



PEACE  
CORPS

# Guatemala HOST COUNTRY IMPACT STUDY

## Purpose

In 2008, the Peace Corps launched a series of studies to determine the Volunteers' impact in meeting two of the agency's three goals: building local capacity and promoting a better understanding of Americans among local people in host countries. These Host Country Impact Studies are unique in providing feedback from the people who lived and worked with Volunteers. A team of Guatemalan researchers conducted this study in May 2010, interviewing 111 people in 21 communities. The Peace Corps Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning developed the methods and protocols, trained the local researchers and produced a series of reports from this and other Host Country Impact Studies.

## Study Focus: Sustainable Agriculture Project in Guatemala

As of 2011, 4,690 Volunteers have served in Guatemala since Peace Corps opened in 1963. The goal of the Sustainable Agriculture Project is to improve food security and increase household income by teaching sustainable agricultural practices and alternative ways to add value to farm products.

### Peace Corps Goal One

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

### Findings

#### Agricultural:

- 99 percent of project partners and beneficiaries (farm workers and members of co-ops and women's groups) reported that the project built local agricultural capacity.
- 88 percent of counterparts and beneficiaries increased the amount, diversity, and consumption of vegetables and other agricultural products grown in their home gardens.

Cooperative member: *"My crop is better and I do not use chemicals. I learned more efficient ways of harvesting and composting. Volunteers gave us good ideas and advice."*

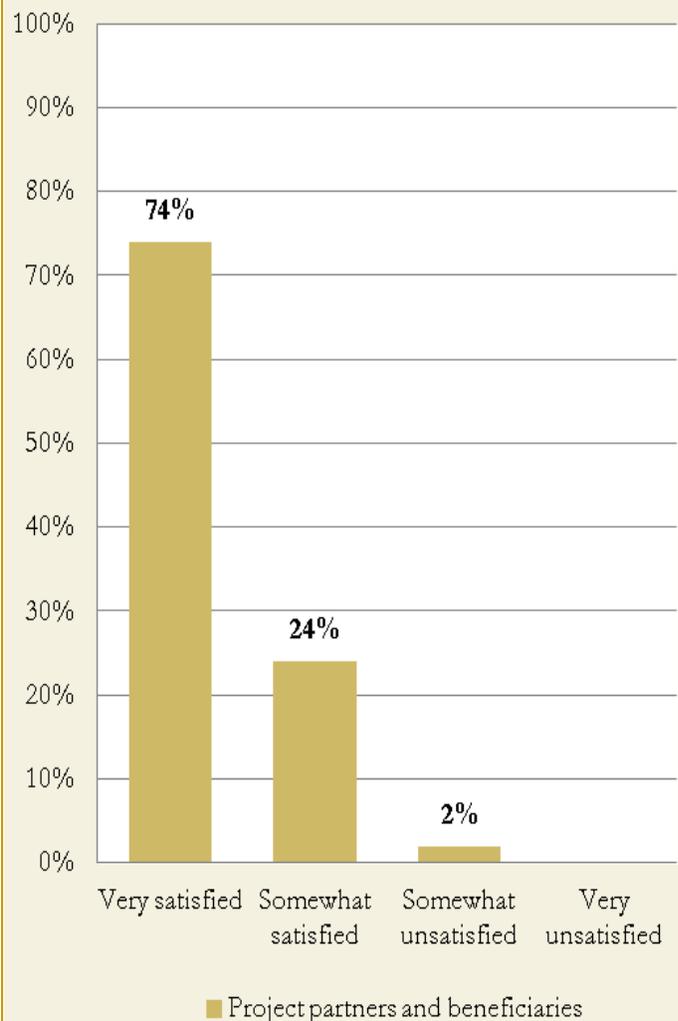
#### Quality of Life:

- Families increased their income by exchanging surplus produce for other goods, such as jellies, crafts, and cloth.
- 62 percent reported household income increased somewhat.

#### Sustainability:

- 78 percent of project partners and beneficiaries reported the changes resulting from the project were largely maintained after the departure of the Volunteer.
- 65 percent of project partners used the skills gained through the project at least weekly in their work.

### Satisfaction with Changes Resulting from Peace Corps Projects





## Peace Corps Goal Two

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

### Findings

*Before interacting with Volunteers:*

- 33 percent of project partners and beneficiaries had learned about Americans from friends or relatives.
- Guatemalans described Americans as disciplined, successful, experienced, and knowing a great deal about technology.

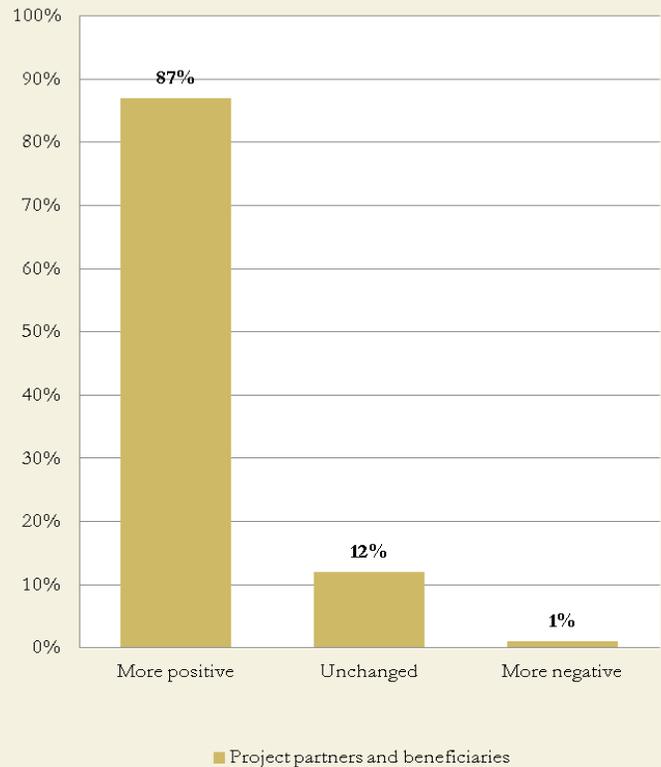
A Guatemalan farmer: *“I never imagined that an American would be in our community helping us.”*

*After interacting with Volunteers:*

- 89 percent of project partners and beneficiaries and 14 of 16 host family members reported a thorough or moderate understanding of Americans.
- 12 of 14 host family members said their relationship with the Volunteer was either “like family” or that they were “good friends.”
- The values exhibited by the Volunteers that changed local opinions were: equality, responsibility, sociability, friendliness, punctuality, and transparency

Guatemalan project partner: *“Developing the work jointly with Volunteers contributed to improving their understanding of people from the United States. Volunteers are positive people who love their work and are willing to share knowledge. They are collaborators, enthusiastic, and are very practical in their actions.”*

Opinion of Americans  
After Interacting with Volunteers



Overall, the study found that Peace Corps Volunteers helped improve the nutritional status of rural families and contributed significantly to learning about Americans.