness of health and environmental problems completely or to some extent (Figure 11 and 12). For example, this counterpart and beneficiary reported:

*The HIV prevention campaign was continued and the SAO still conducts training on HIV prevention for youth groups. The moral training camp was continued. These continued because the SAO found another resource person to replace the Volunteer [when they left]. –Beneficiary*

*The community participated more in activities organized by the SAO. For example, the number of health Volunteers for HIV work had increased. The HIV Friends for Friends Network is still strong and known to many people outside community. –Counterpart*

<sup>16</sup> Respondents were also given a choice of “unsure” but these responses were not included for this analysis.



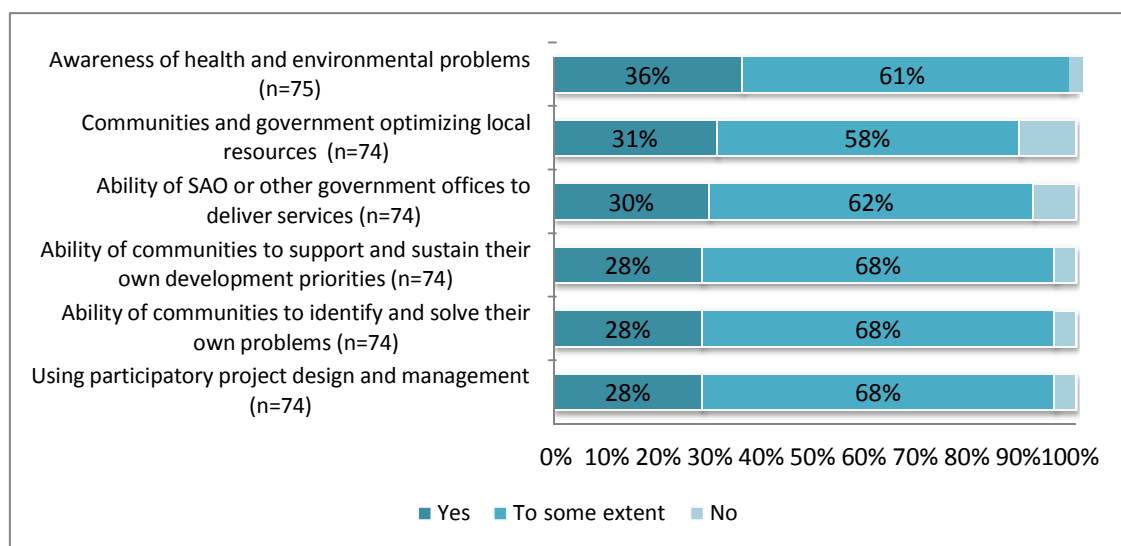
The high levels of sustained activity for this outcome combined with the high rates of change reported by counterparts and beneficiaries suggest improved community health and environmental conditions have continued and expanded.

Counterparts (89%) and beneficiaries (90%) felt communities and local governments continued to optimize local resources completely or to some extent after the Volunteer completed their service. Activities related to starting or expanding new businesses were frequently cited by beneficiaries as evidence, for example:

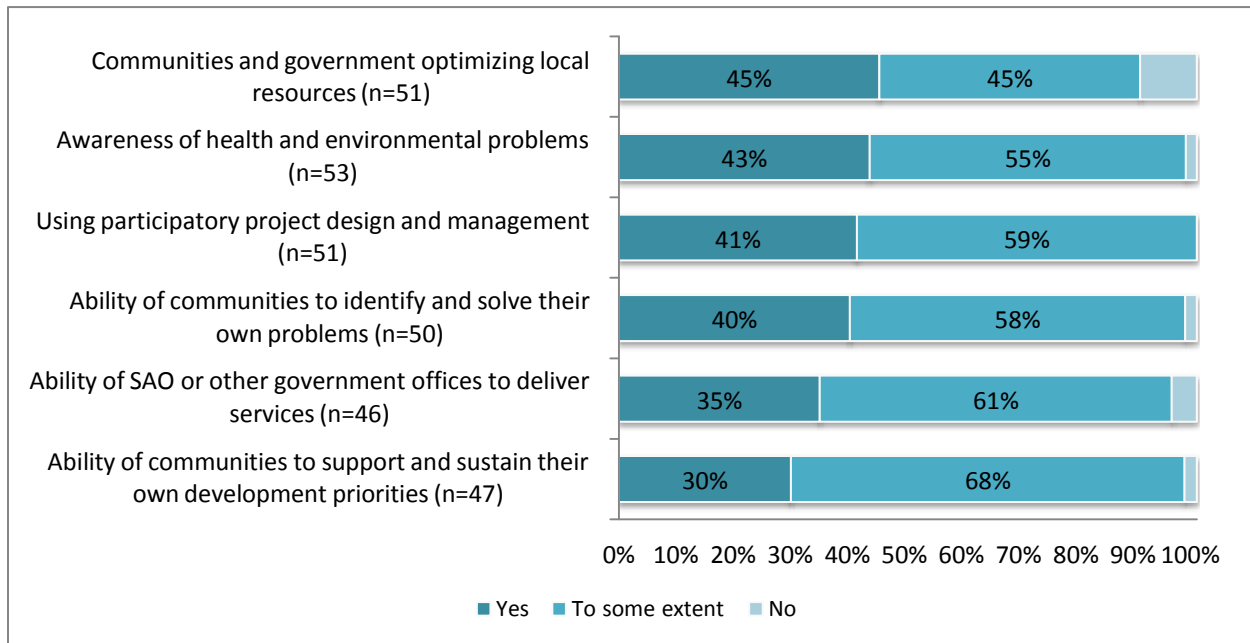
*We still use local raw materials, like rice or herbs, to make snacks. The products became popular and orders increased.* –Beneficiary

Beneficiaries (100%) felt communities had completely or to some extent sustained their ability to use participatory project design (Figure 12). In contrast, counterparts rated this as the least sustained activity (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Counterpart Assessment of Sustainability at the Community Level**



**Figure 12: Beneficiary Assessment of Sustainability at the Community Level**



Counterparts who reported the Volunteer’s work as very or somewhat effective in building community capacity described maintaining planning skills, income generation activities, environmental or health awareness projects, and English or teaching skills. However, the majority of these respondents linked their ability to sustain their own development priorities with the Volunteer’s level of hard work. Conversely, respondents who reported the Volunteer’s work as somewhat ineffective stated that the Volunteer did not work very hard. These responses indicate that the sustainability of these changes is intertwined with the level of work performed by the Volunteer.

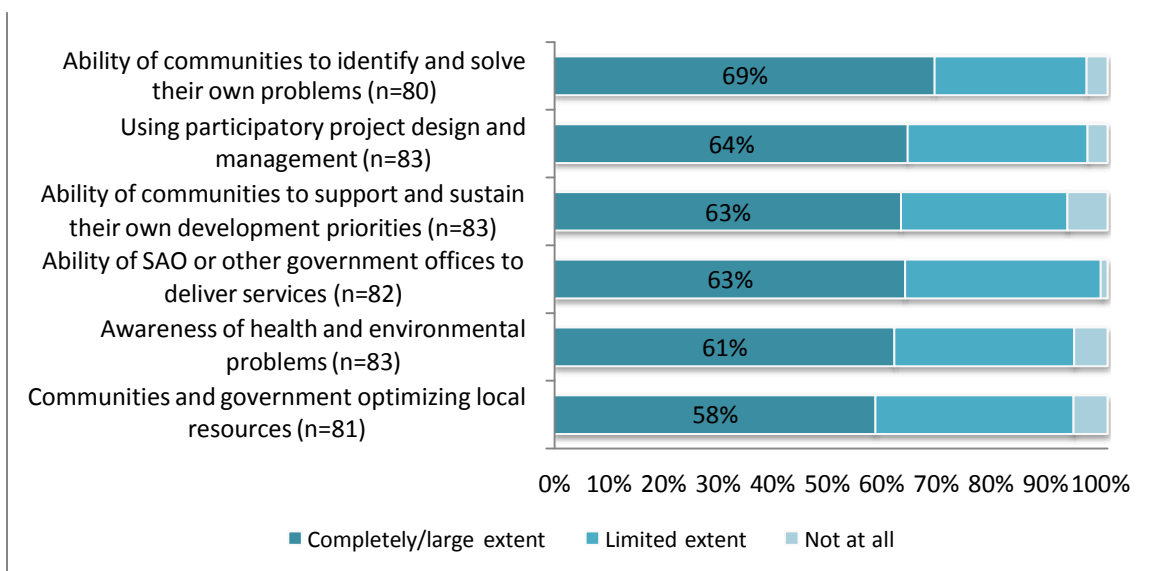
### Extent to which Changes Met Community Needs

Finally, respondents were asked to assess how well the changes met the community’s needs. The outcomes that most met the needs of each group are compared to the findings for observed changes and sustainability. The intersection of the three variables shows which outcomes appear to have had the most impact.

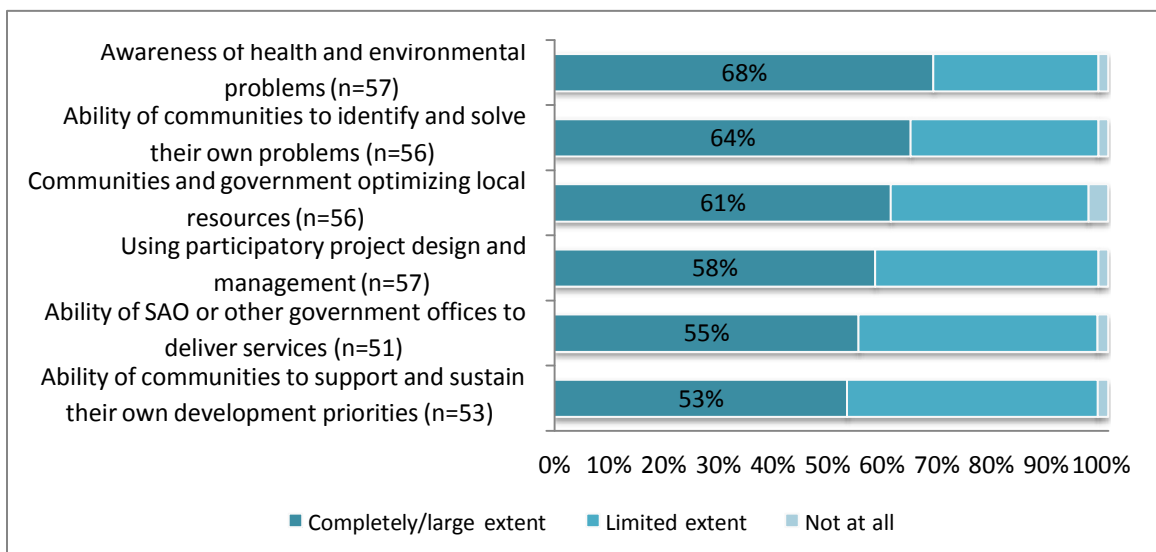
Although *counterparts* reported high rates of change and sustainability for improved health and environmental awareness, only 61 percent believed this outcome best met their needs (Figure 13). Instead, counterparts felt the ability of communities to identify and solve their own problems best met their needs (69%). Since most counterparts were SAO staff, this suggests that SAOs expect the CBOD Project to make communities more self-reliant. *Beneficiaries* (64%) also reported their improved ability to identify and solve their own problems met their needs to large extent (Figure 14). However, this outcome was not one of the top three beneficiaries reported in terms of change or sustainability, suggesting that communities had difficulty becoming more self-reliant.

The outcome that *beneficiaries* (68%) most often stated met their needs was an increased awareness of health and environmental problems (Figure 14). Beneficiaries also rated this outcome highly in terms of level of change and sustainability (Figures 9 and 12). Beneficiaries reported that communities and governments optimizing local resources also met their needs (61%), which they rated highly for observed and sustained change. Overall, beneficiaries viewed their increased awareness of health and environmental problems, and their ability to optimize local resources as the most successful outcomes from the project.

**Figure 13: Counterpart Assessment of How Well Changes Met Community Needs**



**Figure 14: Beneficiary Assessment of How Well Changes Met Community Needs**



These different responses from counterparts and beneficiaries regarding needs indicate not only conflicting perceptions of capacity building between SAOs and community members, but also differing opinions in community needs and how to address those needs. Communities report difficulties sustaining activities that enable them to solve problems, such as project design and management. Part of the difficulty, according to respondents, is that solving the problem requires communities and government offices to work together (discussed later), which remain a challenge for communities.

Although counterparts and beneficiaries rated the project outcomes highly for meeting their needs, many commented that teaching English would better meet their needs than community development. For example, this counterpart explained,

*We would like to have the Volunteer teach English and Western culture to people in our community because we have many foreign tourists visiting our community. We would like to have the Volunteer teach English at school because we need help with English teaching rather than community development. Our community is quite strong and capable of helping ourselves with development activities.*

Among *stakeholders*, 54 percent reported that the increased awareness of health and environmental problems met their needs completely or to a large extent (n=39), supporting the beneficiaries' assessment of community needs.

### **Changes at the Individual Level**

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

1. Your ability to identify and solve problems
2. Your ability to deliver quality services or sustain development priorities
3. Your awareness of health and environmental problems
4. Your ability to optimize local resources
5. Your ability to use participatory project design and management

Counterparts and beneficiaries were asked about individual-level project outcomes through a series of questions. For each individual outcome derived from the project plan, respondents were asked if changes had occurred and about the direction of those changes, whether their needs had been met, and, where applicable, whether they had maintained the change after the Volunteer departed. Stakeholders were not asked about individual level changes since they did not work with the Volunteer on a daily basis, and were more involved in the design and implementation of the project.

## Individual Changes Resulting from the Project

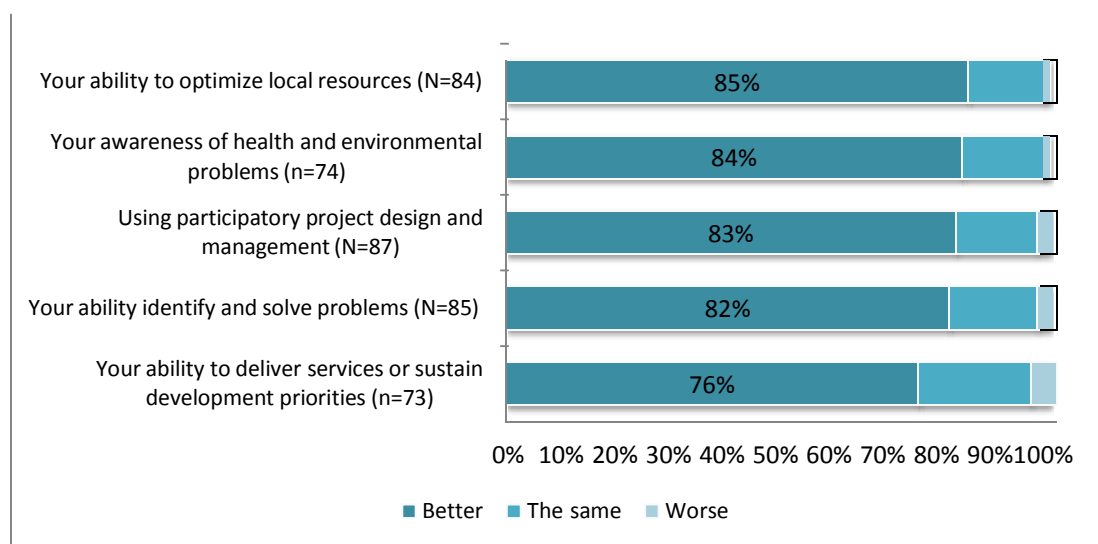
Overall, a majority of both *counterparts* and *beneficiaries* felt their technical skills had improved as a result of working with the Volunteer. Furthermore, counterparts and beneficiaries agreed on the top three personal changes they experience. More beneficiaries, however, reported stronger levels of change.

*Counterparts* (85%) and *beneficiaries* (88%) felt they had improved their ability to optimize local resources (Figures 15 and 16). Interestingly, counterparts did not report optimizing local resources showed a large change at the community level, suggesting that respondents believed they are better able to accomplish this individually than as a community.

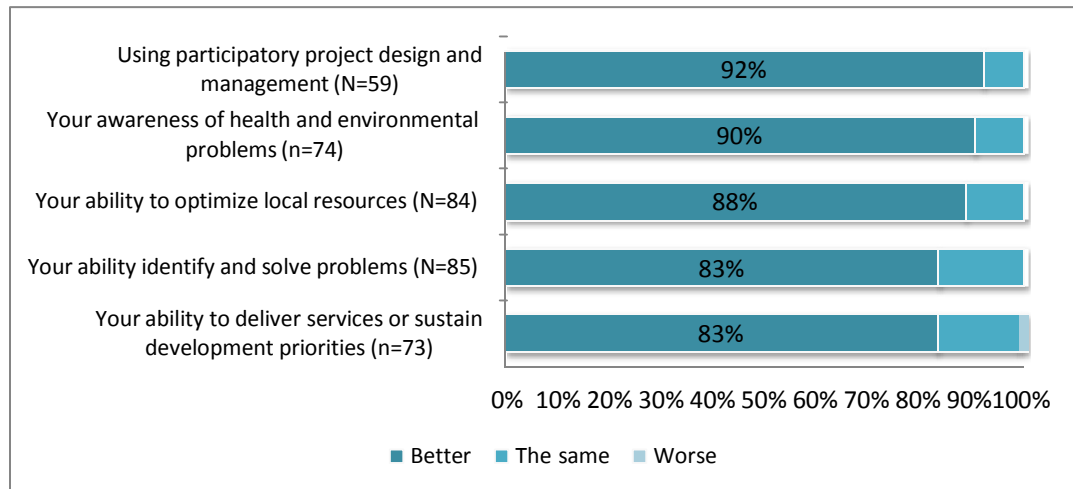
Beneficiaries (90%) and counterparts (84%) reported increasing their personal awareness of health and environmental problems, supporting the reported changes at the community level for both respondent groups. Increased use of participatory project design and management also showed high rates of change for counterparts (83%) and beneficiaries (92%).

These results mirror the community-level changes reported by beneficiaries, suggesting that beneficiaries overwhelmingly felt these three outcomes showed the biggest change at the community and personal level.

**Figure 15: Counterpart Assessment of Individual Changes Related to Project Outcomes**



**Figure 16: Beneficiary Assessment of Individual Changes Related to Project Outcomes**

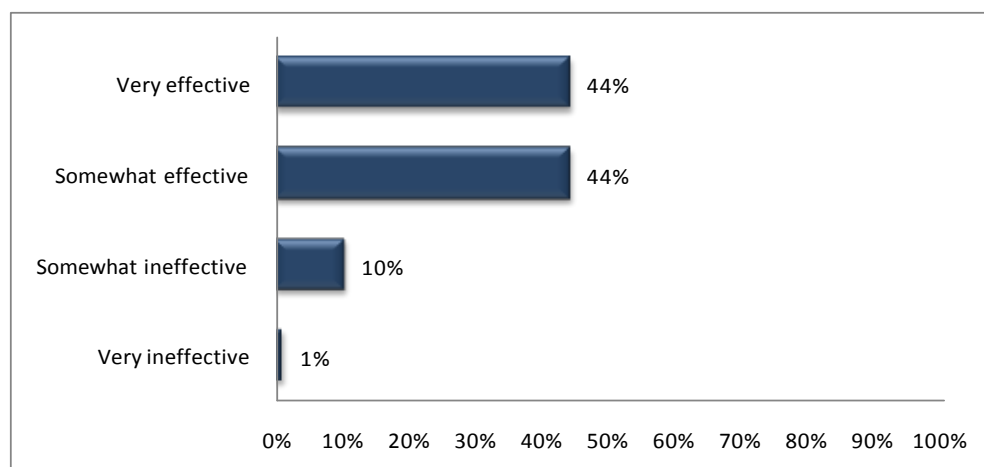


In a separate question, *counterparts* (n=86) were asked how effective Volunteers' work was overall in building their individual capacity (Figure 17). Forty-four percent stated the activities were very effective in building their capacity and another forty-four percent reported that the activities had been somewhat effective in building their capacity.

Counterparts who reported the Volunteers' work as very effective felt their capacity had been built because the Volunteer worked hard and they had gained planning and income generation skills. Counterparts reporting the Volunteer's work as somewhat effective noted the following project shortcomings:

- Volunteers lacked the right skills or were too shy
- The short length of the project (two years) did not give participants enough time to complete the activities, and build their capacity

**Figure 17: Effectiveness of Volunteers' Work in Building Individual Capacity**



## Sustainability of Individual Changes

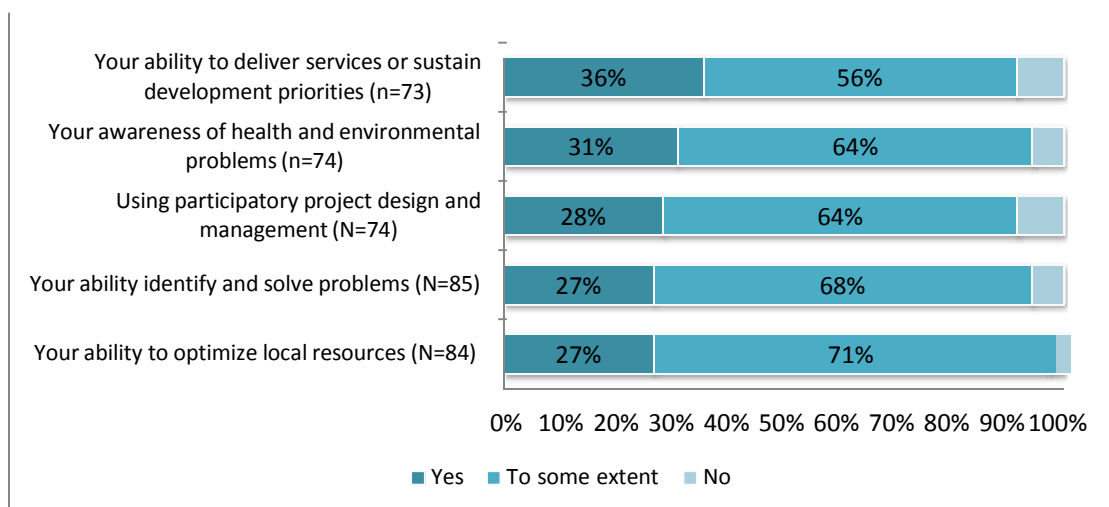
Overall, *counterparts* and *beneficiaries* said the individual changes had been sustained to some extent. Counterparts and beneficiaries rated the same two outcomes as largely sustained; however, beneficiaries believed all outcomes had been sustained to a greater extent than counterparts.

Counterparts (95%) and beneficiaries (98%) reported their improved awareness of health and environmental problems had been fully sustained or to some extent (Figures 18 and 19). Both respondent groups also rated this outcome highly in terms of individual levels of change. This beneficiary described the activities and behaviors they continued to practice:

*My personal attitude has changed. I am more aware of the negative impact from the use of chemicals on my farm. Now I turn to organic compost.*

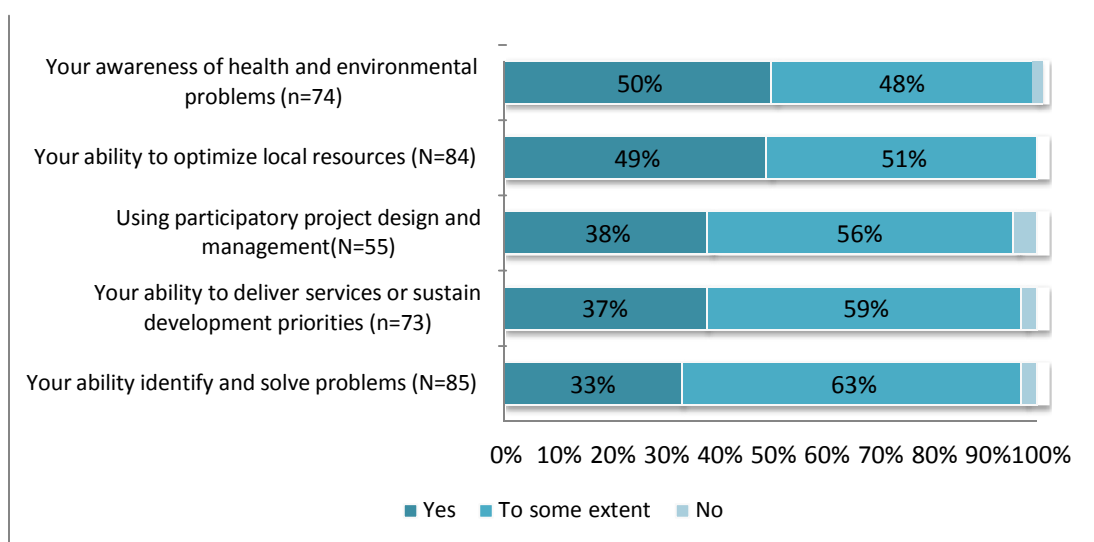
Beneficiaries (94%) and counterparts (92%) also agreed that they had individually sustained their skills in using participatory project design and management either fully (38% and 28%) or to some extent (56% and 64%) (Figures 18 and 19).

**Figure 18: Counterpart Assessment of Sustainability at the Individual Level**



Whereas all the beneficiaries (100%) stated they had fully (49%) to somewhat (51%) sustained their personal ability to optimize local resources, counterparts rated this outcome as the least sustained, suggesting that beneficiaries, who were primarily community members seeking resources, continue to optimize the networks they created during the project. For example, vocational group members described continued use of local ingredients in producing food products and HIV/AIDS group members described accessing local health and nutritional support in their qualitative statements throughout the interviews.

**Figure 19: Beneficiary Assessment of Sustainability at the Individual Level**



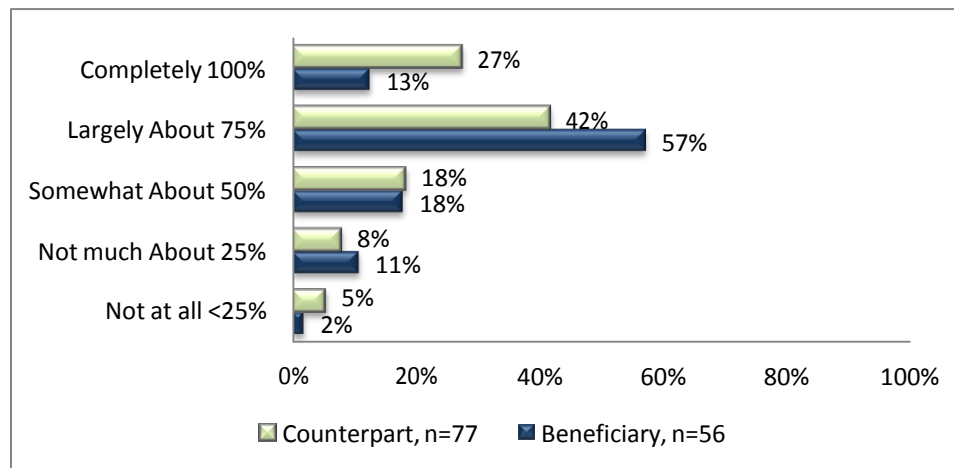
In a separate question, the majority of counterparts (69%) and beneficiaries (70%) reported they had completely or to a large extent maintained the changes from the project (Figure 20).

Respondents explained that teaching methods and HIV/AIDS activities had been completely to largely maintained, including networks and training for HIV/AIDS patients. The senior researcher reported that hospital counterparts continued HIV projects and networked with the SAOs more to reach HIV groups. These counterparts also adopted holistic healthcare approaches to working with HIV/AIDS patients. This counterpart explained:

*We are able to mobilize community members to engage in the hospital's HIV prevention program. We have more HIV voluntary workers from communities. The Peer-for-Peer network is well known to people outside the sub-district and they are often visited by infected groups from other districts/provinces. The Volunteer's work was highly admired by the provincial chief of public health office. After the Volunteer left, people in the communities continued to support activities of HIV-infected groups.*



**Figure 20: Extent to which Counterparts and Beneficiaries Maintained Changes**



Income generation activities, especially organic fertilizer production, had also been completely to largely maintained, according to respondents. The senior researcher's report detailed that in cases where the Volunteer advised the groups on improving their product designs and packaging, these efforts attracted new customers, more orders, and expanded the groups' markets.

According to the senior researcher, most SAOs continue to apply participatory planning approaches and have adopted participatory data collection and consultation processes. The SAOs also use databases developed by the Volunteers. Finally, some SAOs have reduced their support to community development activities citing the communities' ability to help themselves after working with a Volunteer.<sup>17</sup>

Respondents reported that English and youth camps had not been maintained or only somewhat maintained. Waste banks and speaking English had also been somewhat maintained, according to respondents.

*Stakeholders* (71%) reported that the changes had been largely maintained or somewhat maintained. Stakeholders commented that they were able to maintain changes because the Volunteers' activities became mandates of their local SAO, suggesting a possible solution to the sustainability problems outlined earlier. However, stakeholders also acknowledged that communities could not continue all of the changes initiated by the Volunteer:

*After the Volunteer left, the people did not participate actively in development activities. They are busy with their own earnings and there was no one to motivate them to work together.*

<sup>17</sup> These were not the same respondents who cited lack of funding from the SAOs as a barrier to project success.

This suggests that the high level of motivation achieved by the Volunteers is difficult to sustain, but necessary for continued community development.

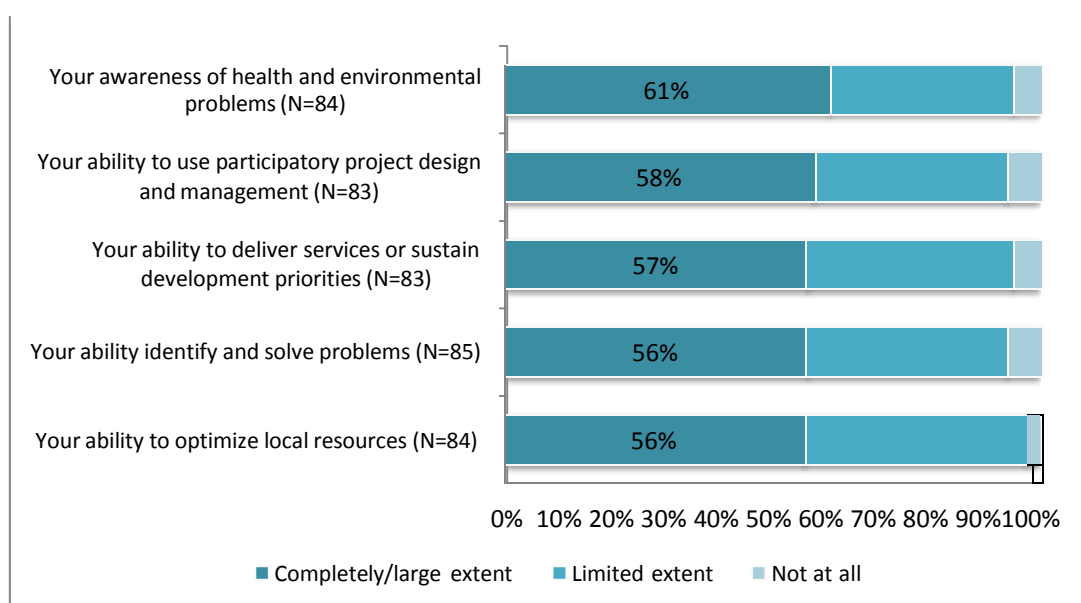
### Extent to which Changes Met Individual Needs

Slightly more than half the *counterparts* reported that each project outcome largely met their individual needs (Figure 20). However, their responses show that counterparts, in several cases, view their individual needs and community needs differently. Beneficiaries reported that outcomes met their needs to a greater extent than counterparts.

Counterparts most often reported that their increased personal awareness of health and environmental problems met their needs completely or to a large extent (61%). However, they reported this outcome did not meet the community level needs. At the individual-level, personal awareness of health and environmental problems was the second most frequently cited change and sustained change among counterparts. In sum, counterparts consider this outcome to have had the most impact on them personally, but less impact on the overall community.

Using participatory project design and management was the second most reported outcome that fully met counterparts' needs (58%). This outcome was also the second highest rated at the community-level for meeting counterparts' needs (64%). At both the community and individual-levels, using new project methods was rated high in terms of change and low in terms of sustainability. This suggests that barriers are preventing these changes from continuing, whether among individuals or communities (discussed in the next section).

**Figure 21: Counterpart Assessment of How Outcomes Met their Individual Needs**

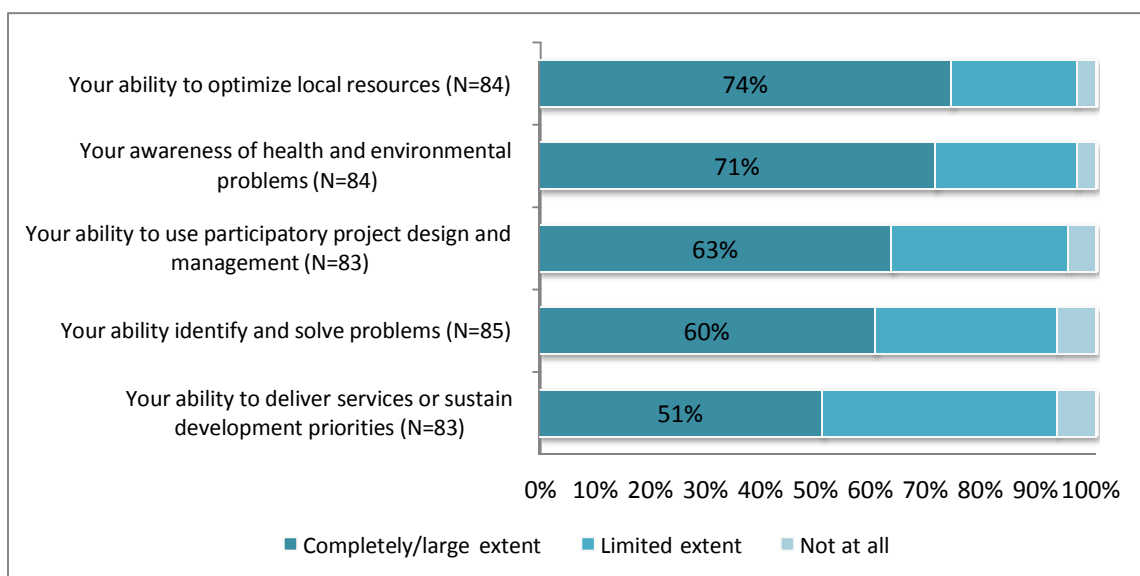


Unlike counterparts, beneficiaries reported their individual and community-level needs were closely aligned. Additionally, beneficiaries revealed their needs were different from those of the counterparts.

Beneficiaries reported that their personal ability to optimize local resources had best met their needs (74%), which they rated highly also at the community-level (61%). This response contrasts with counterparts who reported this outcome least met their individual needs (56%). The counterparts tended to be teachers, SAO staff, and health staff.

Beneficiaries reported that their increased awareness of environmental and health issues also met their personal needs (71%) and their community-level needs (68%). At both the personal and community-levels, beneficiaries reported that this outcome showed high levels of change and sustainability. These findings suggest that an increased awareness of health and environmental issues was institutionalized in personal behavior and extends to community actions.

**Figure 22: Beneficiary Assessment of How Outcomes Met their Individual Needs**

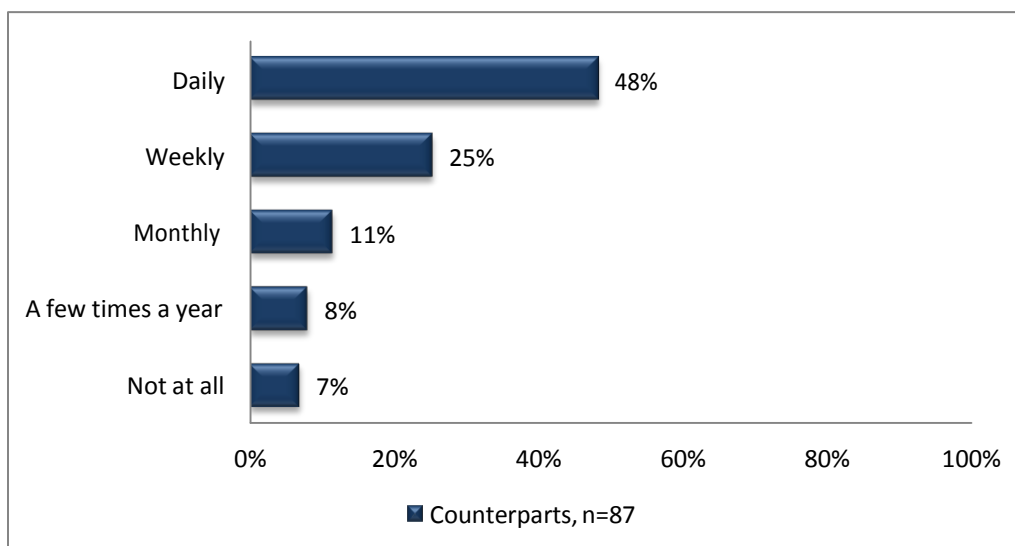


### How Skills are Used Personally and Professionally

Respondents were asked how often they used the skills gained from the project in their professional and personal lives, and which skills they most frequently used.

Forty-eight percent of *counterparts* used the skills they learned during the project on a daily basis for work (Figure 23). More importantly, 88 percent of counterparts who worked with a Volunteer daily or several times a week reported they used the new skills at work on a daily basis.

**Figure 23: Frequency of Skills Used in Professional Life**



The majority of counterparts reported they were more punctual and used better time management skills at work. Other skills used frequently at work included speaking English (especially with foreigners) and project planning and management, including budgeting, grant writing, and computer technology. The value of these new skills is described in the comments below from a counterpart:

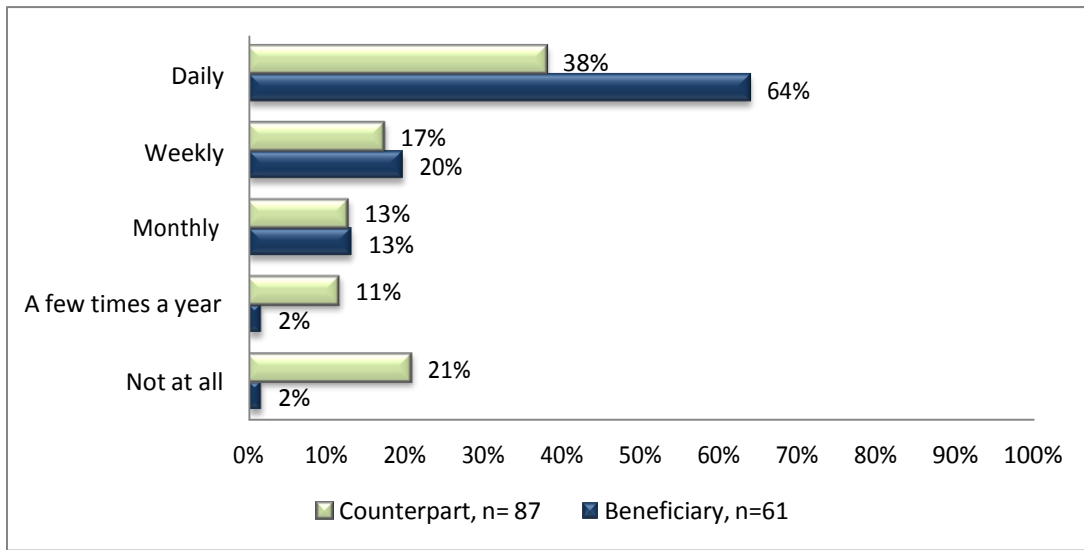
*I learned to write a detailed project proposal with more specific supporting information, such as objectives, activities, and expected outputs. Through this process, I developed analytical thinking skills and was more prudent in my work.*

Several respondents described using a broad range of community development skills, such as community assessments, community mapping, and home visits. For example, this counterpart revealed:

*I myself gained more self-confidence and more new techniques in working with the community and the community was able to conduct community assessments and identify their genuine problems, not problems identified by outsiders. –Counterpart*

Only five respondents reported not learning or not using any skills in their professional lives. In these cases, respondents explained that either they taught the Volunteer or the Volunteer did not work at the SAO very much, and therefore a limited amount of technical skill transfer occurred.

**Figure 24: Frequency of Skills Used in Personal Life**



In their personal lives, 38 percent of counterparts stated they used new skills from the project on a daily basis and almost twice as many *beneficiaries* (64%) reported using new skills daily in their personal lives than counterparts (Figure 23). A very few beneficiaries reported not using any skills in their personal life while almost a quarter of the counterparts said they do not use the skills in their personal lives.

Counterparts and beneficiaries most frequently reported using English skills in their personal lives, including teaching English to children at home. However, several commented that they no longer speak English. Respondents also reported being more friendly and creating more harmonious relationships, that they were more frugal, and paid more attention to their health, especially nutrition.

## Unintended Project Outcomes

Research teams asked respondents to describe other changes and accomplishments resulting from the work of the Volunteer beyond those defined by the project plan.

### Other Changes and Accomplishments

The CBOD Project produced three primary unintended outcomes. First, the majority of counterparts and beneficiaries reported learning English from Volunteers even though teaching English is not part of the CBOD Project.<sup>18</sup> According to respondents, Volunteers taught English in elementary schools and informal schools, such as day care centers.

<sup>18</sup> Peace Corps Thailand maintains a separate English education project.

These activities produced the following outcomes:

- Teachers reported adopting interactive teaching methods and developing new teaching resources
- Students were more motivated to learn English and study
- Students and adults increased their self-confidence in speaking English

In addition, many respondents commented that rural schools such as theirs could not afford to hire or bring in a native speaker to teach English. Respondents noted that having a native speaker in rural schools brought recognition to their school and made them feel valued. In one case, the respondent explained how this helped the school:

*Our school was rather small and the government wanted to close it down but the Volunteer never ignored us. She came here every week to teach students.*—Beneficiary

As a result of Volunteers' education activities, participants gained skills and confidence in teaching and speaking English. One of the project's goals is to strengthen self-esteem, and while the confidence building that resulted from this activity supports that goal, English teaching is not incorporated into the project plan and thus may not be part of the training Volunteers receive for this project. As a result, Volunteers may not be prepared to work in this area.

The second unplanned outcome was that more people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) sought medical, nutritional, and other support from local agencies. Respondents reported seeking more support because they were no longer ashamed to reveal to community members that they had HIV/AIDS. For example, these rural health workers and members of the HIV/AIDS network explained:

*Before only five [HIV/AIDS] infected people disclosed themselves and were on the SAO list, now over fifty HIV infected people have identified themselves to the SAO in order to get support.*—Counterpart

*More HIV infected people felt encouraged to disclose themselves [to the community] and seek support. Before they would hide themselves and didn't integrate with the rest of the community.*—Counterpart

This health worker revealed why the Volunteer's efforts were so successful:

*The method the Volunteer used was to interact with HIV people—eat with them, talk with them, participate in special events, such as New Years with them. The Volunteer also conducted home visits to give them relevant information on how to look after themselves.*—Counterpart

Beneficiaries who were HIV/AIDS patients reported they had more hope in life or that their health had improved. For example:

*I have more hope in life and would like to make others accept us as part of the community. Before, we didn't contact, or open our group to outsiders. Now we established a network of HIV infected people for mutual support. –Beneficiary*

*Before I joined the network, I was rather thin and dark. When I joined the network and disclosed myself [as HIV positive], I learned how to look after myself, so I gained weight. –Beneficiary*

This outcome of hope and improved health moves the CBOD Project well beyond its stated goal of “improving health awareness.” Respondents reported feeling more integrated into the community and service providers felt better able to work with PLWHA. In addition, respondents commented that SAOs provided more services to AIDS patients. For example, these beneficiaries explained that the SAO had established welfare funds for the PLWHA, as well as the elderly, after suggestions made by Volunteers:

*The Volunteer created a fund to look after HIV-infected people and a lunch program for these people. The money was raised by selling the PCV's bicycle.*

*The Volunteer never looked down on HIV-infected people and tried to help them. At the end, HIV-infected people got a monthly allowance of Thai baht 500 from the SAO.*

The third unintended outcome was the construction or expansion of buildings by a few Volunteers (3-4). In one case, the Volunteer and community built an organic fertilizer plant to facilitate income generation while also decreasing the farmers' dependency on chemical fertilizers and improving the environment. In another case, the Volunteer and community expanded the health station building to serve more community members. In both cases, Volunteers and community members raised the money together.

Not all of the unintended outcomes were positive. Several counterparts and SAO staff members believed that teaching English was one of the primary activities of the CBOD Project. They reported being disappointed that the Volunteer did not teach them English and that this may have contributed to their reporting lower satisfaction with the project outcomes.

For example, this SAO Director commented:

*I expected the Volunteer to teach English to SAO staff but found out later that it was not her direct role under the CBOD. So I was a little bit disappointed.*

Comments such as this suggest that SAO staff and other participants were not sufficiently aware of the project goals and activities. In fact, several beneficiaries and counterparts reported they did not know what exactly the Volunteer was supposed to achieve. As a result, some respondents had a difficult time answering interview questions about project accomplishments. In addition, this disappointment among counterparts and beneficiaries led to low satisfaction rates, which will be discussed later.

## **Factors Affecting Project Performance**

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 change was not sustained, and the degree to which the daily interaction with the Volunteer caused the change. This section outlines these factors.

## **Factors Contributing to the Project's Success**

*Counterparts and beneficiaries* overwhelmingly reported that the Volunteer's professional skills were the primary factors in the success of the CBOD Project. Respondents most often cited the Volunteer's willingness to work hard, dedication to the project, and being responsible as qualities that garnered community support, leading to increased participation and change. Respondents also felt that a Volunteer's punctuality and organizational skills helped the project succeed. Many respondents linked these professional skills to the Volunteer's ability to create harmonious relationships within the community. Harmonious behavior is extremely important in Thai culture, and often valued more than working hard. Creating harmonious relations means taking measures to not cause discomfort to, inconvenience for, or impose upon another person. It also means showing respect for elders while always taking into consideration other people's feelings.<sup>19</sup> Beneficiaries and counterparts described how well some Volunteers were able to achieve this Thai social value:

*The Volunteer understood Thai cultural Do's and Don'ts, such as dressing styles, [not] smoking or drinking, and sexual behavior. And the Volunteer could conduct herself properly. Also, the Volunteer paid high attention to her work, worked hard, was punctual and friendly. She could adjust herself to Thai rural living conditions very well.*

*The Volunteer paid high attention to his work and demonstrated hard efforts. Although the Volunteer was relatively young, he was as responsible and tolerant as older adults.*

A few beneficiaries linked these skills with the Volunteer's ability to speak Thai, and thus communicate with the communities. For example,

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas Knutson, Rosechongporn Komolsevin, Pat Chatiket, and Val Smith, "A Cross-cultural Comparison of Thai and US American Rhetorical Sensitivity," in *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27:63-78, 2003.



*The Volunteer's personal and professional skills, such as punctuality, commitment to work, their friendliness and liveliness, and ability to communicate well in Thai helped the project succeed.*

Creating good relationships is extremely important in achieving community development project goals. As evidence, respondents reported the second biggest factor in the success of the project was community support for the Volunteer, including motivation and community participation in the activities. Beneficiaries most often linked their participation with the Volunteer's friendliness and good relations:

*The caring and collaboration from the community and the Volunteer's friendliness and genuine interest to learn about the community's life.*

*The Volunteer got along well with the community; knew the right protocols especially for Thai rural communities. The Volunteer was loved by many people so they were collaborative.*

The cross-cultural ability of Volunteers fostered community acceptance, which facilitated support and participation from community members.

For counterparts, the third biggest factor in project success was support from the SAO, teachers and students. Beneficiaries did not mention this support, but counterparts tended to be staff from the SAO and schools where Volunteers worked. This suggests counterparts had a different perspective than beneficiaries, who tended to be community members.

The cultural competence of Volunteers also speaks well of the training Volunteers received prior to arriving at their site. A few counterparts cited the training provided by Peace Corps in technical skills and the support from Peace Corps/Bangkok as factors in the success of the project. Additionally, they also mentioned that Volunteers followed the Peace Corps rules, which also helped the project succeed.

Finally, a small group of respondents cited elements of the program design as factors responsible for success. Specifically, counterparts believed that the needs assessment conducted by Volunteers early in their service was a foundation for success because it gave Volunteers a good understanding of community issues while allowing communities and Volunteers to work collaboratively and build relationships. Beneficiaries felt that Volunteers working directly with community members was a key to success.

*Stakeholders* reported that the Volunteers' harmonious relations and their ability to build on the skills and traditional knowledge of community members were the primary factors in project success. The most often cited characteristics were Volunteers' ability to get along with different groups of people, their commitment to the project, and working hard. The second factor in the project's success, according to stakeholders, was the collaboration from communities and SAO staff.

## Factors that Hindered and Limited Project Outcomes

Counterparts, beneficiaries, and stakeholders were asked what factors hindered the project's success. According to all respondent groups, some Volunteers' lack of skills and abilities in technical areas and cultural competency were major barriers to success. The secondary barrier to success was the lack of support from the community or SAO, followed by project design issues.

The primary factor limiting the CBOD Project was that some Volunteers could not speak sufficient Thai to conduct community development activities. A few counterparts noted that Volunteers learned Thai quickly once at site, but the majority of respondents reported that the Volunteer needed a translator throughout their service whenever interacting with the community. This meant that a staff member from the SAO or school had to accompany the Volunteer to all meetings. This was not always feasible and strained the resources of the counterparts and the host organizations. Volunteers who could not speak Thai well enough to conduct work also were unable to build harmonious relationships with community members. This further limited their ability to conduct activities:

*Most of the villagers who participated in the project were fifty-five years old [and] up and they couldn't understand English. The Volunteer didn't speak much Thai either. So some of them eventually stopped coming to the meeting. –Beneficiary*

Counterparts and beneficiaries also reported that Volunteers did not have the technical skills to conduct community development projects. Respondents commented that Volunteers did not have any skills or experience in agriculture, development work, or business, and lacked an understanding of the Thai bureaucratic system. For example:

*I learned a little bit about project development. The Volunteer was quite young though and had limited hands-on experience. –Beneficiary*

*SAO staff helped to coordinate work for the Volunteer because they didn't understand the Thai bureaucratic system and work culture. For example, the Volunteer wanted to run a training course that was too long for the local community. –Counterpart*

Several respondents reported that some Volunteers did not want to learn new skills and linked this to their perception that the Volunteer exhibited an attitude of superiority. The following example shows the challenges the Volunteer's attitude raised:

*The Volunteer didn't have a background in vocational training and couldn't give much advice to community groups. For example, he criticized the pottery designs made by the group, saying they were not attractive and that the ones produced in the States were much more beautiful. When the group asked him how to improve their designs, he couldn't advise them. He also had not tried to find out information from other sources to respond to the request. –Counterpart*

In one case, Thai gender norms hindered the project. The counterpart, an SAO director, placed the Volunteer at a day care center to teach English believing that the male Volunteer could not help the women's weaving group with income generation.

*The Volunteer came under CBOD project but his background didn't fit with local needs. Most of the income generation activities in the community are for women groups and required skills which the Volunteer, as a male, didn't have like mat weaving, embroidery. So he was placed in a school instead, which was not consistent with the objective of the project.*—Counterpart

A few respondents reported Volunteers who did not work hard as a barrier to success. For example, a few respondents described Volunteers who played computer games during work hours or spent much of their day checking email and Facebook at the SAO. Throughout their interviews, the majority of respondents linked hard working Volunteers not only to the success of the project, but also to changes in their views about Americans and changes in their own behavior (see Chapter 3). As a result, in the sites where respondents said Volunteers did not work hard, these same respondents do not report changes in their own behaviors or attitudes.

Other constraints to the project came from the communities and SAOs. According to nine respondents, Volunteers had a difficult time garnering participation from some community groups. For example, community members addicted to drugs did not always participate because they did not want others to know of their addiction. Community members with HIV/AIDs were slow to participate, but eventually many did join activities and HIV/AIDS networks. Respondents who worked at the SAO stated that Volunteers only assisted the SAO with work that had already begun, and did not initiate any new activities.

Another constraint to the project was transportation. Respondents commented that bicycles were not an efficient mode of transportation for Thailand, especially in the rainy season. Often Volunteers could not make it to work or travel to other communities because of transportation issues. For example,

*The school is situated in a mountainous area, about 1,200 feet above sea level. The Volunteer lived near the SAO office, which was 16 kilometers away. The Volunteer couldn't ride his bike to the school and had to rely on the SAO's only car which was in demand by many units.* —Stakeholder

*The PC rule on bicycles use is too strict. In the rainy season, the Volunteer had to ride bicycles to work in the rain—and it rained almost every day. This can also be dangerous on bad road conditions and from landslides.* —Beneficiary

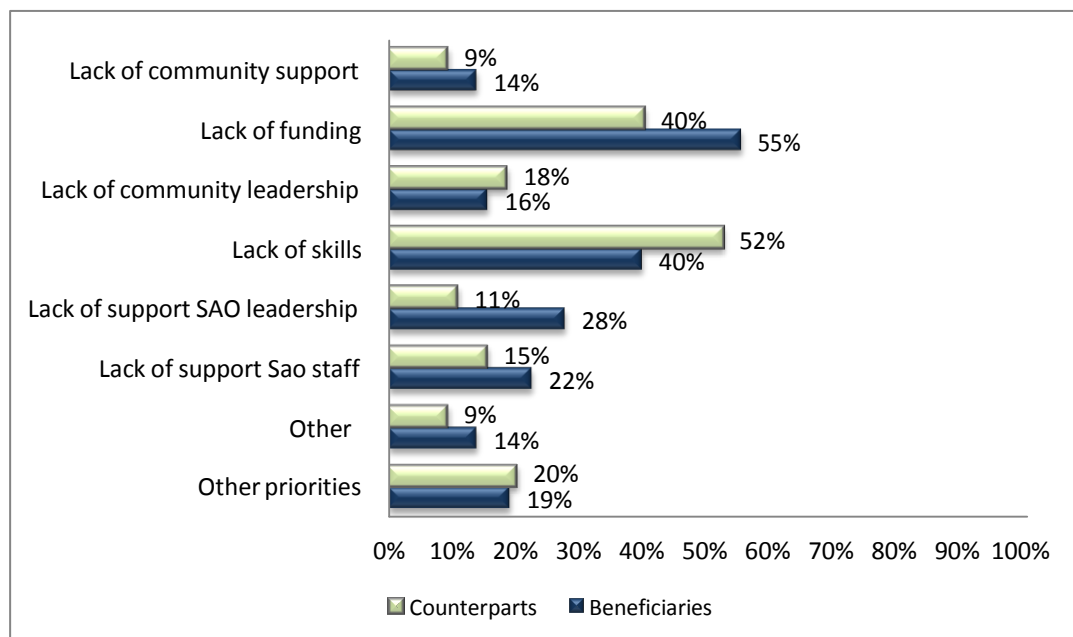
Counterparts and beneficiaries raised special concerns about female Volunteers travelling alone whether by bike or foot. They limited the Volunteers' activities to communities that did not require a lengthy bike ride.

*Counterparts and beneficiaries* were asked to describe any factors that limited the SAO or community's ability to maintain the changes resulting from the project (Figure 25). Counterparts (52%) and beneficiaries (40%) reported the lack of skills and training among community members and SAO staff was one of the primary barriers to maintaining the changes. Stakeholders (31%) also cited a lack of people with the skills and training to maintain the changes as a barrier. In this case, many stakeholders said that the community could not continue the activities without a Volunteer, citing the lack of English skills and expertise in environmental conservation among community members.

Counterparts (40%) and beneficiaries (55%) also reported a lack of funding as a major obstacle to maintaining change. Respondents recalled that in many cases, SAOs did not have sufficient budgets or staff to support the Volunteer's activities. In contrast, a few counterparts asserted they did not face any barriers because they had a budget to support the activities after the Volunteer departed. *Stakeholders* (43%) also reported the lack of continuing funding as the largest barrier to maintaining change and noted that SAO budgets do not include community development activities.

In several cases, counterparts described Volunteers creating welfare and nutrition programs. However, support for these activities came from selling the Volunteers' bike or other short-term funding solutions. Respondents reported that the programs created from these funds have not been sustained.

**Figure 25: Counterparts and Beneficiaries: Factors Limiting the Project Outcomes**



For counterparts, n=65; for beneficiaries, n=58

Beneficiaries, who were mostly community members, also felt that the SAO leadership did not give enough support to the project (28%). Many beneficiaries recalled that a new SAO director began during the Volunteer's service resulting in a loss of support for the Volunteer's projects. In other cases, the SAO did not understand the Volunteer's role or the SAO work system did not support the new activities and interventions developed by Volunteers. Others explained that the SAO was very selective in its projects, and thus did not support the Volunteers' work. Stakeholders also reported the lack of support from the SAOs and other officials as a barrier, noting SAO officials change every four years.

Counterparts and beneficiaries explained the impact of this lack of support:

*SAO directors didn't provide the Volunteer with sufficient information about communities' needs (secondary data). The Volunteer had to conduct the community study by himself in many places, like the school, daycare center, and even the SAO, which took quite long time. As a result, two years was too short to implement projects which are fully beneficial. —Beneficiary*

*The new SAO director didn't continue the policy of the old director, especially the use of SAO facilities and vehicles for field work. —Counterpart*

*[The] SAO director didn't support [the] HIV project because the project was not important in his opinion. HIV group received very limited funding for its training and activities. —Beneficiary*

In other cases, the SAO did not understand the goals and objectives of the CBOD Project:

*If the SAO management didn't understand the project's objective, then they will assign the Volunteers to something irrelevant to the goal of the project and both sides will lose their benefits. —Stakeholder*

## **Degree to which Daily Interaction with Volunteers Caused the Change**

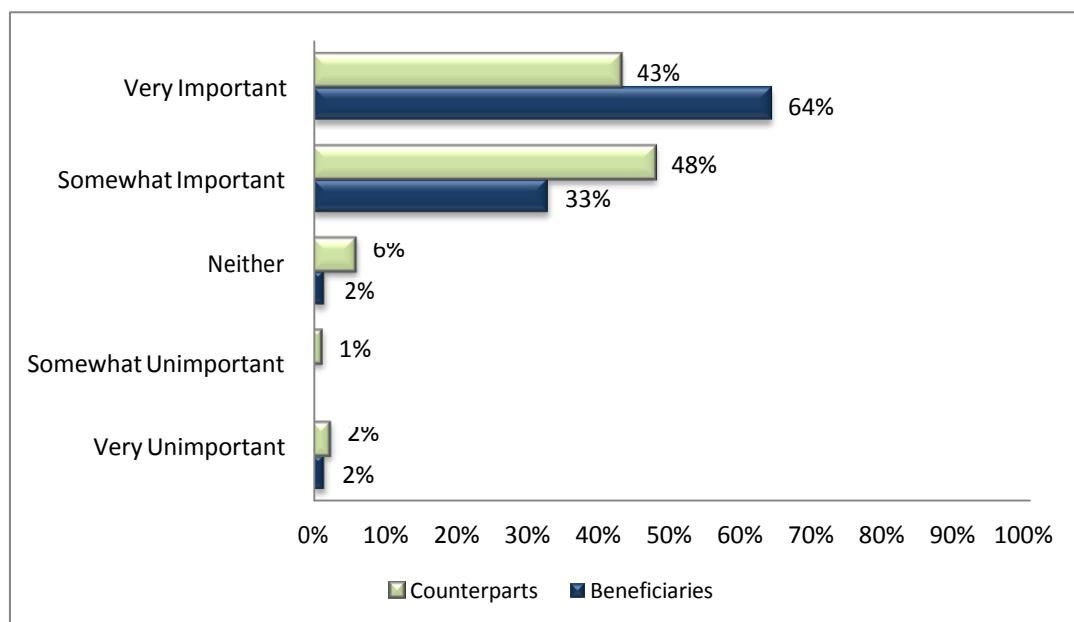
Respondents were asked how important the daily interaction with the Volunteer was in terms of causing the changes they had described. As stated earlier, 27 percent of counterparts and 16 percent of beneficiaries interacted with the Volunteer on a daily basis, and more stated they worked with the Volunteer several times a week (36% and 41%, respectively).

According to counterparts (91%) and beneficiaries (97%), this level of interaction was very to somewhat important in facilitating change (Figure 26). For counterparts and beneficiaries, the primary factor facilitating change was the ability of the Volunteer to motivate community members by gaining their trust and respect through harmonious relations. Respondents commented that the Volunteer's ability to build good relationships among community members contributed to their motivational capacity. Once motivated and working as a team, community members recalled that most participants changed their attitude about the work and their own abilities to work as a team. Counterparts also tended to link the changes to technical skills or activities, such as community needs assessments, more than did beneficiaries.

*[The daily interaction] was very important because people developed good rapport and mutual trust with the Volunteer. So, it's easier for the Volunteer to coordinate with people and engage them. –Beneficiary*

*[The daily interaction] was important because the Volunteer could develop rapport with the community and understand their problems more in-depth. –Beneficiary*

**Figure 26: Importance of Daily Interaction in Causing Change**



For counterparts, n=84; for beneficiaries, n=61

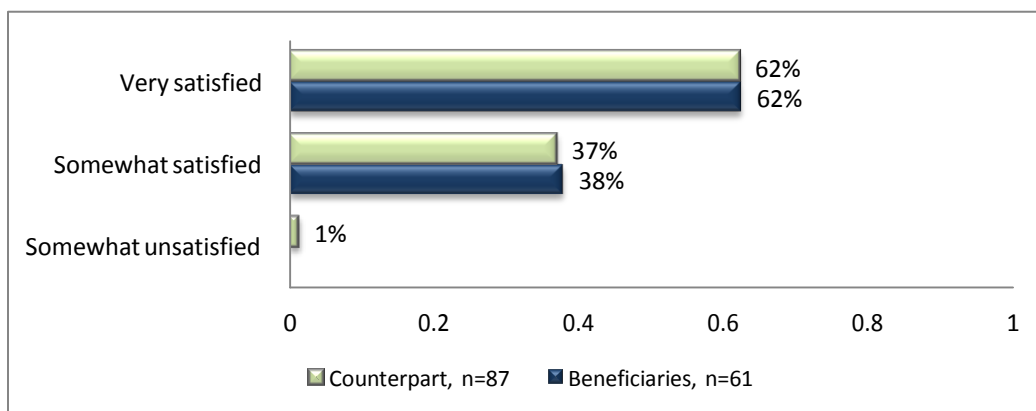
## Satisfaction with Outcomes

Researchers asked counterparts, beneficiaries, and stakeholders about their satisfaction with the project through two different questions. One directly asked about satisfaction level and reasons for satisfaction, while another asked if respondents would host another Volunteer.

### Overall Satisfaction

Counterparts and beneficiaries overwhelmingly reported they were somewhat (37% and 38%) to very satisfied (62%) with the changes resulting from the project and the work of the Volunteer (Figure 27).

**Figure 27: Counterpart and Beneficiary Satisfaction**



Counterparts and beneficiaries were most satisfied with the unintended outcomes related to Volunteer's teaching, including the methods teachers had learned and the increased motivation and skills of the students.

Among the intended outcomes of the project, respondents were most satisfied with the increased community awareness of health and environmental issues. Specifically, respondents' drew significant satisfaction from the decreasing stigma around PLWHA and the increasing acceptance of PLWHA by community members. As a result, PLWHA were more willing to seek services and several reported that they had more hope after working with the Volunteer. Respondents were also satisfied with the income generation activities and project planning skills developed as a result of working with the Volunteer.

Only one percent of counterparts were somewhat unsatisfied with the project (Figure 27). These few respondents were not satisfied because the Volunteer was not a qualified English teacher, or the Volunteer was too young and unable to integrate into the community.

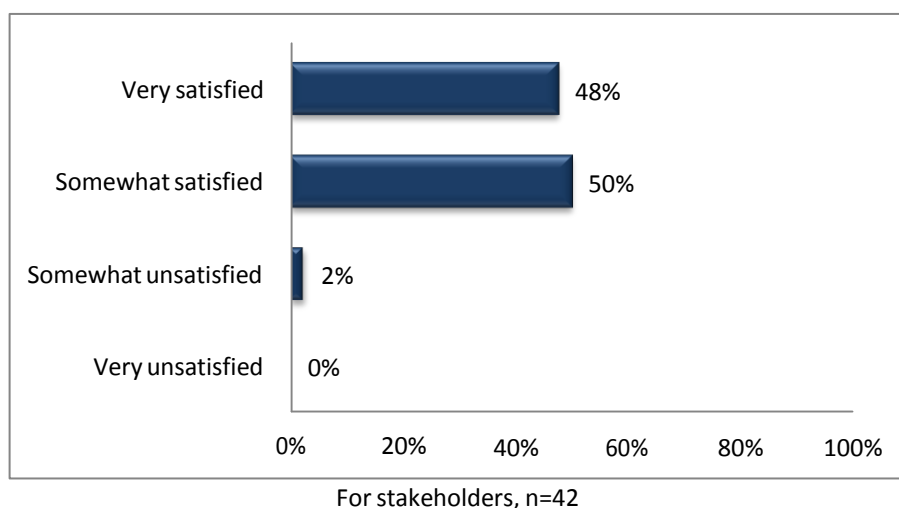
Half of the *stakeholders* reported they were somewhat satisfied with the project outcomes (50%) and almost as many reported they were very satisfied (48%) (Figure 28). Stakeholders were satisfied with the Volunteer's ability to boost tourism and thus income in communities and their efforts to teach community members how to interact with tourists. For example,

*I am very satisfied because the Volunteer helped to improve our community development activities, such as in environmental conservation and eco-tourism. Villagers also understood the needs of tourists more accurately based on the questionnaire the Volunteer developed to get tourists' feedback.*

In other cases, stakeholders reported the SAO staff had learned to be more professional in their behavior, picking up traits such as punctuality, discipline, and continuous learning.

Only two percent of stakeholders were somewhat unsatisfied (Figure 28). The majority of these respondents were not satisfied with Volunteers who did not come to work, could not adapt to the local culture, or could not speak Thai.

**Figure 28: Stakeholder Satisfaction with Project Outcomes**

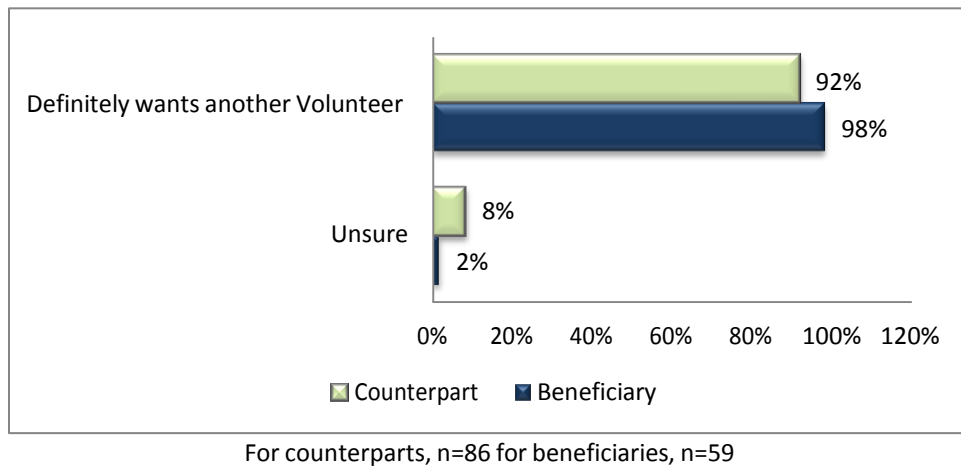


### **Desire to Work with Peace Corps Again**

Another measure of satisfaction is whether counterparts and beneficiaries would want to work with another Volunteer. Among *counterparts*, 92 percent stated they definitely wanted another Volunteer and 98 percent of *beneficiaries* reported that they would want to work with another Volunteer (Figure 29).



**Figure 29: Counterpart and Beneficiary: Want Another Volunteer**



The majority of counterparts and beneficiaries want to work with another Volunteer in order to sustain the changes and projects begun by the Volunteer and continue the high level of community motivation initiated by the Volunteer. This may suggest that community members and SAO staff do not have the skills to motivate other people, which may limit the sustainability of the project.

Respondents also stated they want another Volunteer because they did not feel there was enough time to finish the projects. For example:

*Two years was too short for us to learn and understand each other in terms of culture, language and habit. Most of the villagers didn't have much time to meet or interact with the Volunteer because they had to work. The Volunteer wanted to meet during working hours but the villagers wanted to meet in the evening. –Counterpart*

Several respondents only want Volunteers who will teach English in schools, suggesting their needs may be better met through Peace Corps/Thailand's education project. The few respondents who were unsure about working with another Volunteer explained they wanted a Volunteer with more development skills and wanted a male Volunteer who was older and more mature.

## **Summary Goal One**

Volunteers in the CBOD Project implemented the project activities as designed, although they independently conducted training for community members rather than through the SAOs. Beneficiaries received more training and direct project work with the Volunteers than counterparts. As a result, beneficiaries more often reported their skills had been enhanced than counterparts. Training and project activities largely led to the intended outcomes outlined in the project plan. As a result, the CBOD project met the three project goals.

Health and environmental awareness training and activities had the largest impact at the community and individual levels, especially among beneficiaries. These activities were largely sustained by communities and in some cases, people expanded these activities.

In general, however, counterparts (who were primarily SAO staff) and beneficiaries (who were community members) had different opinions regarding which outcomes and activities had high rates of change and best met their needs. For example, counterparts felt that communities had gained the skills to identify and solve their own development problems and were better able to support and sustain their own development priorities. Beneficiaries believed they still needed support from the SAO. Counterparts did not see the need for communities to be aware of health and environmental problems, but beneficiaries rated this outcome as the highest need. These differences in perspective suggest that counterparts and beneficiaries have conflicting expectations and needs that should be acknowledged and addressed by Volunteers and program staff.

The project had several unintended outcomes and activities. The most significant unintended outcome was the re-integration of PLWHA into communities and their increased sense of hope for the future. These respondents noted they sought more services from health centers, and health care providers reported they were better able to serve these patients. An unplanned activity was teaching English in schools or to SAO staff, which achieved several of the project outcomes related to professional development. However, many respondents believed that teaching English was the primary activity of the project. This suggests that project participants were not fully briefed on project goals and outcomes. Respondents were more dissatisfied with the project when they did not learn English and Volunteers might not be trained to teach English.

Volunteers faced many challenges in implementing the CBOD Project. The most significant barrier for the project is that SAO directors serve as the Volunteer's supervisor. However, these people change positions or locations every four years. New SAO directors tended not to support the Volunteer's work in the CBOD Project. Volunteers who are dependent on SAO staff for translation services and other resources may find they can no longer depend on SAO staff if the director does not support the CBOD Project work. Furthermore, many SAOs do not have budgets that support community development projects, which may lead SAO staff to limit their time working with the Volunteer in the community. The project review identified these issues as major barriers; however, the redesign of the CBOD Project does not seem to have addressed these issues.

## CHAPTER 3: GOAL TWO FINDINGS

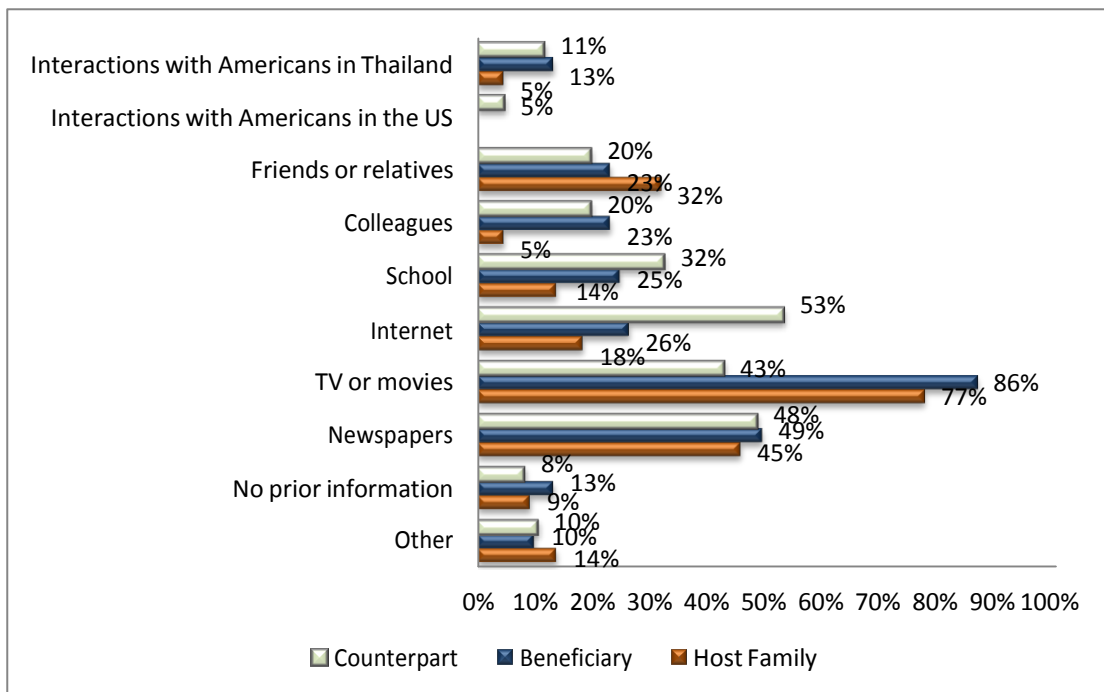
This section addresses how and to what extent Volunteers promoted a better understanding of Americans among the Thai community members with whom they worked and lived. The section begins with a description of project participants' sources of information about Americans followed by what counterparts, beneficiaries, and host families thought about Americans prior to working with a Volunteer, and how their opinions of Americans changed after interacting with Volunteers.

The next section discusses the causes of change according to respondents, including descriptions of how much and in what ways Thai community members interacted with Volunteers. The section concludes with a description of the impact on respondents' behaviors and outlook on life.

### Sources of Information about Americans

Thai counterparts learned about Americans primarily from the internet (53%) prior to the arrival of a Volunteer (Figure 30). Beneficiaries (86%) and host families (77%) reported learning about Americans primarily from television and movies (Figure 30). Counterparts tended to be SAO staff who have regular access to the internet

**Figure 30: Counterpart and Beneficiary Sources of Information about Americans**



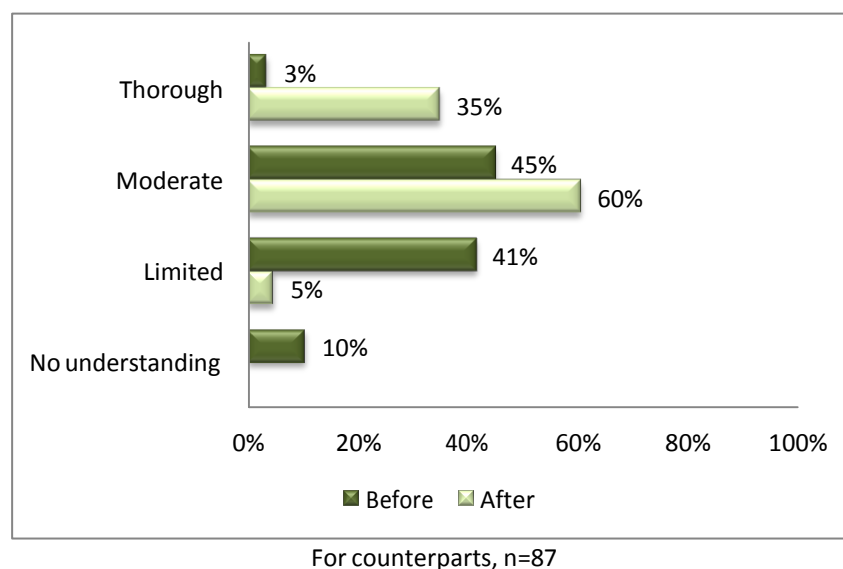
For counterparts, n=87; for beneficiaries, n=61; for host families, n=22

## Changes in Understanding and Opinions about Americans

Counterparts, beneficiaries, and host families showed increased understanding of Americans after interacting with a Volunteer.

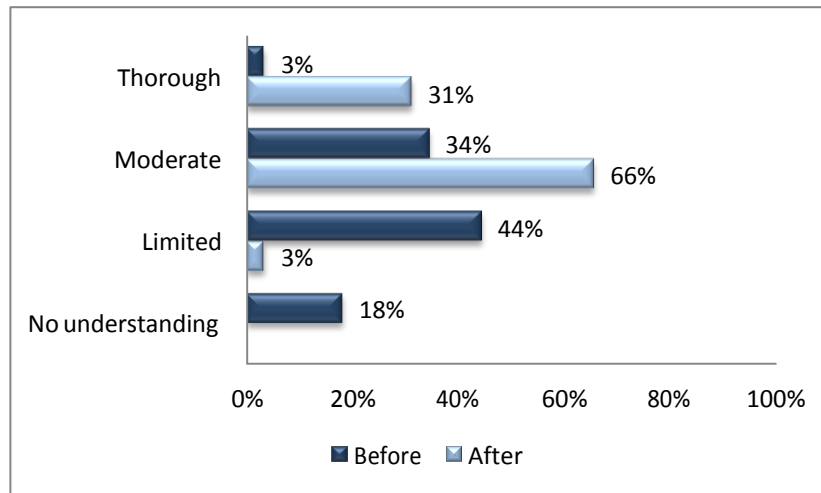
Before interacting with a Volunteer, 41 percent of *counterparts* reported a limited understanding and 10 percent reported they had no understanding of Americans (Figure 31). After interacting with a Volunteer, 35 percent of counterparts reported a thorough understanding of Americans, 60 percent reported a moderate understanding, and only 5 percent reported a limited understanding (Figure 31).

**Figure 31: Counterpart: Understanding of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer**



Before working with a Volunteer, 44 percent of *beneficiaries* reported a limited understanding of Americans while 18 percent said they had no understanding of Americans (Figure 32). After interacting with a Volunteer, 31 percent of beneficiaries stated they had a thorough understanding of Americans, 66 percent stated they had a moderate understanding; only three percent stated they had a limited understanding (Figure 32).

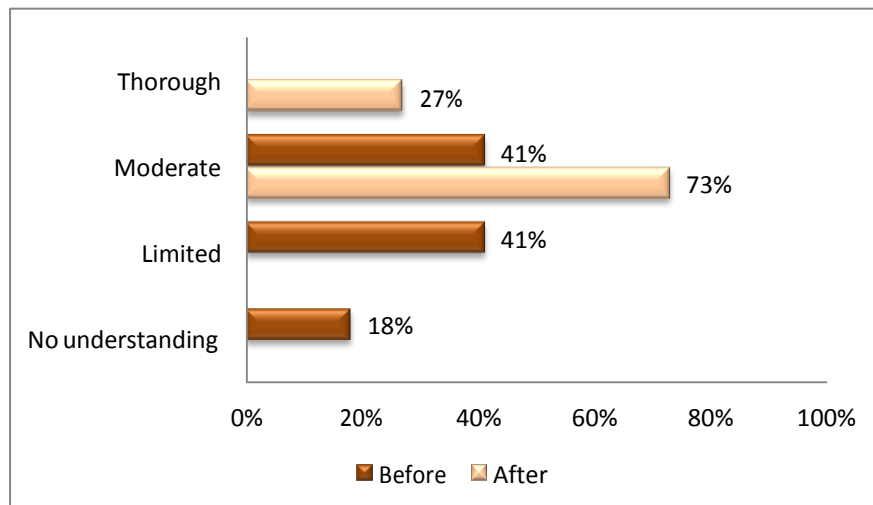
**Figure 32: Beneficiary: Understanding of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer**



For beneficiaries, n=61

None of the *host families* reported a thorough understanding of Americans before interacting with a Volunteer. Like beneficiaries, 18 percent of host families reported they had no understanding of Americans before interacting with a Volunteer. After interacting with a Volunteer, none of the host family respondents reported having limited or no understanding of Americans. Instead, 27 percent of host families reported they had a thorough understanding of Americans, and 73 percent reported a moderate understanding of Americans (Figure 33).

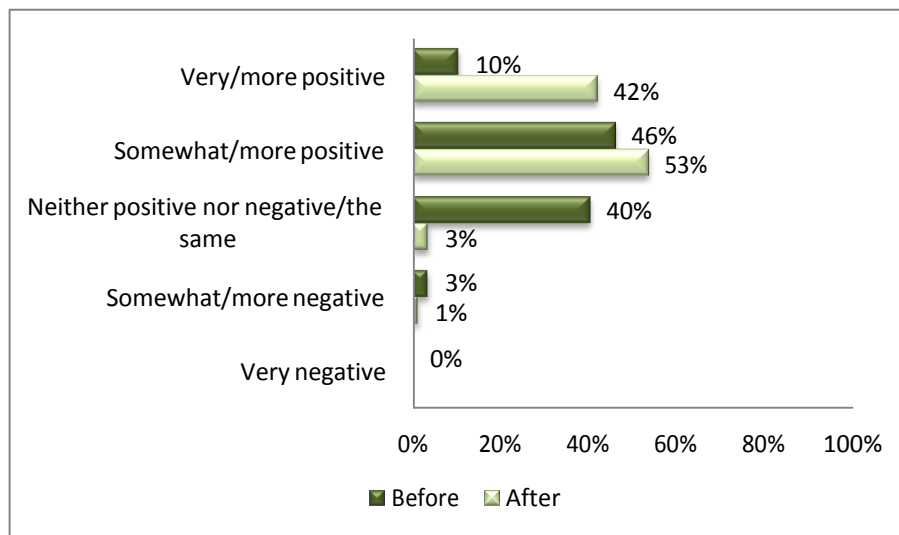
**Figure 33: Host Family: Understanding of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer**



For host families, n=22

Respondents also showed marked increases in positive opinions about Americans after working with a Volunteer. When asked what their opinion was about Americans prior to working with a Volunteer, 43 percent of *counterparts* reported a neutral (40%) or somewhat negative opinion (3%) (Figure 34). After interacting with a Volunteer, 95 percent of counterparts reported they had a more positive (42%) or a somewhat more positive (53%) opinion of Americans. Only one percent reported a more negative opinion (Figure 34). These few respondents changed their opinion due to the emotional and unprofessional behavior of the Volunteer.

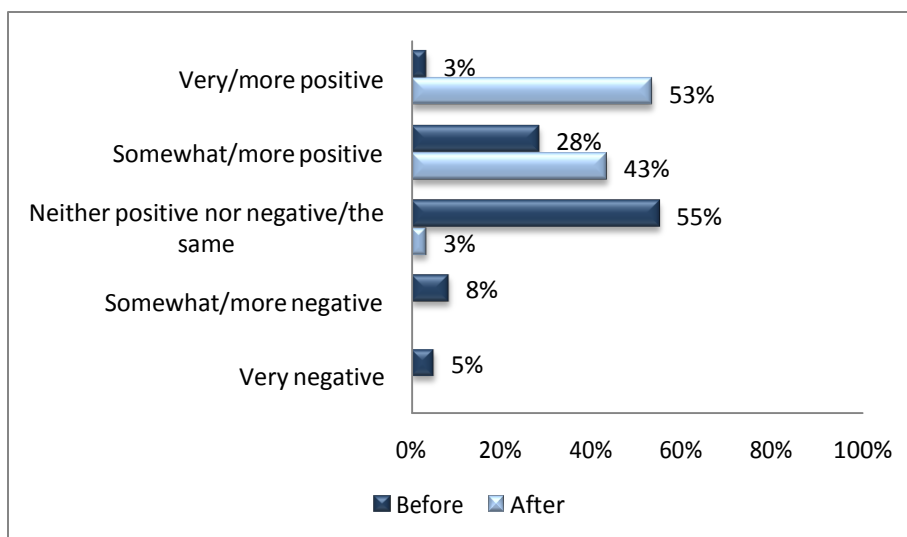
**Figure 34: Counterpart: Opinions of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer**



For counterparts, n=87

Prior to working with a Volunteer, more than half of the *beneficiaries* (55%) reported a neutral opinion of Americans (Figure 35). After interacting with a Volunteer, 96 percent of beneficiaries reported a more positive (53%) or a somewhat (43%) more positive opinion. Only 3 percent reported their opinion had not changed (Figure 35).

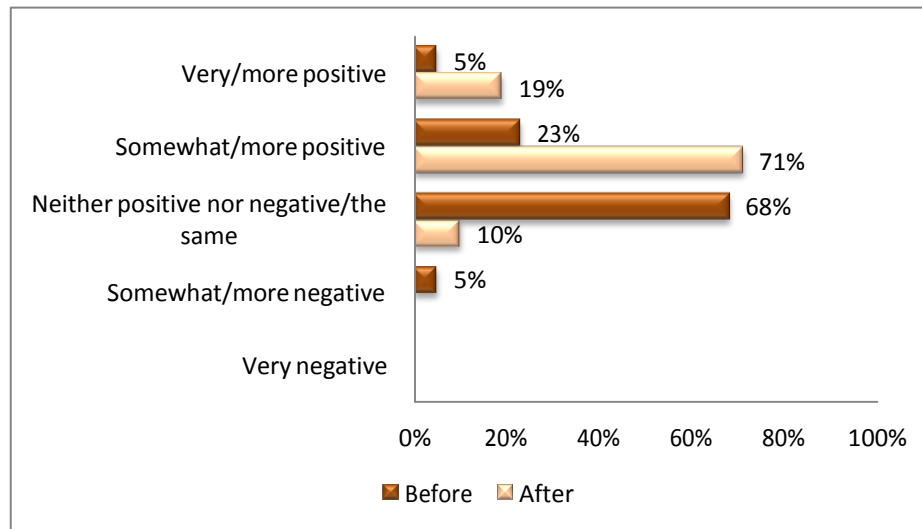
**Figure 35: Beneficiary: Opinions of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer**



For beneficiaries, n=60

Among *host families*, more than two-thirds (68%) had a neutral opinion and five percent had a very positive opinion of Americans (Figure 36). After hosting a Volunteer, 90 percent of host families had a more positive opinion (19%) or a somewhat more positive opinion (71%). Ten percent of host families had not changed their opinions (Figure 36).

**Figure 36: Host Family: Opinions of Americans Before and After Interacting with a Volunteer**



For host families, n=22

*Counterparts* and *beneficiaries* gave three general descriptions of Americans when asked what their opinion was about Americans prior to working with a Volunteer. One group (10 of 52) reflected neutral opinions, stating that although Americans had a different culture, they could not generalize about Americans. In other words, some people were “good” and some people were “bad,” just as in Thailand. Another group (18 of 81) described Americans positively, characterizing them as punctual and efficient with their time, and kind, hard working, and competent.

The final recurring description of Americans was as rich people who looked down on or took advantage of developing countries (25 of 48). Respondents in this group viewed Americans the same as other foreigners and tourists, noting that these people disrespected Thai culture. A few respondents in this group also described Americans as “big and scary” due to their physical size.

After interacting with a Volunteer, counterpart and beneficiary descriptions of Americans became more positive. Respondents described Americans as kind, having good will or a good heart—a significant compliment in Thai culture. They also said that Americans work hard and are helpful and able to adjust to new cultures and situations.

Respondents who had previously described Americans as rich people who looked down on or took advantage of developing countries now described Americans as hardworking, tolerant, and having good will toward developing countries.

Prior to hosting a volunteer, *host family* respondents most often described Americans as rich tourists who marry Thai women and do not know how to behave properly in Thai culture. After interacting with a Volunteer, host family members most often described Americans as able to adjust to a new culture and get along with people. Several respondents also noted they worked hard.

The following descriptions illustrate the kinds of changes taking place:

*Before, I thought that Americans were arrogant because they come from a highly developed country. I also thought they were self-centered. But when I got to know the PCV, I changed my thinking because he was the opposite. He was helpful and liked to help other people. I have a broader and more positive view about the world after having known the PCV. I also have more positive attitude about Americans because I've seen the good example from the Volunteer.*—Beneficiary

*Previously, I wasn't confident about how well Americans could live in our community. Later on, I found out that they are easy-going and able to live in harmony with local people. They're generous. The Volunteer was a role model for me in some good aspects: punctuality, respect to other cultures, and helpfulness.* —Host family member

*Previously I thought Americans were arrogant, and reserved. But now I know that they are kind, helpful, and can sympathize.* —Host family member

*I thought that the Volunteer and myself may not be able to get along. He's a rich person and may not want to interact with[an] HIV-infected person like myself. [Now] I think that Americans are highly determined. If they want to do something, they will try their best to succeed. They have a good heart and like to help people.* —Beneficiary

One thing stands out when examining the responses across the questions on changes in opinion and understanding. Thai respondents tended to view Americans as “just another foreigner” prior to working with a Volunteer. After working with a Volunteer, they projected their experiences with the Volunteer to all Western foreigners, and generalized that perhaps all foreigners are not as bad as the tourists who come to Thailand. For example, this host family member stated:

*The Volunteer's performance has changed my attitude toward foreigners. The Volunteer tried to adapt herself living with us, eating what we eat, and being friendly to everyone.* —Host family member



## Causes for Changes in Opinion

Respondents were asked to discuss what caused the changes in opinions referencing specific activities, memories, and learning experiences. These narratives were correlated against the level of interaction respondents had with the Volunteer who served in their school.

## Level of Interaction with Volunteers

*Counterparts* and *beneficiaries* primarily interacted with Volunteers in a work setting on a daily basis. In Thailand, Volunteers do not live with host families, but members of the community act as aunts, uncles, or family-like friends. These *host family members* primarily interacted with Volunteers in a home setting, but were also part of the community development project. When asked why they wanted to host a Volunteer, one-third (6 of 18) of the host family respondents stated they initially did not have any interest in hosting a Volunteer. The SAO chose them to be a host family. Four other respondents wanted to host a Volunteer so they could learn English. Five more respondents stated they owned property or had a spare room to rent.

## Most Frequent Activities

The activities *counterparts* and *beneficiaries* engaged in most often with Volunteers fall into two categories: those related to work (n=124) and those outside of work or more personal in nature (n=62).

At work, counterparts and beneficiaries primarily collaborated with Volunteers on two activities. Twenty percent of counterparts and beneficiaries reported collaborating on teaching and lesson planning. Another 20 percent of respondents also described working on income generation activities or with the income generation groups. The next most frequently mentioned interaction was working on health activities, especially with HIV/AIDS groups (19%).

Outside of work, 35 percent of beneficiaries and counterparts reported sharing meals and talking with Volunteers and 26 percent reported sharing cross-cultural experiences, especially attending traditional rural events and ceremonies.

Fifty percent of *host family members* mentioned cooking and sharing meals as their most frequent activity with Volunteers. Eating together was followed by talking and attending traditional activities in the community. Eight host families described community development project activities, such as teaching, home visits, and weaving.

When asked about the nature of their relationship with Volunteers, 16 of 20 host family members commented that the Volunteer was like a son or daughter to them. They also described the Volunteer as helpful and thoughtful, and someone who followed the rules and was not a picky eater. Three host families characterized their relationship with the Volunteer as poor, explaining that they treated the Volunteer like family but the Volunteer was unappreciative or described the Volunteer as “just a tenant.”

## Most Memorable Activities

The most memorable activities for *counterparts, beneficiaries, and host family members* were not activities, *per se*, but related instead to the Volunteers' demeanor (127 of 151). The majority of counterparts and beneficiaries found the Volunteers' friendliness and their ability to develop harmonious relationships to be memorable.

Respondents linked building harmonious relationships with the Volunteer's ability to adapt to local cultural norms, and were surprised by Volunteers' willingness to work hard and even get dirty:

*The Volunteer could get along easily with others and was highly responsible. One time, we had a meeting on Sunday. It was raining heavily but the Volunteer insisted on riding her bike to get data from SAO office and come back to the meeting. When she arrived, her face and clothes were all dirty but the document she brought was still clean and dry.*

*One day everybody came to the office as usual but the Volunteer didn't turn up. We started to get worried because the Volunteer was a woman and she never disappeared like this before. So we went out to search for her and found her working in the rice field with farmers in her office dress. We were impressed that she could do such a thing.*

Another group of respondents linked building good relationships to the Volunteers' willingness to treat rural, poor community members with dignity and respect:

*The Volunteer was friendly, easygoing, generous, and did not look down on other people. Everything they did reflected a genuine interest to help improve the quality of life in our rural community. The Volunteer behaved like they were one of us.*

Other respondents recalled the changes resulting from the Volunteer's work, such as improving local products and increases in student performance.

The majority of host family members (17 of 23) recalled how friendly the Volunteer was and their ability to adapt to rural Thai culture:

*The Volunteer's behavior has shown that Americans are friendly, self-evaluated and able to adjust to living with different kinds of people. The Volunteer built up strong ties and good relationship with everyone.*

## What Volunteers Did to Change Opinions and What Project Participants Learned About Americans

The majority of *counterparts and beneficiaries* (28 of 116) who reported a more positive or somewhat more positive opinion of Americans stated that the Volunteers' work style caused the change. These respondents described Volunteers who were willing to interact with PLWHA and poor communities, were hardworking, confident, and had a good heart. For example:

*The Volunteer talked with me so I could see that she's not afraid to be infected. She had a good heart and helped us in many ways. –Beneficiary*

Another group (14 of 116) said they changed their opinions because of the Volunteer's ability to adjust to rural Thai life and Thai culture. As a result, these respondents learned that Americans are punctual and confident, and able to integrate this work style with cross-cultural skills, allowing them to work with different people. As one beneficiary explained:

*Every country has its own culture and language, but we can live together harmoniously if we treat each other with respect, observe the right cultural protocols, and are willing to adjust to each other.*

Host family members also cited the Volunteers' work style and ability to speak Thai as the reason they changed their opinion about Americans. These respondents described hard working Volunteers and explained how surprised they were that Volunteers learned the Thai language. Host family members most often stated that they learned Americans are good at cross-cultural communication and exchange, and diligent workers.

### **Impact of the Changes on Participants' Behavior and Outlook on Life**

As the final question of the interview, respondents were asked how they had changed their personal behavior or outlook on life as a result of interacting with the Volunteer. *Counterparts* and *beneficiaries* who reported a more positive or somewhat more positive opinion of Americans (Figure 34 and 35) stated they had:

- Adopted the Volunteers' work style and become more responsible and better leaders, used better time management, planned activities, and set objectives and targets
- Become more open-minded, patient, and tolerant when working with colleagues, students, and villagers. SAO staff commented that they listened more to villagers and included them in decision making more often
- People with HIV/AIDS adopted a more positive view of life, had more hope, and were more willing to reintegrate into the community
- People working with HIV/AIDS patients were more willing to help patients, less discriminatory, and more respectful.

One teacher explained that they better understand their students as a result of working with the Volunteer, and are more tolerant:

*I have [a] better understanding about children's behaviors in class after conducting home visits and knowing their family background.*

This SAO staff member, who was a counterpart, summed up the changes this way:

*Before, I was very individualistic and always thought my ideas are the best and never treasured my colleague's ideas. After working with Volunteer, I changed almost totally. I realized that if I don't learn to improve myself, looking for new experiences, listening to new ideas, I will not be successful. I also learned to put myself into other people's shoes, to be sympathetic and learn to accept others so that we could live in harmony. I learned to think more positively. For example, if people gossip about me, I will try to ignore it or think that they are blessing me instead. What is most obvious is that I became very open-minded.*

The majority of *host family members* commented that they had a new attitude toward working with people in the community. They were more open-minded, flexible, and willing to get involved to help others.

## **Summary Goal Two**

Overall, project participants gained a better understanding of Americans and improved their opinions of Americans. The Volunteer's ability to create harmonious relationships with community members and their willingness to work hard led participants to change their views of Americans. Interestingly, this shift in viewpoint was extended to include a positive change in attitudes toward other foreigners.

Volunteers' demeanor and work habits led project participants to change their own personal and work habits. In terms of their work habits, respondents reported adopting planning and time management practices and being better leaders. Personally, respondents reported they were more tolerant of people with different opinions, which many also incorporated into their professional lives working with community members.

## **CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS**

In Thailand, Peace Corps largely met its goal of building local capacity (Goal One) and promoting a better understanding of Americans among host country participants (Goal Two) through the CBOD Project. These goals were met primarily through the service of the Volunteers and their daily interaction with community members.

### **Goal One: Conclusions and Recommendations**

All three of the goals of the CBOD project were largely met:

- Community members and SAO staff were more motivated, and created networks to optimize local resources
- Project participants reported increased self-confidence, and stated they now set goals, used problem-solving skills, and planning strategies.
- Project participants reported gaining and using business, planning, project design, and interpersonal skills to deliver better services, start businesses, work as teams, and provide services to community members.

In meeting these three goals, the CBOD Project increased local capacity and contributed to Peace Corps Goal One. In addition, Volunteers taught English, which was outside the scope of the project's activities. Teaching produced outcomes that supported the project's goals. For example, learning English built participants' self-confidence and provided them with the language skills to successfully build tourism businesses. However, Volunteers may not be trained in this activity since teaching English is not part of the project plan. In addition, many respondents assumed the project plan included English classes and were disappointed when Volunteers did not conduct this activity.

#### *Recommendations:*

- The CBOD Project plan could be adjusted to include elements from the teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) training package during Pre-Service Training (PST). Volunteers who find themselves teaching could be provided with additional resources and training.
- Program Managers could provide communities with the project plan and develop methods to manage community expectations regarding Volunteers' activities.

The networks of HIV/AIDS patients and service providers created by Volunteers produced unintended outcomes among PLWHA. These participants reported they had more hope for the future, had reintegrated into their communities, and were seeking medical and other services more often.

Some project participants were able to sustain certain skills and capacities more than others. Most respondents reported that health and environmental awareness activities and the HIV/AIDS networks had continued after the Volunteer completed service. However, the sustainability of other outcomes was not as strong. Respondents acknowledged that identifying and solving their own development problems was the most needed change, but also the hardest to achieve and sustain.

## **Goal Two: Conclusion and Recommendations**

Respondents reported adopting the Volunteers' work style, becoming more responsible and better leaders, using better time management, planning activities, and setting objectives and targets. They also reported becoming more open-minded, patient, and tolerant when working with colleagues, student, and villagers. SAO staff listened more to villagers and included them in decision-making. Many respondents adopted a more positive view of life, had more hope, and were more willing to help others.

## **APPENDIX 1: OSIRP METHODOLOGY**

### **Site Selection**

In Thailand, the team conducted interviews in 25 communities where Volunteers worked. The sample sites were a representative sample rather than a random sample and generated from the list of Volunteer assignments in the CBOD Project since 2005. Sites in which the Volunteer had served less than 12 months, had married someone at site, had remained at site after the close of their service, or sites that were extremely remote, were excluded. 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. With regard to the selection of 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 where there were still multiple possible respondents, the research team randomly selected the respondents.
4. In cases where respondents had moved or were no longer at site, researchers either located their current contact information or conducted snowball sampling to locate other respondents who had worked with the Volunteer.

### **Data Collection**

The research questions and interview protocols were designed by OSIRP staff and refined through consultations with the Country Director, Director of Programming and Training, and the Program Manager in Thailand.

A team of local interviewers, trained and supervised by a host country senior researcher contracted in-country, carried out all the interviews. Interviewers used written protocols specific to each category of respondents and conducted semi-structured interviews.

The research teams also reviewed existing performance data routinely reported by posts in Volunteers' Project Status Reports, as well as the results of the Peace Corps' Annual Volunteer Surveys and any previous evaluations or project reviews. However, the results presented in this report are almost exclusively based on the interview data collected through this study.

Two hundred and thirteen individuals were interviewed in Thailand for the study.

## Types of Data Collected

The counterparts, beneficiaries, and stakeholders 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 groups are shown below (Table 2).

**Table 2: Summary of Interview Questions by Respondent Type**

Respondent Type	Question Categories	Approximate Length of interview
Counterpart  <i>Stakeholder and comparison group questions were adapted from the counterpart questions.</i>	Goal One 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. Maintenance 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 behaviors/attitudes that Volunteers exhibited that helped improve respondent's understanding of Americans	60-90 minutes
Beneficiary	Goal One 1. Clarification of the project purpose 2. Frequency of contact with the Volunteer 3. Project outcomes and satisfaction with the project 4. Community and individual-level changes 5. Maintenance 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	60-90 minutes



<b>Respondent Type</b>	<b>Question Categories</b>	<b>Approximate Length of interview</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Particular behaviors/attitudes that Volunteers exhibited that helped improve respondent's understanding of Americans</li> <li>5. improve respondent's understanding of Americans</li> </ul>	
Host Family Member	<p>Goal Two</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Source of information and opinion of Americans prior to the Peace Corps work</li> <li>2. Type of information learned about Americans from interaction with the Volunteer</li> <li>3. Opinion of Americans after interaction with the Volunteer</li> <li>4. Particular behaviors/attitudes that Volunteers exhibited that helped improve respondent's understanding of Americans</li> <li>5. Behavioral changes based on knowing the Volunteer</li> </ul>	30 minutes

## APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH TEAM METHODOLOGY<sup>20</sup>

The assessment was conducted through field interviews with people who have worked and lived with the PCVs. The respondents were classified according to the nature of their relationship/interaction with the PCVs. The questionnaires for the stakeholder, counterpart and beneficiary cover question sets for both goals whereas that for the host family focuses only on Goal Two.

All of the questionnaires were developed by the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) in Peace Corps Headquarters and were translated into Thai by the Thai Senior Researcher. The Thai translation was then translated back into English by the Peace Corps/Thailand office staff to check the accuracy of the translation. After piloting the questionnaires during the training of field researchers, the question sets were adjusted based on feedback from the interviewees.

### Data Collection

The field interviews were conducted by six teams of field researchers led by the Senior Researcher and Research Associates. Prior to the field interviews, researcher training was conducted by the Peace Corps /Thailand office together with an evaluation officer from OSIRP. The training covered content on background and the goals of Peace Corps, objectives of the impact evaluation, evaluation concept, method, and tool, as well as field pilot interviews with respondents from a former Peace Corps site.

The sites for the interviews were chosen through a systematic sampling method by OSIRP. Altogether, twenty-five CBOD sites were selected throughout all regions of the country. Most of them were ‘former’ sites, meaning the Volunteers had left the sites for 1-5 years.

Interview partners were identified primarily according to their roles in the project and a list of potential interviewees for all sites was prepared by the Peace Corps /Thailand office. Additional interviewees were located through snowball sampling conducted by interviewers during fieldwork.

Field interviews took place simultaneously in the twenty-five sites from 1 August to 30 September 2010. In addition, a focus group discussion was conducted with Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) and ministerial officers from the Department of Local Administration (DLA).

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<sup>20</sup> This section was excerpted (with minor editing) from the research report developed by the in-country research team. As a result, the formatting and style vary from those used in the body of the report. Dr. Walaitat Worakul, *Peace Corps Host Country Impact Assessment, Thailand Report.*” pg.10-13, 2011.

## **Data Analysis**

Raw data was entered into a web-based data collection database, Datstat, which was designed especially for this study. The excel tables containing a summary of quantitative data and full details of qualitative data were then provided to the Senior Researcher for further analysis and reporting. Quantitative analysis of the data [was] based mainly on percentages, while qualitative analysis was based on both deductive and inductive methods. For some questions, data was categorized under the pre-defined headings based on related theory/knowledge commonly accepted. In some other cases, data categories were identified after the data was scrutinized [for] interesting answers.

English translation of the data in Datstat was also provided to Peace Corps for its further reference.