

Haiti Assessment

Building Peace Corps Education & Communication Capability

In 1999, the USAID mission and Peace Corps program in Haiti wanted to strengthen environmental education and communication through collaborative partnerships between the Peace Corps and local institutions. GreenCOM was asked to assist the Peace Corps in conducting a rapid assessment of the current communication and education activities and organizational capacity of twelve potential partner institutions.

The institutions surveyed included international donors, government agencies, and NGOs. The research consisted of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, site visits, and document review in six geographic areas: Double Harvest, Forêt de Pin, Meyer, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Port-au-Prince. Results of the assessment indicated that most of the institutions surveyed:

- Did not view environmental education and communication as a major priority.
- Lacked personnel with formal training in education and communication skills.
- Were constrained by Haitian schools' lack of interest in environmental education and communication.



Recommendations

After a careful analysis of the assessment findings, GreenCOM made the following recommendations for future development of the Peace Corps' environmental education and communication program in Haiti.

- 1. Focus primarily on conservation education rather than formal environmental education, especially in rural areas.**

Conservation education focuses on the sustainable use and management of natural

resources. In a field-based setting, it teaches practical solutions to problems—for example, addressing soil erosion through use of special cropping techniques and tree planting. Formal environmental education, by contrast, takes place in a classroom setting and aims to give students the theoretical and analytical skills needed to assess local and global environmental issues. GreenCOM recommended that conservation education would have a greater impact given the schools' lack of interest in environmental education and the Peace Corps' work with farmers and other groups whose members were not enrolled in schools.

2. Incorporate education and communication in Peace Corps agroforestry programs.

The assessment recognized great potential for conservation education on environmentally appropriate intermediate technologies (EATIs) such as small-scale agriculture and forest

product processing, water harvesting and storage, fuel efficient stoves, and composting. The Peace Corps' ability to concentrate on EATIs could also generate linkages with the business sector for mutual gain in agroforestry and sustainable business development.

3. Train Peace Corps volunteers on conservation education.

Training workshops should include a discussion of GreenCOM's assessment and recommendations, the development of a strategic plan for strengthening current education and communication activities and expanding those activities to new sectors, and a review of education and communication materials. In particular, GreenCOM recommended that volunteers review materials developed in other Peace Corps countries (especially the agroforestry and farming planning tools developed by Peace Corps/Guatemala) and adapt them to local needs.

Selected Publications

Ndayitwayeko, Albert, and Ron Savage. *A Report Pertaining to Environmental Education and Communication Support for Peace Corps/Haiti* (also in French: *Project de rapport sur le status de l'éducation et la communication environnementale en République d'Haiti*). Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development, 1999.



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