



PEACE  
CORPS

# Thailand HOST COUNTRY IMPACT STUDY

## Purpose

In 2008, the Peace Corps launched a series of studies to determine the impact of its Volunteers in meeting two of the agency’s three goals: building local capacity and promoting a better understanding of Americans among local people in host countries. These Host Country Impact Studies are unique in providing feedback from the people who have lived and worked with Peace Corps Volunteers. A Thai research team conducted this study in the fall of 2010, interviewing 213 respondents in 27 communities, and submitted a final report to the post upon completion of the field work. The Peace Corps Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning developed the methods and protocols, trained the local researchers, and has produced a series of standard format reports from this and other Host Country Impact Studies.

## Study Focus: Community-Based Organizational Development Project

As of 2012, 5,095 Volunteers have served in Thailand since Peace Corps opened in 1961. The goal of the Community-Based Organizational Development project was to increase community members’ technical, organizational, and problem-solving skills in order for them to take advantage of new social and economic opportunities.

### Peace Corps Goal One

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

### Findings

Project objectives achieved:

- 89 percent of project partners and 91 percent of beneficiaries (community members, local administrators, and health professionals) reported increased awareness of health and environmental issues.
- 69 percent of project partners and 64 percent of beneficiaries reported that communities could identify and solve their own problems after working with a Volunteer.
- One of the most significant outcomes of the project was that people living with HIV/AIDS felt more integrated into the community and sought out services more often.

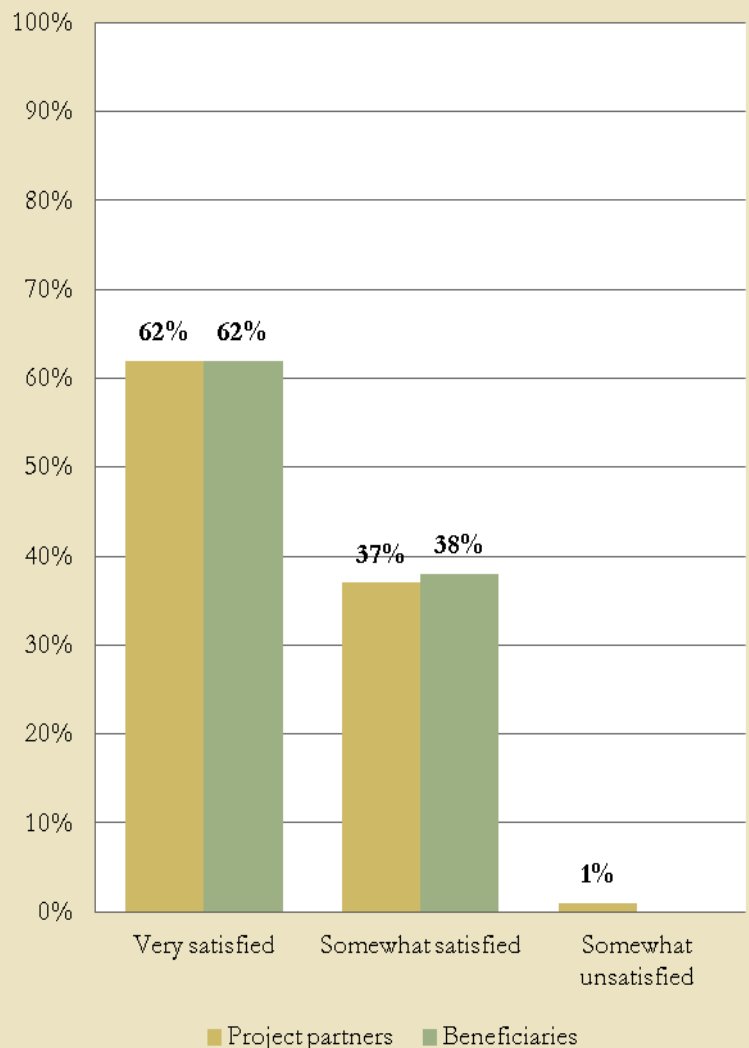
Sustainability:

- 85 percent of project partners reported communities were better able to support and sustain their own development priorities.

Beneficiary: *“I gained more self-confidence and 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.”*

HIV positive beneficiary: *“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 have a network of HIV-infected people for mutual support.”*

### Satisfaction with Changes Resulting from Peace Corps Projects





## Peace Corps Goal Two

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

### Findings

*Before* interacting with Volunteers:

- 53 percent of project partners learned about Americans from the internet. Beneficiaries (86%) and host families (77%) learned about Americans from television and movies.
- Ten percent of counterparts and three percent of beneficiaries held a very positive opinion of Americans.
- Most respondents described Americans as the same as all Western tourists who dress inappropriately and disrespect Thai culture.

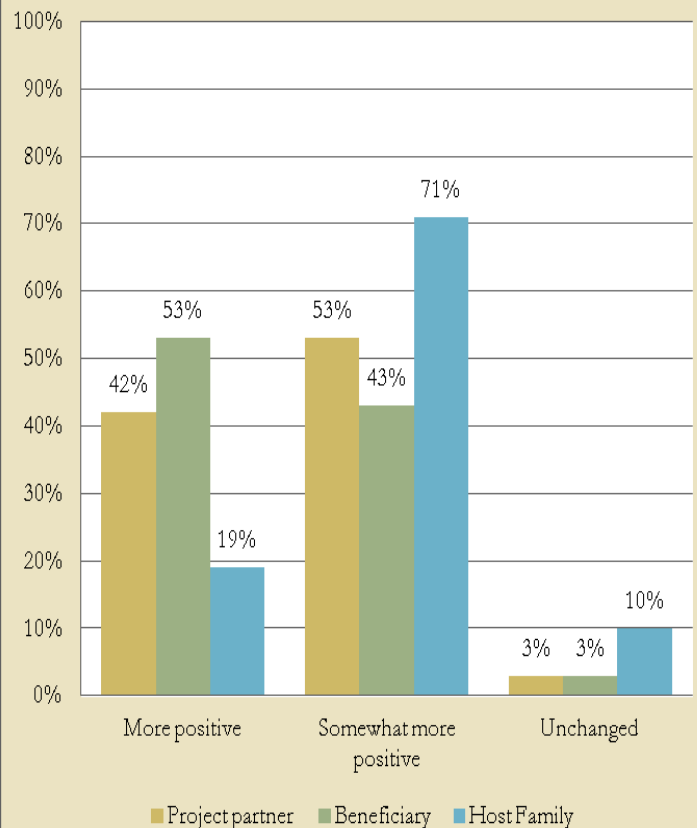
*After* interacting with Volunteers:

- Forty-two percent of counterparts and 53 percent of beneficiaries had a very positive opinion of Americans.
- Americans were described as hard workers who are kind, helpful, and full of good will.
- Thais said they became more responsible and open-minded, patient, and tolerant.
- Municipal staff reported listening to villagers more and including them in decision-making.

Municipal staff member: *“Before, I was very individualistic and always thought my ideas were the best and never treasured my colleague’s ideas. After working with a 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.”*

Host Family: *“The Volunteer’s performance has changed my attitude. The Volunteer tried to adapt herself while living with us, eating what we eat, and being friendly to everyone.”*

## Opinions of Americans After Interacting with Volunteers



Overall, community members and municipal staff learned to more effectively work together to identify and solve community problems. HIV-positive community members accessed services more often and felt better integrated into the community. Participants’ opinions about Americans became more positive.