



# Peace Corps Panama

## ANNUAL REPORT 2025



### Meet a Partner

"We express our sincere recognition of the valuable collaboration of the Peace Corps in Panama, which has been a fundamental pillar for the strengthening of technical, organizational and community capacities in the Infoplazas at the national level. This alliance reflects a shared commitment to sustainable human development, social inclusion and the empowerment of communities, aligning efforts for the direct benefit of the Panamanian population."

- Dr. Luis C. | Infoplazas AIP

### Meet a Volunteer

"As a Sustainable Farming Systems Volunteer, service so far has taught me to find that balance, and where a lot can be accomplished, it really depends on the community members – their passion, their dreams, and their dedication to environmental restoration and conservation and food security."

- Robert F. | Comarca Ngäbe-Buglé



### Meet a Counterpart

"For me, the presence of the Peace Corps here in the community has had a very positive impact because it is a great learning opportunity and a lot of help to continue improving as a person in many areas. I wish in the future more Volunteers would come; this community has a lot of potential and each of the Volunteers who have come has left their contribution for those of us who have been able to value it and take advantage of this great opportunity by acquiring knowledge from the Volunteer professionals."

- Alvaro A. | Coclé



*Volunteer Molly learning how to harvest beans in the garden of the local school.*

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*Volunteer Arabella and children from her community painting a pilgrim at the School, turning an empty space into something attractive and energizing.*



# Message from the Country Director

Dear Community and Institutional Partners

It is an honor to present to you the 2025 annual report of the Peace Corps in Panama, where we reflect the achievements made thanks to the joint efforts of our Volunteers, their counterparts, and our regional and national partners. Since our arrival in 1963, we have been committed to development and collaboration in Panamanian communities to elevate sustainable solutions and strengthen local capacities.

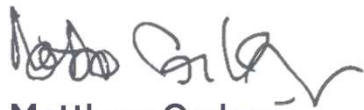
This report highlights the results achieved by more than 90 Volunteers who, together with local leaders and allies, have promoted initiatives in youth education, health, environmental conservation, and sustainable agriculture.

*National Director Matthew Carlson handing over a certificate to Counterpart Mariano after an agriculture workshop.*

Cultural exchange between Volunteers and community partners has been instrumental in creating strong and lasting relationships based on mutual respect and learning. This report is a reflection of the friendship and respect we have cultivated, as well as a testament to the power and scope of collaborative work.

Looking to the future, the Peace Corps prepares to celebrate its 65th anniversary in 2026, reaffirming our dedication to peace, growth, and a shared commitment to prosperity in Panama. We invite you to explore our report and join us on this journey of service and transformation for Panama.

With gratitude,



**Matthew Carlson**  
Country Director  
Peace Corps Panama

### Meet a Partner

"The experience has been rewarding, as Peace Corps Volunteer partners are always willing to share experiences with growers and technicians, and vice versa. This method facilitates the execution of activities in the field and strengthens capacities and knowledge in various aspects."

- Ing. Ilza M. | Sustainable and Inclusive Agricultural Innovation Project (PIASI)



*Volunteers Josh and Valencia and IDIAP Eng. Ulfredo training new Volunteers and community members on beneficial mushrooms.*





# Peace Corps

The mission of the Peace Corps is to promote world peace and friendship through community development and cross-cultural understanding

1

## Strengthening Local Capacities

Volunteers share knowledge and skills in six key areas—Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health, and Youth Development—to drive sustainable change.

2

## Fostering Understanding of the U.S.

Through their service, Volunteers represent U.S. culture and values, while learning about the customs and resources of their host communities.

3

## Fostering Understanding of Other Cultures (Panama)

Upon returning to the U.S., Volunteers share their experiences from their Panamanian communities, strengthening intercultural understanding and the spirit of service.

*Students participating in a trash collection (above); Volunteer Janet building an ecological stove with her community in Panama Oeste (below).*

# History of The Agency

The Peace Corps is an independent agency of the U.S. government that was created in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy. Our history is based on a shared vision: to work alongside communities, live alongside them, and celebrate cultures around the world. The Peace Corps continues its bold mission by collaborating with host communities on locally prioritized projects.

That vision, along with our mission and goals, drives the Peace Corps and its Volunteers to build relationships, exchange culture and knowledge, and contribute to transforming lives for generations. Our impact is reflected in many ways: a cup of tea shared with a host mother that generates greater understanding; a school library built; a child prepared to serve his community; a girl who recognizes herself as capable as her peers; a Volunteer who returns home with cross-cultural competencies, strengthened professional skills, and a lifelong passion for service.

The Peace Corps network is diverse, global, and future-oriented. It includes national hosts, volunteers, staff around the world, partners, educators, groups of friends and family, and associations. United by a common desire to create positive change, we support, embrace and inspire.

## Peace Corps in Panama

The Peace Corps has a long history in Panama. The first Volunteers began work in 1963 and continued to serve in Panama until May 1971. In February 1990, the Panamanian Government requested the return of the Peace Corps and the program has continued uninterrupted ever since.

## Our Vision

Strengthen local talent, capacity, and initiatives that respond to the needs of the Panamanian population, with a sustainable approach to benefit all those involved in the process.



# Our Approach

Peace Corps Volunteers bring a variety of technical skills and experiences to the table, meeting requirements and completing a rigorous selection process. While Volunteers serving for two-years receive 10 weeks of training in Panama Oeste – learning Spanish, customs and social dynamics when living with host families – Response Volunteers integrate quickly thanks to their previous experience and specialized training, responding to specific needs in high-impact projects.

In both cases, the approach is the same: working shoulder to shoulder with local actors, identifying priorities and promoting sustainable solutions that strengthen the social fabric and empower the population. This model combines technical knowledge with traditional knowledge, generating more effective projects and reinforcing community identity and self-esteem. Progress is not imposed: it arises from collaboration based on trust and respect.



## Meet a Host Family Member

"Being a Host Mom and Peace Corps Volunteer counterpart has been life-changing. Peace Corps Volunteers are an instrument of love, unity, family, understanding, and friendship."

- Lucí H. | Panamá Oeste

# Service Models in Panama

## Peace Corps

2 years  
In-person

Volunteers live and work side-by-side with local communities on projects that reflect their own priorities and aspirations. Through immersive service, Volunteers receive comprehensive training in technical skills, language, and cultural understanding, enabling them to make a meaningful impact. During their assignment, they receive a modest allowance to cover their living expenses, allowing them to fully integrate into the community during their service.

## Response

12 months  
In-person

Volunteers serve in short-term, high-impact assignments, working directly with specific institutions to strengthen organizational capacity and address critical needs and priority areas. These assignments require specialized skills and experience, allowing for immediate and significant contribution. Volunteers receive comprehensive training in technical areas, in addition to a modest living allowance that allows them to fully integrate during their service.

## Virtual Service Pilot

3-6 months  
Online

Participants serve virtually and support local institutions that have identified specific needs. Through this modality, participants apply their technical skills and experience to strengthen capacities, share knowledge and generate impact without the need to physically travel. They receive guidance, ensuring they can be effectively integrated and contribute to sustainable solutions from anywhere.

# Our Impact Areas



## Community Environmental Conservation

Environmental Volunteers work to protect the planet by collaborating with community partners to lead local efforts that promote environmental awareness, sustainable management of natural resources, and much more.



## Youth Leadership Development

Youth Leadership Development Volunteers work with teens and youth to help them become healthy, productive, and civically engaged adults.



## Sustainable Agricultural Systems

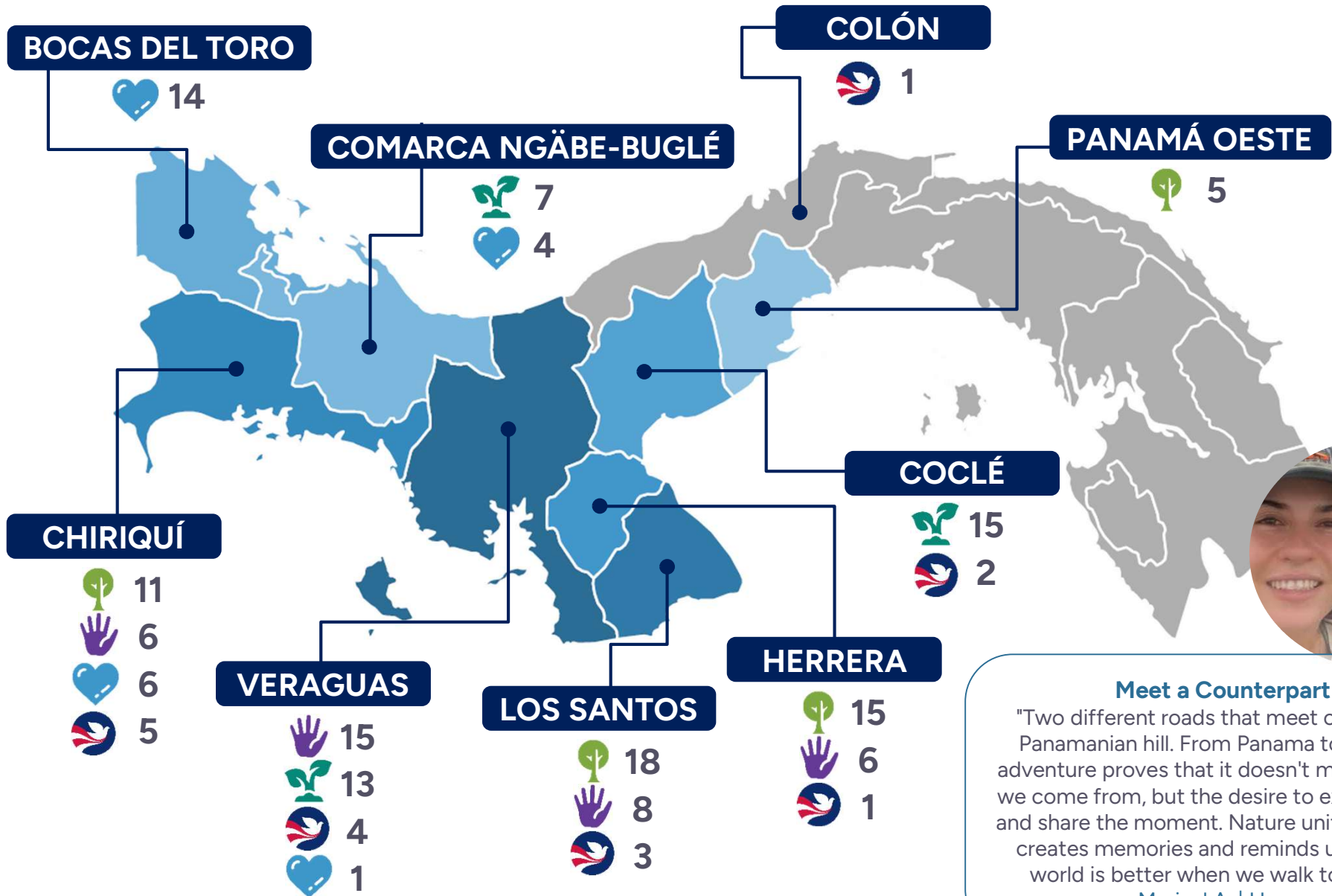
Agriculture Volunteers work with smallholder farmers to increase the diversity, productivity and sustainability of their agricultural activities; increase revenues; and improve food security.



## Youth Health and Wellbeing

Health Volunteers work alongside their communities on locally prioritized projects that focus on nutrition, basic hygiene, youth life skills, sexual and reproductive health, women and girls, and HIV prevention and education.

# Where We Worked in 2025



**Meet a Counterpart**

"Two different roads that meet on top of a Panamanian hill. From Panama to the U.S., adventure proves that it doesn't matter where we come from, but the desire to explore, learn and share the moment. Nature unites cultures, creates memories and reminds us that the world is better when we walk together."

- Marisol A. | Herrera



# Community Environmental Conservation

- Increase the knowledge and awareness of community members, including children/youth, on environmental issues and to strengthen their participation in the fight against environmental challenges.
- Increase the adoption of solid waste management practices by community members.
- Increase the adoption of community practices that lead to increased tree numbers.

## Common Activities in 2025



Solid waste management and recycling (eco-bricks, cleaning, ecological benches)



Construction of ecological stoves and training in maintenance



Reforestation and nurseries (protection of water sources, mangroves, silvopastoral systems)

### Meet Volunteers

What we love most about being CEC Volunteers is working shoulder to shoulder—with each other and with the community—to build a long-term environmental care plan that protects the community for the future.

- Eli and Jason (pictured on the left)



# Community Environmental Conservation Achievements

563

Community members, including children and youth, who have increased their knowledge and understanding of environmental issues.

6,664

Trees planted in activities co-led between community members and Volunteers; 200 have survived 6+ months.

57

Eco-friendly stoves built and used correctly by community members.

## Project Spotlight: Transitioning to Digital Tools

"When I joined this project, I saw more than digital forms – I saw an opportunity to strengthen environmental health and trust in our community. The team expressed a desire to move away from paper and have data that truly guides decisions. With my counterpart, they will soon be able to map risks and follow up faster. My role has been to accompany them with training and tools, but the real engine has been their commitment. Together, we are building a system that will transform how we care for our environment."

- Volunteer Jason, Los Santos

*Volunteer Sophie at a vermiculture workshop (top) and Volunteers Jason and Eli planting seedlings (bottom)*





# Youth Leadership Development

- Strengthen young people's life skills.
- Increase youth community engagement skills.
- Increase the employability skills of young people.
- Increase the skills of youth service providers to effectively implement positive youth development programs.

## Common Activities in 2025



Service-learning projects  
(school beautification,  
green areas)



Youth clubs and workshops  
on life skills, employability  
and digital literacy



Recreational events with  
a focus on skills (sports  
clinics, talent shows)

### Meet a Volunteer

"Working at the Infoplaza has been one of the great moments of my service so far. I enjoy collaborating with my counterparts, who are very committed to making a positive impact in the community.

- Mikayla (pictured on the left)



# Youth Leadership Development Achievements

4,500

Young people who were trained in life skills, employability and digital literacy through clubs, camps, mentoring, educational workshops and recreational activities.

42

Community service projects and awareness days (cleanups, recycling, etc.) were implemented with the support of more than 700 young people who demonstrated their leadership.

58

Local counterparts (facilitators, counselors, youth promoters, etc.) increased their skills to promote activities with a focus on positive youth development.

## Project Spotlight: The Community Mural

"For five months, we worked with students and local businesses to collect more than 20,000 plastic caps and create a community mural on the cemetery wall. The project seeks to promote environmental awareness and beautify a public space. After obtaining municipal support and sponsors, 25 people participated in the first day of installation. Although it is still to be finished, seeing the beginning of the mural has been very satisfying for the community."

- **Volunteer Nivi, Chiriquí**

*Volunteer Nivi (above) creating a community mural with local students (center); Volunteer Mia supporting a student at the Infoplaza (below)*





# Sustainable Agricultural Systems

- Sustainably manage soil fertility and pests for subsistence crop production and/or cash crops such as coffee and others.
- Basic knowledge of agribusiness such as managing budgets or taking advantage of local materials.
- Develop basic training for the organizational strengthening of groups of producers, artisans and others.
- Knowledge about adequate nutrition with local products, implementation of gardens and preparation of innovative recipes.

## Common Activities in 2025



Composting and organic fertilizer training



Home gardens and nutrition-based cooking classes



Integrated Pest Management Demonstrations and Farmer Trainings

### Meet a Volunteer

"My service with the Peace Corps has taught me that meaningful change is not found in a single project, but at the intersection of education, environmental awareness, and the deep trust that is built between a Volunteer and their community."

- Shoshana (pictured on the left)



# Achievements of Sustainable Agricultural Systems

148

Farmers have applied at least one improved agricultural management technique or practice on their farm.

1,150

Farmers have worked with a Peace Corps Volunteer on issues associated with food security.

417

Farmers have been trained in topics related to soil and water management and conservation.

## Project Spotlight: Sowing Knowledge

"For the first time, the Peace Corps arrived in our community. We are learning new things thanks to the Volunteer, things that we did not know before. We feel good because we are having new experiences and sharing with other communities. We recently participated in a talk on organic fertilizers and biol (liquid fertilizer) to improve the soil, and we have already put these topics into practice on the farms, both in theory and in practice."

- **Counterpart Nicolás, Comarca Ngäbe-Buglé**



Volunteer Sakke planting a tree (above); Volunteers Robert and Bonnie, and counterpart Ricardo presenting at a regional agriculture meeting (center); Sakke and his counterpart, Nicolás (below).



# Youth Health and Wellbeing

- Strengthen young people's knowledge, skills and attitudes to improve their health and well-being through health and life skills education.
- Strengthen the knowledge, skills and attitudes of adults to effectively support the health and well-being of young people.

## Common Activities in 2025



Educational talks on HIV/STI education and prevention



Youth Camps with a Focus on Health Skills Development and Practices



Sexual and reproductive health, empowerment and social support education sessions

### Meet a Volunteer

"The encounters I've had with my neighbors, working side-by-side, have given me an important perspective on the realities of global health, empathy, and the human connection that I hope to keep forever, as a public health professional and as a person."

- Elizabeth (pictured on the left)



# Youth Health and Wellbeing Achievements

3,500

People were trained, in 24 Ngäbe communities, on essential health and well-being issues including sexual and reproductive health, good hygiene practices and youth empowerment.

1,000

People were trained in education and prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

1,600

People developed and reinforced their life skills through participatory workshops and community activities.

## Project Spotlight: The Health Resource Library

"This space will not only represent walls and books but will also be a forum of knowledge that will transform the future of our children and young people, providing them with the necessary tools for their educational and cultural growth. The collaboration of the Peace Corps has been the fundamental engine for this collective dream to materialize, demonstrating that working together between institutions and communities can generate significant changes. We reiterate our gratitude for trusting our community and for investing in the power of education."

- Counterpart Virgilio, Chiriquí



Counterpart René working on the health resource library project (above); Volunteer Celeste and community members, Dr. Alexander, Dr. Lucy, and nurse Beronica (below).



# Peace Corps Response

- The Peace Corps Response program provides high-impact, short-term (12 months) technical and capacity building assistance to members of organizations, institutions, NGOs, and government entities in Panama.

## Projects Highlighted in 2025



Strengthening and organizational development of monitoring and evaluation programs



Technical collaboration within the PIASI\*\* project in the Ngäbe-Buglé Region



Technical collaboration in the coordination and medical planning of HIV in the Ngäbe-Buglé Region

*\*\*Sustainable and Inclusive Agricultural Innovation Program (PIASI)*

### Meet a Volunteer

"I am grateful for the gift of being able to work with the admirable teams at Smithsonian and Biocultural Learning to share our enthusiasm for science and caring for the environment with young people. Most of all, I am pleased with the friendships I had the opportunity to meet and the wonderful people in the community for making me feel so accepted to live with everyone."

- Ryan (pictured on the left)



# Peace Corps Response Accomplishments

16

Projects in which Peace Corps Response Volunteers has collaborated.

7

Public institutions with which they have collaborated.

5

Non-governmental organizations and local organizations with which it has collaborated.

## Project Spotlight: Youth Sexual Health

"During the second semester, Eva joined the Peace Corps Response program at the APLAFA Clinic in Santiago, supporting youth sexual health, violence prevention and HIV education. Her work included workshops for adolescents and teachers, participation in community campaigns, project design and collaboration with local and national networks. She stood out for her comprehensive approach to human rights, gender and institutional strengthening. Eva's work during this period is distinguished by a strong combination of youth intervention, institutional strengthening, community engagement, HIV prevention support, and a strong focus on human rights and gender."

- **Counterpart Nathaniel, APLAFA Veraguas**



Volunteer Yadariselt planting a seedling (above); Volunteer Eva facilitating a session (center); Volunteer Brandon and his counterpart performing a colossoma harvest day (below)

# The Peace Corps Partnership Program

The Peace Corps Partnership Program is an initiative that supports community projects through private donations and local contributions from host communities. The projects emphasize capacity building, technical skills, and sustainability, while strengthening collaboration between volunteers, communities, and strategic partners.

During 2025, the program supported 14 projects in provinces such as Veraguas, Bocas del Toro, and Chiriquí, Coclé, Herrera. Each project included significant local input—in some cases more than 40%—that ensured commitment and continuity. These efforts demonstrate that the combination of external funding, local contributions, and community training is key to generating lasting impact and strengthening resilience in Panamanian communities.

*Counterparts Zenaida, Hermeregildo, and Yamizel prepare a soil mix for use in a new greenhouse, built to encourage organic production and crop diversity in their community in Coclé.*



# Peace Corps Partnership Program Featured Projects



**Youth Health Camp:** Benefited 90 direct participants and 119 indirect participants, training 13 facilitators.

- 45% community contribution



**School Bathrooms** (*third photo*): Improved infrastructure and hygiene practices, benefiting 600 people.

- 55% community contribution



**Coffee Piling Machine Installation:** Reduced production costs by more than 50% and strengthened the local economy. It benefited 22 direct members and 500 indirect members, with technical and organizational training.

- 30% community contribution



**Greenhouse for medicinal plants** (*second photo*): Impacted 53 students and 168 indirect beneficiaries, creating a sustainable educational space.

- 37% community contribution



**Construction of 14 ecological stoves** (*first photo*): Benefited 29 people indirectly, promoting environmental conservation.

- 42% community contribution



**School greenhouse:** Benefited 240 people, promoting environmental education.

- 30% community contribution





MINISTERIO DE  
DESARROLLO SOCIAL



Thank you to our partners  
for a successful year!



[www.peacecorps.gov/panama](http://www.peacecorps.gov/panama)

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