



Peace Corps Works: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of 21 Host Country Impact Studies



Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning

November 2016

Acknowledgments

The impetus for this cross-sectional study came from Dr. Cathryn L. Thorup who led OSIRP's completion of 25 analytical reports (2009–2014) based on the Host Country Impact Studies (HCIS's) conducted between 2008 and 2012. The richness of each of these individual studies inspired her commitment to taking the data collected a step further in order to better understand what is unique about the Peace Corps' approach to community development and cross-cultural understanding. The result is this cross-sectional study. Leah Ermarth, chief of evaluation and research in OSIRP, provided valuable guidance and instrumental support throughout the process.

Kate Goddard Rohrbaugh, author of this cross-sectional analysis, is a program analyst in OSIRP with extensive experience in program evaluation in education, data analytics and benchmarking, and research on teams and organizations. She is a returned Peace Corps Volunteer, having served as a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Volunteer in Poltava, Ukraine, from 1993 to 1995, and received a Master of Policy Sciences degree focusing on program evaluation in 2000.

The Peace Corps staff members who provided context and insight into this analysis need to be recognized as well. They include Sandra Anderson-McClymont, Adam Beebe, Ruth Goode, Jessica Folk, Gabriel Krieschok, Corina-Lyn Langlois, Sarah Marshall, Alissa Mayer, Danielle Niedermaier, Alene Seiler, and Carl Triplehorn. Thanks also to Gregg Friedman who provided help with the visuals in Tableau, Samuel Ludwig for editing, and interns Chris Praley and Zachary Yost who were responsible for the sometimes tedious and always time-consuming work of amassing the data. Cathryn L. Thorup and Leah Ermarth provided the final manuscript review.

The Peace Corps wishes to thank its many staff members both past and present who shepherded the Host Country Impact Studies from initial concept to implementation at posts around the globe from 2008 to 2012. Many others contributed to maintaining data consistency and quality and to producing the final country-specific reports. In addition, the Peace Corps thanks the members of the independent research teams, of which there were dozens overall, and all others who contributed to previous HCIS efforts.¹

Special recognition is extended to Jody Olsen, former acting Director and deputy director of the Peace Corps who provided inspiration at a key moment by expressing her belief that the agency was sitting on a treasure trove of data. She underscored the interest that university researchers had expressed in the Host Country Impact Studies and urged the agency to take full advantage of all of the work invested in the

¹ For a complete list of individuals who contributed to the Host Country Impact Studies and reports from 2008 to 2014, please refer to the 25 country-specific reports available online at peacecorps.gov/about/open-government/reports/.

development of these studies. Her encouragement to build on the work to date was the right encouragement at just the right moment.

Finally, the Peace Corps would like to thank all of the host country participants in these studies who gave their time and provided an invaluable opportunity to learn more about the Peace Corps from a new perspective.

About the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP)

It is the mission of OSIRP to advance evidence-based management at the Peace Corps by guiding agency strategic planning; monitoring and evaluating agency-level performance and programs; conducting research to generate new insights in the fields of international development, cultural exchange, and Volunteer service; enhancing the stewardship and governance of agency data; and helping to shape agency engagement on high-level, governmentwide initiatives.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	1
Tables.....	iv
Figures.....	iv
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
Host Country Impact Studies	1
A Cross-Sectional Analysis.....	2
Methodology, Scope, and Limitations.....	2
Summary of Findings.....	4
Conclusions and Recommendations	4
1. INTRODUCTION.....	6
1.1 About the Peace Corps	6
1.2 The Comprehensive Agency Assessment (2010) and HCIS Data	7
1.3 Other HCIS Studies.....	7
1.4 The HCIS Cross-Sectional Analysis and Report Structure.....	8
2. FREQUENCY OF COMMUNICATION MATTERED	10
2.1 Frequency of Communication with Volunteers	11
2.2 Factors that Influenced the Frequency of Communication with Volunteers	12
2.3 Summary of Findings	17
3. POSITIVE COMMUNITY CHANGE WAS SUSTAINABLE	18
3.1 Measuring Community Change	18
3.2 Outcomes by Sector, Target Beneficiaries, and Cross-Sector Programming Priorities.....	19
3.3 Factors that Drove the Perception of Positive Change	21
3.4 Factors that Influenced Perceived Project Sustainability	24
3.5 Summary of Findings	29
4. PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS IMPROVED THE UNDERSTANDING OF AMERICANS.....	31
4.1 Measuring the Improvement in Understanding	31
4.2 A Change in the Depth of Understanding of Americans.....	31
4.3 Volunteer Traits.....	35
4.4 Summary of Findings.....	37
5. GOALS ONE AND TWO WERE MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE.....	38
5.1 The Importance of Communication to Goals One and Two	39
5.2 Traits of Volunteers.....	40
5.3 Purposeful Volunteerism.....	41

5.4 Temporal Relationship Between Goals One and Two	42
5.5 Summary of Findings	42
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	43
6.1 Language and Communication Between Volunteers and Counterparts.....	43
6.2 Counterpart Identification and Retention	44
6.3 Project Design.....	45
6.4 Volunteer Recruitment and Placement Efforts.....	45
6.5 What the Peace Corps Can Still Learn	46
6.6 Summary	46
APPENDIX A: HCIS HISTORY AND METHODOLOGY	48
APPENDIX B: SCOPE OF THIS STUDY	53
APPENDIX C: LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY	63
APPENDIX D: ANALYTIC METHODOLOGY	66
APPENDIX E: OUTCOME VARIABLES.....	69

Tables

Table 1: Languages Used in Counterpart Interviews (n=928)	14
Table 2: Country Data.....	54
Table 3: Project Data.....	55
Table 4: Brief Descriptions of the Purpose of the Projects.....	58
Table 5: Sector Breakdown by Number of Projects and Project Type.....	61
Table 6: Regional Breakdown by Country and Number of Projects (n=29).....	62

Figures

Figure 1: Cartogram of Countries in the HCIS Cross-Sectional Analysis.....	3
Figure 2: Counterpart Years of Experience in their Professional Field (n=903).....	11
Figure 3: Number of Peace Corps Volunteers with whom Counterparts had Experience (n=913).....	11
Figure 4: Frequency of Communication with Volunteers About Work (n=923)	12
Figure 5: Frequency of Communication by Difficulty of Language (n=923)	15
Figure 6: Frequency of Communication by Sector and Project Type (n=923).....	16
Figure 7: Frequency of Communication by Counterpart Experience in their Field (n=900).....	17
Figure 8: Direction of Change by Outcomes (n=6,229)	19

Figure 9: Ratings of Outcomes by Sector (n=6,229).....	20
Figure 10: Ratings of Outcomes for HIV/AIDS and Gender Equity.....	21
Figure 11: Relationships Between Outcome Ratings and the Difficulty of Language with Frequency of Communication (n=851).....	23
Figure 12: Relationships Between Outcome Ratings and Counterpart Experience with a Succession of Volunteers and Experience in their Field (n=819).....	24
Figure 13: Counterparts' Belief in Maintaining Changes (n=783).....	25
Figure 14: Satisfaction with Changes from Volunteer Work (n=910).....	26
Figure 15: Satisfaction With Changes and Counterparts' Belief in Maintaining Changes (n=781).....	26
Figure 16: Number of Years No Volunteer Assigned to the Site (n=836).....	27
Figure 17: Counterparts' Belief in Maintaining Changes by Average Project Outcome Rating and Number of Years No Volunteer Assigned to the Site (n=661).....	28
Figure 18: Counterparts' Belief in Maintaining Changes by Project Type and Sector (n=783).....	29
Figure 19: Understanding of Americans Before and After Working with Peace Corps Volunteers (n=860 and n=857).....	32
Figure 20: Growth in Understanding of Americans (n=870).....	33
Figure 21: Frequency of Communication and Understanding of Americans (n=868) ...	34
Figure 22: Understanding of Americans by Geographic Region (n=870).....	35
Figure 23: Percentage of Counterparts Using Specific Traits to Describe Americans (n=673).....	37
Figure 24: Ratings of Outcomes by Frequency of Communication about Work and Understanding of Americans (n=868).....	40
Figure 25: Traits Associated with Average Ratings (n=662)	41

Executive Summary

Host Country Impact Studies

In 2008, the Peace Corps launched the Host Country Impact Studies (HCIS's) to assess the effectiveness of its Volunteers in achieving two of the Peace Corps' three strategic goals—building local capacity (Goal One) and sharing America with the world (Goal Two)—from the perspectives of Volunteers' local partners and community members.

From 2008 to 2012, between two and seven studies were completed each year for a total of 25 studies in 24 countries.¹ These studies examined 32 separate projects tailored to meet the specific needs of each host country.

These projects fell into the Peace Corps' six project sectors (Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health, and Youth in Development). A total of 523 sites were visited, and a total of 3,569 host country nationals (HCNs) were contacted: 3,501 were interviewed, and 68 participated in focus groups. Some of these individuals had a Peace Corps Volunteer in their community at the time of the interviews, while others had not had a Volunteer assigned to their community for several years.

These studies were achieved through a successful collaboration between the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) and 24 Peace Corps posts. The success of these studies depended upon a significant investment of time and effort on the part of local staff at Peace Corps posts and all who took part in the interview process.

The country-specific findings that resulted from these interviews were shared through 25 discrete reports, the last of which was published in 2014.² Overall, the Host Country Impact Studies continue to represent the agency's broadest effort to date to learn about the Peace Corps' impact directly from the people who lived and worked with



¹ There were two separate studies conducted simultaneously in Thailand—one focused on the Community-Based Organizational Development (CBOD) Project and the other on the Teacher Collaboration and Community Outreach (TCCO) Project.

² The complete set of Host Country Impact Study reports and two-page summaries of each are available online at peacecorps.gov/about/open-government/reports/.

Volunteers during their service.³ As described below, there is unique value in merging the data from these discrete studies into a single cross-sectional analysis designed to strengthen the agency's understanding of Volunteer efforts at the global level and its ability to document its impact.

A Cross-Sectional Analysis

The main aim of this cross-sectional analysis is to better understand counterpart perspectives regarding the Peace Corps' effectiveness in its Goal One and Goal Two work globally. More specifically, this analysis examines counterpart perspectives on the frequency of communication with Volunteers in the local language, the success and sustainability of Peace Corps projects, and the extent to which Volunteers changed counterparts' understanding of Americans.

Although the HCIS data are between four and seven years old,⁴ merging the full array of country-level results into a single dataset offered the rare opportunity to develop deeper insights into many topics that remain highly relevant for the Peace Corps today, such as language and communication. These data also offered an exceptional opportunity to assess several broader themes among counterparts—the Volunteers' primary host country work partners—related to the Peace Corps' Goal One and Goal Two efforts.

Methodology, Scope, and Limitations

This cross-sectional study limited its analysis to the questions found in all or almost all of the 29 interview guides. By design, the questions that were asked in all of the countries focused on key Goal One and Goal Two topics. The study also limited its analysis to the responses from the 928 counterparts interviewed in the 21 HCIS studies conducted between 2009 and 2012.

This study covers a meaningful proportion of Peace Corps projects and countries around the globe. All six of the Peace Corps' project sectors and all three of the Peace Corps' administrative regions⁵ were represented. The 21 posts signify more than one-quarter of the 80 countries where the traditional two-year Volunteers were posted

³ In 2014, the agency established two annual surveys—the Global Counterpart Survey and the Host Country Staff Survey—to further understand targeted HCN perspectives on the Peace Corps' work. Summary reports from the fiscal year (FY) 2015 surveys are available online at peacecorps.gov/about/open-government/reports/.

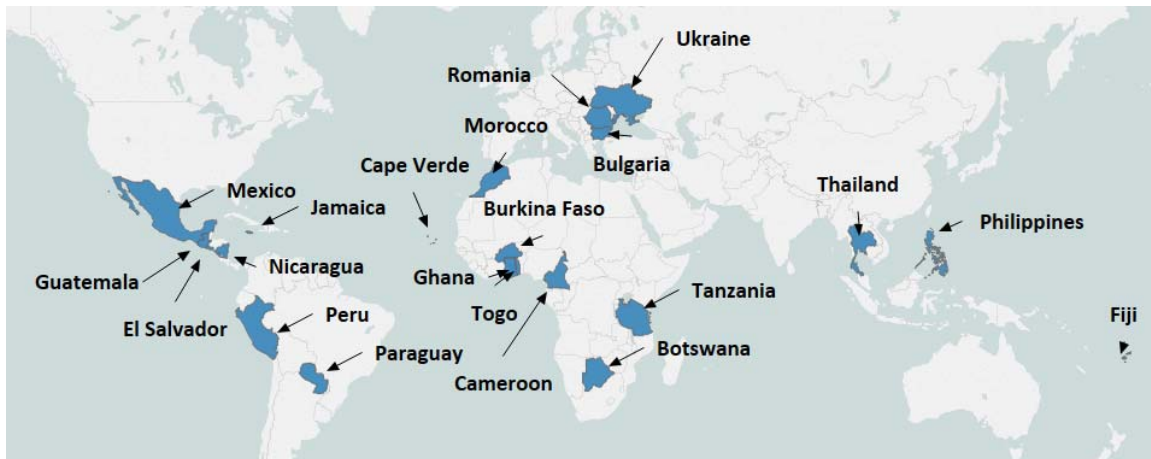
⁴ The interview guides used in the 2008 HCIS pilot studies in Armenia, the Dominican Republic, and Mali were significantly different from those used in 2009–2012. This cross-sectional analysis therefore excludes data from these three HCIS pilot studies; the analysis includes data from the remaining 29 projects in 21 countries.

⁵ Peace Corps posts are organized into three administrative regions: Africa (AF); Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia (EMA); and Inter-America and the Pacific (IAP).

during the HCIS interviews. The Peace Corps retains a presence in 18 of the 21 countries included in this study.⁶

The following cartogram in Figure 1 illustrates the global reach of this cross-sectional analysis.

Figure 1: Cartogram of Countries in the HCIS Cross-Sectional Analysis



It must be recognized that there are certain limitations to this analysis. Neither the counterparts who were interviewed nor the projects included in the Host Country Impact Studies should be interpreted as fully representative of all Peace Corps counterparts and projects. Challenges to interpreting the data included the likelihood of positivity bias among the respondents and the complications of aggregating data collected in 26 different languages.⁷

Please refer to [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#) for more detailed information on the methodology and scope of this analysis. For a more in-depth description of study limitations, the extent to which they were mitigated, and the reasons why the agency considers the findings of this study valid, please refer to [Appendix C](#).

⁶ The Peace Corps has closed the posts in Bulgaria, Cape Verde, and Romania.

⁷ It is also important to note that these are called “impact” studies because they help the Peace Corps understand project effects. These are not, however, “impact evaluations” that employ traditional evaluative methodologies (e.g., control or comparison group design) for measuring program effectiveness.

Summary of Findings

In general, the findings regarding the assessment of the Peace Corps' work were very positive:

- **Goal One** – Counterparts rated 87 percent of the project outcomes examined in the studies as either “much better” (44 percent) or “somewhat better” (43 percent) after working with Volunteers.
- **Goal One** – Nearly all of the counterparts were either “very satisfied” (64 percent) or “somewhat satisfied” (31 percent) with the changes that resulted from working with the Peace Corps.
- **Goal Two** – More than nine in 10 counterparts reported a good (27 percent) or better (66 percent) understanding of Americans after working with Volunteers.

In addition, important correlations were found that have implications for Peace Corps Volunteer recruitment, programming, and training. Some of the most compelling findings from the analysis include the following:

Frequent Communication Heightened Project Success

- This analysis indicated that the key element for improving counterparts' opinions of Peace Corps projects—and, to a lesser extent, Goal Two impact—was frequent communication with Volunteers about work. Project outcomes were, on average, rated more highly by counterparts who met daily with their Volunteers than for those who met less frequently.

Positive Community Change Was Sustainable

- A large proportion of the counterparts found Peace Corps projects sustainable—90 percent believed that they would “completely” (24 percent), “largely” (44 percent), or “somewhat” (22 percent) maintain the positive changes that resulted from the work of the Volunteers. In cases where counterparts noted that they would be less likely to maintain the changes that had occurred, counterparts tended to have a lack of satisfaction with those changes.

Volunteers' Soft Skills Were Associated with Positive Change

- The counterparts who described Americans as “kind” and “supportive” (interpreted as personal traits) were significantly more likely than those who did not describe Americans this way to find that Peace Corps projects resulted in positive change. Meanwhile, counterparts who described Americans as “hardworking,” “knowledgeable,” and “punctual” (interpreted as professional traits) were no more likely than others to find that Peace Corps projects resulted in positive change.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Peace Corps model of promoting world peace and friendship through community-based development and cross-cultural understanding is an effective approach for both building local capacity and sharing America around the globe. The findings from this

study can be used to further improve a model that already works, but that also needs to keep current with an evolving understanding of how and why it works.

This study also presents an opportunity to understand recent Peace Corps history and provide evidence for programming efforts going forward. The findings from this study can be used to further inform and validate many initiatives already underway, while highlighting areas for continued focus. These latter areas include communication between Volunteers and counterparts, challenges with languages, counterpart identification and retention, project design, and Volunteer recruitment and placement.

1. Introduction

1.1 About the Peace Corps

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. The Peace Corps grew from that inspiration into an agency of the federal government devoted to promoting world peace and friendship through community-based development and cross-cultural understanding. Rather than providing monetary assistance to countries, the agency sends Volunteers to share their skills and experience while living and working alongside local individuals and communities. This day-to-day interaction affords the Volunteers a unique perspective and the opportunity to partner with local communities to address their development challenges and to strengthen mutual understanding.



By the end of 1961, the first Peace Corps Volunteers were serving in seven countries. Since then, more than 220,000 men and women have served in 141 countries and lived in thousands of communities. Today's Peace Corps Volunteers tackle a range of issues over the course of their two-year service in one of six project sectors: Agriculture, Community Economic Development (CED), Education, Environment, Health, and Youth in Development (YD). They work alongside host country teachers, community members and leaders, health professionals, farmers, staff at nongovernmental organizations, and many others. They work with those who want to build better lives for themselves, their families, and the people in their communities. In June 2016, more than 7,000 Volunteers were serving in more than 60 countries around the globe.

The Peace Corps has three strategic goals, as articulated in the FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan:¹

- *Strategic Goal One—Building Local Capacity:* Advance local development by strengthening the capacity of local communities and individuals through the service of trained Volunteers.

¹ The three strategic goals outlined in the Peace Corps' FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan (files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/policies/pc_strategic_plan_2014-2018-annual_plan_2016-2017.pdf) serve as the foundation of the Peace Corps' approach to development and guide agency operations. These strategic goals are consistent with the three core goals articulated when the Peace Corps was first established in 1961 (The Peace Corps Act, Public Law 87-293—September 22, 1961, [go.usa.gov/cYrH5](https://www.govinfo.gov/cYrH5)).

- *Strategic Goal Two—Sharing America with the World:* Promote a better understanding of Americans through Volunteers who live and work within local communities.
- *Strategic Goal Three—Bringing the World Back Home:* Increase Americans' awareness and knowledge of other cultures and global issues through Volunteers who share their Peace Corps experiences and continue to serve upon their return.

The interdependence and interaction of these three mutually reinforcing goals are central to the Peace Corps mission.

1.2 The Comprehensive Agency Assessment (2010) and HCIS Data

Approaching its 50th anniversary, and as mandated in the FY 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act, the Peace Corps conducted an agencywide comprehensive assessment.² In response to the recommendations of the assessment team, the Peace Corps implemented several major reforms, including Focus In/Train Up (FITU), which concentrated training efforts globally to enable Volunteers to implement a more limited number of highly effective technical interventions in their work.

Given that the Host Country Impact Studies coincided with the implementation of FITU and other reforms from this period, the data collected in the Host Country Impact Study (HCIS) interviews can continue to serve the agency as a baseline. While there are methodological constraints in repeating the HCIS interviews and obtaining completely comparable data in the future, the HCIS data nonetheless provide a valuable reference point for understanding the perspectives of host country national partners on the Peace Corps' work before the agency's reforms and major changes from this decade fully took effect.

1.3 Other HCIS Studies

At three of the Peace Corps posts that participated in the Host Country Impact Studies (Bulgaria, the Philippines, and Tanzania), the local researchers employed a comparison group design, interviewing the standard groups as well as an additional 129 host country nationals. These comparisons were intended as a counterfactual, as the interviews took place at sites that had applied for a Volunteer but had not received one. The interviewees were individuals who likely would have filled the role of counterparts or non-counterpart beneficiaries. The focus of the comparison groups was on Goal One; no questions on Goal Two were included.

² The Peace Corps: A Comprehensive Agency Assessment (2010) is available online at files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/opengov/PC_Comprehensive_Agency_Assessment.pdf.

In all three countries, the comparison groups were much less likely to be satisfied with the changes that had occurred in their schools' English language programs than was the case in the communities that had hosted a Volunteer. In the Philippines, the results were mixed—beneficiaries in both the Peace Corps-associated and comparison groups rated project outcomes as better at roughly the same rate. The main benefits of the Peace Corps project over the comparison schools were that students of Volunteers reported studying harder, participating more in class, and experiencing more interactive teaching methods.

In June 2010, midway through the development of the Host Country Impact Studies, the Peace Corps' Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) drew on data from the 10 studies completed by that time for a report entitled "The Impact of Peace Corps Service on Host Communities and Host Country Perceptions of Americans."³ This study was requested by the Brookings Institute and presented at a meeting with international development professionals in 2010.⁴ This study found that, after working and socializing with Volunteers, host country nationals indicated that they understood Americans better and had fewer stereotypical and negative perceptions of Americans.

1.4 The HCIS Cross-Sectional Analysis and Report Structure

The main aim of this cross-sectional analysis is to better understand global counterpart perspectives on the Peace Corps' effectiveness in its Goal One and Goal Two work. More specifically, this analysis examines counterpart perspectives on the frequency of communication with Volunteers in the local language, the success and sustainability of Peace Corps projects, and the extent to which Volunteers changed counterparts' understanding of Americans.

Given the importance of frequent communication between Volunteers and counterparts, [Chapter 2](#) explores possible factors that drove greater communication. [Chapter 3](#) reviews the findings regarding Goal One and what may have driven positive perceived changes within a community. [Chapter 4](#) reviews the findings regarding the improved understanding of Americans due to counterpart work with Volunteers, and [Chapter 5](#) explores the relationship and synergy between Goals One and Two. Lastly, [Chapter 6](#) draws conclusions from these findings, provides recommendations, and identifies areas for further research.

³ Kerley, Janet and Susan Jenkins, The Peace Corps (OSIRP), "The Impact of Peace Corps Service on Host Communities and Host Country Perceptions of Americans," 2010. https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/opengov/impact_of_PC_service.pdf.

⁴ A transcript of this meeting is available online at https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/20100623_volunteering_panel1.pdf.

For an in-depth discussion of the history and overall methodology of the Host Country Impact Studies conducted from 2008 to 2012, please refer to [Appendix A](#).

A total of 928 counterparts are represented in this report, who—based on their responses—collaborated with 2,322 Volunteers (more than two Volunteers per counterpart on average). This represents roughly 60 percent of the 3,815 Volunteers sworn in at these posts who worked on these projects. For more post- and project-specific data, including the number of counterparts interviewed for each project, please refer to [Appendix B](#).

[Appendix C](#) details the limitations of this study, and [Appendix D](#) further details the report's analytic methodology.

The unit of analysis for most of this report is the counterpart. Where noted, a second dataset is used in which the unit of analysis is the project outcome rating provided by the counterpart. For a complete description of the project outcome rating variables, please refer to [Appendix E](#).

2. Frequency of Communication Mattered

The relationship with a counterpart, or primary host community work partner, is one of the most critical relationships that a Volunteer will have during service. At some posts, Peace Corps staff identify the in-country counterpart before the Volunteer arrives. At other posts, the Volunteer identifies his or her own counterpart after an initial period of settling into the host country community. In cases where there has been a succession of Volunteers, a new Volunteer will often continue working with the previous Volunteer's counterpart. Regardless of how counterparts are identified, these individuals are expected to collaborate closely with Volunteers throughout their service and are an integral part of the Peace Corps model.

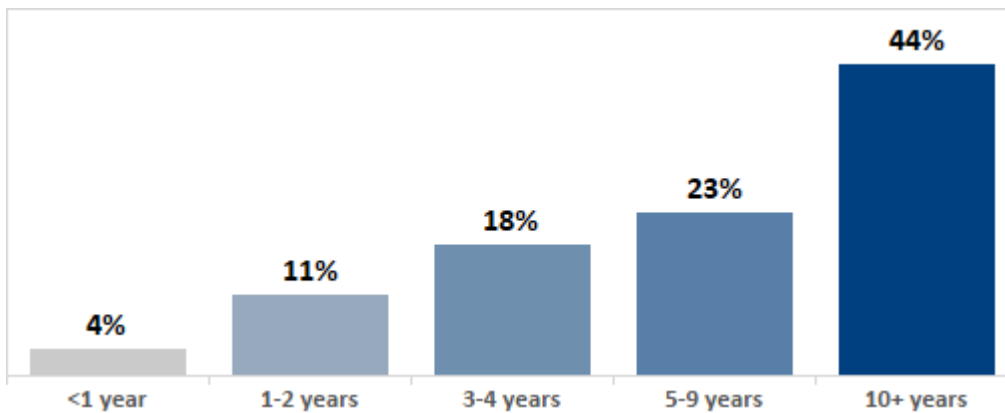


The HCIS interviews were conducted with both post-assigned and Volunteer-identified counterparts. Although not all of the researchers distinguished among the counterpart types, the HCIS report in Mexico—as one reference point—noted that 21 of the 46 counterparts were “informal” (i.e., identified by the Volunteer), while the remaining counterparts were “formal” (i.e., formally designated by the Peace Corps).¹

Counterparts in this study had varying levels of professional experience, as seen in Figure 2 below. A large proportion of the counterparts interviewed had more than 10 years of experience (44 percent), but there were several with very little experience—15 percent of the study participants had two years of experience or less in their professional field. The remaining 41 percent had between three and nine years of experience.

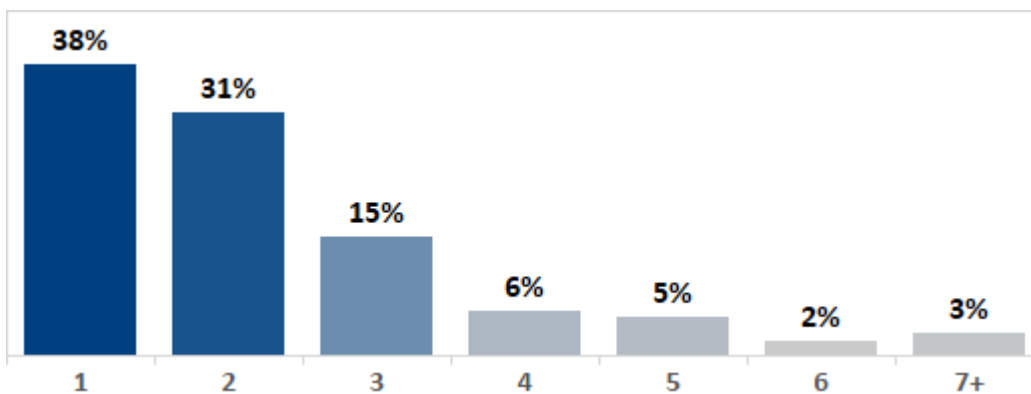
¹ The Peace Corps (OSIRP), Host Country Impact Study: Mexico, 2014.
https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/opengov/PC_Mexico_Report.pdf.

Figure 2: Counterpart Years of Experience in their Professional Field (n=903)



Counterparts also had varying levels of experience with Volunteers. As seen in Figure 3 below, roughly 40 percent indicated they had worked with only one Volunteer, 30 percent had worked with two Volunteers, and 30 percent had worked with three or more Volunteers.

Figure 3: Number of Peace Corps Volunteers with whom Counterparts had Experience (n=913)



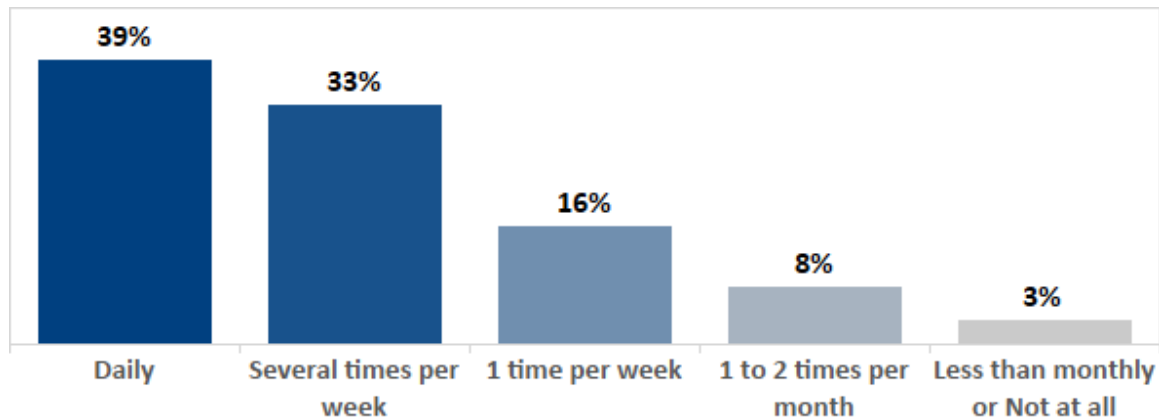
It is important to note that the counterparts interviewed had varying personal and professional characteristics. Some were colleagues with the same level of education and age as the Volunteers they worked with, others were less experienced professionally than the Volunteers, and still others had much more professional experience and may have functioned as a Volunteer's supervisor. Some counterparts had a high level of interest in collaborating with a Peace Corps Volunteer, while others had less flexibility due to the demands of their everyday personal and professional responsibilities. This study includes the responses of all participating counterparts, regardless of their age, professional experience or rank, and level of engagement with the Volunteer.

2.1 Frequency of Communication with Volunteers

In the 21 countries included in this study, 89 percent of the counterparts interviewed reported speaking about work with their Volunteer at least once per week; 11 percent

reported speaking a few times per month or less.² Figure 4 provides a breakdown of how counterparts responded to the frequency options that were provided.

Figure 4: Frequency of Communication with Volunteers About Work (n=923)



Results from the 2015 Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS)³ offered similar data from the perspective of the Volunteers: 90 percent of the Volunteers reported communicating with their counterparts at least once per week. While the audience and timing of these two data collection instruments differed, both groups reported communicating on a regular basis.

2.2 Factors that Influenced the Frequency of Communication with Volunteers

What made it more or less difficult for a counterpart to communicate with a Volunteer? Language ability was one obvious factor, but there were also strong indications that project type and counterpart characteristics may also have driven communication.

- Counterparts who spoke languages that were more difficult for native English speakers to learn were less likely to communicate with Volunteers frequently about work ($p < 0.001$).
- Counterparts who worked with Volunteers on English-teaching projects (Education sector) communicated with their Volunteers more frequently about work than counterparts who worked on other projects ($p < 0.001$). Less frequent

² There was minor variation in how this question was asked across the HCIS countries. Most notably, this is one of the few questions where counterparts may have been asked to respond regarding the most recent Volunteer they had worked with (i.e., regarding a specific individual) rather than all of the Volunteers with whom they had worked.

³ Earlier versions of the AVS did not include questions on the frequency of communications between Volunteers and counterparts.

communication was particularly noticeable with regard to a health education project (Health sector) and a food security project (Agriculture sector) ($p < 0.01$).

- Counterparts who had more experience in their professional field were more likely to communicate with Volunteers frequently about work ($p < 0.02$).

These three factors were found to have a significant and independent relationship with how often counterparts communicated with Volunteers about work, holding all other factors constant.⁴

Language of the Counterpart

The Peace Corps has been a pioneer in training Americans to speak a variety of languages for decades. Some of these languages are well-known and commonly taught in the United States, but many others are indigenous and some are unwritten. After arriving in their country of service, Peace Corps trainees preparing to become Volunteers study the local language or languages during pre-service training (PST). Currently, the number of hours in language training during PST ranges from 50 hours—to learn a local English Patois, as in Jamaica—to over 200 hours at other posts with more complicated language landscapes. After PST, and upon arrival at their two-year sites, Volunteers are expected to continue learning the local language to achieve the goals of the Peace Corps.

Not all languages are equally difficult for native English speakers to learn. Therefore, the Peace Corps, like other major language-teaching organizations, such as the Foreign Service Institute or the Defense Language Academy, has assigned a number to indicate the level of language difficulty. French and Spanish, which are grammatically similar to English, share many cognates with English, and use the same alphabet, are categorized as Level 1 languages. As the languages become more difficult for native English speakers, the level increases to Level 4.

The languages of the HCIS interviews can be used as a basis for understanding how difficult the languages of the communities were for the Volunteers. Although this may be an imperfect proxy for the languages that the counterparts spoke with Volunteers (many of the counterparts likely spoke English or a *lingua franca* with the Volunteers at times, particularly at the beginning of the Volunteers' service), examining the HCIS data using this proxy nonetheless illustrated an interesting relationship. Indeed, language difficulty was the strongest predictor of communication frequency between counterparts and Volunteers: the more difficult the language, the less frequent the communication.

⁴ For more information regarding the analytic approaches used in this study, please see [Appendix D](#).

Table 1 below provides a breakdown of the 26 unique languages used in the HCIS interviews examined in this analysis, the level of difficulty assigned internally by Peace Corps language-learning experts, and the proportion of total counterparts who used each level's languages in the interviews. As some of the interviews were conducted in English, this study created a Level 0 as well for analytical purposes.

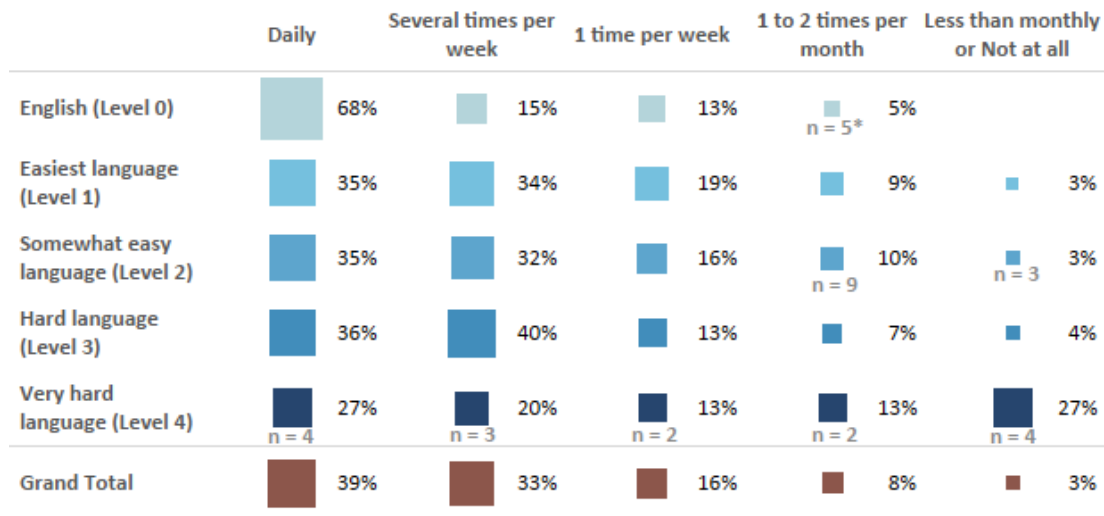
Table 1: Languages Used in Counterpart Interviews (n=928)

Level 0 (10%)	Level 1 (45%)	Level 2 (10%)	Level 3 (32%)		Level 4 (2%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • English Patois 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French • Portuguese • Portuguese-Creole • Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guarani • Kiswahili • Romanian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bisaya • Boholano • Bulgarian • Ewe • Fijian • Hiligayno • Kiniray-a • Moba 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nawdum • Russian • Setswana • Tagalog • Tamazight • Tashlhit • Thai • Ukrainian⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arabic

The relationship between the difficulty of a language and the frequency of communication is depicted below in Figure 5. The size of the boxes is proportionate to the adjacent percentage, and the percentages across each row add to 100 percent. Counterparts who used English in the HCIS interviews communicated significantly more frequently with their Volunteers than those who did not. Although the sample is small for the Level 4 language speakers, more than 25 percent of these counterparts spoke with Volunteers less than monthly or not at all. As the language used in the HCIS interviews grew in difficulty, the frequency of communication diminished.

⁵ The specific language used in the Ukraine interviews were not identified for each respondent, but there is a note that English, Russian, and Ukrainian were all used in the interviews. Because Ukrainian and Russian are both Level 3 languages, these counterparts have been rated as utilizing a Level 3 language for analysis.

Figure 5: Frequency of Communication by Difficulty of Language (n=923)



*Response rates are only noted when there were fewer than 10 observations.

Frequency of Communication by Project Type

Looking again at Figure 5 above, it appears that language difficulty Levels 1 through 3 had essentially the same distribution of responses across frequency of communication—the percentage of counterparts who spoke to Volunteers “daily” was approximately 35 percent for all three groups.

Controlling for other factors, however, counterparts who worked on the English-teaching projects were significantly more likely to speak with Volunteers frequently about work. The English-teaching projects were all in countries where Level 3 languages were spoken: in Bulgaria (Bulgarian), the Philippines (Tagalog), and Ukraine (Russian and Ukrainian). As a result, the similar distribution of responses for Level 2 and Level 3 languages is likely due to the fact that there were a high number of English teachers represented in the Level 3 category.

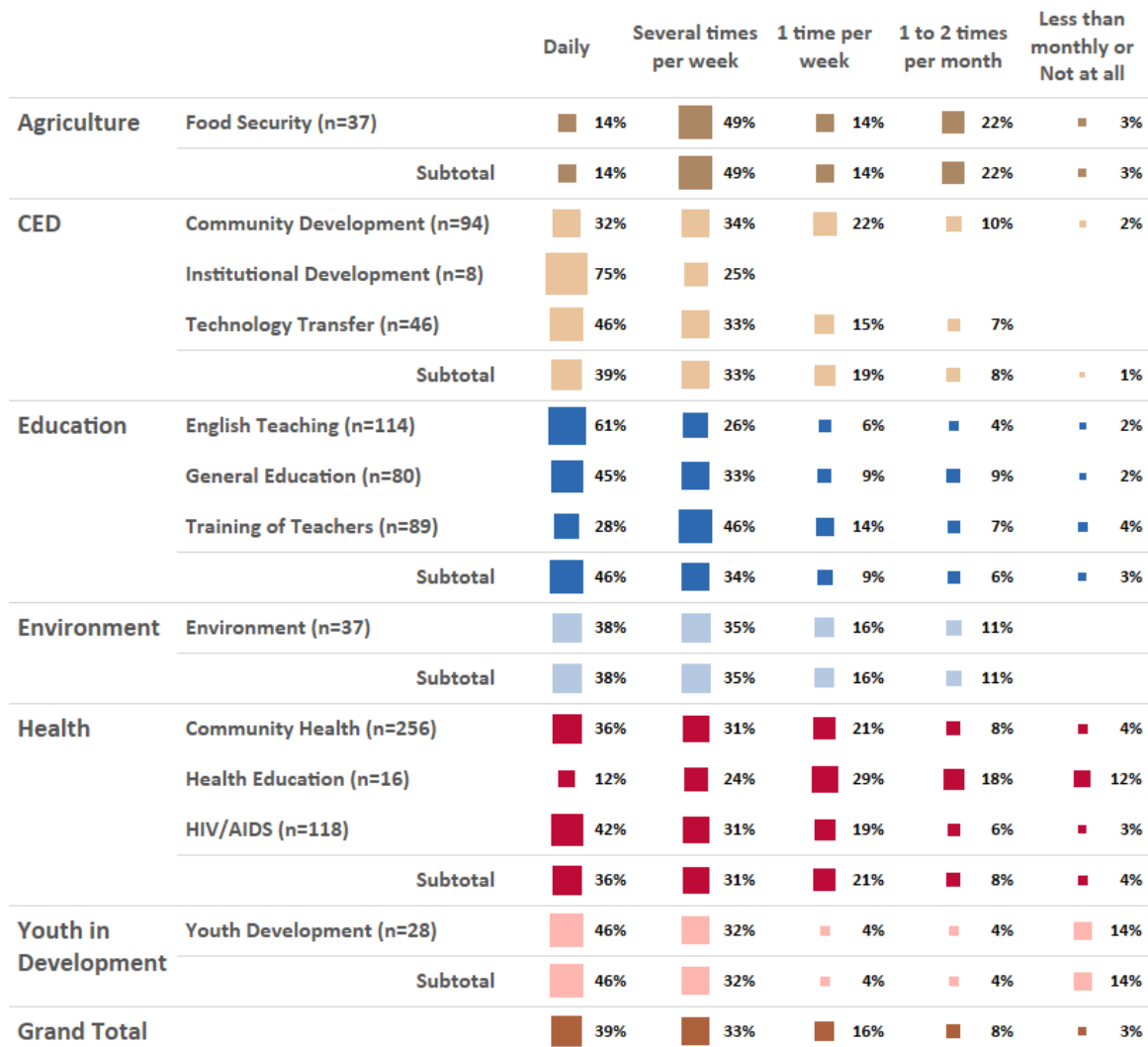
Other projects appeared to influence the frequency of communication between counterparts and Volunteers as well. The counterparts who worked on the health education project in Tanzania and the food security project in Guatemala were significantly less likely to speak with Volunteers about work. In Tanzania, the interviews were conducted in Kiswahili (a Level 2 language), but English is also an official language of the country. In Guatemala, the interviews were conducted in Spanish, a Level 1 language. These results are counter to the theory that the difficulty of a language alone drove communication.

Based on a discussion with a Volunteer in Guatemala at the time, counterparts and Volunteers often had work spaces in different communities, making frequent communication difficult. Given this finding, the nature of the project likely has an independent impact on the frequency of communication between counterparts and Volunteers.

The Peace Corps' six project sectors have been classified into 12 different project types for the purposes of this analysis. However, it is important to remember that this study is not representative of all Peace Corps projects and that there are project types beyond these 12. Additionally, these results were affected by project-specific characteristics. For example, this analysis included only one project in the Agriculture sector and one project in the Youth in Development sector. Several of the project types were represented by only one project's data as well. In order to be truly representative, the data would need to include multiple projects in each of the sectors (for more information, refer to [Appendix B](#)).

Figure 6 below shows how frequently the counterparts across the 12 project types included in this study communicated with their Volunteers. Again, the size of each box is proportional to the distribution across the row.





















Figure 6: Frequency of Communication by Sector and Project Type (n=923)



Counterparts' Professional Experience

As shown in Figure 7 below, the counterparts with more experience in their professional field were more likely than the counterparts with less experience to communicate with their Volunteers about work. It is particularly notable that the counterparts with five or more years of experience in their field were more likely than those with less experience to communicate daily with the Volunteers.

Figure 7: Frequency of Communication by Counterpart Experience in their Field (n=900)

	Daily	Several times per week	1 time per week	1 to 2 times per month	Less than monthly or not at all
2 years or less of experience in their field	 33%	 32%	 21%	 13%	 2% <small>n = 3*</small>
3 to 4 years of experience in their field	 35%	 36%	 18%	 6%	 4% <small>n = 7</small>
5 or more years of experience in their field	 42%	 32%	 15%	 8%	 3%
Grand Total	 39%	 33%	 16%	 8%	 3%

*Response rates are only noted when there were fewer than 10 observations.

This analysis indicates that frequent communication between two independent actors (i.e., a Volunteer and counterpart) goes beyond the ability of two people to work together effectively across cultures. There are both personal and programmatic factors that were demonstrated to matter. Further research is needed to better understand other factors that drove counterparts' willingness, interest, and ability to communicate with Volunteers.

2.3 Summary of Findings

- Language can be a barrier to frequent communication. Counterparts who spoke languages more difficult for native English speakers to learn communicated less frequently with Volunteers about work.
- Project context can drive the likelihood of a counterpart and Volunteer communicating frequently. English-teaching counterparts communicated more frequently with Volunteers about work than counterparts who worked on other projects, particularly those in the health education and food security projects.
- Counterparts' professional experience can be a factor in the frequency of communication. Counterparts with more than five years of experience in their professional field were more likely than counterparts with less experience to talk about work daily.

3. Positive Community Change Was Sustainable

As outlined in the FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan, the purpose of the Peace Corps’ Strategic Goal 1: Building Local Capacity is to:

Advance local development by strengthening the capacity of local communities and individuals through the service of trained Volunteers.

This chapter explores Goal One, the extent to which community change occurred due to the work of Peace Corps Volunteers, and the degree to which counterparts believed they themselves and/or their local community could maintain those changes.



3.1 Measuring Community Change

In the Host Country Impact Studies, researchers asked counterparts several questions that attempted to measure the extent to which Goal One was being achieved. Counterparts were asked about a series of desired project outcomes that were unique to each project. These outcomes were developed by posts in conjunction with host country agencies as part of each project’s framework.

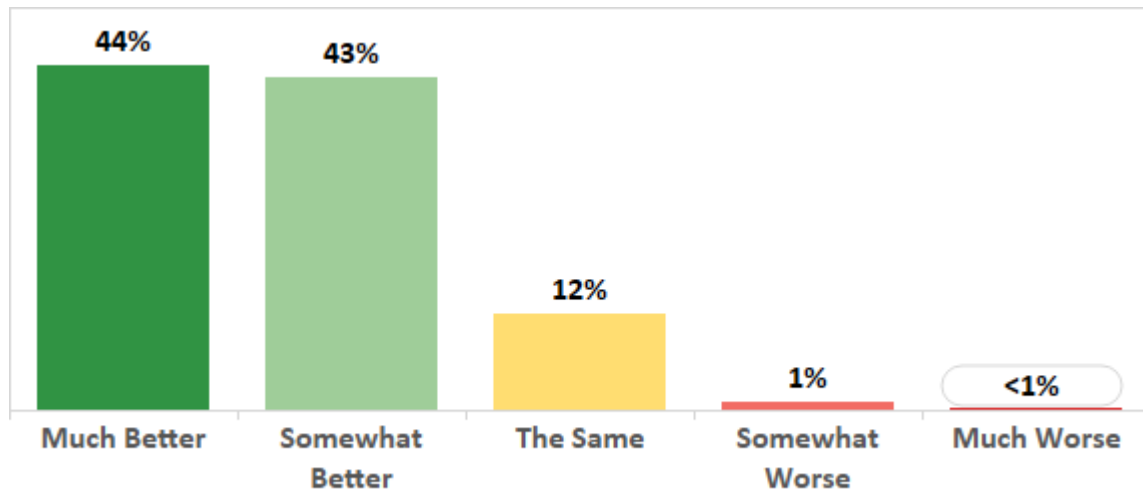
There were between four and 17 unique outcomes for each of the 29 projects.¹ Researchers asked all of the counterparts from each project about that project’s outcomes and the direction of change they had witnessed for each outcome. For example, one outcome in a Tanzania project was “English language fluency among teachers.” The counterparts in this country were systematically asked the direction of the change after working with a Volunteer, as measured by a five-point scale: “much better,” “somewhat better,” “the same,” “somewhat worse,” or “much worse.”

In general, the ratings were very positive. Nearly nine in 10 counterparts (87 percent) rated their project outcomes as either “much better” (44 percent) or “somewhat better” (43 percent). Twelve percent indicated that the results were “the same,” and 1

¹ The project outcome data from the Host Country Impact Study in Nicaragua used a different scale in the interviews, which could not be aligned with the data from the other 20 countries. As a result, the Nicaragua HCIS data are excluded from this section of the cross-sectional analysis.

percent indicated that the results were either “somewhat worse” (1 percent) or “much worse” (<1 percent). Figure 8 shows the ratings of all outcomes by all counterparts.

Figure 8: Direction of Change by Outcomes (n=6,229)



3.2 Outcomes by Sector, Target Beneficiaries, and Cross-Sector Programming Priorities

Effectiveness by Sector

Among the six Peace Corps sectors, outcomes for the Health sector projects and the one Agriculture project received the most positive ratings.² In particular, the percentage of project outcomes rated “much better” for the Health sector (53 percent) was much higher than that of any other sector. As depicted in Figure 9 below, project outcomes in the Education and Youth in Development sectors were not notably different from the average, while those in the Environment and Community Economic Development sectors lagged somewhat.

² For a summary of the overall purpose of these projects, see Table 4 in [Appendix B](#).

Figure 9: Ratings of Outcomes by Sector (n=6,229)

		Much Better	Somewhat Better	The Same	Somewhat Worse	Much Worse
Agriculture	Food Security (n=132)	● 24%	● 66%	● 9%	● 1%	
	Subtotal	● 24%	● 66%	● 9%	● 1%	
CED	Technology Transfer (n=61)	● 28%	● 50%	● 21%		
	Community Development (n=568)	● 27%	● 56%	● 17%		
	Institutional Development (n=63)	● 41%	● 32%	● 27%		
	Subtotal	● 28%	● 53%	● 19%		
Education	English Teaching (n=849)	● 40%	● 47%	● 13%	● 0%	
	General Education (n=576)	● 45%	● 38%	● 16%	● 1%	
	Training of Teachers (n=577)	● 44%	● 42%	● 14%		
	Subtotal	● 42%	● 43%	● 14%	● 0%	
Environment	Environment (n=303)	● 31%	● 55%	● 2%	● 11%	● 0%
	Subtotal	● 31%	● 55%	● 2%	● 11%	● 0%
Health	Community Health (n=1,406)	● 53%	● 37%	● 9%	● 0%	● 0%
	HIV/AIDs (n=1,198)	● 53%	● 34%	● 12%	● 1%	● 0%
	Health Education (n=157)	● 47%	● 44%	● 8%	● 1%	
	Subtotal	● 53%	● 36%	● 10%	● 1%	● 0%
Youth in Development	Youth Development (n=185)	● 39%	● 48%	● 10%	● 2%	● 1%
	Subtotal	● 39%	● 48%	● 10%	● 2%	● 1%
Grand Total		● 44%	● 43%	● 12%	● 1%	● 0%

Effectiveness by Target Beneficiaries

An analysis of the outcomes in this study yielded several distinct target beneficiaries: communities, health professionals, organizations, students, teachers, and youth.³ In terms of their representation in this analysis, 44 percent of the outcomes targeted communities as beneficiaries, 19 percent targeted organizations, 17 percent targeted teachers, 11 percent targeted students, 9 percent targeted youth, and 4 percent targeted health professionals. In general, there were only slight differences in how these outcomes targeting different groups were rated by counterparts. One difference worth noting was that 20 percent of outcomes targeting health professionals and 17 percent targeting organizations were rated by counterparts as “the same,” as compared to an average of 12 percent for the other target beneficiaries.

³ Note that “youth” are distinct from “students” and represent people between 15 and 24 years old.

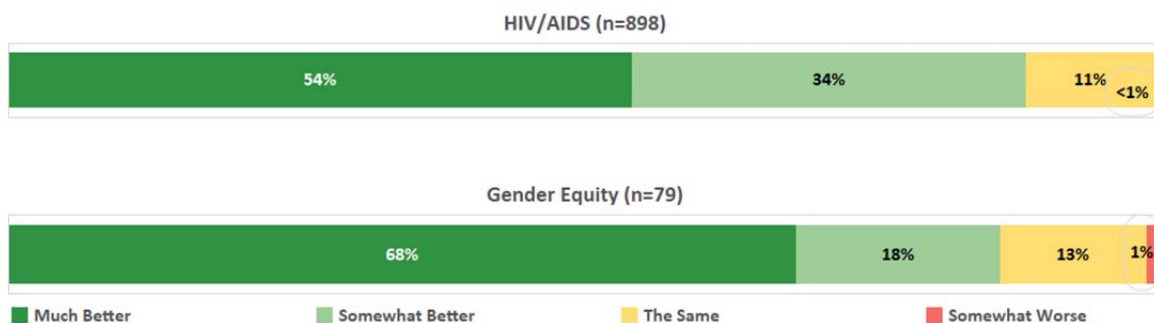
Effectiveness by Cross-Sector Programming Priorities

Following the completion of the Host Country Impact Studies, the Peace Corps established six Cross-Sector Programming Priorities (CSPPs): Disabilities; Gender Equity; HIV/AIDS; Information, Computers, and Technology (ICT); Volunteerism (V2); and Youth as Resources (YAR). In terms of their representation in this analysis, 25 percent of the projects addressed YAR outcomes, 14 percent addressed HIV/AIDS outcomes, 5 percent represented ICT4D outcomes, and 1 percent represented V2 and Gender Equity outcomes. The outcomes in this analysis were aligned with the CSPP indicators retroactively and can provide potential baseline measures for CSPP efforts moving forward.

Counterparts' ratings of the outcomes did not differ greatly across the CSPPs with two exceptions—HIV/AIDS and Gender Equity. HIV/AIDS activities were rated as “much better” (54 percent) significantly more than the average across all six CSPPs (44 percent), likely reflecting the long-term commitment that the Peace Corps has had to HIV/AIDS issues. While a relatively smaller proportion of the outcomes were related to women and girls (only 79 total ratings), 68 percent of these outcomes were rated as “much better.” This was by far the highest percentage of a “much better” rating for any subgroup in this analysis. This is a significant difference and bodes well for current efforts in Gender Equity, including the Let Girls Learn Program.

Figure 10 provides a visual of the findings for the topics of HIV/AIDS and Gender Equity.

Figure 10: Ratings of Outcomes for HIV/AIDS and Gender Equity



3.3 Factors that Drove the Perception of Positive Change

Clearly, the perception of positive change varied to some extent by sector and CSPP, but there were other factors that drove these results as well. For this analysis,

counterparts' ability to communicate with Volunteers and the professional experience of the counterparts also drove counterpart perceptions of how effective the Peace Corps projects were. Holding other factors constant, the following relationships were identified as significant:⁴

- Counterparts who communicated more frequently with Volunteers about work were more likely to rate program changes positively ($p < 0.001$).
- Counterparts who spoke a language more difficult for native English speakers to learn were less likely to rate program changes positively ($p < 0.001$).
- Counterparts who had more experience with a succession of Volunteers were more likely to rate program changes positively ($p < 0.004$).
- Counterparts who had more experience in their professional field were less likely to rate program changes positively ($p < 0.03$).

Measuring Changes in Project Outcomes

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, counterparts rated a unique set of outcomes for each project in this study. The controlled responses for these ratings were aligned along a balanced five-point scale ranging between “much better” and “much worse” with a neutral point (“the same”). Each of these ratings received a numeric value, and an average of all four to 17 outcome ratings was calculated for each counterpart. These average outcome rating values are used throughout the remainder of this study as the primary outcome measure for determining the success of Goal One (i.e., the dependent variable).

The Importance of Communication

The high correlation of counterpart perceptions of project results and the ability to communicate with Volunteers is notable. This study found that the more frequently the counterparts spoke with their Volunteers about work, the higher the counterparts rated Peace Corps projects. Additionally, the more difficult the language of the counterpart for native English speakers, the lower the counterparts rated Peace Corps projects (holding the frequency of communication and other factors constant).

Communication and relationships matter—being able to engage effectively with a Volunteer is critical to the counterpart's perceptions of a Peace Corps project's success. Figure 11 below depicts the relationship between counterpart ratings, frequency of communication, and the difficulty of the language.⁵

⁴ For more information regarding the analytic approaches used in this study, please see [Appendix D](#).

⁵ In addition to the 55 Nicaraguan counterparts for which the ratings were unusable in this study due to an inconsistent scale, there were 22 other counterparts who did not respond to all three questions included in this graphic. Thus, only 851 counterparts are included in this section of the analysis.

Figure 11: Relationships Between Outcome Ratings and the Difficulty of Language with Frequency of Communication (n=851)



*The triangles represent the average rating for each category. The legend at the bottom only covers the ratings between “much better” and “the same,” because the averages were never below “the same.”

**Response rates are only noted when there were fewer than 10 observations.

Counterpart Characteristics Mattered

Counterparts bring their own sets of skills and experience to the table when they work with Volunteers. In this study, counterparts indicated how many years they had been working in the professional field associated with the Peace Corps project and how many Peace Corps Volunteers they had worked with.

Interestingly, there was an inverse relationship between counterparts' experience in their professional field and their experience with a succession of Volunteers in terms of project outcome ratings. In the cases where counterparts had more experience in their field, they were more likely to rate Peace Corps project outcomes as better after

having worked with more than one Volunteer. Counterparts with less experience, however, were more likely to rate Peace Corps project outcomes as better after having worked with only one Volunteer.⁶ From a programming perspective, this indicates that less experienced counterparts may benefit more from working with Volunteers, especially during their first interaction with the Peace Corps. These relationships are depicted below in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Relationships Between Outcome Ratings and Counterpart Experience with a Succession of Volunteers and Experience in their Field (n=819⁷)



*The triangles represent the average rating for each category. The legend at the bottom only covers the ratings between “much better” and “the same,” because the averages were never below “the same.”

3.4 Factors that Influenced Perceived Project Sustainability

Not only does the Peace Corps want Volunteers to generate positive change during their service, but it also wants those changes to last long after Volunteers have left their host country communities. The key factors that appeared to increase the counterparts’ belief that the results of Peace Corps projects were sustainable, holding the other factors constant, follow:

- Counterparts who viewed the effects of Peace Corps projects favorably were more likely to believe that they themselves would be able to maintain

⁶ There are several instances of counterparts who indicated they knew Volunteers before starting to work in that specific field.

⁷ Counterparts in all of the Host Country Impact Studies were asked about their level of experience in their field and the number of Volunteers with whom they had worked. The 55 Nicaraguan counterparts whose ratings data were unusable are excluded from these results, as are an additional 54 counterparts who did not answer all three questions included in this graphic.

the changes that occurred. This was true both for counterparts who were more satisfied with the results of the Peace Corps projects ($p < 0.001$) and for those who rated the outcomes of the Peace Corps projects more positively ($p < 0.001$).

- Counterparts who worked on English-teaching projects ($p < 0.001$) and Health sector projects ($p < 0.004$) were more likely than those who worked on other projects to believe that they would be able to maintain the changes that occurred.
- As the number of years without a Volunteer assigned to the site increased, counterparts were less likely to believe that they would be able to maintain the changes that occurred ($p < 0.007$).

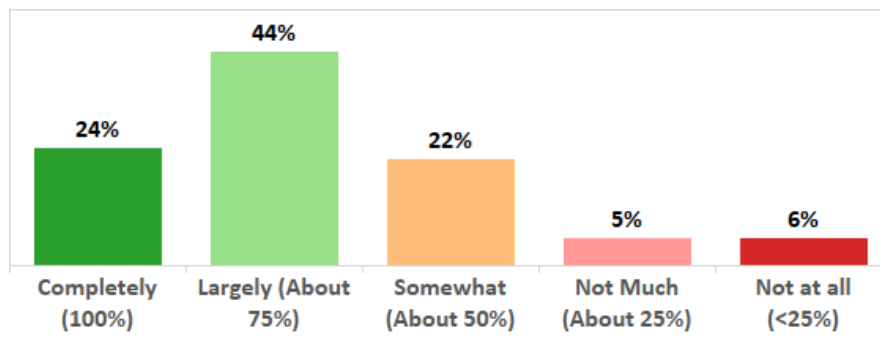
A discussion on how these factors were measured and why they would drive outcomes follows.

Measuring the Maintenance of Change

Counterparts were asked to indicate the extent to which they would be able to maintain the positive changes resulting from the work of Peace Corps Volunteers⁸ using ratings on a five-point scale: “completely (100%),” “largely (about 75%),” “somewhat (about 50%),” “not much (about 25%),” and “not at all (<25%).”

As shown in Figure 13 below, nine in 10 counterparts (90 percent) indicated that the changes were at least “somewhat” sustainable. (Due to rounding, these percentages do not add to 100 percent.)

Figure 13: Counterparts’ Belief in Maintaining Changes (n=783⁹)



⁸ There was some variation in how this question was asked in the HCIS interviews. Sometimes, counterparts were asked about the extent to which they *and others* would be able to maintain the changes; in other cases, counterparts were asked about the extent to which they alone would be able to maintain the changes.

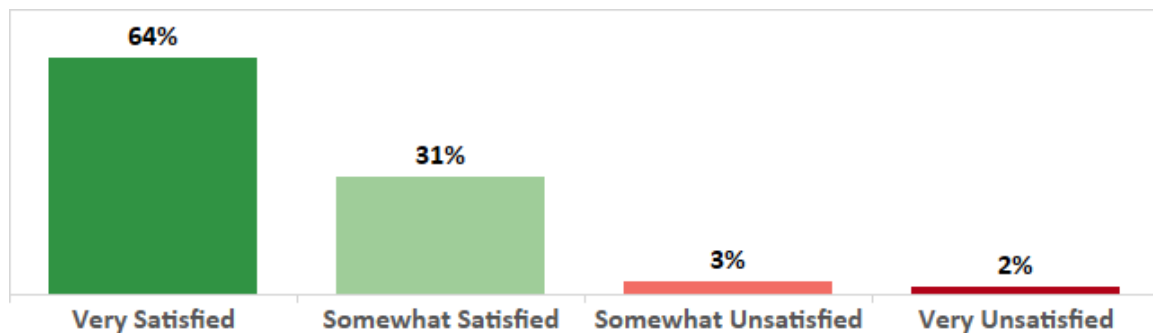
⁹ This question was not asked of the Burkino Faso, Cameroon, and Tanzania HIV/AIDS projects, or of the Mexico project, for a total of 75 counterparts (8 percent). Additionally, another 70 counterparts (7.5 percent) from the remaining projects did not provide a response to this question.

Satisfaction with the Changes

Researchers asked counterparts the extent to which they were satisfied with the changes that occurred as a result of working with the Peace Corps Volunteer(s) or project. Counterparts could indicate on a four-point scale that they were either “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” “somewhat unsatisfied,” or “very unsatisfied” with these changes.

As depicted in Figure 14, 95 percent of the counterparts indicated that they were satisfied with the changes, with 64 percent indicating they were “very satisfied,” and 31 percent indicating they were “somewhat satisfied.”

Figure 14: Satisfaction with Changes from Volunteer Work (n=910)



The level of satisfaction with the changes brought by Volunteers was highly correlated with the extent to which counterparts thought they would be able to maintain these changes. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of the counterparts who were “very unsatisfied” with the changes indicated that they would not be able to maintain the changes at all. In contrast, only 2 percent of the counterparts who were “very satisfied” with the changes indicated that they would not be able to maintain the changes. Figure 15 depicts the relationship between these two variables.

Figure 15: Satisfaction With Changes and Counterparts' Belief in Maintaining Changes (n=781)

	Completely (100%)	Largely (About 75%)	Somewhat (About 50%)	Not Much (About 25%)	Not at all (<25%)
Very Satisfied	◆ 26%	◆ 50%	◆ 18%	◆ 4%	◆ n = 9* 2%
Somewhat Satisfied	◆ 22%	◆ 35%	◆ 29%	◆ 8%	◆ 6%
Somewhat Unsatisfied	◆ 13% n = 3	◆ 17% n = 4	◆ 21% n = 5	◆ 8% n = 2	◆ 42%
Very Unsatisfied	◆ 13% n = 2	◆ 7% n = 1	◆ 7% n = 1		◆ 73%
Grand Total	◆ 24%	◆ 44%	◆ 22%	◆ 5%	◆ 6%

*Response rates are only noted when there were fewer than 10 observations.

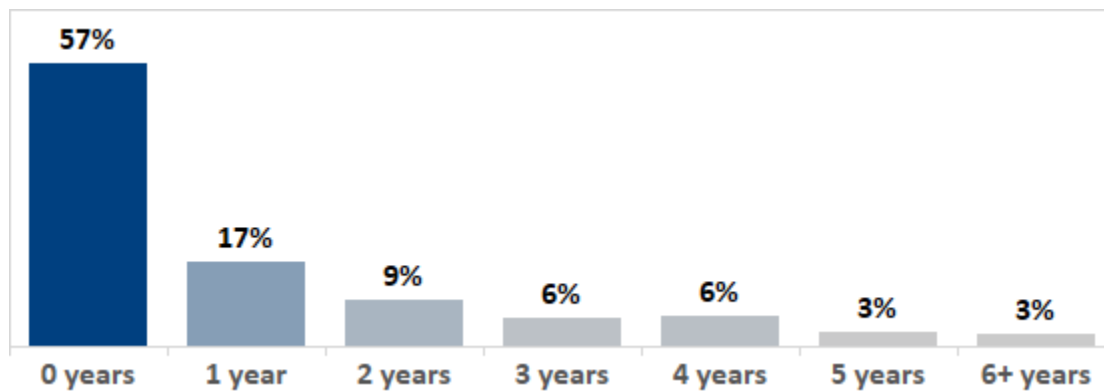
Positive Ratings of the Project Outcomes

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, an average rating of the outcomes was calculated for each of the counterparts in this study. This average value was significantly and positively associated with an increased belief on the part of the counterpart that they would be able to maintain the changes brought about by the project. In other words, positive ratings of the project outcomes produced a perception of positive and sustainable changes.¹⁰

Number of Years No Volunteer Assigned to the Site

Counterparts in this study were asked when the most recent Volunteer had been at their site. The answers ranged between having a Volunteer at the time of the study to the most recent Volunteer having left nine years earlier. Over half of the counterparts (57 percent) had a Volunteer at their site at the time of the study or one who had been there within the past year. Figure 16 provides a distribution of the number of years that a Volunteer had not been at the site.¹¹

Figure 16: Number of Years No Volunteer Assigned to the Site (n=836)



Analysis of the data reveals that as the length of time without a Volunteer at the site increased, the counterpart's belief that the changes produced by the project could be maintained decreased. This indicates that there was some degradation in the perception of project outcomes after Volunteers left their host country communities,

¹⁰ When international development professionals are discussing long-term change and sustainability, the timeframe often covers decades. In this study, the duration of the changes measured do not extend past five years.

¹¹ There were 92 counterparts across 19 projects who did not indicate the last time a Volunteer had been at their site, although the question was included in the protocols for all studies. Sixteen of 29 counterparts in Botswana did not reply, and 24 of 27 counterparts in the Philippines did not respond. The other non-responses were randomly distributed across the other countries.

although some positive results still remained. This occurs with both the positively rated and the less positively rated projects. Figure 17 below depicts this relationship.

Figure 17: Counterparts' Belief in Maintaining Changes by Average Project Outcome Rating and Number of Years No Volunteer Assigned to the Site (n=661¹²)



*Response rates are only noted when there were fewer than 10 observations.

Maintenance of Change by Project Type and Sector

There were also variations in the responses to this question by project type. Controlling for other factors, counterparts who worked on English-teaching (Education sector) and Health sector projects were more likely to believe that they would be able to maintain the changes that resulted from the project. The extent to which counterparts believed these changes would be maintained was stronger for the English-teaching counterparts than for the Health sector counterparts.¹³

¹² This graphic represents only 71 percent of the 928 counterpart responses in this study due to missing responses in one or all of the variables included. This graphic depicts the degradation of the counterparts' belief that they would be able to maintain project outcomes without a Peace Corps Volunteer.

¹³ Note that most of the HIV/AIDS projects were not included in this analysis. In general, ratings for the HIV/AIDS outcomes were very positive. Therefore, it is likely that counterparts would have perceived the positive changes for the HIV/AIDS projects as maintainable.

Figure 18 below provides the counterpart responses to how well the changes would be maintained for all project types.¹⁴

Figure 18: Counterparts' Belief in Maintaining Changes by Project Type and Sector (n=783)

		Completely (100%)	Largely (About 75%)	Somewhat (About 50%)	Not Much (About 25%)	Not at all (<25%)
Agriculture	Food Security (n=37)	27%	46%	16%	11%	
	Subtotal	27%	46%	16%	11%	
CED	Community Development (n=83)	27%	41%	18%	8%	6%
	Institutional Development (n=4)	50%	25%	25%		
	Subtotal	28%	40%	18%	8%	6%
Education	General Education (n=80)	6%	44%	41%	5%	4%
	TEFL/TESL (n=107)	36%	44%	16%	2%	3%
	Training of Teachers (n=83)	12%	47%	25%	8%	7%
	Subtotal	20%	45%	26%	5%	4%
Environment	Environment (n=37)	22%	22%	22%	14%	22%
	Subtotal	22%	22%	22%	14%	22%
Health	Community Health (n=223)	22%	47%	22%	4%	4%
	Health Education (n=17)		82%	12%	6%	
	HIV/AIDS (n=84)	45%	39%	13%	1%	1%
	Subtotal	27%	47%	19%	4%	3%
Youth in Development	Youth Development (n=28)	18%	29%	21%	4%	29%
	Subtotal	18%	29%	21%	4%	29%
Grand Total		24%	44%	22%	5%	6%

3.5 Summary of Findings

- Overall, the counterparts in this study were extremely positive about the ability of Peace Corps projects to achieve specific stated outcomes. Counterparts rated project outcomes as better (either “much better” or “somewhat better”) after working with Volunteers 87 percent of the time.
- These ratings, however, were not uniform across different subcategories. There were minor differences by sector and Cross-Sector Programming Priority (CSPP), with particularly positive results for outcomes focusing on HIV/AIDS and Gender Equity.
- Four factors emerged as driving counterparts' perception of positive change.

¹⁴ This graphic includes all project types, even though when used in multivariate analysis, only counterparts in the English-teaching and Health sector projects were significantly more likely to believe they would be able to maintain the changes.

- Counterparts who communicated most frequently with Volunteers about work were more likely to rate the outcomes of Peace Corps project outcomes as positive.
 - Counterparts who communicated in languages that were difficult for Volunteers to learn were less likely to rate Peace Corps projects as positive.
 - Counterparts who worked with a succession of Peace Corps Volunteers were more likely to rate project outcomes as positive.
 - Counterparts with greater experience in their professional field were less likely to rate project outcomes as positive.
- Overall, 95 percent of the counterparts were satisfied with the changes that occurred as a result of working with the Peace Corps.
- A large majority of the counterparts believed that the changes brought about by the Peace Corps projects were sustainable—68 percent believed that they would be able to either “completely” or “largely” maintain the changes that occurred, and 22 percent indicated that they would be able to maintain some of the changes.
- There were several factors that drove the counterparts’ perception that they would be able to maintain the changes from Peace Corps projects. Satisfaction with the changes and positive ratings of project outcomes each increased counterparts’ belief that they would maintain the changes. As the number of years since a Volunteer had been assigned to the site increased (limited to a five-year timeframe), the counterparts’ belief that they would maintain the changes decreased slightly. Additionally, Health sector and English-teaching projects were considered more sustainable than others.

4. Peace Corps Volunteers Improved the Understanding of Americans

According to the FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan, the second goal of the Peace Corps is to:

Promote a better understanding of Americans through Volunteers who live and work within local communities

This chapter explores the extent to which Goal Two was achieved in the Peace Corps projects examined through the Host Country Impact Studies. It also looks at some of the different traits counterparts used to describe Americans after working with Volunteers.



4.1 Measuring the Improvement in Understanding

While living and working in a host country community for two years, Volunteers are encouraged to stay at their sites, learn the local language, and make friends in the community. This unique approach to international development has always been one of the Peace Corps' core strategies for achieving Goal Two.

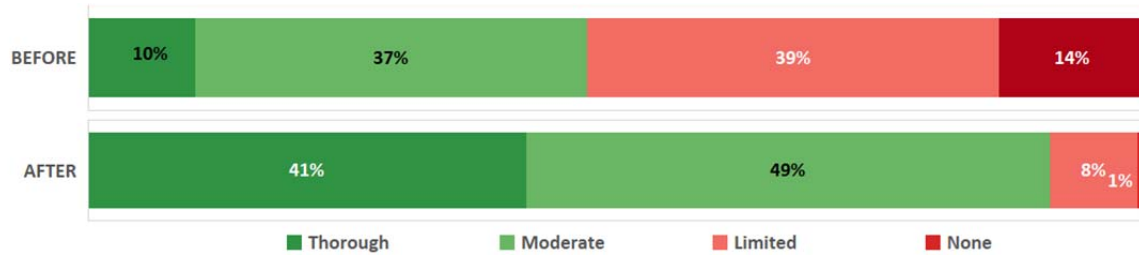
There are two different aspects to consider when trying to measure whether the understanding of Americans has improved as a result of Volunteers living in a community. The first aspect is the depth of that understanding, and the second is whether or not that understanding was positive in nature.

4.2 A Change in the Depth of Understanding of Americans

The measure of change in the depth of understanding relies on two questions that the researchers asked the counterparts. The first question asked them to think about a period before meeting any Peace Corps Volunteers and to rate their knowledge or understanding of Americans at that time. The second question asked them to rate their understanding of Americans after having worked with Volunteers. The four-point response scale was the same for both: "thorough," "moderate," "limited," and "no understanding."¹ The distribution of the counterparts' responses to these questions is provided in Figure 19 below.

¹ These questions were not asked in Ghana or El Salvador. The response scale in Peru was moderately different in Spanish, but it was still a four-point scale and had essentially the same meaning.

Figure 19: Understanding of Americans Before and After Working with Peace Corps Volunteers (n=860 and n=857)

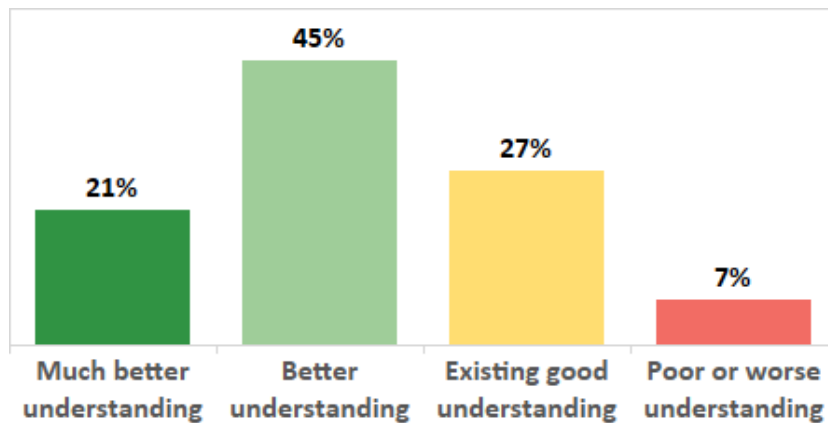


It is clear from these data that the overall opinions of the counterparts shifted toward a greater understanding of Americans after working with Volunteers. In order to further understand this shift, a “growth” measure was calculated for each counterpart.

To calculate growth, the counterparts were broken into four groups: (1) Counterparts who moved up two or three categories to either a “moderate” or a “thorough” understanding after working with a Volunteer were put in the “much better understanding” group; (2) counterparts who indicated an improvement of one rating up (e.g., “none” to “limited” or “limited” to “moderate”) were put into the “better understanding” group; (3) counterparts who indicated an already “moderate” or “thorough” understanding and did not indicate any change in their understanding were rated as “existing good understanding”; and (4) counterparts who indicated that they understood Americans less (e.g., moved from “thorough” to “moderate”) and those who indicated no change in understanding from the “limited” or “none” level were grouped as “poor or worse understanding” of Americans.

As seen in Figure 20 below, nearly two-thirds of counterparts indicated that they had either a “much better understanding” (21 percent) or a “better understanding” (45 percent) of Americans after working with Peace Corps Volunteers. More than one-quarter of the counterparts (27 percent) indicated that they already had an “existing good understanding” of Americans, and only 7 percent indicated that they had a “poor or worse understanding” of Americans.

Figure 20: Growth in Understanding of Americans (n=870²)



Frequency of Communication and a Better Understanding of Americans

Consistent with an OSIRP study published in June 2010 (midway through the execution of the HCIS research effort),³ counterparts who communicated with Volunteers more frequently about work were more likely to understand Americans better overall. Counterparts who communicated with Volunteers several times per week or more were also more likely to have a “much better” understanding of Americans ($p < 0.01$). Conversely, counterparts who communicated with their Volunteers about work less than monthly were far more likely to have a poor understanding of Americans.

Researchers also asked counterparts how often they saw Volunteers outside of work or socialized with them.⁴ The same dynamic between frequency of communication and improved understanding of Americans exists ($p < 0.02$), but the results were not quite as strong as they were for communication about work. As shown in Figure 21 below, 23 percent of the counterparts who communicated with Volunteers about work less than monthly had a poor or worse understanding of Americans. In contrast, only 10 percent of the counterparts who communicated with Volunteers in social settings

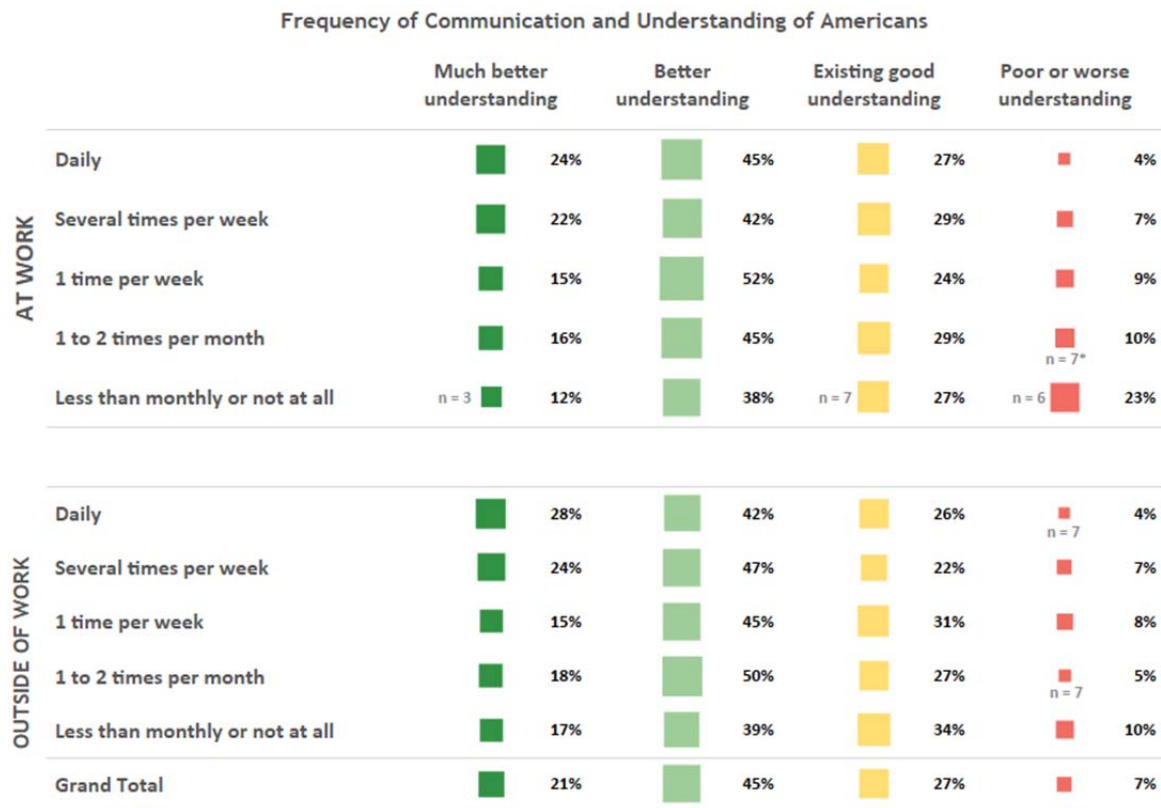
² The number of responses for this variable was higher than the number of responses for the two questions that constructed it, because it was possible to backfill some missing data to either “better understanding” or “existing good understanding” based on counterpart comments.

³ Kerley and Jenkins, “The Impact of Peace Corps Service” (see chap. 1, sect. 1.3).

⁴ This question is problematic because of the different wording used in different countries, but the overall intent of being differentiated from communication about work was the same in all countries where counterparts were asked this question.

had a poor or worse understanding of Americans. This is an indication that working with an American is what helped the counterpart better understand Americans.

Figure 21: Frequency of Communication and Understanding of Americans (n=868)































*Response rates are only noted when there were fewer than 10 observations.

Understanding of Americans by Geographical Region

Given the global reach of this study, it was worth exploring the extent to which Goal Two results differed by geographical region. Not surprisingly, counterparts in the region closest to the United States already had a better understanding of Americans than those in other regions. As shown in Figure 22 below, counterparts in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean (including El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, and Nicaragua) were most likely to indicate an existing understanding of Americans prior to meeting Volunteers (41 percent); the counterparts in South America (Paraguay and Peru) were least likely to indicate an existing understanding of Americans (11 percent). Counterparts in Southern, Central, and East Africa (including Botswana, Cameroon, and Tanzania), however, were most likely to indicate that they had a much better understanding of Americans after working with a Peace Corps Volunteer (32 percent).

Figure 22: Understanding of Americans by Geographic Region (n=870)

	Much better understanding	Better understanding	Existing good understanding	Poor or worse understanding
Asia & the Pacific Islands (Fiji, The Philippines, and Thailand)	 17%	 46%	 27%	 11%
Europe & North Africa (Bulgaria, Morocco, Romania, and Ukraine)	 15%	 43%	 35%	 7% <small>n = 9*</small>
Mexico, Central America & the Caribbean (El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, and Nicaragua)	 18%	 36%	 41%	 4% <small>n = 7</small>
South America (Paraguay and Peru)	 25%	 50%	 11%	 13%
South, Central, & East Africa (Botswana, Cameroon, and Tanzania)	 32%	 42%	 22%	 4% <small>n = 5</small>
West Africa (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, and Togo)	 24%	 54%	 20%	 2% <small>n = 2</small>
Grand Total	 21%	 45%	 27%	 7%

*Response rates are only noted when there were fewer than 10 observations.

Improved Understanding of Americans Happens Quickly and Does Not Degrade

Improved understanding of Americans was also investigated, both in terms of the number of Volunteers that the counterparts had worked with and the number of years that no Volunteer had been assigned to the site. Counterparts' perception of their understanding of Americans improved after working with just one Volunteer, but working with additional Volunteers did not produce a further improvement. Similar results were found for the counterparts whose communities or organizations had not had a subsequent Volunteer for multiple years. Even after five years without an assigned Volunteer, the results in an improved understanding of Americans on the part of the counterparts remained the same as for the counterparts who had a Volunteer at the time.

4.3 Volunteer Traits

An implicit assumption in the goal of improving the understanding of Americans is that this improved understanding would also be a positive one. This is the second element of understanding Americans. Ideally, through living every day and sharing their experience with counterparts, Volunteers expose host country nationals to the human side of the United States, which is unrelated to any policies that may be unpopular globally and could contribute to a dislike of the American people. This is especially critical as news and information via technology becomes ever more accessible around the world.

To determine whether working with Volunteers resulted in a more positive attitude toward Americans, researchers asked counterparts to describe what they thought of Americans after working with a Peace Corps Volunteer. Unlike most of the data

analyzed in this report, these responses were open-ended. In all, there were responses from 673 of the counterparts, and several unique traits were identified from these responses.⁵

The trait that counterparts mentioned most frequently was that Americans were essentially kind. Roughly one-third (35 percent) of the respondents indicated this (in English and other languages) using words like “nice,” “friendly,” “kind,” “caring,” “compassionate,” “sympathetic,” “loving,” “good,” “humane,” and “affectionate.”

“The Volunteers who were here in the village were always very active, good, very kind, and humble.”

The next most frequently mentioned trait was that Americans were “hardworking.” This was indicated with words like “industrious,” “not lazy,” “dedicated,” “motivated,” “committed,” and “devoted.” Eighteen percent of the responding counterparts mentioned this trait.

Americans are “hardworking people who value other people and help people of other countries.”

More than 5 percent of the counterparts also mentioned that Americans were “punctual,” “supportive,” “honest,” “knowledgeable,” “fair,” “polite,” “liked to teach,” and were people “like us.”⁶ Only 3 percent of the counterparts

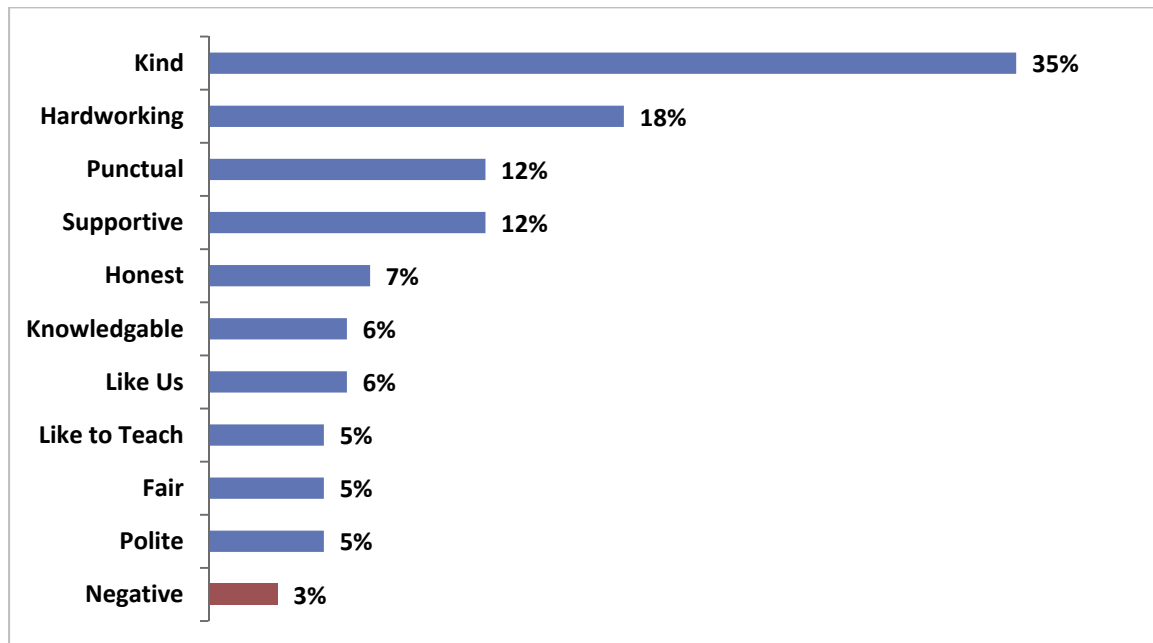
mentioned anything unquestionably negative. The few negative traits (mentioned by 18 counterparts in total) were characteristics such as of being “arrogant,” “lazy,” and “selfish.”

Figure 23 below includes a graphic indicating how often each of the various traits were mentioned by the counterparts asked this question. (Note that multiple traits may have been mentioned by one counterpart, so the percentages will not add to 100 percent.)

⁵ This question was not asked in Nicaragua or Thailand, removing a total of 206 respondents from this analysis. Other nonresponses were distributed across other countries. For more in-depth information on missing responses, see [Appendix D](#).

⁶ For descriptions on the specific text included of each of these categories, please see [Appendix D](#).

Figure 23: Percentage of Counterparts Using Specific Traits to Describe Americans (n=673)



4.4 Summary of Findings

- The operational structure of the Peace Corps was highly effective in achieving Goal Two. Ninety percent of the counterparts in this study indicated that they had a “thorough” (41 percent) or “moderate” (49 percent) understanding of Americans after having worked with Peace Corps Volunteers. Slightly more than one-quarter of the counterparts indicated that they already had this depth of understanding (27 percent), but almost two-thirds of the counterparts indicated that working with the Volunteers had increased their understanding of Americans. Only 7 percent indicated that they did not understand Americans well or better after working with Volunteers.
- Counterparts in Southern, Central, and East Africa were more likely to have a much better understanding of Americans after working with a Volunteer than counterparts in other regions.
- The counterparts in this study were most likely to indicate that they found Americans “kind” after working with Peace Corps Volunteers. They also used traits, such as “hardworking,” “punctual,” “supportive,” “honest,” “intelligent,” “enjoy teaching,” people “like us,” “fair,” and “polite” to describe Americans. Only a handful of counterparts identified any negative traits after working with Volunteers.

5. Goals One and Two Were Mutually Supportive

Following the 2010 Comprehensive Agency Assessment,¹ the Peace Corps committed significant resources to bolster Volunteers' technical training and improve their Goal One effectiveness in tackling locally identified development priorities. The capacity of Volunteers to serve as technical resources is increasingly important to the leaders and citizens of countries that host the Peace Corps and who have high expectations for Volunteers. Demonstrating the impact of the Peace Corps in these countries is therefore of critical value. Additionally, these investments reflect the expectations of the Peace Corps staff and Volunteers of today, who want to execute proven approaches to community development around the world.²



At the same time, Goal Two continues to be a crucial component of the strategy for achieving Goal One. Peace Corps Volunteers are some of America's most effective goodwill ambassadors in many local communities where staff members from other development organizations are rarely present. Through the Peace Corps' grassroots approach, Volunteers have a unique opportunity to interact one-on-one in communities that have had little exposure to Americans. Living and working side-by-side with local partners, this approach also allows Volunteers to learn more about local community strengths and challenges and build trust with local partners, improving their project work.

In terms of whether Goal One drives Goal Two or vice versa, there are clues but no definitive answers. Most likely, the two goals amplify one another: High-quality work engenders greater respect for and interest in understanding the Americans who undertook that work; and a greater understanding of Americans can facilitate more productive collaboration with Peace Corps Volunteers and other international development organizations. A greater understanding of a culture besides their own can also familiarize host country nationals with a range of potentially different perspectives—providing a reference point for their own views and encouraging a renewed assessment of their development needs.

¹ The Peace Corps: A Comprehensive Agency Assessment (2010) (see chap. 1, sect. 1.3).

² The data from this study were collected prior to the execution of the 2010 Comprehensive Agency Assessment recommendations, and therefore do not reflect the results from investing in the priorities outlined in that document.

The findings in this study bear out the mutually supporting nature of Goals One and Two given the Peace Corps' model. Based on the counterparts interviewed in the 21 countries where the Host Country Impact Studies were conducted, both sustainable international development and citizen diplomacy were advanced through frequent communication and the soft skills of Volunteers.

5.1 The Importance of Communication to Goals One and Two

From the perspective of the counterparts interviewed, the working relationship between the counterpart and the Volunteer is a key ingredient to achieving Goal One. Based on the data from this analysis, Goals One and Two are mutually supportive (i.e., highly correlated), but Goal One outcomes are more often driven by frequency of communication than are Goal Two outcomes. There was a strong correlation between whether the work of the Volunteer was considered to have a positive effect and results reflecting a perceived improved understanding of Americans ($p < 0.001$). There was also a relationship between the frequency of communication about work and the perception of an improved understanding of Americans (see Figure 21 in the previous chapter). As exhibited by Figure 24 below, communication with Volunteers was a key element for both goals.

While it was possible for the counterparts to indicate that they better understood Americans despite not communicating with a Volunteer frequently, however, it appeared much more difficult for the outcomes of a Peace Corps project to be rated highly if counterparts interacted infrequently with the Volunteer. Conversely, it was also possible for a counterpart who met daily with a Volunteer about work yet did not report an understanding of Americans to rate project outcomes positively. In summary, frequent communication between a Volunteer and counterpart is more critical for achieving Goal One, as measured in this study, than it is for Goal Two.

It is also notable that the counterparts who had an existing understanding of Americans (the yellow triangles in Figure 24 below) were less likely to rate the outcomes of the project positively.

Figure 24: Ratings of Outcomes by Frequency of Communication about Work and Understanding of Americans (n=868)



*Response rates are only noted when there were fewer than 10 observations.

5.2 Traits of Volunteers

Another clue regarding the nature of the relationship between Goals One and Two comes from the traits that counterparts identified as “American” after having worked with Volunteers. In the textual analysis described in the previous chapter, there were some traits that could be classified as personal characteristics and others that appeared to be more work-related. The personal traits that counterparts used most frequently included “kind,” “polite,” and “supportive.” The traits most frequently identified that were work-related were “knowledgeable,” “hardworking,” and “punctual.”³

Interestingly, the counterparts who described Americans as “kind” or “supportive” were significantly more likely to believe that the effects of Peace Corps projects were positive. Counterparts who described Americans as “hardworking,” “knowledgeable,” and “punctual,” however, were no more likely to find the effects more positive than those who did not describe Americans that way. From the perspective of the

³ This analysis does not take into account the different nuances—whether positive or negative—that these personal and professional attributes have in the different HCIS countries.

counterparts, what appeared to differentiate good work from great work were the personal qualities of the Volunteers themselves.

The few counterparts who listed negative traits of Americans after working with Peace Corps Volunteers (there were only 17 counterparts who both identified negative traits and rated the results of the project) found the work of Volunteers less likely to bring about positive change. This further supports the idea that counterparts are more likely to find Volunteers' work effective if they like them as people. These few counterparts, however, were just as likely to indicate an improved understanding of Americans as those who were not negative about Americans. Therefore, the counterpart responses imply that the perception of a Volunteers' Goal One effectiveness was linked to their "likability," while their Goal Two effectiveness was not. Figure 25 below displays these findings.

Figure 25: Traits Associated with Average Ratings (n=662)



5.3 Purposeful Volunteerism

It is not enough, however, to simply send Americans who are "kind" to serve in other countries. Volunteers must have meaningful work to be successful. At the same time and for a host of practical reasons, it is important that there be an alignment between Volunteers' skills and host country goals. The likelihood that the Peace Corps will be able to recruit Volunteers willing to serve overseas in challenging circumstances or

that host countries and communities will welcome them is reduced when both of these criteria are not met.

Evidence for the importance of purposeful work can be found in this study's findings regarding the frequency of communication between counterparts and Volunteers. As discussed in the previous chapter, from the perspective of the counterparts, Goal Two effectiveness was influenced more by communication about work than communication outside of work. Working with the Volunteer was what made the difference.

5.4 Temporal Relationship Between Goals One and Two

It is important to mention how quickly Goals One and Two were achieved, as this could influence how Peace Corps posts plan their projects. For Goal One, the data in this study showed that the ratings of project outcomes improved when counterparts worked with more than one Volunteer—the ratings generally improved with each successive Volunteer. However, an improved understanding of Americans occurred after the counterparts worked with a single Volunteer and did not improve detectably with additional and successive Volunteers. Thus, to achieve Goal One, it is important for the Peace Corps to have a sustained commitment to a site.

5.5 Summary of Findings

- From the perspective of the counterparts, the key element for success in Goal One and to a lesser extent, Goal Two, was frequent communication about work. Counterparts who communicated with Volunteers daily on average rated the results of the Peace Corps projects more positively than those who did not. A greater understanding of Americans was less dependent on how frequently the counterparts communicated with Volunteers about work.
- Although there were no definitive results about whether Goal One drove Goal Two or vice versa, there were several interesting findings about the interaction of the two goals:
 - Based on their experience working with Volunteers, counterparts were significantly more likely to rate the outcomes of Peace Corps projects positively if they also described Americans as kind, supportive, or having other positive personal traits. Counterparts were significantly less likely to rate the outcomes of Peace Corps projects as positive when they described Americans as having negative personal traits. Work-related traits, such as being hardworking and punctual, did not appear to have the same effect. This indicates that positive personal connections drove perceptions of Goal One activities.
 - Counterparts demonstrated Goal Two outcomes after working with just one Volunteer, whereas Goal One was more likely to be achieved after counterparts had worked with more than one Volunteer.
 - Communication about work drove Goal Two outcomes more than communication outside of work. This is an indication that Goal Two was achieved more effectively in a work environment.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the Peace Corps remains a highly effective model for promoting world peace and friendship through community-based development and cross-cultural understanding.

Undertaking a cross-sectional analysis of 21 Host Country Impact Studies offered the opportunity to analyze new evidence about the Peace Corps' operational and programming efforts. As the Peace Corps improves its capacities in monitoring and evaluation (see [Appendix C](#) for details on the limitations of this study), there will be additional opportunities to further build upon a culture of performance improvement. The findings from this study can be used as support for many initiatives already underway, and they highlight areas for continued focus. These areas include communication between Volunteers and counterparts, challenges with languages, counterpart identification and retention efforts, project design, and Volunteer recruitment and placement efforts.



6.1 Language and Communication Between Volunteers and Counterparts

Encouraging communication between Volunteers and their community members has long been considered a crucial element of Peace Corps programming. Language training has been a critical component of pre-service training, and it is considered essential to achieving both Goals One and Two.

One significant finding in this study was the importance of one-on-one communication, and the extent to which communication was driven by the difficulty of the language for native English speakers. For Volunteers to be considered effective and for counterparts to better understand Americans, counterparts needed to communicate with Volunteers about work at least a few times per week. This was more likely when the counterpart and the Volunteer spoke a common language. This finding was subsequently supported by the 2015 Global Counterpart Survey (GCS),¹ which found that counterparts rated Volunteers' language skills when they first started working with the Volunteers lowest among four possible traits. The 2015 GCS also

¹ A summary report of the FY 2015 Global Counterpart Survey results is available online at https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.peacecorps.gov/opengov/2015_Global_Counterpart_Survey_Summary_Report.pdf.

found that Volunteers needed to increase their level of cultural integration in the communities where they served—the most common suggestion for improving the work of Peace Corps was to increase counterpart access to and interaction with Volunteers. The implication is that enhanced language skills are an essential element of more effective cultural integration.

Volunteers serve in countries with varied language landscapes—some serve in countries where the local language is English, while others serve in countries where there are numerous local languages, none of them easy for native English speakers to learn. This has implications for posts as they execute a language-training program for their trainees and Volunteers. There was clear evidence supporting the achievement of at least an intermediate ability in language skills at the end of PST on the part of English-teaching Volunteers. Language skills will continue to be fundamental to supporting the core mission of the Peace Corps, as demonstrated by its inclusion in the FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan. Performance Goal 8.1 focuses on the importance of improving language learning for Volunteers.

6.2 Counterpart Identification and Retention

Counterparts are considered key to helping Volunteers adjust to their new communities, achieve the goals of their project, and advance the overall goals of the Peace Corps. This study provides evidence that may help the agency identify and retain counterparts in an ever more strategic manner. Three examples of how this evidence may be useful programmatically are provided below.

First, counterparts play a dual role in relation to Volunteers' Goal One efforts. They are non-beneficiary work partners who are expected to work alongside Volunteers in the execution of the project goals. They are also, ideally, one of the most direct beneficiaries of Volunteers' technical work, learning new skills and approaches to continue projects long after Volunteers return home. The findings from this study suggest that counterparts with less experience in their professional field are more likely to consider the work of the Volunteers to be beneficial to the community—and this, after working with just one Volunteer.

On the other hand, counterparts with greater professional experience may simply have higher standards (they communicated more than less experienced counterparts with Volunteers about work) or need more time to adapt to Volunteers' cultural and professional differences (they viewed project outcomes more positively after working with a succession of Volunteers). Ultimately, each post is best positioned to determine its optimal counterpart-identification strategy and whether a project would benefit more from the immediate enthusiasm generated among less experienced counterparts or the longer-term commitment and rewards of collaborating with more experienced counterparts.

Second, over 60 percent of the counterparts in the study had served as counterparts more than once, and 10 percent had worked with five or more Volunteers—over a decade of commitment to the Peace Corps. There was evidence that engagement with a succession of Volunteers was beneficial, but over time there were diminishing

returns. Peace Corps projects might benefit from counterparts rotating out of that role if the post has made a long-term commitment to a specific site. Depending upon the realities at posts and project designs, posts may want to consider asking counterparts to commit to working with Volunteers for a few Volunteer cycles, and then identify a counterpart successor if the project continues at that site.

Third, the evidence in this study indicates that the counterparts who had prior knowledge of Americans did not learn much more about Americans after working with a succession of Peace Corps Volunteers, and were less likely to value the work of Volunteers. Therefore, to achieve both Goals One and Two more broadly, posts might consider prioritizing counterparts who have less, rather than more, knowledge of Americans or America prior to working with Volunteers. This may create more challenges from a cross-cultural perspective for Volunteers, but may ultimately yield more positive results for both the counterpart and the Volunteer.

6.3 Project Design

One of the key activities of posts around the globe is to develop a plan for each project as it is initiated, and to review this plan on a systematic basis every five years or so. As part of an ongoing effort to improve development impact in the host countries, posts are encouraged to establish theories of change and logic models for their projects during this process.

This study gives us insight into the types of project outcomes that were received more positively than others—and, therefore, which projects might be more easily achieved and more sustainable. For example, counterparts gave more positive ratings to efforts that targeted women and girls than those targeting other audiences. Knowing this can help feed into the design of every project and set Volunteers up for success. Outreach to girls is a natural fit for Peace Corps Volunteers who often work in countries that systemically undervalue what women and girls have to offer their society. The Let Girls Learn initiative presents the Peace Corps with a number of possibilities to further focus on capacity-building efforts with girls.

This study found that Goal Two effects (better understanding of Americans) were achieved after counterparts worked with a single Volunteer, and these effects did not appear to degrade over time. On the other hand, Goal One effects (increased counterpart satisfaction with Peace Corps projects) improved as counterparts worked with a succession of Volunteers. The counterparts in this study also appeared to be less engaged with Volunteers the longer they worked with the Peace Corps—they communicated less frequently the more they worked with Volunteers. As a result, posts should continue to weigh the benefits of having a succession of Volunteers at a site, whereby Volunteers can build off the successes of their predecessors, against the likelihood of diminishing returns. It may be worthwhile to rotate Volunteers off of sites after a certain amount of time has passed or after a project plan has been completed.

6.4 Volunteer Recruitment and Placement Efforts

Since revamping the application process for potential Peace Corps Volunteers, the number of applicants has skyrocketed. In FY 2013, the Peace Corps processed 10,118

applications. This number had not changed significantly in the decades preceding it. In fiscal year 2015, this number jumped to 22,956 applications due to significant changes in the application process. This larger pool of applicants offers the Peace Corps an opportunity to be even more selective in terms of applicant skills.

The need for better language skills underscores the importance of programs such as the Peace Corps Prep certificate program, which facilitates language-learning among potential applicants through 39 current university partners. Most of the Peace Corps posts in Central America, South America, and Francophone West Africa already require specific levels of language ability. The Peace Corp Prep program and the recently established option for applicants to choose their country of service, provide an excellent opportunity for individuals to lay the foundation for effective service prior to swearing in as Volunteers.

Regarding soft skills, the counterparts in this study provided evidence that positive personal characteristics mattered. This finding emphasizes the importance of recruiting Volunteers who demonstrate these positive tendencies, and then providing training in cross-cultural understanding during pre-service training (PST). It also supports the importance of only swearing in Volunteers who have demonstrated their suitability for service throughout PST.

6.5 What the Peace Corps Can Still Learn

As an agency, the Peace Corps can still learn much more about its counterparts. While staff at posts may have an in-depth understanding of the role of counterparts at their post, there is an opportunity for the agency to better leverage the role that counterparts are asked to play vis-à-vis the Volunteers and the goals of the agency. As Peace Corps continues to conduct the Global Counterpart Survey annually, it will gain additional information about the role of the counterpart that will help develop a more robust process for selecting and nurturing counterparts.

To further support Peace Corps posts and the work of the Volunteers, there is an opportunity to better understand the mechanisms by which positive changes are achieved. Community changes can include practical improvements for beneficiaries (e.g., “I have learned a new skill, and my life or community will improve because of that skill”) or they can be aspirational (e.g., “I know that this can be done, and my life will be better because I see a future worth pursuing”). Depending upon the sector, the Peace Corps can more intentionally design to these different approaches after learning more about this dynamic.

6.6 Summary

Peace Corps Volunteers are volunteers. They are paid a living wage to survive, with a mission to do great work, be good people, and learn as much as possible. They often live in places unheard of by the average American, and they do it despite circumstances that many Americans would find very difficult. And they love it. It also appears that the people who work most closely with Volunteers are quite positive about the value that the Peace Corps brings. In a world in need of greater peace and friendship, this is a meaningful finding.

As the agency moves forward, the Peace Corps will continue to build on its strengths, continuing the process of focusing on developing evidence-based training in both technical skills and language, and recruiting the strongest candidates. As training in both language and technical skills improve, the efforts of Peace Corps Volunteers will be increasingly effective and sustainable in communities around the globe, communities around the globe will mirror that success by building a better tomorrow, and Volunteers will return home with the satisfaction of a job well done.

Appendix A: HCIS History and Methodology

In 2008, the Peace Corps launched a series of studies called the Host Country Impact Studies (HCIS's) to assess the impact of its Volunteers on Goals One and Two. This was in response to a mandate from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that the agency evaluate the impact of its Volunteers in achieving Goal Two. These studies are unique for their focus on learning about the Peace Corps' impact directly from the host country nationals who lived and worked with Volunteers. Included as one of four important tools for monitoring and evaluating progress toward agency goals in the 2010 Comprehensive Agency Assessment,¹ they continued to be conducted through 2012.

These studies were carried out under the direction of the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) at the Peace Corps, and involved coordination among several different offices at headquarters and overseas posts. Participating countries were jointly selected by OSIRP and the regional management offices at headquarters in Washington, D.C. OSIRP secured funding for the studies, provided overall methodological consistency, guided in-country staff during the implementation of the studies, trained the third-party researchers on collecting the data, cleaned the data after the data collection process was finished, and prepared a series of country-specific studies that were shared with the in-country staff. These studies were made available to the public in 2014.²

To execute the collection, translation, and basic analysis of the data, research teams comprised of local researchers were chosen through a competitive contracting process. The teams tended to consist of host country nationals (although a few teams included Americans living in the country who were familiar with the local language and customs) who travelled to the sites where Peace Corps Volunteers were serving or had previously served.³

The sites were identified by OSIRP working through in-country staff. One of the goals of site selection was to be "representative" of the program. When identifying the participants for the study, OSIRP identified possible sites based on the criteria that a Volunteer had served at the site for at least 12 months in the past five or six years. Notes indicate that the sites were randomly selected by OSIRP, but the extent to which

¹ The Peace Corps: A Comprehensive Agency Assessment (2010) (see chap. 1, sect. 1.3).

² These reports and the two-page summaries of each are available online at peacecorps.gov/about/open-government/reports/. Under "Report Topic" on the right-hand side menu, select "Post Operations" to narrow the search results.

³ In three country studies (Bulgaria, the Philippines, and Tanzania), the researchers also interviewed 129 other respondents with the goal of developing comparison groups to understand differences in outcomes in communities that were not assigned a Peace Corps Volunteer.

there were substitutions is not quantifiable. In addition, sites that had accessibility issues were excluded. This has implications for the generalizability of the studies.

Three pilot studies were conducted in 2008, six countries encompassing 11 projects were studied in FY 2009, seven countries encompassing 10 projects were studied in FY 2010, six countries and projects were studied in FY 2011, and two countries and projects were studied in FY 2012. In all, a total of 32 projects in 24 countries around the globe were evaluated.

During site visits, the researchers held hour-long, in-person interviews with individuals who fell into one of four categories described below, generating a holistic perspective of Peace Corps projects within each country.

- **Beneficiaries:** the population targeted to benefit from a Peace Corps project (e.g., students, teachers, farmers, health-care facility employees).
- **Counterparts:** the primary host community work partners assigned to each Volunteer (e.g., an English teacher, a ministry of health's community outreach specialist, a youth center's events coordinator). These individuals were generally identified prior to Volunteers' arrival and were paired with Volunteers to help them adjust to the community and/or implement the specific goals of a project.
- **Host family members:** the host country adults and children who provided housing for the Volunteers during their service. (Note that not all Peace Corps posts used a host family model; some Volunteers lived independently.)
- **Project stakeholders:** host country staff members of a third organization or agency (i.e., neither the Peace Corps nor the host country organization to which the Volunteer was assigned) that sponsored a Peace Corps project. These individuals worked with Peace Corps staff to define the goals of the project.

In sum, a total of 523 sites were visited, and a total of 3,569 individuals were contacted: 3,501 people were interviewed, and 68 people participated in focus groups.⁴ The interviews were based on an interview guide that was developed jointly by OSIRP, in-country staff, and local researchers. In many instances, these interview guides were translated into local languages. The interviews were often conducted in the local language or a mix of languages in which the participant and interviewer were jointly most comfortable. The guides included a combination of both qualitative and quantitative questions.

Once the local researchers completed the data collection, they prepared a report for the in-country staff—sometimes doing both an oral briefing and a written report—and submitted the report and data to OSIRP. These data were used to provide feedback to the in-country staff at each post, and were maintained in a centralized location at OSIRP. To ensure the level of quality and consistency in the reporting, OSIRP prepared new analytical reports for each country using standard formats for both a long-form

⁴ In Mexico and Nicaragua, focus groups were held with beneficiaries and some counterparts.

report and a two-page summary report. These were completed in 2014 and made available publicly.

Data Merging

Once the studies were brought to a close in 2014, OSIRP recognized that there was tremendous value in analyzing the data from a cross-sectional perspective and started reviewing the independent studies in the OSIRP archives to identify how the data might be merged.

There were numerous challenges involved in executing this element of the study. The task of merging the information was broken down into numerous steps that involved careful notation of the existing data, a review of analytic decisions by a team of researchers, and iterative quality checks. Interns played a key role in this activity, and if not for their dogged attention to detail and comprehensive notes, this study would not have been possible.

For merging to be technically possible and for the results to be sufficiently reliable, OSIRP had to first determine what data could be analyzed on a cross-sectional basis, and then track where all the inconsistencies were located. There were several steps involved in this process.

1. A list of the number of observations from each type of interviewee in each project was generated. The decision was made to focus on the data from the counterparts, because they were the most consistently represented group across the studies.
2. The final interview guide used in the interviews was identified. There were usually English versions and often, but not always, translated versions (for example, there were no electronic versions of the interview guides in Ukrainian or Russian found in the archives). The interview guides for the beneficiaries and the counterparts were typically combined, with a few additional questions for counterparts that were skipped for beneficiaries.
3. The final datasets used for the report were identified. Typically, the beneficiaries and counterparts were part of one dataset, but sometimes they were already split out. In other cases, they were included with all of the other interviews.
4. Once the final interview guides and datasets were identified, a massive effort was undertaken to align these two key pieces. This involved using a spreadsheet to track each question in each interview guide across all projects. Notes were taken when the precise wording of a question mutated. Each pass of the questions generated a new worksheet within the spreadsheet so that decisions could be tracked as they were made. Generally, the decisions involved removing questions with inadequate coverage to merit inclusion in a cross-sectional study. Additionally, most of the long, open-ended questions were excluded. Some of the responses to the shorter open-ended questions were retained.
5. The questions used in the interview guides to measure similar concepts were not always precisely the same in English, much less in the other languages used. Since, ultimately, all of these responses were collected in-person during the interviews, all of the local researchers received training on the data collection

process. It is not unreasonable to assume that the local researchers provided context and examples during the interview process, as is typical in that setting. Therefore, because of this general assumption that none of the questions were asked in exactly the same way, there was a greater comfort level in combining questions that were similar, but not identical. This approach is evident in this report, because the precise wording of a question was rarely provided in the body of the report. The most common wording of the key questions, however, is provided in Appendix E.

6. The following inconsistencies were noted with responses on the interview guides and in the dataset:
 - a. The variable names used in the datasets were not consistent across all of the studies.
 - b. The variable values on closed-ended, ordinal scales were not always the same. Sometimes the scale values were flipped (i.e., on a five-point scale, a “1” in one dataset had the same meaning as a “5” in another), and sometimes the scale choices were different. Not all questions consistently had a “does not apply” option. In some cases, the translated versions had a marginally different meaning. Sometimes a balanced, ordinal scale for the same question had five values in one country (i.e., with a neutral in the middle) and four in another (considered a “forced-choice” option). In all of these cases, the research team decided to either fix or combine values, or not to use the question.
 - c. The question responses were not always structured in the same way—the responses to the same question would be collected as a “check-all-that-apply” option in some cases, and as a “check one” option in others. In general, these problems were impossible to resolve, and these questions were excluded.
 - d. For one question involving how long the counterpart had known Volunteers, the unit of measure was not consistently captured—sometimes it was in months, sometimes it was in years, and sometimes it was unclear. (Ultimately these responses were not used for analysis because the data were determined to be unreliable).
7. Once all of the discrepancies were noted between the specific wording of the question and the response categories, and the general topics that could be covered were identified, the data were reviewed to see which variables had an adequate number of responses to conduct a cross-sectional analysis. This formed the basis of the research questions that were determined to be most promising for this study.
8. The data were merged into one dataset with the specific variables that were determined to have adequate coverage and sufficient variance in responses for analysis. There were additional complications in this part of the process, as some of the datasets did not only have a numeric value in the variable field, but also accompanying text. While this is a good way to confirm that the value of the number is the same as the value in the interview guide, it makes merging values exponentially more difficult. Thus, to merge the data, the character

values had to be stripped from the numeric values so that later merging of the variables could be achieved with relative ease.

9. One dataset at a time, the selected data were merged into a master blank dataset using SPSS. As each dataset was merged, it was confirmed that the data merged properly. At the end of merging, variables from the merged dataset were checked against the reported data to confirm that no errors were made during the merging process.
10. Once the data from the counterparts had been merged, a series of new variables were created to merge similar questions and similar scales, to note which responses were not asked of counterparts, and to note which questions were not responded to by counterparts. These “cleaning” efforts were maintained in a series of syntax files in SPSS for replicability.
11. In addition to merging variables with similar concepts, new variables were generated based on data that were available within existing variables (e.g., the number of years no Volunteer was assigned to a site was calculated from the last year a Volunteer was assigned to the site). Additionally, external data (i.e., language difficulty) was merged into the dataset. All variable creation and merging of external data are documented in SPSS syntax files.
12. The responses to open-ended questions were not always translated into English. In one study, only one question used was not translated (the question asking for descriptions of what Americans learned after working with Peace Corps Volunteers), and the original language was Spanish. This was easily addressed in-house with the help of Spanish speakers and online resources.

Typically complicating these steps was the fact that most of the people involved in each study had left their positions or the agency at the time the data and interview guides were reviewed. As a result, extra due diligence was employed in terms of carefully observing each decision listed above.

Appendix B: Scope of this Study

For the purposes of this study, the 928 responses from counterparts in the 21 non-pilot studies were analyzed. There were methodological and practical reasons for this approach. First, the 21 interview guides for counterparts were more consistent across all the countries. Additionally, the number of counterparts reached in each country was more consistent than with other groups. For example, in one study it was noted that the host families were not always found, so a landlord was interviewed instead. From a practical standpoint, despite an effort to remain consistent across all countries, as mentioned in Appendix A, the level of effort to merge all the data for just one set of respondents was significant. Lastly, the relationship with a counterpart is one of the most crucial of the Volunteer experience. This is evidenced by the fact that “Improve Counterpart Selection and Preparation” is a performance goal within the Peace Corps’ FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan.

In addition to limiting the analysis of respondents to counterparts, this study only analyzed the responses to questions that were found in all (or in almost all) of the interview guides. By design, the questions that were asked universally were key Goal One and Goal Two questions. There are a few instances where an entire country or project is excluded from the analysis, because the question was not asked or the data were of questionable quality. These exceptions are noted in the text of the report.

Lastly, data from the pilot studies in 2008 were excluded, because the interview guides were significantly different from those used from 2009 to 2012. The countries included in the pilot phase were Armenia, the Dominican Republic, and Mali.

Table 2 below includes a list of the countries that formed part of this study, the year the post opened, the total number of Volunteers sworn in since the post opened up until the point when the study was conducted (i.e., all Volunteers in-country to the date of fielding), the number of Peace Corps projects during the period covered by the HCIS (there are multiple unique projects within each post, above and beyond what was included in the HCIS), which fiscal year the HCIS data were collected (federal fiscal years run between October 1 and September 30), and the number of Volunteers that were sworn in during the five- or six-year period covered by the HCIS. In total, almost 59,000 Volunteers had served at these posts before the Host Country Impact Studies were conducted, the posts ran a total of 131 unique projects while the HCIS was underway, and 16,630 Volunteers served at these posts during the time covered by the HCIS.

Table 2: Country Data

Country	Year Post Opened	Total # of Volunteers Since Post Had Opened	# of Projects During the HCIS Timeframe	Fiscal Year of HCIS Fielding	# of Volunteers Sworn In During the HCIS Timeframe
Botswana	1966 ¹	2,154	2	2011	521
Bulgaria	1991 ²	1,093	4	2009	918
Burkina Faso	1967	1,521	7	2009	507
Cameroon	1962	3,029	10	2009	794
Cape Verde	1988 ³	499	4	2011	390
El Salvador	1961 ⁴	2,186	9	2012	899
Fiji	1968 ⁵	2,267	4	2011	357
Ghana	1961	4,199	5	2012	1,168
Guatemala	1963	4,561	12	2010	406
Jamaica	1962	3,600	8	2009	608
Mexico	2004	119	7	2010	218
Morocco	1963	4,177	5	2010	1,139
Nicaragua	1968	1,815	5	2009	930
Paraguay	1966	3,476	10	2011	1,024
Peru	1962	2,810	11	2010	874
Philippines	1961	8,521	5	2011	1,039
Romania	1991 ⁶	1,048	6	2009	730
Tanzania	1961	2,202	4	2010	1,031
Thailand	1961	4,915	3	2010	507
Togo	1962	2,637	7	2011	769
Ukraine	1992 ⁷	2,045	3	2010	1,801
21 countries	1961 to 2004	58,874 Volunteers	131 Projects	2009 to 2012	16,630 Volunteers

Table 3 below includes some detailed information about each project.⁸ Countries had

¹ The Peace Corps did not operate in Botswana for six years, but the Botswana post is currently open.

² The Peace Corps closed the Bulgaria post in 2013.

³ The Peace Corps closed the Cape Verde post in 2012.

⁴ The Peace Corps suspended the El Salvador post in January 2016.

⁵ The Peace Corps did not operate in Fiji for five years, but the Fiji post is currently open.

⁶ The Peace Corps closed the Romania post in 2013.

⁷ The Peace Corps suspended the Ukraine post February 2014 to May 2015.

⁸ To learn more about the programmatic elements and history of each project, please review the country studies available online at peacecorps.gov/about/open-government/reports/.

between one and three projects included in the HCIS's, and these projects covered all of the six programmatic sectors. With the exception of two of the HIV/AIDS projects (which were activities that were part of a larger Health sector project in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Tanzania), all were stand-alone projects. The projects had been in-country for anywhere between six and 51 years, and a total of 3,815 Volunteers were sworn in for these projects during each country's five-to six-year HCIS timeframe. Between six and 88 counterparts were interviewed for each project.

Table 3: Project Data

Country	Sector	Project Title	Year Project Started	# of Project Volunteers Sworn In During the HCIS Timeframe	# of Counterparts Interviewed
Botswana	Health	HIV/AIDS Capacity-Building Project	2003	230	29
Bulgaria	Education	English Language Education Project	1991	243	22
Burkina Faso (2)	Health	Community Health Development Project	1995	92	23
	Health	HIV/AIDS activities	1995	87	11
Cameroon (3)	Education	Education Project	1962	35	19
	Health	Community Health Project	1963	126	16
	Health	HIV/AIDS activities	1988	73	7
Cape Verde	Education	Cape Verde Education (CVE) Project	1988	111	21
El Salvador	Youth	Youth Development Project	2005	96	28
Fiji	Environment	Integrated Environmental Resource Management (IERM) Project	2003	105	31
Ghana	Education	Education Project	1961	250	24
Guatemala	Agriculture	Sustainable Agriculture Project	1963	93	37
Jamaica	Health	Community Environmental Health Project	1995	99	28

Country	Sector	Project Title	Year Project Started	# of Project Volunteers Sworn In During the HCIS Timeframe	# of Counterparts Interviewed
Mexico	CED	Technology Transfer for Sustainable Economic Development Project	2004	34	46
Morocco	Health	Community Health in Rural Morocco Project	1988	151	25
Nicaragua	Health	Community Health Education Project	1992	95	55
Paraguay	Health	Rural Health and Sanitation Project	2004	99	36
Peru	Health	Community Health Project	2002	88	74
Philippines	Education	Basic Education and Technical Assistance (BETA) Project	2002	208	27
Romania (3)	CED	Community Economic Development (CED) Project	1993	61	6
	CED	Institutional Development (ID) Project	1996	208	8
	Environment	Environmental Education and Outreach (ENV) Project	1998	57	6
Tanzania (3)	Education	Secondary Education Project (SEP)	1996	231	39
	Health	Health Education Project (HEP)	2000	110	17
	Health	HIV/AIDS activities	2004	N/A ⁹	11

⁹ Counterparts in this instance were asked about the same Volunteers who were also working on HIV/AIDS activities.

Country	Sector	Project Title	Year Project Started	# of Project Volunteers Sworn In During the HCIS Timeframe	# of Counterparts Interviewed
Thailand (2)	CED	Community-Based Organizational Development (CBOD) Project	2003	116	88
	Education	Teacher Collaboration and Community Outreach (TCCO) Project	2003	146	69
Togo	Health	Community Health and AIDS Prevention (CHAP) Project	1995	116	60
Ukraine	Education	Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)	1993	455	65
21 Countries	29 Projects		1961 to 2005	3,815 Volunteers	928 Counterparts

Table 4 below provides brief descriptions of the purpose of all projects included in this study.

Table 4: Brief Descriptions of the Purpose of the Projects

Country	Sector	Project Title	Brief Description
Botswana	Health	HIV/AIDS Capacity-Building Project	This project assisted the government of Botswana's National AIDS Coordinating Unit (NACA) and other partners with their efforts to strengthen the capacity of government service providers, community-based organizations, communities, and individuals to mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS.
Bulgaria	Education	English Language Education Project	This project sought to increase English language proficiency in Bulgaria by providing schools with English language instructors, educational materials, and extracurricular activities designed to address community needs.
Burkina Faso (2)	Health	Community Health Development Project	This project supported the efforts of the Ministry of Health of Burkina Faso in collaboration with health care professionals, health management committees, and communities. The project also revitalized primary health care at the village level through the implementation of the Bamako Initiative.
	Health	HIV/AIDS activities	These activities were integrated into the Community Health Development Project.
Cameroon (3)	Education	Education Project	This project helped Cameroonian teachers, teacher trainees, and students increase their general academic knowledge and build skills through participation in a gender-balanced, learner-centered environment focusing on the subjects of English, Science, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The project also integrated HIV/AIDS education.
	Health	Community Health Project	This project focused on promoting community participation and self-reliance in solving health and development issues.
	Health	HIV/AIDS activities	These activities were integrated into the Community Health Project.
Cape Verde	Education	Cape Verde Education (CVE) Project	This project targeted the capacity building of Cape Verdean teachers and school directors in the areas of teaching methodology and training. The project also developed students' capacity and strengthened the relationships between schools and communities.

Country	Sector	Project Title	Brief Description
El Salvador	Youth	Youth Development Project	This project provided Salvadoran youth with the necessary tools and resources to become active community members and have success in their family life and the world of work.
Fiji	Environment	Integrated Environmental Resource Management (IERM) Project	This project built community members' capacity to maintain their environmental resources and improve their livelihoods by learning more about the environment and acquiring management skills.
Ghana	Education	Education Project	This project supported educational reforms in Ghana by improving the quality of math, science, English, and arts education and increasing students' access to education, especially for girls.
Guatemala	Agriculture	Sustainable Agriculture Project	This project aimed to improve food security and increase household income by teaching sustainable agricultural practices and alternative ways to add value to farm products.
Jamaica	Health	Community Environmental Health Project	This project sought to reduce the prevalence of environmental-, water-, and sanitation-related diseases and improve community health standards.
Mexico	CED	Technology Transfer for Sustainable Economic Development Project	This project targeted technological capability, organizational and management capacity, and technology transfer.
Morocco	Health	Community Health in Rural Morocco Project	This project responded to local health needs, promoted personal health and appropriate health behaviors, and built the capacity of local individuals, health professionals, and community-based organizations through formal and informal training and skills development.
Nicaragua	Health	Community Health Education Project	This project sought to increase community awareness of diseases, increase knowledge and adoption of healthier behaviors among youth, and reduce illnesses in women and children.
Paraguay	Health	Rural Health and Sanitation Project	The purpose of this project was to improve the health, nutrition, and sanitation knowledge and practices of community members and service providers in rural Paraguayan communities, thereby leading to healthier lives.

Country	Sector	Project Title	Brief Description
Peru	Health	Community Health Project	This project aimed to improve the health of families and youth living in low-income rural communities by promoting sustainable healthy lifestyle practices.
Philippines	Education	Basic Education and Technical Assistance (BETA) Project	This project built the capacity of local teachers, students, and community members to address their educational needs and implement sustainable school and community-based educational change.
Romania (3)	CED	Community Economic Development (CED) Project	This project supported Romanian communities in their economic development efforts and offered technical assistance to nonprofit organizations, local administrative offices, educational institutions, and individuals.
	CED	Institutional Development (ID) Project	The purpose of this project was to strengthen the organizational capacities of institutions serving marginalized populations and to support inter- and intra-sectoral collaborative projects that contributed to local development.
	Environment	Environmental Education and Outreach (ENV) Project	This project supported the local capacity to address environmental issues through greater environmental knowledge, increased engagement of youth, and stronger environmental organizations.
Tanzania (3)	Education	Secondary Education Project (SEP)	This project targeted the skills and knowledge of secondary students and teachers in training colleges.
	Health	Health Education Project (HEP)	This project promoted healthy behaviors among teachers and students.
	Health	HIV/AIDS activities	These activities were integrated into the Health Education Project.
Thailand (2)	CED	Community-Based Organizational Development (CBOD) Project	This project aimed to increase community members' technical, organizational, and problem-solving skills in order for them to take advantage of new social and economic opportunities.
	Education	Teacher Collaboration and Community Outreach (TCCO) Project	This project helped Thai teachers learn new student-centered and participatory teaching methods, lesson planning, classroom resource development, and community networking.

Country	Sector	Project Title	Brief Description
Togo	Health	Community Health and AIDS Prevention (CHAP) Project	This project provided women and youth with greater access to quality community health education services, resulting in improved child, maternal, and family health and an increased awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention strategies.
Ukraine	Education	Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)	The purpose of this project was to improve teachers' and students' English communication skills and encourage independent thinking and problem-solving among students through interactive learning and student-centered teaching methods.

Sector and Regional Information

Peace Corps projects fall into six sectors: Agriculture, Community Economic Development (CED), Education, Environment, Health, and Youth in Development. The projects in this study can be grouped into 12 different general project types within the sector groups. Overall, the project types that occurred most often in this study were community health projects (7 projects), HIV/AIDS projects (5 projects), general education projects (3 projects), and English-teaching projects (3 projects). Table 5 identifies the number of projects included in this study from each sector and project type. This list is not comprehensive of all of the project types at the Peace Corps.

Table 5: Sector Breakdown by Number of Projects and Project Type

Sector	Total in Sector	Project Type	Number of Projects
Agriculture	1 project	Food Security	1 project
Community Economic Development (CED)	4 projects	Technology Transfer	1 project
		Community Development	2 projects
		Institutional Development	1 project
Education	8 projects	General Education	3 projects
		Training of Teachers	2 projects
		Teaching English ¹⁰	3 projects

¹⁰ The two projects in Bulgaria and Ukraine were traditional Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) projects. In the Philippines, Volunteers taught English as well as other subjects in English at secondary schools. Given that the main goal of the project in the Philippines was to enhance the use of English in the classroom, this project was included with the two traditional TEFL projects for analytical purposes.

Sector	Total in Sector	Project Type	Number of Projects
Environment	2 projects	Environmental Education	2 projects
Health	13 projects	Community Health	7 projects
		Health Education	1 project
		HIV/AIDS	5 projects
Youth	1 project	Youth Development	1 project
			29 projects

The Peace Corps divides its operations into three administrative regions: the Africa region, the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region (EMA), and the Inter-America and Pacific region (IAP). In this cross-sectional analysis, there are 21 countries represented, with seven countries in Africa, six countries in EMA, and eight countries in IAP. The countries included in this analysis, their currently assigned administrative regions, and the number of projects in each country are provided in Table 6.

Table 6: Regional Breakdown by Country and Number of Projects (n=29)

Africa	EMA	IAP
Botswana (1 project)	Bulgaria (1 project)	El Salvador (1 project)
Burkina Faso (2 projects)	Morocco (1 project)	Fiji (1 project)
Cameroon (3 projects)	The Philippines (1 project)	Guatemala (1 project)
Cape Verde (1 project)	Romania (3 projects)	Jamaica (1 project)
Ghana (1 project)	Thailand (2 projects)	Mexico (1 project)
Tanzania (3 projects)	Ukraine (1 project)	Nicaragua (1 project)
Togo (1 project)		Paraguay (1 project)
		Peru (1 project)
7 countries (12 projects)	6 countries (9 projects)	8 countries (8 projects)

Appendix C: Limitations of this Study

While the Host Country Impact Studies represent the Peace Corps' most comprehensive effort to date to systematically collect data from host country national partners at the global level, it is important to mention the limitations of the data in this report.

Representativeness of Respondents

In the design of the Host Country Impact Studies, OSIRP endeavored to achieve representativeness among the sites that were selected. This effort, however, was not equivalent to a randomly selected sample of study participants for purposes of generalization. This latter level of rigor was introduced in a recent study from OSIRP, the FY 2015 Global Counterpart Survey,¹ where researchers at the Peace Corps randomly selected 400 of the 5,500 currently serving Volunteers to identify their counterparts, who were then interviewed.

The information included in this cross-sectional analysis should be viewed as representative only of the counterparts, projects, and posts included in the study. There were many counterparts, projects, and posts that were not included. However, this report's findings are consistent with those of the FY 2015 Global Counterpart Survey. Additionally, this study provides helpful insights into understanding what drives results at these sites and posts, which can guide decisions at other Peace Corps posts that are making programmatic changes. What cannot be said is that these results represent the opinions of *all* counterparts in *all* Peace Corps countries.

Opinion Data and Positivity Bias

The effect data reported in this study were based on opinions. This is one approach to measuring effect, but it is not considered the most robust. In this instance, there was evidence that counterparts responding to questions about the Peace Corps would invariably be positive, because there were multiple incentives to be positive and few to be negative.

Several techniques were employed to mitigate the effect of positivity biases.

- 1) The data were collected by in-country researchers, not Peace Corps staff directly. This increased the likelihood that the counterparts would provide honest feedback.
- 2) The analysis refrained from reporting magnitudes of effects and focused more on the underlying relationships of the effect data (i.e., the dependent variables)

¹ A summary report of the FY 2015 Global Counterpart Survey results is available online at https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.peacecorps.gov/opengov/2015_Global_Counterpart_Survey_Summary_Report.pdf.

and the drivers and confounders of these results (i.e., the independent variables).

- 3) Variation is the spice of life in multivariate analysis—without variation, analysis is very limited. To that end, effect data are not “netted,” which is to say that a five-point ratings scale was not consolidated into three categories, where the top two and bottom two ratings were collapsed into one rating at the top and the bottom. The benefit of this is that differences on the high end have more meaning. For example, someone who chose “somewhat positive” was differentiated from someone who chose “very positive,” and someone who chose “somewhat negative” was differentiated from someone who chose “very negative.”

Long-Term Impact

When international development professionals are discussing long-term change and sustainability, the timeframe often covers decades. In this study, the duration of the changes measured do not extend past five years. Long-term effects in this context are very hard to measure. Until the FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan² was prepared, there was little effort at the agency level to systemize baseline assessments of the communities where Volunteers served. This makes it difficult to determine what the long-term impacts of Peace Corps projects are. There are alternative approaches to identifying long-term impacts, but these types of studies tend to be expensive, and the Peace Corps operates on a relatively lean budget that typically precludes such an approach. Therefore, this study represents a first attempt to collect such data at a global level.

Variations in Interview Guide Content

OSIRP designed interview templates that were intended for universal use across all participating HCIS countries. The posts and local researchers were responsible for translating the template and making adjustments for local content. This included identifying and listing the unique project outcomes used for measuring effect listed in the interview guide as well as adding questions of specific interest to each post. From a cross-sectional perspective, country-level adjustments also resulted in some undesirable inconsistencies.

- **Questions with variations in the survey items:** Every question had a stimuli (i.e., what was asked of the respondent) and either a set of closed-ended responses or an open format for qualitative questions. Variation was introduced in three main ways: 1) The questions and response options were translated; 2) posts made changes to the wording, altering the meaning in either a major or minor way; and 3) posts removed response categories to closed-ended questions. To address the first issue, there was some back translation with reviews by several staff members. However, translations were

² The FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan (see chap. 1, sect. 1.1).

- compounded by the second issue—alterations of the survey items in English. This issue was addressed by carefully cataloguing all of the changes that were made to the English versions, and reviewing the extent to which the stimuli meaning changed substantially. Where it was determined that the meaning had been significantly altered, the question was excluded. The data from response categories that were changed were similarly either combined to address variations or excluded. For example, in the questions regarding frequency of communication, researchers in some countries provided response options of both “less than once a month” and “not at all”; researchers in others countries provided only “less than once a month,” which by definition includes “not at all.” These two response categories were combined across all questions. For other questions, researchers alternatively used four-point or five-point balanced scales (e.g., a positive/negative balanced scale with and without a neutral middle value). These questions were excluded.
- **Omitted questions:** This study utilized the available HCIS counterpart data as long as the counterparts for more than 25 projects had been asked the same question, and as long as the variable was important to the analysis. However, there were some countries where specific questions were not asked or where the data were of questionable quality. For example, the responses to the questions on project outcomes in Nicaragua could not be aligned with responses from the other countries and were therefore excluded from the merged dataset; Nicaragua’s data for other outcome variables were retained in the report. Any omissions are indicated in the footnotes.

Appendix D: Analytic Methodology

Statistical Measures of Significance

Numerous approaches were used to determine which elements to include in this report. Most of the data included were selected because the measures of association were statistically significant (i.e., correlations were unlikely to be random). As is appropriate, the statistical test was primarily determined by the dependent variable being studied, but the data were also reviewed in depth to confirm that the statistical relationships were not driven by outliers.

In general, for bivariate relationships, chi-square was used when analyzing two ordinal variables, and ANOVA and t-tests were used when looking at differences in means between independent samples. In instances where a small number of observations had a large impact on the outcomes, the number of observations is noted in the graphic. For the multivariate relationships mentioned, when the dependent variable was an ordinal variable (e.g., the maintenance of change and the understanding of Americans), ordered logit (called “ordinal regression” in SPSS, which is the statistical package that was used) was utilized. When the dependent variable was a continuous variable (e.g., the average effect rating), ordinary least squares methods were used. Violations of the Gauss-Markov assumptions were reviewed. For researchers interested in duplicating these results and taking them further in analysis, the data will be made public in machine-readable format soon after the publication of this report. Please visit the Open Government page at peacecorps.gov/about/open/evaluations/ to download copies of these datasets.

Coding CSPPs for Analysis

Following the 2010 Comprehensive Agency Assessment, the Peace Corps identified a set of Cross-Sector Programming Priorities (CSPPs), and each of these was assigned a specialist. As part of this study, the CSPP specialists were asked to review the list of outcomes in the HCIS interviews and identify those that were aligned with current indicators in each CSPP. The outcomes were also reviewed by sector specialists at the Peace Corps, but in the end the sector assigned by the post was used for analysis, as it is an indication of programming choices at the time.

Coding Traits for Analysis

To identify the traits that counterparts learned about Americans after working with Peace Corps Volunteers, the open-ended responses from one specific question were analyzed. The following question was translated into several languages and asked in all but two countries (Nicaragua and Thailand):

Briefly describe what you think of Americans as a result of working with Peace Corps Volunteers.

Using a simplified grounded-theory approach, the comments were reviewed. The words that appeared most frequently were coded into a new variable that represented

that construct. If a comment included a given word, the variable was coded as a “1,” and if a comment did not include that word, the comment was coded as a “0.” In countries where the question was not asked, the variable was coded as missing. The key words that were identified for each construct follow. One comment may have included multiple constructs, and all comments were reviewed to ensure that they were correctly coded.

Constructs	Key Search Words
kind	nice, friendly, kind, caring, compassion, sympathetic, loving, good, humane, affectionate
hardworking	hardworking, industrious, not lazy, dedicated, worker, motivated, committed, devoted
punctual	timely, punctual, organized, responsible, reliable, disciplined
supportive	supportive, helpful
honest	honest, sincere, genuine, open, trustworthy
knowledgeable	knowledgeable, skilled, capacity, intelligent, smart, experienced
teach	like to teach, share information
like us	like us, similar to us
fair	nondiscriminatory, not racist, equal, not prejudiced, open-minded, tolerant, fair, just
polite	polite, mannered, respectful

Negative attributes were also mentioned. These constructs and key words are listed below and were mentioned by only 18 counterparts out of 673.

Negative Constructs	Key Search Words
arrogant	arrogant, impatient, racist
selfish	selfish, not generous
lazy	lazy, bad behavior

There were several other constructs identified, but they were mentioned by fewer than 5 percent of the responding counterparts.

Unused Constructs	Key Search Words
collaborative	collaborative, cooperative
generous	generous, not greedy, not selfish, sharing
curious	like to learn, interested, inquisitive, curious, adventurous
goal-oriented	goal-oriented, results-driven, persistent, sets targets, committed to task
adaptable	adaptable, integrated, adjusted, flexible
easy	easy-going, simple, not complicated
fearless	fearless, courageous, not afraid, confident
creative	creative, original, new ideas
dynamic	dynamic, energetic, tireless
diverse	diverse
serious	serious
not rich	not rich

Unused Constructs	Key Search Words
not spies	not spies, not CIA

There were 25 comments that were not coded into any specific construct, so roughly 4 percent of the responses were not coded.

Appendix E: Outcome Variables

This report includes the analysis of several different outcome variables. This addendum includes an abbreviated codebook for these specific variables. Note that the questions varied slightly between each country, so the questions provided below were the dominant questions used.

Chapter	Outcome Variable	Question	Response/Value Categories
2	Frequency of Communication About Work	During the time that you worked with the Peace Corps project, how often did you talk with the Volunteer(s) about work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily • Several times a week • Approximately once a week • Approximately 1 to 2 times a month • Less than monthly or not at all
3	Project Effect Ratings	What is the direction of the changes seen in [project outcomes]?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much better • Somewhat better • The same • Somewhat worse • Much worse
3	Satisfaction with Changes	Overall, how satisfied are you with those changes or contributions and the overall results of the Peace Corps Volunteer's (Volunteers') work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very satisfied • Somewhat satisfied • Somewhat unsatisfied • Very unsatisfied
3	Maintaining Changes	Thinking about these positive changes that resulted from the Peace Corps Volunteer's (Volunteers') work, to what extent have you (and others) been able to maintain these changes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely (100%) • Largely (about 75%) • Somewhat (about 50%) • Not much (about 25%) • Not at all (less than 25%)
4	Understanding of Americans Before Volunteers	Think about the period before you knew any Peace Corps Volunteers. How would you rate your understanding/knowledge of Americans before you knew a Volunteer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough • Moderate • Limited • No understanding
4	Understanding of Americans After Volunteers	Now that you have worked with Peace Corps Volunteers, how would you rate your understanding of Americans?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough • Moderate • Limited • No understanding

Chapter	Outcome Variable	Question	Response/Value Categories
4	Growth in Understanding Americans	<i>Calculated difference between two questions above</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much better understanding (+2 change in rating) • Better understanding (+1 change in rating) • Existing good understanding (no change in “thorough” or “moderate” rating) • Poor or worse understanding (no change in “limited” or “no understanding” rating or a negative change in rating)