SPA

Peace Corps

Small Project Assistance Program

Supporting Sustainable Community Development

Idea Book
M0082

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Small Project Assistance Program:

Supporting Sustainable Community Development

Peace Corps

2003

The Idea Book Series

This Idea Book is one of a series of booklets produced to share specific activities you may be interested in replicating. Other titles in the series are listed below, and new ones are being produced continuously. All of these ideas come from the work of Volunteers. Most of them were submitted just at they are printed—there is no additional information. Others were parts of larger reports. Where there are additional reference materials for an idea, notations tell you how to obtain them. There is also a reference section at the end of the booklet. Please contact the appropriate person/group to follow up on the ideas.

You are encouraged to submit your successful activities by sending them to:

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M0082:   Small Project Assistance Program: Supporting Sustainable Community Development

M0083:   In the Classroom: Empowering Girls

M0084:   DPM: Integrating Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation in Your Work

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Introduction

As Volunteers you will assume a number of roles throughout your service—student, teacher, mentor, and facilitator—accomplishing many things and participating in the life of your community. In fact, as you become a "capacity builder" by helping people to help themselves and improve their lives through their own actions, you will have a key role in the community development process.

You can contribute to your community's development by facilitating the transfer of skills, knowledge, confidence, abilities, and experience to your neighbors so they become better able to plan and accomplish their short- and long-term goals. Your understanding of local needs, problems, and aspirations together with your training and expertise will help ensure that development is consistent with local traditions and culture, and can be sustained through the community's own actions.

There are many ways you can support community members as they try to improve their own lives. You can help them identify local human, financial, and technical resources; create links with other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), government agencies, foundations, aid organizations, and local businesses; and use the financial resources available through the Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program and the Peace Corps Partnership Program.

One way to transfer skills and build capacity is to conduct "hands-on" projects in your community. SPA grants enable you to support your community in reaching a particular development goal by "jump starting" a local development process or expanding an existing activity.

This Idea Book presents information gained from Volunteers' participation in the SPA program at Peace Corps posts around the world. It includes:

▶ An overview of the SPA program

▶ How to develop a project with a community*

▶ How to secure funding for a project

▶ How to implement a project

▶ How to monitor and evaluate a project

▶ Examples of successful SPA grant activities in all project sectors

▶ Tips and suggestions

▶ Information and training resources

* *Note:* In this Idea Book, "community" denotes a geographic location, and generally refers to all residents in this location. As used in this book, community is also where the Volunteer resides. Within the community, a Volunteer's assigned counterpart organization may be one (or more) smaller group, for example, a school, a health committee, or NGO. Although many SPA grants will directly involve the Volunteer's counterpart organization, it also is important to keep the larger community in mind when deciding which activities to pursue. Generally, activities that benefit only a small minority may not be the most successful or sustainable activities.

Local Volunteers help construct a wheel chair ramp for a community-based rehabilitation group in St. Lucia.

Overview of the SPA Grant Program

Volunteers and their counterparts who have been involved in the community development process report time and time again that solutions which come from the community and activities that rely on local resources are the most effective and sustainable. They also point out that some solutions will require technical assistance and financial support from outside the community. When this is the case, the SPA program may be able to help.

The SPA program makes small grants available to communities through an agreement between the Peace Corps and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). These funds are designed to provide small amounts of capital that are combined with local contributions to support community-initiated activities. SPA grants are intended to improve the community's ability to organize, plan, make group decisions, and collaborate to improve their lives. In fact, the broad goal of the SPA program is:

> *To enhance communities' capabilities to conduct low-cost, grass-roots, sustainable development activities.*

Capacity building, then, is the hallmark of the SPA program. Based on the specific needs you and your community identify, capacity building can take many forms and is directly related to the work you do in your primary sector assignment. Working with a health Volunteer, the advisory committee of a clinic may request badly needed training for area health workers. Working with an environment or agriculture Volunteer, farmers may request assistance from an extension agent in planting nitrogen-fixing or fruit-bearing trees. Community women may request training to set up a school garden or dried vegetable small enterprise. Working with an education Volunteer, the staff and students of a school may request help establishing a vocational training program or a new library. Working with a business Volunteer, a cooperative may request help to identify prospective markets or an NGO to meet its clients' needs. Activities such as these in a primary sector assignment build the capacity of the community.

SPA grants may be used in many ways to support the activities mentioned above, including: to purchase instructional materials to provide training for community health workers; to finance the purchase of seeds and tools needed to establish the school vegetable garden; to partially defray the costs of building the school library or other community infrastructure; to cover a portion of the start-up costs of a new women-owned business; or to purchase ledgers and implement accounting, marketing, and business planning classes for members of a cooperative.

While SPA grants may support community-based activities in any sector, it should be noted that when Volunteers and their communities work together to implement grant activities that are part of the Volunteers' primary-project activities, the opportunity for achieving more lasting change and impact are enhanced. This occurs because the Volunteer has more time to work on the activities and the activities are more likely to respond to the community's felt need. The Volunteer is available to play the role of "troubleshooter" or to provide additional assistance to better ensure that the community will be able to continue the activity following the Volunteer's close of service date.

How Volunteers Benefit From Working With SPA Grants

▶ SPA grants are approved by staff in country, so funding may be available more quickly than it would be through other programs.

▶ The SPA coordinator is able to assist and advise Volunteers with guidelines and reporting requirements.

▶ Volunteers gain experience managing funds and improve planning skills.

▶ Many Volunteers have said they felt satisfaction and real accomplishment after successfully completing an SPA grant project.

▶ While completed SPA project abstracts and completion forms are used by Peace Corps headquarters in managing and reporting on the SPA program, they also document skills built, processes implemented, and tangible end products that Volunteers can refer to in completing their descriptions of service.

▶ The SPA program empowers Volunteers to help meet a real need and benefit in their host community.

Developing and Completing a SPA Grant-Supported Project

In "helping people to help themselves," the SPA program is based on two assumptions: (1) by planning and carrying out small-scale, self-help activities, people acquire development skills; and (2) when community members and groups are given the opportunity to practice the steps of project development, capacity is built at the local level. The small community development projects supported by SPA can serve as a "road map" to help a community realize its dreams of a better life. Initial development gains are sustained as the organizational and technical skills community members acquire through SPA grant activities are applied to other aspects of their lives and to new community development initiatives.

> In working with your community, you will become directly involved in the project development cycle, and you will follow a series of steps that will help guide your community through the process of needs assessment, proposal development, project implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. (See the *Roles of the Volunteer in Development* [ICE T0005] or the *New Project Design and Management Workshop Training Manual* [ICE T010] for further information.)

To access SPA funding, you will work first with your counterpart(s) and your community to identify a priority, and then "translate" the goals and objectives, actions, and resources that respond to this priority into a written plan, also called a proposal. You will present the proposal to your post's SPA coordinator for review and approval by your post-level SPA committee. If the proposal is approved, you and your community will implement the project and also provide monitoring and evaluation reports.

The following steps and tips will guide you through the process of developing and implementing a SPA proposal.

Step 1: Where do we want to go?

How can you help your community decide what to do? How can you identify those activities that are most important to your community? How can you and your community decide what to do first?

Project development begins when members of a community identify their hopes and dreams and then work together to marshal the skills and resources needed to achieve their goals. Usually it is helpful if the community considers the big picture first, before deciding to focus on a specific problem or need. While communities may have a vision of the future that includes various changes, most cannot take on too many projects at one time. By working together, a Volunteer can help a community identify one priority goal that, when successfully reached through collaborative community action, will move the entire community closer to its desired future.

To facilitate a planning process within the community, a Volunteer might begin by using some of the community-entry tools learned in Pre-Service Training. For example, work with community members to create a daily activity schedule or a seasonal calendar that shows how community members occupy their days and when community members are available to work on a project.
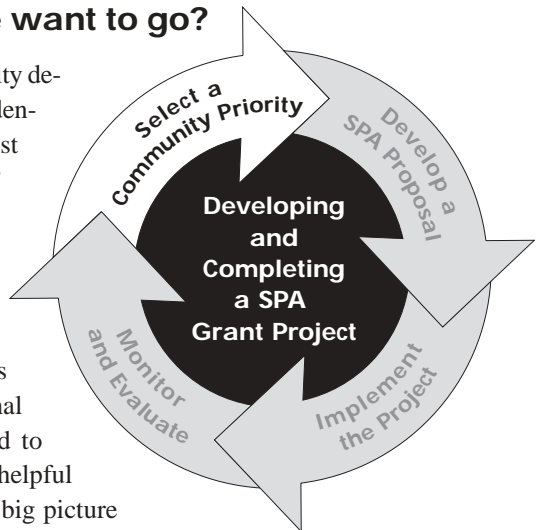
Time

To ensure the success of a project Volunteers must take the time to learn about their community—how various social groups interact, what resources are available locally, and the power structures that influence community decision making. In the process of getting to know your community, you may discover that the community does not require outside funding to meet its priority needs.

Look for opportunities to draw a community map or an asset map, depicting how your community is organized and listing the resources available for improvement projects. Shadow community members to find out what activities they do and why.

By asking questions, observing, and getting to know a community, Volunteers learn:

✓ What kinds of formal and informal groups exist;

✓ Who are the formal and informal leaders, and whose opinion is most valued;

✓ How information is shared within the community and how decisions are made;

✓ What kinds of activities community members undertake and why;

✓ What motivates the community to take action; and

✓ What problems, needs, or desires community members express.

It is important for the entire community to decide where to focus its efforts first. Do not be surprised if a community's list of project ideas is quite long. Community members may need help setting priorities and narrowing the list of ideas to one or two projects.

Deciding on a project is relatively easy when the whole community is affected by the same problem or has the same need, such as the availability of clean

Lessons Shared by Volunteers

A Volunteer in *Thailand* reported that it would have been easier and less costly to have planned the construction of water tanks with the rainy season in mind. Early rains made it difficult to transport construction materials to the site, or to complete the project on schedule. From *Madagascar*, a Volunteer tells us that the latrine construction project he facilitated should have been implemented during the season of the year when families have more money. This would have meant the project could have been completed within a shorter period of time. Seasonality was also a factor in a SPA grant activity in *Moldova*, where the publication and distribution of an informational bulletin for small farmers would have been easier had the activity started during the late winter or early spring when farmers are buying or selling inputs and planning the upcoming growing season. A Volunteer in *Morocco* also cautions not to forget when holy days occur, as these important days can affect the implementation of many community activities, including the operation of small businesses.

drinking water. Sometimes different members of the community will have different needs, or have different opinions about the most serious problems and issues facing them. In these cases, you may want to meet first in smaller groups before meeting with the entire community. The process of selecting from numerous ideas for possible projects can take some time and involve many meetings, but it is absolutely essential to build consensus, since the community "buy-in" and sense of ownership that come from working together to establish clear priorities and solutions usually lead to the most effective and sustainable projects.

To help a community decide on a project, ask the following questions:

✓ Where is the problem or need occurring?

✓ How serious is the problem or need?

✓ Who in the community is affected by the problem? Everyone? Men? Women? Children? To what degree are different groups within the community affected? (Are women affected more than men; or boys more than girls?)

✓ How many people are affected?

✓ How long have people been affected by the problem?

✓ What problems can the community agree to work on together to solve?

> **Lessons Shared by Volunteers**
>
> *From Benin*, a Volunteer reported that a map project at a local school was made more difficult because of a lack of community involvement in the project. Making completion of the map the school's sole responsibility turned it into a burden, rather than a project in which the entire community could participate. This idea was also mentioned by a Volunteer from *Thailand*, who recommended that before starting an activity, make sure everyone in the community is interested in helping. The activity will be easier to implement and more sustainable if everyone feels a responsibility for its success. In this community, the school principal decided that a library was needed and work began, but the project almost ceased when the principal was transferred to another school. The Volunteer and counterpart were able to rally the community, and all members of the community subsequently participated in creating a library system, establishing a library committee, and choosing responsible persons to be librarians.

As you narrow the list of possible projects, you and your community should list the advantages and disadvantages of each proposed activity to determine how feasible each project is. Some activities will seem to be natural responses to specific situations. Some activities will take less time to organize and complete, such as a one-day field trip to a national park as part of the environmental education curriculum for school-age children. Other activities will require longer-term responses, such as training small farmers in improved agricultural production practices. Some activities will be easily resolved within the community itself, and others will require the assistance of people and organizations from outside the community.

In setting priorities, you should examine the resources that are available to support an activity. Money is not the only resource; there are human and material resources as well. If together you determine that the community will need external resources, identify sources that might provide information, products, or services that will help reach the project goals.

From the asset maps your community produced, can you identify those government agencies that might be able to provide technical assistance to small farmers in your community? How often does the local agricultural extension agent travel through your region? Is there an NGO working in the area that you could enlist to give a talk to farmers in your community or demonstrate the proper use

SPA funds help many animal husbandry projects get off the ground, like this deer-raising project in Panama.

Using Community Resources

The best resource you have may be the members of your own community. What kinds of skills do the members of your community possess? Does someone possess carpentry or masonry skills, even though he or she might not be able to draw up a blueprint or calculate the amount of materials necessary to build a particular structure? Does an older member of the community know how to grow the traditional crops the community used to produce but no longer does; or do they know how to use traditional medicinal plants to cure simple ailments? A Volunteer from *Malawi* recommended involving local people, such as carpenters and other skilled laborers, in community projects whenever possible. Not only is it usually less expensive to use local labor, but the project then supports the local economy as well. When procuring services from local contractors or buying equipment from local suppliers, signed contracts or warranties are required.

of an agricultural production technique? What businesses might be willing to donate products or supplies to your community project? Is there an NGO in the region that distributes products or supplies on behalf of international donor organizations?

Often, a community will need the tacit or even written support of the government or local municipal authorities before commencing a project. Such approval is critical in the case of infrastructure projects. A community will not be able to realize its dreams of a better education for its children or improved health care for all its members if the education ministry does not agree to send teachers to the new school or the health ministry does not agree to pay the salaries of trained personnel for the health clinic. When referring to her work with an NGO-sponsored children's rights center, a Volunteer from Romania affirmed, "Securing complete collaboration from the Ministry of Child Welfare and the Mayor's Office … proved to be a major part of the Center's success."

Activities that use local resources as much as possible will be more effective in the long run since the community doesn't become dependent on any one external funding source. Activities that use external resources in ways that are consistent with local culture and traditions also will be more effective than activities that impose a radically new practice or procedure.

If your community has determined that it will need financial resources from external sources, consult your post's SPA coordinator. Many posts maintain lists of funding organizations in the country, in addition to SPA grants, with the types of activities each contributor supports and the requirements for accessing these funding sources.

Once you and your community have identified a project and decided whether or not to seek external funding, review your decision one last time. The questions below may help:

✓ Will the identified solution really solve the problem? How well will it work?

✓ Does the community have the skills needed to implement the solution?

✓ How long will it take?

✓ Is the community willing to accept this solution?

✓ How much will it cost?

✓ When is the best time to begin the project or undertake activities within the overall project?

The way you approach a community project will determine how successful the activity will be. For example, in Guatemala, a Volunteer provided training as part of building and maintaining a water collection system. First, eight women were trained in how to construct water storage tanks in their homes. They also were empowered as trainers to pass on their new skills to the members of a women's development association. Initially, some women were unhappy that skilled masons were not brought in to teach them, especially when some of the tanks leaked or they experienced other construction problems. But as their competence increased, they began to accept responsibility and realize they could do the work themselves.

A Project Design and Management (PDM) workshop in Jordan increased host country national and Volunteer capacity to successfully complete community development activities.

Step 2: How will we get there?

Once you and your community have decided on an activity, and have decided to seek funding from the SPA grant program, you will need to prepare a proposal. Each Peace Corps post has its own SPA approval committee and has established policies, procedures, and deadlines for reviewing and approving SPA proposals. You should be able to obtain information about the SPA program in your country from the SPA coordinator or your associate Peace Corps director (APCD).

Regardless of the review process your post follows, all SPA proposals must meet certain basic criteria.

▶ The project activity must originate with a local community or community organization and fall within the broad area of community development.

▶ The activity cannot cost more than $10,000 (although your post has likely placed a lower limit on acceptable activities), and the community organization must contribute its own resources to the project as well.

▶ Projects must be completed within one year and should involve activities that the local organization can continue (or expand) on its own, following the close of service (COS) date of the Volunteer.

▶ The project should transfer skills to the community organization or otherwise build local capacity.

▶ Finally, projects should not encourage continued reliance on external funding sources, whether SPA grants or other donor organizations.
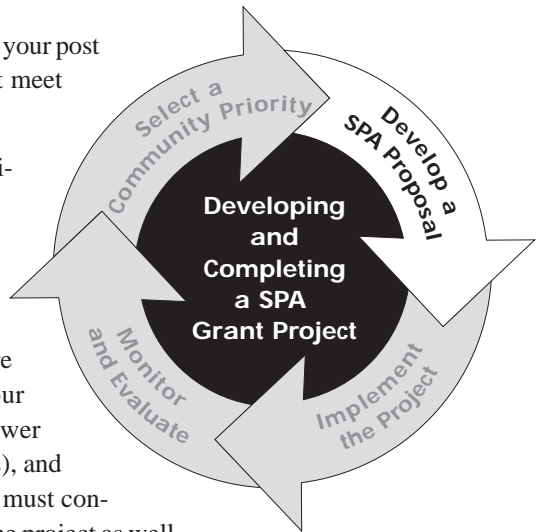
Presenting a complete proposal, and following both the general SPA program guidelines as well as any post-specific criteria, will enhance your chances for approval. Use the following checklist to ensure your proposal is complete:

✓ Have you identified an issue that you perceive as a problem, but the community or group may not perceive as one?

✓ Are you imposing a solution that seems best from your perspective but may not seem appropriate to the community or group?

✓ Does the community want the project? How do you know?

✓ Will the community or group be fully engaged in the activity? Has the community identified roles, responsibilities, and tasks for its members to perform?

✓ Does the project increase local capacity? Does it transfer skills to community members?

✓ Is the activity seeking a lasting solution?

✓ Have you included a business plan for business or income-generating projects?

✓ Are you using locally procured resources whenever possible?

✓ Are these resources low-cost, technologically appropriate, culturally acceptable, and ecologically sound?

✓ Is the activity complementary to other development activities in your community?

Key points to remember: Plan projects with realistic time frames. School vacations, holy days, and even weather can affect project timelines. Obviously, some projects are more complex than others and take more time to complete. An example from Morocco is a case in point. A Volunteer working to build more than 70 latrines in a community advised, "It may be better to implement large projects in phases, in order to ensure all potential beneficiaries are committed to and able to complete the project." This Volunteer recommended constructing a percentage of planned latrines, stopping to assess the situation and evaluate the community's progress,

SPA funds have helped support Life Skills training events with youth and young adults.

and then ordering materials to complete the remaining latrines. Even those projects that appear relatively simple can turn out to be more complicated if deliveries of supplies are delayed or early rains delay completion.

Allow enough time to complete the project before your COS date. Completing a project "with time to spare" allows you time to ensure that the community is able to continue managing project activities on its own. An example from Burkina Faso confirms this point. The Volunteer and his community were working to build a library, and construction delays occurred. Although the building was completed by the Volunteer's close of service date, training in how to manage a library did not take place. It is not known whether or not the community has been able to use the library as intended. The example highlights the importance of allowing sufficient time to complete projects, especially infrastructure projects, so that all project activities, including the required training and capacity building can also take place.

These examples also point out the frustrations that may result when a community's expectations are not met as quickly as they would like. SPA projects should involve the "sweat equity" or in-kind labor and other continuing contri-

SPA funds support training that ensures development efforts are sustainable.

butions of community members. There may be moments when the community's enthusiasm and commitment are difficult to sustain. Encourage participants to be realistic in their expectations and commitments, and consider implementing relatively simple or short-term projects that will result in more immediate gains and improvements. Future development projects can result from these successes.

See Appendix 1 for proposal writing guidelines.

Preparing Budgets

To present a complete proposal to SPA or any other funding organization, you will need to prepare a budget. The budget should be comprehensive, listing not only the items for which the community is requesting SPA funds, but also those items that the community will contribute, whether in cash or as in-kind contributions.

Key points to remember: Take the time to prepare the budget with the help of your community. This is another good opportunity to transfer skills and build capacity within your community. Put together a list of what you need before you think about how much money your community needs to obtain.

Talk with community members about each project activity. Decide what resources will be needed for each activity and what the total cost will be. For example, you might be able to obtain the services of an agricultural extension agent who will donate his or her time for a training workshop on environmentally sound production techniques, but you may have to include the cost of travel to and from the community in your budget.

Volunteers have advised: "Remember to include the little things in your budget." In a water and sanitation project, this might include the cost of tools needed to repair a pump, or the cost of purchasing additional piping to drain spilled water from the pump site. Many Volunteers also report that they and their communities underestimated some expenses, for example, the cost of transporting materials and supplies to their project sites.

For business and income-generating projects, you and your community should devise a business plan. First, the business plan should include all costs the fledgling business will incur. These costs might include raw materials and labor needed to produce an item, packaging or other marketing expenses, storage as well as transportation of products to market, publicity, and so on. Second, the business plan should estimate the income that will be earned from sales and how this income will be used. Ultimately, you want to determine that income will be greater than costs, increasing the likelihood that the community will be able to continue the activity on its own.

Place a value on the community's in-kind contributions. If community members contribute their labor to construct a health post, what would the cost be if your community had to pay for that labor? Determine the daily (or hourly) wage rate, and then multiply by the total number of days of labor required. If the community is providing a venue for a training workshop, what would be the cost be to the community if it had to rent a training site?

Determining community contributions to a project is important for several reasons: (1) it reinforces local ownership of the activity; (2) it demonstrates to funding organizations the degree of community commitment to the project; and (3) depending on the amount of community contributions, it provides evidence that the community is not overly dependent on external resources and should be able to sustain the activity. Moreover, when you have completed the entire budget for your project, your community may find that it really only needs modest external funding to complete those activities it considers to be most important. This is empowering to your community.

As you prepare the budget proposal, encourage your community to consider how it will be able to sustain the activity on its own. A Volunteer in Benin developed extracurricular activities for girls to help build their self-confidence and encourage them to continue their education. Although the project was successful, the Volunteer reported that he wished he had involved the girls' club more directly in raising funds for their activities during the project, in order to match or even exceed the resources received from SPA. "Then the group would have been more oriented toward generating resources to be self-sustaining, permitting the club to continue into the future."

The time you and your community take to develop your SPA proposal will be time well spent. In addition to helping you obtain funding, the proposal can be used as a guide for implementing the project activity and as a monitoring guide, to check the community's progress in meeting the project's goals and objectives.

Step 3: Going ahead with the project

Once your proposal has been approved, you should complete a project agreement, which must be signed by an official who represents the community or local organization you are working with. Your post's country director will sign the project agreement and the administrative officer will submit this form to headquarters and request a check for the amount of the grant.

Select a Community Priority

Develop a SPA Proposal

Developing and Completing a SPA Grant Project

Monitor and Evaluate

Implement the Project
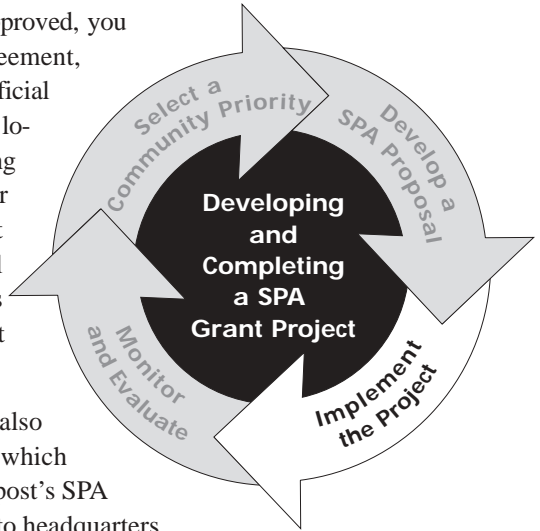
At the same time, you should also complete the project abstract, which summarizes the proposal. Your post's SPA coordinator will send this form to headquarters.

While you are waiting for the funds to arrive, you and your community can review your action plan. You already should have identified the major project tasks,

Project Abstract [Refer to Appendix 3]

The Project Abstract form is not merely a bureaucratic hoop to jump through. It is a tool that helps project planners think through all the steps required to plan a successful activity. One of the most frequent self-critiques from Volunteers is the need for better planning. If used properly, the abstract will help you and the project participants consider the reasons the community wants to take on this project and its feasibility as a sustainable initiative. The abstract must be completed by you and your community for it to be a relevant document. Completing the abstract together increases the project's chances of success and allows issues to be resolved prior to implementation.

and who will perform these tasks. Look for opportunities to provide "hands-on" experience for community members. When purchasing equipment and supplies, involve community members in searching out the best prices and supply sources, and determining how best to transport these materials to the community.

Delegate responsibility for the different project activities to community members as much as possible, and allow them to decide how to complete the activities within required time frames and budgets. For example, if the women in your community will be providing lunch or refreshments during a training activity, let them decide the menu, purchase the supplies, and organize the activity. If the project requires the services of a master artisan, carpenter, or plumber, make sure members of the community work alongside this professional to learn the basic skills involved in constructing a latrine, school room, or health post.

Handling the resources of a community project can be complicated. Many times, SPA grant funds will be the first external funds a community has obtained. Nevertheless, you should look for opportunities to involve your community in managing these resources.

A Tip About Working With Money

Managing SPA funds together with your community is an excellent way to increase the community's sense of project "ownership." However, when selecting money managers, it is important to keep in mind the community's power structure. Seek a situation in which money managers must be accountable to others or which involves a system of checks and balances on the use of funds. Generally, it is not a good idea to entrust funds to any one individual in the community, but rather to form a committee to manage the finances.

If the Peace Corps disburses the check directly to you, obviously you will want to safeguard these resources by putting them into a bank account as soon as possible. If local conditions permit, you might consider opening a bank account in the name of the community or in the name of the project. You and two other trusted members of the community could have signature authority to make deposits into or withdrawals from this account.

As the project proceeds, you should also involve the appropriate community members directly in managing these resources. One suggestion is to use the project log to register deposits and withdrawals from the project bank account.

You can also use the log to show community members how project expenses must follow budget projections and how to make corrections, when necessary, during the course of a project, either to meet unforeseen costs or to reprogram expenses when cost savings are possible. Most important, you should hold regular meetings with community members to report how the resources of the project are being spent. One Volunteer posted the budget and expenses on the outside of a building so the whole community could see how the funds were being used.

If you encounter delays or difficulties, refer to the daily activity schedules and maps you did with your community. If the project closely corresponds to community priorities and needs, activities will soon be back on schedule. Remember, however, that cultures differ in how "time frames" and "deadlines" are perceived and valued. The concept of time will influence how community members interact with each other and with you.

Step 4: **How are we doing? And what did we do?**

Monitoring and evaluation are integral components of project implementation. Work with your community throughout the life of the project to monitor progress in reaching the project goals and objectives.

Monitoring helps you and your community answer the question, "How are we doing?" and tells you if your project is making progress toward achieving its objectives. Monitoring is conducted at different times throughout the implementation of the project, according to a specific monitoring plan and schedule.

Monitoring and evaluation also are key components of the capacity-building process at the community level. For example, monitoring can demonstrate how activities are improving the skills and well-being of families, or building the capacity of individuals and community organizations. When done with the community, monitoring also can reinforce community ownership of its project.
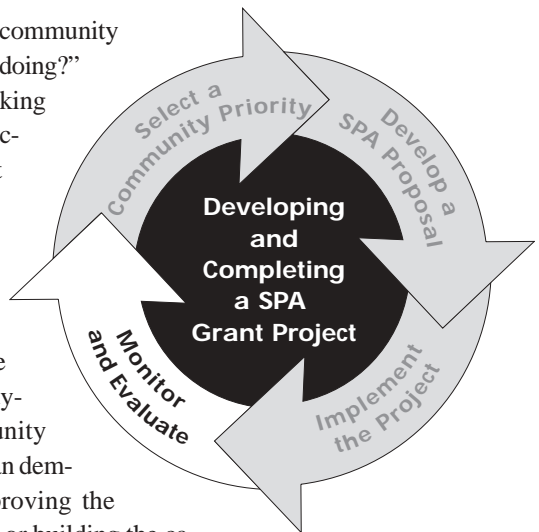
You should refer to your project's action plan to identify what to monitor. You will need to choose indicators, which are markers or signs that the desired changes are in fact taking place. Indicators used to monitor an activity can be both quantitative and qualitative. They measure both tangible project outcomes, such as the number of individuals participating in a training activity, and intangible outcomes, such as how the self-esteem of participants has changed as a result of the training.

> **A Tip About Indicators**
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> Indicators present an excellent opportunity to use PACA tools in concert with the SPA proposal process. Activities such as resource mapping and pair-wise ranking can be completed with the community at the beginning and end of the project to gauge how their perceptions and priorities have changed. See the PACA Manual (ICE M0053) for more information.

Since SPA projects focus on building the capacity of local groups and communities to perform sustainable activities to improve their own lives, you will likely choose indicators that will reflect changes in the quality of life of individuals and families, or that reflect changes in the capacity of community organizations to manage their own activities. (See Appendix 3 for help in choosing indicators.)

Incorporating monitoring and evaluation techniques into your work with your community also will help you better support the community in building on what has worked well as new activities are planned.

The following guidelines may help you develop a monitoring plan.

✓ Are we on schedule? (Refers to project timeline)

✓ Are expenses within budget? (Tracks costs, to stay within the budget)

✓ Are community members involved in implementing the activity? (Refers to leadership and decision making)

✓ Does the community still support the activity? (Measures degree of interest and cooperation)

✓ Are community leaders taking steps to solve problems? (Monitors the development of leadership)

✓ Are records being kept? Are regular reports being made? (Tracks financial management and looks for accountability and transparency)

✓ Are benefits being shared with the entire community? (Focuses on equitable distribution of benefits)

✓ Have adjustments in the activity plan been made when required? (Refers to management)

✓ Are there any unresolved issues?

✓ What more do we need to do?

As your project proceeds, you and your community will be asked to submit reports. You should already have completed and submitted the project abstract, which is a summary of the basic objectives of the project, the expected changes and transfer of skills that will take place, and the indicators that will be used to measure these changes. Once you have finished the project, you and your community should fill out the Project Completion report. This report provides information on what happened, whether the objectives were met, and on any unintended project outcomes. In addition to using these reports to inform the donor institution that provided the resources, the Peace Corps also uses these reports to share best practices among Volunteers who are engaged in community development projects.

Completion Reports

Much like the project abstract, the Project Completion report should be seen as a tool to enhance both the Volunteer's and the community's experience with the SPA project. After completing a project, many Volunteers find it difficult to measure the impact their work has had on those around them. The completion report asks you to reexamine the indicators set out in the abstract to get a sense of both the quantitative and qualitative changes. This appraisal of both the negative and positive aspects of the project will give a better sense of what has been accomplished. These reports also add to the pool of "promising practices" that the Peace Corps collects and disseminates to Volunteers worldwide through publications and informal discussions with programming and training staff.

So Now What?

What are the results when a community development project is complete and your neighbors are using the agricultural skills they received in training; or they are better protecting themselves from HIV and other STDs; or their water pump is working and a committee is trained and ready to maintain and repair it? No matter what your project's outcome, the process itself will build capacity and enable community members to focus on their priorities, marshal resources, and organize and implement a plan to improve their lives. Every challenge you and your neighbors overcome in achieving your goals will instill confidence, pride, and competence that is every bit as important as the structures that are erected or the training undertaken. SPA grant-supported community development activities enable you, as a Volunteer, to play an important role in helping your community define its dreams and aspirations, build skills to address them, and move at least one step closer to reaching them. In the end, your community's motivation, organization, and commitment will leave you feeling amazed, humbled, and proud.

Women in Guatemala constructed hutches to raise small animals for income and improved food security.

SPA Grant Examples by Peace Corps Project Sector

With more than 1,000 community-based grants completed each year, the following examples are merely representative of the wide range of efforts undertaken by Volunteers and their communities in all Peace Corps sectors. The examples that follow are best practices gleaned from activity abstracts and completion reports submitted by Volunteers. They show how Volunteers are using SPA grants to build leadership, technical skills, and self-reliance in hundreds of communities around the world.

The chapters in this section contain project examples in the major Peace Corps project sectors and communications technology. The examples focus on the elements common to most SPA grants: training and capacity building; the acquisition of equipment and materials for both educational and productive endeavors; infrastructure development; and income generation. They also describe activities in the several initiative areas, including NGO and youth development. The examples in each sector reflect the issues Volunteers and their communities are addressing or suggest emerging trends.

Each chapter is organized according to the most salient aspects of SPA grant activity within the sector, followed by other examples of the different SPA components.

Agriculture

In the agricultural sector, SPA grants support community efforts to achieve food security, thereby ensuring a more varied diet and better nutrition for households. In communities where food security has been guaranteed, SPA grants support the efforts of small farmer cooperatives, women's groups, and other community organizations to identify and grow alternative cash crops to increase household income. Additional SPA grants support efforts that provide training and technical assistance to community groups to improve production yields, invest in post harvest handling and processing of agricultural crops, and assist in identifying and supplying new markets.

In this chapter, you will find examples of:

▶ Food security

▶ Increasing household income

▶ Investments in production and marketing infrastructure

▶ Investments in equipment to improve production, post-harvest processing, or marketing

▶ Training

▶ Instructional materials to support technical assistance

▶ NGO development

▶ Youth development

Food Security

In helping communities achieve food security, SPA grants provide training as well as equipment and resources. One representative example comes from Senegal. In one project, the Volunteer and local community group wanted to increase food production and improve the nutritional value of daily meals. They decided to establish a community garden to supply the local community (Jatafa) and surrounding villages with vegetables. A secondary, but no less important, objective was to build group cohesiveness and strengthen the group's ability to carry out

other community development activities. SPA funds covered the purchase of seeds and fencing materials. The Volunteer reports that community members worked well together to establish the garden and plant live fencing to protect the garden. The community is growing a greater variety of vegetables, and families are using these vegetables to prepare more nutritious meals, indicating they have a greater understanding of the value of incorporating vegetables into their diet. Group members received training in basic accounting and now know how to operate a banking account. The women are maintaining the garden themselves and are learning how to market their products to the surrounding villages. The group is both proud of its effort and more cohesive.

Another example comes from Mali, where a women's association was created to address community nutritional needs. A SPA grant supported training and the acquisition of equipment and resources while focusing on the NGO development of this new community organization. The Volunteer and the association decided to establish a community garden to grow a variety of vegetables that can be added to the family diet. A 50-square-meter plot was prepared to cultivate cabbage, tomato, cucumber, salad greens, and onions. Any additional produce not needed for family consumption was sold to neighboring villages, supplementing income earned from the principal cash crops in the region (cotton and grains). The Volunteer reports that the project has proceeded well and that the association has been able to sell all the vegetables it produces. Proceeds are deposited in the group's bank account, together with monthly dues collected from the members. This income should be sufficient to purchase seeds and supplies in the future, ensuring sustainability of the project. Training also has been provided in health and nutrition topics at the association's monthly meetings.

Income Generation

SPA grants support the efforts of Volunteers and their communities to identify alternative cash crops to help small farmers diversify production and earn additional income. SPA grants in this sector support training, infrastructure, equipment and supplies, and even instructional materials that will help community groups diversify production and improve crop yields. An increasing number of SPA grants in this sector focus on nontraditional crops, including snail cultivation in Togo, and aquaculture in Honduras, Ecuador, Cameroon, and Tanzania. Other grants are reintroducing more traditional cash

crops, including *tuna* (cactus fruit) in Ecuador, iguanas in Panama, and taro root in Samoa. Still other grants focus on preserving crops to improve market position; a women's community group in Bolivia received training and supplies to build solar dryers. The women received training in food preservation and storage techniques, including dehydration. Not only will the project help to improve diets and nutrition for families, but it will also enable the women's group to preserve and store vegetables to sell, thereby increasing income for the women and their families.

In addition to the training and technical assistance in the cultivation of alternative cash crops, crop selection plays a role in a project's success. Fruit tree production, for example, will require three, four, or more years for trees to mature, during which time farmers must have an alternate source of income.

In Ecuador a Volunteer and the local community worked to identify a crop that had a ready market, would grow well in an arid climate with poor soil, and could be transported to market over poor roads. They decided on *tuna* (cactus fruit) cultivation. However, it takes approximately three years for the first crop to mature, and incentives were needed for the farmers during these years. The Volunteer and the community decided, therefore, to establish a demonstration farm where farmers would learn cultivation techniques. During the three-year

Students participate in a school-based papaya growing project in Thailand.

period, farmers were compensated for their labor in kind in the form of tuna plants. The Volunteer also provided training to farmers in all aspects of tuna production and organized a technical exchange visit to a functioning tuna plantation in the region. To fully realize the potential of tuna cultivation, farmers were introduced to *cochinilla* management, which makes use of an insect that feeds on cactus plants and can be used to make dyes, thereby providing another source of income for families. The project's sustainability is ensured as water for irrigation is readily available (sprayers were purchased during the project), and any plant diseases will be treated without the use of chemicals. This project offers a model for introducing alternative cash crops in other Peace Corps communities around the globe.
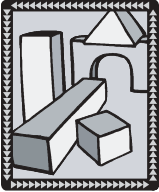
Infrastructure

Diversifying production with alternative cash crops cannot take place without the requisite investment in infrastructure, equipment, and resources. Greenhouse production is a proven technology that can result in increased crop yield and profitability and requires only a modest investment in materials and supplies.

In Moldova, a Volunteer and the Vegetable Growers Association of Slobogia Dusea constructed a greenhouse to be used as a demonstration tool for training farmers on advanced growing techniques, greenhouse management, and cultivation of alternative cash crops. Training was provided in greenhouse construction, soil preparation, irrigation systems, greenhouse heating, advanced growing technology for seedlings, improved vegetable growing technology, pest control, harvesting and post-harvest techniques, and greenhouse financial management.

Participation in weekly training seminars remained consistently high throughout the activity, indicating a sustained interest in what was being taught. The increased production yields were another indicator of this activity's success. Sustainability has been virtually ensured, since proceeds from crop sales will be used to continue production.

The association meets on a quarterly basis to decide how to use profits from the cooperatively owned greenhouse. Thus far, proceeds have been used to further develop markets, pay overhead costs associated with production and marketing, and return dividends to members.

An added benefit of the activity has been to strengthen links between the local greenhouse association and similar associations in the region, and spark an interest in conducting a group marketing activity. Despite the apparent successes, however, the Volunteer reports that the procurement and transportation of materials, handling of money, and unforeseen import duties all required additional work on the part of project planners.

Equipment and Resources

SPA grants addressing agricultural equipment and resource needs take many forms, from supporting the incorporation of technology in agricultural cooperatives to defraying the costs of tools, seeds, livestock or starter plants within community groups of all kinds. In Thailand, a SPA grant provided cement, bricks, mortar, steel rods, and roof tiles for construction of a food-processing center and to house equipment for a catering business run by the Women's Group of Ban Narab. The Volunteer reports that the project is working well and the women participants have expressed pride and confidence in planning and implementing a project that fulfills their needs.

Other SPA grants are supplying equipment and resources to many community vegetable gardens, managed by women's groups, community associations, and schools in Senegal, Gabon, Mali, Tonga, and Samoa.

Training

Agricultural training activities include one-time events and longer-term training activities, many of which use demonstration farm technology.

In many villages in Gabon, subsistence agriculture does not provide enough nutritious food for consumption or for sale. Villages need to establish more efficient and sustainable agricultural systems to diversify their diets and increase their income. At the same time, however, villagers often lack models of sustainable, environmentally sound, integrated agricultural systems to motivate, educate, and support their production efforts.

In one community, the Volunteer and the local development committee decided to establish an integrated agricultural system that would include an organic

vegetable garden, planted and fenced animal range space, a forage bank, three fish ponds, and adequate housing for chickens and other small domesticated animals. They decided to use one farm as the model demonstration farm where training activities would be concentrated. Each farmer would be allowed to develop an area of expertise, according to individual interest and contribution to the project.

Although the final report is not yet in, the Volunteer was committed to monitoring the gradual development of the farm as a training center, model, and tool for agricultural extension. Monitoring is done in bi-weekly meetings held with the farmers to assess progress and monthly visits from consultants who advise the farmers on technical subjects.

Also in Gabon, a SPA grant enabled a Volunteer and community to hold a one-day agricultural fair. The medical center and local agricultural and environmental extension agencies demonstrated new agricultural techniques to farmers and their families. They hoped to demonstrate to families the connection between improved agricultural practices and improved diets and nutrition. A steering committee was formed to organize the day-long activity at the local community center. Demonstrations were held on the importance of incorporating the three basic food groups into family diets; how to make compost; how to use natural pesticides; how to increase productivity on small plots through intercropping; and small animal husbandry.

The activity was considered successful because there was a high level of community involvement (more than 400 people participated in the fair), and community members who directly contributed to the project acquired more information and became more motivated. Some participants have started vegetable gardens on their own. Because of this success, members of the steering committee have agreed to continue providing information to the community in the future.

Farmers in West Africa try new approaches to increase manioc crops and maintain soil nutrients.

Protection for a plant nursery is completed in St. Vincent.

In Honduras, a community group (Asociación de Productores de San José–Choluteca) used a SPA grant, along with assistance from the international NGO, Save the Children, to train farmers in improved vegetable and fruit tree cultivation. The objective of the activity was to increase the variety of foods available to families in the region and promote agroforestry and soil conservation practices. Training in improved rootstock care and grafting should have a positive effect on both soil quality and production yields.

Project sustainability is achieved through the training of 11 farmers who have committed to training additional farmers in their own communities. During their training, they received seven fruit trees and ten seedling packages to plant on their own farms. They have also agreed to disseminate resources by providing bulbs to the neighboring farmers when the next generation of bulbs is produced.

A different approach was tried in Panama, where a series of monthly agricultural training seminars was carried out by a local NGO concerned with increasing food security and reducing malnutrition in rural areas, especially within the indigenous reserve of Ngabe-Bugle. The monthly seminar series covered such topics as making compost with locally available ingredients,

constructing rice and fish paddies, using tubing to carry water to storage tanks, intensive vegetable gardening, canning fruits and vegetables, and establishing gardens to produce medicinal plants. In addition, since coffee is a cash crop throughout Panama, improved coffee production techniques were also taught.

Training took place at a centrally located experimental farm in Chiriquí, in western Panama. Practice workdays were held in individual community sites and included regular extension visits from local agricultural promoters. In conducting the seminars, the trainers modeled creativity in adapting to unforeseen changes; for example, instead of buying hand-held sprayers for pesticide spraying, the trainers built a chimney to produce wood vinegar, a natural insecticide that participants could easily produce and use on their own small plots of land.

Because acquiring the necessary tools and agricultural implements is often difficult for cash-poor small farmers, trainers offered participants the opportunity to purchase tools at 50 percent of the original purchase price. The income was then used to capitalize a tool fund, which will continue to make tools and agricultural implements available for sale. Instead of paying participants per diem, trainers designed a merit system whereby each participant earned points for attending the seminars. The points were assigned dollar values, and participants could exchange their points for tools. Participants now have the knowledge, tools, and materials needed to provide hands-on demonstrations of these new agricultural production techniques within their own communities, thereby ensuring sustainability of the activity.

Instructional Materials

In Moldova, a Peace Corps Volunteer worked closely with his Counterpart's organization, Agroinstruive, to create the newsletter *Agro-Makler*, which targets small and medium-sized farmers who have privatized their activities but are having difficulties finding buyers and competitive sellers of farming inputs. In producing the newsletter, the Volunteer and NGO counterpart hoped to create a more formal means for farmers to exchange buying, selling, and bartering information—a network of farmers that, in turn, might lead to better sales, more profits, and increased competition.

The Volunteer reports that local farmers have shared an increasing amount of information through the newsletter, and have bought or sold almost all their inputs through contacts found in *Agro-Makler*. The plan is to distribute *Agro-Makler* twice a month to villages in three regions. Producers of the newsletter have learned new skills, including computer, editing, and publishing skills. The counterpart organization is working closely with a network of information centers in Moldova to continue producing *Agro-Makler,* and a locally based international NGO has expressed interest in providing financial support.

NGO Development

SPA projects in all sectors contribute to the strengthening of local NGOs and community-based organizations, and the agricultural sector is no exception. In the Philippines, a SPA grant enabled a Volunteer to assist a local foundation in its efforts to reduce pressure on marine resources by restocking the depleted giant clam population and increasing public awareness about the importance of conserving marine resources. Through training provided by the Volunteer, members of the foundation improved their skills in accounting, business management, environmental education, and community mobilization techniques.

Youth Development

Youth development activities take place in all Peace Corps sectors and projects. In the agriculture sector, SPA projects involve youth in both agricultural production and training activities. In the Pacific, several SPA grants involve secondary school students in vegetable gardening and/or in the production of income-generating crops.

Agricultural science students and teachers at the Avele Secondary School in Samoa are growing a wider variety of vegetables to improve nutrition at their school. To finance the activity, they also are growing flowers to sell in their community. Applying the agricultural techniques they learned in school, students planted a large vegetable garden to supply the school's kitchen, and they created flowerbeds around the school. Their efforts are producing a more consistent and inexpensive supply of locally grown vegetables for the school's lunch program. Recognizing

the benefits of the activity, school authorities have agreed to commit resources to continue the project. Although the project could be easily replicated in many school communities, the Volunteer cautions that in areas where climate permits cultivation throughout the year, the school and/or student group will need to identify people to maintain the garden and flower beds during school breaks.

Three other projects in Tonga also involve students in vegetable gardening or other agricultural production activities. In one project, the Volunteer and youth group decided to establish an income-generating project as one response to youth unemployment. They decided to begin production of four cash crops: timber, flowering plants, kava, and peanuts. Income earned from timber trees, flowering plants, or kava goes to different households, while the income earned from peanuts goes directly into the youth group's bank account. The project capitalized on the production skills of youth and their families, providing only minimal technical assistance. Seedlings were purchased with SPA funds and delivered to youth and their families for cultivation on their own land. Due to a time delay in acquiring seedlings, melon seeds were acquired instead of peanuts. The Volunteer reports that the project has worked well and instilled a sense of commitment and cooperation within the youth group that was not previously there.

School children work with teachers preparing a school garden in Niger.

Environment

Environmental education, the conservation of biodiversity, and sustainable natural resource management are important areas of SPA grant activity in the environmental sector. Sustainable resource management and conservation of biodiversity is difficult for low-income families, but SPA grants are supporting the development of ecotourism and other income-generating activities to create new jobs and increase income for rural communities, especially those located adjacent to national parks or other protected areas. SPA grants support training in both formal and nonformal settings, building the skills and abilities of students and teachers, small farmers, and community organizations. Due to the prevalence of local NGOs working in the environmental sector, many SPA grants also strengthen these organizations by improving their planning, management, or fundraising abilities, and promote closer links and effective networking among these NGOs.

In this chapter you will find examples of:

▶ Environmental education

▶ Development of instructional materials for environmental education programs

▶ Sustainable resource management

▶ Income-generation through sustainable environmental activities

▶ Infrastructure to support sustainable environmental activities

▶ NGO strengthening

▶ Youth participation in environmental activities

▶ Training

▶ Equipment and resources to support environmental activities

Environmental Education

SPA environmental education grants support teacher training and materials and curriculum development.

SPA grants support training of both elementary and secondary school teachers. In Bulgaria, a Volunteer worked with more than 900 teachers and students in Etropole. A SPA grant funded a multidisciplinary environmental education project. With the collaboration of a representative of the State Forestry Service, training was conducted to increase environmental awareness among teachers and students. The training also helped teachers improve their classroom presentation skills by using more interactive materials and activities.

Other teacher training activities combine environmental content with the opportunity to improve classroom teaching and/or English language skills. A grant in Poland is a case in point. Faculty and students at a state technical university seldom had the opportunity to thoughtfully discuss environmental problems and speak or otherwise interact with native English speakers. Many teachers were willing to incorporate environmental topics into the English language teaching

Volunteers and community members clean and upgrade an interactive environment and education site in Bulgaria.

curricula, yet developing strategies and finding resources to accomplish this task was difficult. To provide such an opportunity, three Volunteers agreed to act as trainers and advisors to the faculty and students. They established a roundtable to promote the exchange of ideas for identifying and resolving environmental problems. They elicited ideas for incorporating environmental themes into the English curriculum, and they suggested sample activities, classroom exercises, and appropriate use of audiovisual materials. One idea that arose was to establish a resource center with materials in English on environmental topics. Overall, faculty and students improved their English speaking, listening, and reading skills. The resource center was created and is now available to all community members.

At times, SPA grants support the efforts of teachers outside the classroom as well. In Ukraine, a group of teachers at a local primary school wanted to create a forum to discuss environmental issues facing the community and to promote constructive action within the community. The SPA grant supported the creation of the forum. They decided to create a bimonthly women's forum where they could discuss these issues and articulate ways to build better relationships between the school and the community, and encourage more school/community cooperation in confronting local environmental needs. Initial meetings have led to the idea of holding community cleanups and tree plantings and publishing an environmental newsletter.

Instructional Materials

SPA grants support the development of instructional materials—newsletters, informational posters, videos, etc.—for use in the classroom or with community-based environmental activities. For example, a SPA grant helped a Volunteer and counterpart in Honduras establish an environmental education resource network and generate local interest in environmental education. Inviting participants from seven locations to Olancho, they worked with various agencies to introduce a *Training on Environmental Education Materials Box* (TEEM Box). This resource kit consists of 46 books on integrating environmental education in the classroom. A second regional TEEM workshop and the establishment of a network of trained teachers followed this first meeting.

SPA-funded instructional materials may be designed for use in adult training programs. In Ecuador, where soil erosion, poor management of water resources, deforestation, and a lack of knowledge of appropriate agroforestry techniques continue

to impoverish the small farmers of the central highlands, A SPA grant enabled a local group (Promocion Humana Diocesana and Desarrollo Forestal Comunal) to create a video for use in training highland farmers in nitrogen fixing crops and trees, water management, contour farming and other appropriate methods of preventing soil erosion and deforestation. In addition, the video was intended to demonstrate and motivate particular agroforestry activities and promote sustainable natural resource management through the participation of entire families.

Sustainable Resource Management

A variety of SPA grants are supporting the efforts of communities to protect natural resources and manage these resources in a sustainable manner. Volunteers are working with their communities to incorporate income-generating components into projects that promote conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. Examples of this concept are activities related to ecotourism, particularly in border areas around national parks. These activities can provide incentives to conserve and even improve local environments while creating new jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities for local communities.

In Guatemala, the rural community of Chacacnab is located in a forest where community residents were faced with the dual challenge of conserving the natural resources of the area while identifying a nonagricultural source of income. A committee of community residents received a SPA grant to organize a training project in wood carving and marketing. Using felled timber from the forest, the community formed a cooperative of wood carvers and now manages a small business. The cooperative has also established a community woodlot to replenish trees and ensure a renewable supply of raw materials.

In western Panama, a community received a SPA grant to develop ecotourism activities designed to promote the local Ngabe culture and natural environment while generating income for community development.

Volunteers are working in many communities in biodiversity conservation efforts. There are numerous examples of SPA grants that have helped local communities in such diverse countries as Bulgaria, Ukraine, Slovakia, Philippines, and Honduras to conserve blue herons, frogs, and dolphins**.** In addition to training, several of the grants also include an income-generation component, usually involving ecotourism activities.

Income Generation

Whenever possible, communities and local organizations that receive SPA grants are encouraged to look for ways to make the activity self-sustaining. In addition to ecotourism, other types of environmental projects include an income-generation component. In fact, some combine training and income-generation. This is largely because training is a feature of all well-planned activities, and funds are often provided in support of an income-generating activity.

Two activities in Morocco exemplify this combination of project components. Desertification and erosion pose major problems in mountainous regions of Morocco. A SPA grant provided resources to support two communities' efforts to train community members in planting and caring for trees while at the same time reforesting mountain slopes with indigenous pine and olive trees and generating income from the sale of olives. A similar reforestation and economic incentive effort involving women in another mountain community worked so well that it led to the formation of a community center and a women's cooperative.

An area that is receiving increasing attention is community environmental health. Activities that contribute to the community's environmental health include cleanup as well as recycling activities. The latter also may provide a source of employment and income for low-income groups. In Côte d'Ivoire, an environmental health activity also included infrastructure development. One town used SPA funds to build three garbage shelters in strategic places throughout the principal market, and to open and repair the main drainage canal that runs out from the market. The Volunteer and community group also planned to increase effectiveness and sustainability of the ac-

Youth can generate income, learn about the environment and help their communities through recycling projects.

tivity by conducting hygiene and health trainings for the market community on the importance of proper trash collection and disposal.
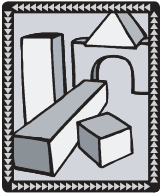
Infrastructure

Environmental infrastructure projects take many forms. They permit communities to more effectively manage natural resources and protect their land from flooding or further erosion. Other projects help build the infrastructure that will make it possible for communities to manage ecotourism projects, contributing to natural resource management, conservation of biodiversity, and creation of jobs and income.

In Guatemala, a Volunteer working with the Association for the Protection of the Biosphere Itza used a SPA grant to improve the ability of the association to protect and manage park resources. The association planned to renovate existing ecotourism facilities in the park, install a radio system to provide direct communication among park rangers, and acquire forest firefighting equipment. These improvements, it was hoped, would lead to an increase in tourism and generate income sufficient to cover the expenses incurred by the association in managing the park.

A Volunteer in Mongolia helped secure SPA funding to support local efforts to better manage tourism and maintain the Boghd Khan Uul Strictly Protected Area. Two carpenters were assisted by park rangers in the construction of signs and wooden shelters at the park's entrance. The buildings are being used to disseminate information and collect small fees to help fund ongoing research and community environmental education outreach efforts. The Volunteer noted strong positive feelings from

Workers install newly constructed trash receptacles in Honduras.

the community about the results of the activity. One lesson learned from the effort was that to avoid problems, projects involving construction, cleanup, or other preparatory activities in parks or protected areas should take place well in advance of the tourist season.

In the Slovak Republic, several communities came together to create the Upper Abov Educational Trail. This entailed constructing an 11-kilometer pedestrian nature trail, installing informational panels along the trail, and preparing descriptive brochures in Slovak, Hungarian, and English. More villages and participants than envisioned have participated in the project. Teachers have begun taking students on educational field trips along the trail. Villagers have agreed to maintain the trail, and the participating communities are motivated to continue working together now that they have developed new contacts across the country.

As is the case with many SPA projects, infrastructure projects in the environmental sector also include capacity building. For example, in Nepal, a SPA grant supported training for trail bridge construction technicians. The training was conducted at the request of the Remote Area Development Committee. Participants improved skills and updated their knowledge. This will have a direct impact on the quality and safety of infrastructure development of this rural area.

In Panama, a Volunteer worked with an ecotourism development committee to improve the management of natural resources and enhance opportunities for ecotourism. One interesting component of the training was to organize a technical exchange with two other communities where local development groups have community-based ecotourism projects. This peer learning provided the ecotourism development committee with important insights about creating and managing tourist packages and the problems associated with them. Following the exchange, the committee organized three cleanup activities.

NGO Development

In the environmental sector, NGOs are assuming a major role in environmental conservation and educational activities. While some assume a national advocacy role vis-à-vis the national government, many other NGOs are working with local communities to protect natural resources, develop conservation efforts, and promote sustainable natural resource management.

A Volunteer in Ukraine worked with Revival, an environmental NGO, to address the lack of local environmental knowledge that has contributed to the degradation of local wetlands. While most of the elements of this SPA-supported activity were not highly technical, they helped the local community understand how unchecked plant growth had diminished the nutrient capacity of these wetlands and their ability to support the local ecosystem. Moreover, the project provided an opportunity for this NGO organization to improve its ability to plan and carry out an education project. Participants gained experience in researching, developing, writing, and presenting environmental awareness and education materials.

Other SPA grants with NGOs supported the development of resource centers. Volunteers in countries including Romania, Slovakia, and Kazakhstan helped establish environmental resource centers that could be used by schools and communities alike. A Volunteer in Romania worked with a local foundation to strengthen its resource center, which provides environmental resources to local schools, businesses, government agencies, and international NGOs. Other resource center improvement projects have included upgrading computer and Internet facilities and providing training to members of the NGO and the local community in managing these assets.

Youth Development

SPA environmental grants often focus specifically on youth and youth groups, and support activities within the classroom as well as the community.

In Mali, a Volunteer helped establish a school garden as part of an environmental education program for children in grades 1 through 4. Since all of the children were from farming families, they already knew something about using natural resources. In the past decade, the Niana region has become drier and more defor-

Pipes are transported for an improved cookstove project in Honduras.

ested and the water table has dropped significantly; program planners decided to expose the children to the environmental problems affecting the area and involve them in activities aimed at counteracting those problems.

Education and technical assistance were provided in establishing and fencing the garden. SPA grant funds covered the cost of equipment and resources, including fencing material, plastic, and fruit tree seeds. Students learned about double digging of soil, ameliorated composting, growing vegetable and fruit seedlings in pots, and transplanting seedlings. The Volunteer was able to enlist the support of a technician from the NGO World Vision, who gave a talk at the school on growing papaya. Since the initial visit, the technician has continued to support the educational effort with both materials and seeds.

The Volunteer reports that the teachers have enthusiastically continued to manage the garden and have worked with the students to also plant okra and trees on the school grounds. One unanticipated result of the project that the Volunteer helped one teacher build a more fuel-efficient mud stove in her home. Now other families are asking the Volunteer for help in building their stoves.

Other SPA grants have supported efforts to provide hands-on activities for youth to change land use practices and engender responsibility for the environment includ-

ing forest conservation. One example is from the Eastern Caribbean, in Antigua and Barbuda. A core group of youth received training in tree propagation and care and in identifying indigenous species of trees and their adaptability to local soil conditions. In Bulgaria, a Volunteer and a local children's center developed an environmental education program for children entitled "Child and Nature." Many of the children were disabled or from minority ethnic groups. Through art (modeling with clay), plays (videotaped for future reference), and production of a simple newsletter, the children and the center were able to build closer relationships with parents and teachers. They also represented the center at Earth Day and other celebrations. Many trees were planted within the community. The center hopes to sustain the activity by selling the newsletter and pottery made by the children.

In Bulgaria, Bolivia, Romania, and Madagascar, youth gained an increased understanding and appreciation of their environment through camp-like workshop experiences. Youth are becoming involved in community environmental programs, including village cleanup efforts. Several activities have taken place with youth in The Gambia involving battery collection drives, environmental awareness, sanitation, and village cleanup efforts. Volunteers and their Counterparts worked with students in area grade schools to collect thousands of old, deteriorating batteries and build cement-lined disposal pits. SPA funds covered the cost of cement and the skilled labor to build the disposal pits. The school groups achieved several goals by improving the environmental health of their towns, educating both youth and adults about environmental concerns, and acquiring experience in conducting a group activity to improve the quality of life in their communities.

Training

SPA resources for training in the environmental sector have been used in both formal and nonformal settings to build skills, raise awareness, and influence community attitudes toward the environment. Trainings and construction of more fuel-efficient cook stoves took place in Benin, Honduras, Morocco, and Nicaragua. A training program in the production of charcoal briquettes was conducted in Haiti to reduce the amount of wood used by school kitchens in food preparation**.** In these examples, specific technical skills were transferred in response to identified local needs: the communities' desire to reduce the consumption of wood, conserve forest resources, and lessen the incidence of respiratory infections.

Another interesting area of training is in the conservation of biodiversity. Volunteers and other trainers are working with local communities in such diverse countries as Bulgaria, Ukraine, Slovakia, Philippines, and Honduras to ensure that environmental trainings address biodiversity. There are numerous examples of SPA grants that have helped local communities to conserve such species as blue heron, frogs, and dolphins.

Equipment and Resources

SPA grants that support the purchase of equipment and resources are important building blocks of community-based environmental education and natural resource management efforts. In Tonga, a SPA grant was used by a Volunteer and the Ha'apai Conservation Area Project to purchase audiovisual equipment for use in environmental education and outreach activities with schools and community groups. The group is attempting to raise awareness of local issues such as coastal erosion, overharvesting of timber, waste management, soil degradation, potable water shortages, free-roaming livestock, and destructive fishing practices.

A SPA grant in El Salvador enabled Fundación Ecológica Berlinesa (FEBERLIN) to acquire the materials needed to establish a 30,000-tree nursery as part of a reforestation and education campaign. The campaign hopes to raise awareness and slow the environmental damage caused by deforestation, soil degradation, and mudslides.

The foundation coordinated and complemented its efforts with the Ministry of the Environment to enhance sustainability of the effort. The ministry constructed several rock retaining walls within the most damaged landslide areas to prevent further damage during the next rainy season. This made it possible to focus reforestation efforts of the nursery in the same area. The combined efforts of both projects should lessen the negative impact on soil and agriculture during the next rainy season. In addition, coffee cooperative members expressed an interest in purchasing certain kinds of trees, which would provide income for the group in the future.

In Russia Far East, a SPA grant enabled the Terneyski Regional Ecology Group to purchase a scanner and surge protector for its computer to enhance environmental awareness and community education efforts and facilitate networking among environmental organizations in the region.

Health

In the health sector, SPA grants routinely support a variety of trainings focused on improving the knowledge and skills of community-level health workers and health committees. Although most of these trainings take place in a nonformal setting within the community, on occasion SPA grants also support more formal trainings with staff of local health ministries or NGOs working in the health field. Many SPA grants in the health sector focus on HIV/AIDS, and range from building awareness about how AIDS is transmitted and can be prevented to interventions that focus on counseling and caring for people living with AIDS. Still other SPA grants help local communities acquire the infrastructure, materials, and resources that will permit them to provide better health care to members.

In this chapter you will find examples of:

▶ Training of village health workers

▶ Training of municipal health personnel

▶ NGO development

▶ HIV/AIDS

▶ Youth development

▶ Health infrastructure

▶ Equipment and resources to support community-based health care

▶ Instructional materials

Training at the Village Level

Around the world, Volunteers have used SPA funds to support grass-roots training efforts for community health workers or village health committees. These health education projects focus on the transfer of skills to improve health care for women, men, and children who have little or no access to formal clinics.

In Burkina Faso, SPA grant activities addressed the need to train and update the skills of village health workers. One activity provided training for health workers of the Lokusso Health Center, with extensive information sessions

for traditional leaders and community members in nearby communities. The information sessions effectively raised awareness of health issues and publicized the services of the health clinic and its extension workers. A second training activity brought basic health care to under-served villages around Kouere, where there is little access to transportation and a 10-kilometer trip to the nearest health center is not unusual. By reaching rural populations who might not normally use clinic services, both activities have contributed to improving the general health of area residents.

SPA funds helped construct a new and improved health clinic in Paraguay.

A similar activity took place in Honduras, where a health center used SPA grant funds to provide training for nurses and midwives in clean birthing techniques, identification of high risk pregnancies, identification of high risk labor and delivery, and care of newborns. This activity was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, which provides information and materials to midwives. The health center plans to remain in contact with and gather support from the Ministry of Health. They also plan to hold monthly meetings with the newly trained personnel.

A SPA project in Cameroon provided training to both women and men at the same time. Because of low levels of formal education and under-utilization of the services of the local health clinic, most of the local population had little or no exposure to basic health care issues, including reproductive health. To improve this situation, the Sokamalam Health Center organized a training-of-trainers. In all, 10 women and five men received training. To complement their training, participants received a supply of instructional materials to use within their communities. Each participant prepared a three-month plan of action and is now ready to operate within the community as a reproductive health educator.

Nurses and other community health providers have received training in prevention and treatment of HIV and other opportunistic infections in many countries

including Togo, Namibia, and Zambia. Traditional and religious leaders attended workshops in Mauritania and Lesotho, while teachers received training in Togo, Benin, Cameroon, and Tanzania.

Training at the District Level

Occasionally, SPA grants support trainings at the district level with municipal health workers. Such was the case with the Mporokoso District Health Office in Zambia. There is a high risk of HIV/AIDS in this district, exacerbated by the prevalence of refugees. Among those housed in refugee camps, there has been a 300% increase in STDs (sexually transmitted diseases). However, the district had no organized education program to address this epidemic. The Volunteer worked with the district health office to design training principally for use in the refugee camps and remote rural villages. Information was also developed and disseminated on the transmission and prevention of HIV. Communities were encouraged to form task forces within local health committees to carry out HIV/AIDS education projects. These committees would work closely with the district health center, which would provide assistance in health project planning, management, monitoring, and evaluation.

Another example from Zambia illustrates a way to spread educational messages widely. A mobile training course was designed that was aimed at capacity building for community health workers and neighborhood health committees. In all, training would be provided to seven neighborhood health committees involving 60 people and four community health workers in the larger region, with three days of training in each community. Training was provided to participants in malaria, childhood diseases, water-borne diseases, basic sanitation, STDs, and HIV/AIDS. The training permitted participants to help local communities identify their health needs, and provide community support to health workers in dealing with the identified problems. Health workers were armed with information about HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, counseling, and home-based health care.

In undertaking educational outreach activities, Volunteers and community groups using SPA grants have found creative ways to accommodate the various work schedules and needs of different segments of participating communities. They have used interactive and entertaining formats to engage at-risk youth and reach adults in their evening leisure time. Vital health lessons about

STDs, drug use, HIV/AIDS, birth spacing, and nutrition have been integrated with theater (Benin, Zambia), sports (Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Gabon, Ukraine), and video and radio (Mali, Guatemala). Using these formats, Volunteers and their Counterparts have taken advantage of informal communication networks. In the end, health messages are shared with much wider audiences in a single training exercise.

NGO Development

In many areas of the world, NGOs play a major role in delivering health services to local populations, either in collaboration with government agencies or independently. In Romania, few services exist for the disabled. A local NGO was able to increase its efficiency and better manage client databases after purchasing office equipment with SPA assistance. This NGO, Organizatia Trebuie Sebes, also has expanded services to provide computer skills training and other educational opportunities to its members. They have been able to streamline and computerize the application process for persons seeking their disability pensions, which saves time and reduces stress for those in need of assistance.

Training for health care workers and community members is a key capacity-building strategy.

In Romania, a Volunteer working together a local foundation and a Dutch NGO developed a SPA project aimed at providing better medical and social assistance to persons with chronic illness. Many of the chronically ill do not always receive proper medical treatment, which may result in more prolonged periods of illness, a decrease in their quality of life, and added stress on the patient and families. The grant supported volunteer physicians, medical students, and social workers to provide in-home care and treatment to persons with chronic illnesses. In addition to helping the NGO to improve these services, the SPA grant also permitted this NGO to develop a fundraising campaign to finance its activities and a public awareness campaign to raise local awareness of services provided to the community. An important part of the activity was the training that was provided to the NGO staff. The training has led to improvements in the group's organizational skills, basic fundraising skills, communication skills, and networking skills.

HIV/AIDS

In response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, SPA grants are supporting diverse HIV/AIDS activities focusing on awareness, prevention, and care.

Due to the high incidence of HIV/AIDS in the Lundazi Province of Zambia and the local health workers' lack of knowledge about the disease, the citizens of the Mwati Village proposed a psycho-social counselor training program that would train 20 community health workers in proper prevention, care, and counseling techniques for HIV/AIDS. Together with the Volunteer, the community developed an HIV training program, which covered the basic facts about HIV, including elements of networking and mobilization and techniques for counseling community members on issues such as bereavement, loss, and death. Following the course and certificate presentations, the participants were motivated to use their newly acquired knowledge. Over 150 patients received blood tests and counseling. Awareness of local health issues was raised among the health workers, and they are now better prepared to interact with and support people living with AIDS.

In Cameroon, the director of a local health center proposed a training workshop for community health workers The objectives of the training were to overcome the lack of accurate information on HIV and to address other basic health education issues among the local population. The workshop provided information

A theatre group in Gabon raises community awareness on World AIDS Day.

about transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS. By adopting a training-of-trainers approach, the center hopes that its health educators will be able to heighten local awareness about STDs, especially HIV, within the region and create sustainable education programs focusing on prevention. Participants in the training were asked to lead several training sessions per month in the local communities and to produce action plans to guide their work. Health center staff will review the action plans every three months.

Volunteers, their Counterparts, and their communities have used many creative ways and media to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS. In Senegal, a health Volunteer undertook a project in collaboration with Plan International that had widespread benefit in AIDS education. The objective of the project was to increase AIDS awareness among the members of the transporters community (principally taxi drivers and truck drivers) by showing the Peace Corps Transporters Project film at places where these individuals gather. In preparation, the AIDS film was translated into Pulaar and French. The Volunteer coordinated a tour of the Cinebus to four urban taxi stations and three suburban centers in northern and southern regions of Senegal. The film was projected at truck stops and taxi stands in Taredji, Podor, Ourossogui, Matam, Tambacounda, Velingara, and Diaobe. In question-and-answer sessions following each showing, attendees demonstrated an increased awareness.

In Madagascar, a high school anti-AIDS club used HIV/AIDS-related skits, songs, one-to-one animation, and condom demonstrations to promote HIV prevention at a large regional festival. The group raised HIV/AIDS awareness among youth and adults while gaining greater self-esteem and confidence, organizational abilities, and new contacts. In several countries, including Zambia, Gabon, and The Gambia, sports competitions have also been used to raise awareness and disseminate information on HIV/AIDS and generally promote healthy lifestyles among young people.

Trainings in HIV/AIDS and other STDs have been done in formal settings with classroom teachers and students. Peer education and mentoring have been used to teach sex education and provide information on HIV/AIDS in Cameroon and Togo. In Benin, a Volunteer worked with school representatives to conduct a workshop on HIV/AIDS for the student body at a local secondary school. A local NGO encouraged the school to expand the activity to include teachers as well. The school complied, making attendance mandatory for teachers and administrative staff. At the end of a frank and highly successful workshop, a committee comprised of students and teachers was formed to develop and continue educational programs within the school and to reach out to the broader community.

Youth Development

Investing in the healthy development of youth is one of the most important areas of SPA grant activity in the health sector. In Ecuador, Kenya, Malawi, and Samoa, SPA grants were used to reach youth and empower them through leadership, peer mentoring, and life skills workshops that shared information about HIV/AIDS transmission and encouraged healthy behavior and personal responsibility.

At a secondary school in Zambia, a group of 50 students and their Volunteer teacher recognized the high incidence but low level of knowledge of HIV/AIDS. They decided to form an anti-HIV club at their school. Their goal was not only to increase the knowledge and awareness of HIV among their fellow students, but also to reach out to the larger community through a workshop to be conducted in connection with World AIDS Day. Through this workshop they hoped to resolve misconceptions about what the disease is and how it is spread, and about the measures that can be taken to prevent its spread. Information was provided through talks and with written materials. Following the workshop, the group was elated to discover that those who received information had begun sharing it with others. This group of students has organized presentations at neighboring schools as well.

The anti-HIV club has learned how to organize and implement HIV/AIDS education programs. To sustain these activities, the club holds benefits and implements other income-generating activities. One such activity involved collection of donated seeds and fertilizers for their school vegetable garden. Proceeds from the sale of vegetables will be used to finance the club and cover the costs of future educational activities.

On a larger scale, Save the Children of Romania noted a need for information collaboration among local child welfare and children's rights organizations. A Peace Corps Volunteer working with Salvati Copii in Suceava proposed a children's rights center to address the problem and raise public awareness of child welfare issues at the local and national levels. This SPA project established a resource center with volunteers trained in children's rights and the use of computers. The center has begun to develop databases on national legislation; local, national, and international children's rights organizations; and government institutions and social services. The center also promotes collaboration among local and national Romanian children's rights organizations. Save the Children has formed partnerships through the resource center with other local organizations to coordinate activities and share information about their respective programs. Finally, the center is developing seminars, workshops, and activities to promote children's rights in Suceava; workshops for local officials, school directors, directors of institutions, and other children's rights organizations; and a street advocacy campaign.

With the infrastructure of the center and initial staff skills training complete, and with staff having improved access to both the computer and the Internet, Volunteers working at the center are accessing and compiling information to develop and distribute informational brochures. The center also has established a network of local and international organizations working in the areas of child welfare and children's rights.

Those who use the resource center are asked to provide written comments and evaluations, which are used to monitor the center's programs and activities and to measure progress. Save the Children in Bucharest is providing funding for follow-up seminars and advocacy programs, and local fundraising is covering all administrative costs. According to the Volunteer, the success of this activity is due in large part to the support provided by the Ministry of Child Welfare and the local mayor's office, as well as Save the Children.

Infrastructure

In many remote and low-income communities, health infrastructure is either lacking or in serious disrepair. SPA infrastructure grants are used most commonly for the construction or refurbishing of health posts and community clinics. This has been the case in many countries including Senegal, Cameroon, Mauritania, and Guinea. One noteworthy example is from Kazakhstan, where a SPA grant covered improvements to a children's home. Orphans were living in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. The SPA grant helped pay for plumbers and welders to repair toilets and showers, and for the general contractors who rebuilt flooring and made other necessary repairs. As a result of this activity, approximately 400 young orphans live in a safer, cleaner, and healthier environment.

Yet infrastructure support in health has not always taken the form of construction activities. For instance, in Ecuador, the cost of medicine had been preventing many local residents from receiving treatment for diseases. A SPA grant permitted a local pharmacy to begin operations by helping to defray the high costs of medicine. In addition to providing medicines at more economical prices, the community pharmacy sponsored talks on disease prevention.
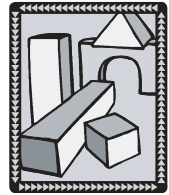
The old "Health Post," which existed in Cautera Boca, Paraguay, prior to the construction of a new health post, supported in part by SPA funds.

In another example of community infrastructure development, a local pharmacy in Côte d'Ivoire provided training to community health workers in dispensing first-aid and managing a variety of medicines and supplies. The project has helped the health workers organize health activities within the community. It has also provided a readily available and safe supply of economically priced medicines. Villagers, especially those located in even more remote areas, no longer have to wait to seek treatment or resort to purchasing "black market" medicines.

Often infrastructure projects have benefits that go far beyond the actual construction. Through a SPA grant, a Volunteer and his community contributed to efforts by the county health department, health clinic staff, and representatives of other international health organizations to improve and upgrade the Centrul Model Ana for Women's Reproductive Health and Family Planning in Drochia, Moldova.

This clinic has four examining rooms, a lab, and a resource center. SPA funds were used to repair several of the walls in the clinic and to purchase a computer, copy machine, supplies, and a variety of health-related printed materials. Using the new equipment, the Volunteer provided information technology training to staff and produced informational brochures to distribute to the more than 300 women per month who use the clinic's services.

Staff members also worked with the Volunteer to translate 13 brochures and booklets on topics such as: drinking and violence, adolescents and HIV, diabetes, tuberculosis, and hepatitis B. The capacity built during this phase of the project was confirmed when staff members went on to produce four additional health information booklets by themselves. Not only did this training assist staff in meeting the current information needs of their clients, but the computer skills they acquired will also serve them in future projects.

As a result of the access to technology and basic computer skills developed through this SPA grant activity, the Volunteer obtained a second grant from a British foundation to fund one year of Internet access for the center. The Internet access enabled the center staff to research health topics and retrieve more accurate and updated information to better serve their patients. The Volunteer and staff also implemented more than 20 informational life skills seminars for adolescents, doctors, and medical assistants in Drochia as well as in surrounding villages, where access to health information is limited and often not up to date.

Equipment and Resources

Cash-poor communities can benefit from acquiring health-related equipment and resources. In one community in El Salvador, a dentist was available but had little equipment or supplies. A community development association received a SPA grant to purchase dental equipment for him. Many adults and more than 1,100 children in the area now receive annual cleanings. To ensure sustainability, the Ministry of Health has assumed responsibility for maintaining the equipment and purchasing consumable supplies, materials, and medicines. In Poland, SPA grant funds supported the purchase and introductory use of new rehabilitation technologies for the elderly.

The Amursk Psychological Resource Center, in Russia Far East, used a SPA grant to purchase a photocopier, television, VCR, instructional tapes, and reference books for use in training staff and improving patient care. The center is a valued psychological health care provider, and with the improved technology it will now be able to increase outreach efforts to populations in more remote areas. To ensure that the equipment is being used effectively, a log was established to monitor professional and educational use by staff, students, and members of the local community.

Instructional Materials

Health training programs are improved with access to up-to-date instructional materials to use in training programs or to distribute to raise awareness about a wide variety of health issues. Sometimes materials are reproduced in training manuals, pamphlets, or booklets, such as those in Slovakia about treating breast cancer**,** or those in Nepal about using and interpreting electrocardiogram equipment and test results**.**

Often Volunteers and their Counterparts find creative ways to develop instructional materials and distribute information. For example, in Gabon, the General Hospital of Franceville lacked effective materials to educate their patients, many of whom had low levels of literacy. The hospital also needed to find ways to maintain necessary consultative control and check-up information for women. Staff created nutrition charts conveying basic health care messages that could be used during prenatal counseling, baby-weighing consultations, and weaning

demonstrations. A SPA grant assisted the hospital staff in developing a set of three nutrition charts, which were illustrated by a local artist. The charts could be used during monthly weaning demonstrations. The demonstrations immediately became more effective in training the women how to prepare nutritious weaning foods for babies six months and older. Women also learned about the role of each of the food groups in babies' development (during pregnancy, while breast-feeding, and after weaning for good health).

In similar fashion, a Volunteer and the staff of a maternal and child health clinic in the Gambia produced a series of murals depicting local health issues. These low-cost murals were particularly useful to the clinic, which was poorly staffed, had limited financing, and served a population with low levels of literacy. Other nonverbal forms of communicating important health information have been widely used in HIV/AIDS education programs, notably posters in Benin, murals in The Gambia, and an AIDS world map in Gabon.

Water & Sanitation

In the 21st century, the lack of clean, potable water is still a problem for many communities around the world. Contaminated water supplies continue to be a major factor in disease transmission and diarrhea. SPA grants assist community groups interested in securing safe water supplies. Promising practices in the water and sanitation sector focus on assisting communities to acquire the infrastructure that will give them access to a safe and reliable water supply, and on the training and appropriate technology that permits these communities to manage and maintain the infrastructure in order to ensure a steady supply of clean water. Even in the water and sanitation sector it is possible to find SPA grants that have an income-generating component, and many Volunteers are working to strengthen community-based organizations and NGOs.

In this chapter, you will find examples of:

▶ Clean water

▶ Training and appropriate technology

▶ Infrastructure

▶ Equipment and resources

▶ Income-generation

▶ NGO development

▶ Youth development

Clean Water

In Morocco, the community of Ait Bou Said identified the lack of clean drinking water as a priority. The Volunteer helped the community to install a hand pump on a recently built well, and trained villagers in pump maintenance and repair and well management. In addition to these skills, the community developed organizational skills and learned to work together. Although the activity took longer than anticipated and ran over budget, the community was able to raise the required funds, and villagers now have access to a safe and healthy source of water.

The community now knows how to treat its water, and two villagers have been charged with maintaining and repairing the pump. Villagers keep the door to the well locked, and plan to lock the pump when not in use. They are also trying to prevent children from playing at the site or throwing dirt and other objects into the well, giving the well a longer useful life and reducing maintenance costs.

Sometimes schools, health clinics, or community centers work with Volunteers to install potable water systems. In Chalaltenango, El Salvador, a local community school had no water source. The lack of a water source at the school made it difficult to prepare food or maintain proper health and hygiene standards. Moreover, schoolchildren were sent to fetch water from a nearby stream causing disruptions in the school day. The school development committee, working together with the Volunteer and skilled laborers, was able to dig a well and install an electric pump system and a tank for distributing the water through pipes, washtubs, and faucets.

During the installation of the water distribution system, the school development committee fell apart. A few committee members took charge and worked to solicit help from other community members, parents, and teachers. Although frequently there was not enough community labor to support the foreman and his laborers, the foreman was willing to proceed with his employees and absorb some of these additional costs through reduced earnings.

A school latrine construction project nears completion in Kenya.

SPA projects help train community members and construct cisterns and wells
to improve local water sources.

Teachers and parents are learning how to measure chlorine/treatment levels
of water in the tank and to generally maintain the system. The parents' com-
mittee, which is quite active and maintains a good working relationship with
the school's director and teachers, has experience in fundraising and will be
responsible for maintaining the water system and addressing any other school
facilities issues that arise.

Although the intent of the Volunteer was to remain on the sidelines, the circum-
stances of this project made it necessary to monitor project activities frequently.
To address or avoid similar issues in other projects the Volunteer recommends
getting commitments from community members in writing before beginning
the project, having a thorough knowledge of the community's work habits, and
allowing extra time to complete every step of the process.

Despite the best intentions, the sustainability of potable water systems is often
problematic. Water systems are often administered, operated, and maintained
by rural communities with little help or guidance from the municipal or federal
government. Honduras is dealing with this issue by providing specialized train-
ing at several levels.

At the grass-roots level, a number of SPA grants are providing technical train-
ing for local plumbing technicians. Because of mountainous terrain, the depart-
ment of Lempira relies on gravity-fed water systems to supply communities

with potable water. Even in the best of circumstances, gravity-fed water systems create maintenance problems. Hurricane Mitch caused serious damage, with landslides and rock falls, forcing local plumbers to cope with difficulties and situations with which they had no experience.

Working with the local water committee, a one week training activity was devised to provide 16 plumbers from 10 adjacent communities with technical training in both theoretical and practical aspects of water system maintenance and repair. Participants learned troubleshooting, including the ability to identify design flaws in water systems and stress limits in tubing. They also learned how to repair water leaks within the system. This training should ensure improvement in both the quality and the length of service of rural water systems. Since the training, which was underwritten in part by other partner institutions, the participating communities have been able to cover the costs of repairing and maintaining their water systems—an important indicator of sustainability.

At the next level, communities have been encouraged to establish local water board associations. Organizing such a body, which assumes responsibility for financing the maintenance of local water systems, is vital to the long-term sustainability and viability of rural water systems in Honduras.

Communities often contribute transportation and labor while SPA and other sources fund the purchase of pipes or pumps.

At still another level, a Volunteer has been working with members of the Honduran Water Board Association, which is a federation of local water boards from the communities of Choluteca, Francisco Morazán, La Paz, Olancho, Valle and Yoro. Promoting and maintaining a water board association builds a network of support for the individual water boards and ensures adequate training for members of each community water board.

The Volunteer and local partners organized a two-day workshop to provide training for the members of the national water board association, covering topics such as the operation and mainte-

nance of potable water systems and community leadership. A goal of the workshop was to provide community water boards with the skills needed to manage, administer, operate, and maintain local water systems: chlorination, water quality and sources of contamination; preventive maintenance as well as plumbing repairs; micro watershed management; administration and basic accounting; assessing user fees and fundraising; and gender roles in local boards. To ensure that local water boards would be able to implement what they had learned, participants developed individual work plans for the next year before the conclusion of the training.

Training and Appropriate Technology

As mentioned above, providing training to local communities in constructing latrines and wells and installing potable water and irrigation systems is a good use of SPA grant funds. To build local capacity in water and sanitation projects, Volunteers identify appropriate technologies that communities can easily manage and maintain. There are numerous examples from Peace Corps posts around the world.

In latrine construction projects, many Volunteers have worked with their communities to dig pit latrines in private homes, in community courtyards, or in schools. Many other Volunteers have helped introduce the concept of composting latrines, providing a dual benefit to local communities as they can then use the by-product as fertilizer.

In installing potable water systems, Volunteers have helped communities dig wells and spring boxes, such as in Cameroon, and construct reservoirs and water catchment systems as in the Philippines and Guatemala, respectively. Volunteers have also worked with communities to incorporate appropriate technology for gravity-fed aqueducts, as in the Domincan Republic. In working with communities to construct irrigation systems, Volunteers in Mali, are helping to identify and install low-cost irrigation systems and develop appropriate irrigation techniques that will permit villagers to maintain vegetable gardens throughout the year or increase the number of hectares of land in production.

Important secondary benefits were derived from these as well as many other water system projects carried out in El Salvador, Morocco, and Tanzania, as technical skills were transferred to local community members, including women, in construction and repair. Trainings such as the pump and well repair maintenance workshops held in Mali also help ensure sustainability.

As many of these examples suggest, training is a key component of most water and sanitation projects supported by SPA grants, and ranges from the most basic instruction on preventing the transmission of waterborne diseases to maintaining more complex water and irrigation systems. Still another important area of training in Peace Corps water and sanitation projects has been in the eradication of guinea worm. In the Department of Kalsaka, in Burkina Faso, guinea worm is still endemic. A SPA grant was used to provide training to community health workers in the detection and treatment of guinea worm infections, and in methods to reduce and prevent further infections as part of the Ministry of Health's campaign in all endemic villages.

Health workers are now able to track infections, give health presentations in local villages, and provide accurate information on how the disease can be prevented. They can demonstrate improved water filtration methods and techniques. An important part of this activity was supporting health workers to manage prevailing traditional beliefs, which may be harmful to controlling the spread of guinea worm, while learning how to use beneficial traditional beliefs to best advantage.

Instructional materials supporting this and many other SPA training activities have been created. Peace Corps' work in guinea worm eradication is just one example.
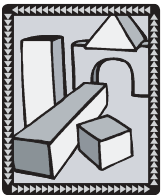
Infrastructure

In addition to construction of potable water and irrigation systems, SPA grants routinely support other infrastructure projects in the water and sanitation sector. Latrine construction in communities, markets, and schools accounted for more than 20 percent of the health and water and sanitation activities supported by SPA grants in Africa in fiscal year 2000, including 40 activities in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, and Ghana. A similar situation occurred in the Inter-America and Pacific region of the Peace Corps, where there were 27 separate activities in the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, El Salvador, and Guatemala. These involved the construction of latrines or sanitary hand-washing stations. In the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region, latrine construction also was a principal focus of many health and water and sanitation projects in Morocco, Nepal, Philippines, and Thailand. Many of these latrine construction projects involved the incorporation of newer technologies such as the composting latrine. Volunteers built capacity through the transfer of construc-

tion and management skills, and they provided training in topics such as the prevention of waterborne diseases and waste disposal.

In Guatemala a Peace Corps Volunteer working with a local women's group in Totonicapán Province designed a SPA grant activity to address two of the major concerns of the community: improved health and hygiene and enhanced economic prospects. Their idea was to construct 16 composting dry pit latrines, and train the villagers in the construction, use, and maintenance of such latrines. In addition to the obvious health considerations, the commu-

Improved access to clean water has many benefits in a school and community in Thailand.

nity also received instruction in how to use the by-product as a natural fertilizer to enhance the soil and diversify vegetable production.

A similar activity was conducted in El Salvador, in San Miguel province. Here, construction of composting latrines was necessary, since soil conditions did not permit the construction of dry pit latrines, which in the past filled with water during the rainy season and leached contaminants into the nearby river. Women became involved in the construction of the latrines as well as preventative health activities. Additional training provided by the Volunteer has helped the community establish standards for managing the community store where supplies and fertilizer are stored and sold to offset any costs involved in maintaining the latrines.

Equipment and Resources

In water and sanitation activities, equipment or resources usually are targeted to improve community infrastructure and quality of life or to support training. Several SPA grants in this sector are supporting the efforts of local municipalities to implement trash and waste management programs, reducing health hazards to the community, and sometimes contributing to income generation.

In the Honduras**,** in the municipality of Santa María, where poor trash management practices posed a health hazard to the community, the town council developed a proposal to raise the consciousness of residents about the importance of proper trash removal. The council used a SPA grant and third-party funding from another NGO to construct and install 20 trashcans and two trash carts, and to develop a plan for trash removal from both public places and private homes. Training was provided to more than 100 community residents and municipal staff about the importance of trash collection, use of public trashcans, and trash disposal and management. At the same time, the Volunteer provided environmental health messages to the public about the diseases and illnesses associated with poor trash management.

Another SPA grant in Panama supported the efforts of a local municipality to create a sanitary landfill and trash collection system. The SPA grant supported the cost of skilled labor and construction materials needed to build the landfill, as well as the equipment and supplies that permitted the municipality to manage the trash collection and disposal system.

At times, SPA grants have been used to help communities recover from natural disasters. In Guatemala, a new water system adequate to the needs of the town of La Union was designed and constructed in the mid-1990s and put into use in 1996. In 1998, Hurricane Mitch severely damaged the system. The town was forced to implement a provisional system capable of only limited service. Water rationing, by sector, became the rule, and the erratic state of the community's water supply disrupted daily life in La Union. A SPA grant, coordinated through the Comite de Desarollo Comunal del Barrrio Nuevo y Barrio El Centro*,* helped the community repair and rehabilitate the damaged water system so that the community again has full water service. To continue managing the new system, households are contributing fees to cover basic operational costs, and meters

will be installed to measure use. The Volunteer reports that the activity truly helped to focus the community's attention on one project and see it through to completion. "The town council had been pulled in a dozen different directions to recover from Hurricane Mitch, and was hard pressed to focus attention and resources on any one problem. The SPA grant galvanized town efforts to complete this crucial activity."

Income Generation

As in all sectors, water and sanitation projects often offer communities the opportunity to generate income. Municipal trash and waste disposal is only one example. Another example comes from Morocco, where a local community and the Volunteer conducted a needs assessment to find that the most critical problem facing the community was access to a clean, reliable water source. Not only were most existing wells in disrepair, but the community also had no method of direct irrigation from the water source, which led to increased levels of water waste. A SPA grant was used to cover the costs of a training workshop. The workshop introduced the use of a hand-operated well pump, which could be manufactured and repaired locally by welders who also participated in the training.

The introduction of these pumps made it easier to draw water from wells, improved the sanitary conditions of the wells overall, and potentially will increase the amount of land under irrigation. The Volunteer reports that by the end of the project, the community was experimenting with improved irrigation techniques. The project offers two opportunities for the community to generate income. Not only will community members be able to increase the production of fruits and vegetables and sell what they do not need to feed their families, but also the local welders have a new, marketable skill and they can continue to manufacture pumps for sale.

NGO Development

Peace Corps Volunteers continually look for opportunities to transfer skills and strengthen the capacity of local nongovernmental organizations in all sectors, including water and sanitation.

In Gabon, a secondary school in Kobela did not have sufficient classroom space or latrines to support its student population. As with most schools in this region of the world, however, the school did have a parent-teacher association that was responsible for the upkeep of the school and surrounding grounds. The association, in conjunction with a Volunteer, developed a proposal to provide two additional classrooms, a storeroom, and a block of five latrines. The proposal also included provisions for a health and sanitation campaign to be directed at both teachers and students.

The work was completed, largely through the sweat equity of the entire community, and its pride in this accomplishment was duly noted in the completion report provided by the Volunteer. The parent-teacher association has continued to maintain the area and is now developing plans for future improvements that it plans to finance on its own, using the skills developed as a part of this activity (proposal writing, bookkeeping, creating and working within strict timelines, financial management, and identifying and obtaining resources for unforeseen expenses). The Volunteer warned against undertaking a large construction activity in the final months of service, as there will invariably be schedule changes, delays, and constraints that may adversely impact the Volunteer's impending close of service.

In another example, a Volunteer in Ukraine supported an environmental NGO's efforts to work with the local community and its youth, in particular, to help clean and restore portions of the river Svenya, whose polluted condition negatively impacted the aesthetics, recreation, and water quality of residents in the Zhovkva District. The activity also enhanced the visibility of the NGO and provided an active forum for raising community awareness of the impact of agriculture and community use on area water sources and the importance of river monitoring.

Youth Development

In the Philippines, a Volunteer working with the Ivasay Youth Association used a SPA grant to acquire waste drums and paint to use for trash disposal in Basco, the capital of the province of Batanes. Although the activity was intended to reduce the amount of trash in the streets, the local youth association decided that awareness of sanitation and health and environmental concerns needed to be addressed in community education efforts. In fact, the group is monitoring use of the new barrels and hopes that successful cleanup efforts in the provincial capital will increase chances that the activity will be replicated in nearby cities.

Education

Although capacity building is the core of the SPA grant program, many SPA grants focus specifically on education. The majority of SPA-supported educational activities occur in a formal setting in primary and secondary schools. These grants contribute to the professional skills development of teachers, increasing their capabilities in the classroom by using proven teaching methodologies and updated resources. They help students improve their knowledge and skills and their educational performance overall. Since learning does not always take place in a school setting, however, many other SPA grants support nonformal educational activities such as adult literacy training, computer training, and diverse educational activities for youth, including out-of-school youth. Although many SPA grants provide resources to help communities build schools or repair existing school rooms and lab facilities, promising practices in this area always include a clear capacity-building component as well. There are also an increasing number of educational projects that focus on developing income-generating opportunities for schools to help them sustain their instructional and extracurricular activities. Finally, some educational projects focus at the municipal level, helping municipalities build infrastructure and expand educational programs.

Sports activities can improve self-esteem, healthy body image, confidence and health for both girls and boys.

In this chapter, you will find examples of:

▶ Formal educational activities

▶ Nonformal educational activities

▶ Educational infrastructure

▶ Income generation/sustainability

▶ Equipment and resources

▶ Instructional materials

Formal Education Activities

Funds spent training teachers have a multiplying impact annually, as these teachers pass on their knowledge to new students and share their experience with colleagues. In Western Russia, school teachers in Karelia learned basic computer skills and gained access to new technologies. In Thailand, a SPA grant helped train English teachers in techniques for integrating new materials and innovative teaching methods into their lesson plans. Further teacher training activities occurred in Cape Verde, Togo, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine.

A number of SPA grants focus on improving formal education for primary and secondary school students. Youth attending a technical school in Kenya learned construction planning, carpentry, and masonry skills in an activity supported with SPA funds. Not only were students able to use their technical skills, but they also gained experience in organization and management by helping to establish their own training institute. Another SPA grant enabled a different school in Kenya (the Muranga School for the Deaf) to purchase several power and hand tools for use in carpentry and furniture-making classes. Funds raised by the sale of students' products are used to finance the costs of the school's vocational program.

Nonformal Education Activities

As learning does not always take place in a school setting, SPA grants also support a variety of nonformal education activities. For example, Volunteers used SPA grants to organize adult literacy projects in several countries, including Mali and Zambia.

In Morocco, a women's literacy activity was carried out in such a way that the activity continued following the Volunteer's close of service. The grant provided only 25 percent of the total cost of the activity as seed funding. The women raised the other 75 percent. They formed a new organization, the Women's Association of Amel, and actively sought contributions for the project. Their successful efforts have led to an increased awareness of the importance of education among all community members, and women in two neighboring villages have decided to start literacy projects.

Youth, particularly out-of-school youth, are the principal beneficiaries of many nonformal education activities. One example comes from Mongolia, where the town of Ovorkhangai Aimag has one of the two highest student dropout rates in the country. In all, as many as 300 youth have dropped out of school, a number that virtually equals the number of students enrolled in schools in the surrounding villages. This high dropout rate is a consequence of the low-income level of families in the region, which forces many youth to leave school to help herd livestock.

The local community used a SPA grant to provide 20–30 young people with the opportunity to continue their education in a nonformal setting. Their objectives were to help students achieve basic competency in seven subjects, and to spark interest among the students, their parents, and their community so that these students might have the opportunity to continue their education through the eighth grade level. If the students were able to successfully complete the national exam for eighth grade competency, they would have the option of going on to secondary school. For the activity to be successful, however, the Volunteer and the community had to organize the classes in a nontraditional way. To better support students and their families, the classes were organized into three sessions of three weeks each, held in September, November, and April; at times when the students were able to participate.

Another prominent area of SPA grant activity in nonformal education is computer training. Throughout the world, Volunteers are working with school clubs, resource and community centers, and small businesses to provide training in the use of computers and the Internet. These activities are described in greater detail in the section entitled "Information and Communications Technology."
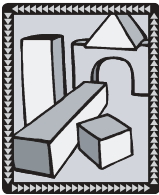
Infrastructure

Often, the basic structure of an existing school is in such disrepair that study is very difficult. In Moldova, a SPA grant helped a local school fund the repair of more than 130 windows, through which snow and ice entered classrooms creating an unhealthy learning environment. Other structural repairs included replacing 547 pull handles and several window frames, as well as repairing several sinks.

Throughout the world, SPA grants have supported construction of new classrooms. In Tanzania, a retired teachers' group assisted in building a teachers' office and three new classrooms at a primary school, where in the past the

SPA funds helped purchase supplies for this school construction project in Gabon.

students in all eight grades had been sharing one schoolroom. Moreover, the Association of Retired Teachers, together with the school, developed an income-generating farm project, the income from which will go directly into the school's budget for school maintenance and future expansion.

A number of school communities initiated SPA-supported activities that incorporate vocational training and experience for students with the school improvement activities. For example, students can participate in the fabrication of desks, tables, and chairs for classrooms and libraries. In other projects, students who have learned carpentry skills in school are providing valuable services in their communities. At a skills training center in Eastern Caribbean, students are trained in wood crafts with tools purchased through a SPA grant. As the students learn, everyone benefits. The community benefits from the availability of a cadre of trained artisans and low-cost wood products, the youth benefit from new skills in crafts and marketing, and the school benefits from a portion of the income generated by the activity.

Other SPA grants have helped communities acquire needed social infrastructure to be used for a wide variety of educational or recreational activities. For example, in Senegal, a literacy project aimed at the women of Dienoundiala received a SPA grant to construct a small building that will provide an environment conducive to studies for women. These women have demonstrated a commitment to increasing their reading and writing skills during the dry season.

The Mwambiti Secondary School in Kenya identified a lack of recreational facilities for youth and developed a SPA proposal to build a basketball court. The idea behind the project was to create a safe venue for a sporting activity for all youth, whether in or out of school. Their objectives also included enhancing the status of the school as an important community institution, and improving the performance of school and local teams in district, provincial, and national basketball competitions.

As the construction progressed, it was evident that the activity was drawing the school together as a community, with both male and female students participating equally in the manual work and offering each other encouragement and support. Equipped with basic construction skills, including foundation laying and cement work, and a basic knowledge of proposal writing, students felt a new sense of pride in their school, confidence in their abilities, and empowerment within their community. When construction was completed, both male and female basketball teams were formed; the teams are enjoying learning, playing, and teaching basketball to others.

The Volunteer reports that the community was very enthusiastic about the project, as evidenced by the labor and effort they contributed throughout the project. The community has continued its activities and now is interested in organizing new sports teams and training sessions, and in hosting league play and tournaments. The community is eager to landscape the area surrounding the court with shade trees and live fencing.

Income Generation/Sustainability

Many schools, especially community schools, find it difficult to cover their costs. Budget support received from local and national ministries is often insufficient to cover teachers' salaries, pay utilities, purchase equipment, and maintain facilities. Increasingly, schools are incorporating income-generating activities that allow them to continue education programs and extracurricular activities.

In Kenya several schools have begun income-generating activities, which are usually linked to the schools' curriculum. Technical schools, for example, may provide training to boys and girls in one or more vocational skills. The students' work as they learn their trades is then sold to generate income.

The Nyawa Primary School, in Kenya, is in an area that has a high dependence on agriculture. The percentage of students who go on to secondary school and university is small, and most will become farmers. To provide a more relevant education to youth in this area, the Volunteer and the local community established a working demonstration farm to provide training and other assistance to students and the surrounding community in livestock production, zero-grazing milk production, and organic farming. Through their efforts they are teaching farmers and students

A welding workshop in Morocco transferred employable skills and produced useful items, such as this wheelchair.

alike about the proper use of available resources to improve production and productivity. At the same time, they hope their efforts will enable the school to become more self-sufficient.

Students and the community have learned new agricultural production techniques. A zero-grazing unit was completed and is operating far better than expected. Their cow produces 11 liters of milk per day, which provides students with fresh milk on a daily basis and a product that can be sold within the community. As a result of this activity, the community has become more unified and is making new plans for the demonstration farm. They plan to install a biogas digester, a silage pit, a three-stage compost pit, and a dormitory building. Although the school will need to obtain additional funds to cover these investments, it plans to cover operating costs at both the school and the farm with income from the sale of milk and other farm produce.

Equipment and Resources

Occasionally, SPA funds are used to purchase equipment that enhances the curriculum or improves efficiency in the distribution of instructional materials in a school or training institute. The Community English Program of the Gminy Korczyna

in Poland received a SPA grant to purchase a photocopy machine to duplicate lesson plans, tests, and handouts for students; a television; a computer and VCR to run training videos and interactive language sessions; and a cassette player for working with language-learning tapes. Classes now are offered in the evening and on weekends to reach adult learners who will seek employment in the growing tourism industry. To ensure sustainability, students pay a small fee to maintain equipment and update tapes and videos.

In Romania, a Volunteer and two local community groups recognized the need to modernize and improve the community's library services. They planned to update library technology and to strengthen the library's resource base. These improvements, in turn, helped local community organizations carry out their activities. A local women's group gained access to computer-based information in the areas of health and family. A children's therapy program used computer technology for record keeping.

In planning the activity, the Volunteer and community partners paid close attention to the kinds of skills transfers that would be needed to complement the technology additions.

The head librarian received specialized computer training, and many of the participants were trained in using CD-ROMs, Internet navigation, desktop publishing, and proposal writing.

As a result of the activity there has been a marked "boost" in the status of the library and the librarians as community leaders. There is also increased support from the main library. One unexpected outcome has been the start-up of a neighborhood newspaper written by young people using the library computer. Currently, the community is conducting various fundraising activities to meet costs for telephone and Internet access charges and fees, as well as for supplies.

Instructional Materials

At St. Kizito's Litein School for the Deaf in Kenya, a SPA activity provided eight hours of classroom sign language instruction to 100 parents and community members, and an additional four hours of instruction on issues relevant to the deaf and deaf education. This activity was organized because most students' parents were unfamiliar with sign language and therefore unable to communicate with

their children and support them in their schoolwork. In addition to the classroom instruction, the participants also received instructional materials. An unanticipated outcome of this activity was the degree of enthusiasm displayed by the parents, which has led to parents and school staff forming a new parent-teacher association to support improvements at the school.

Municipal Development

SPA grant activities in the area of municipal development are increasing. In the education sector, developing educational infrastructure in close coordination or partnership with local municipalities is one example of this trend.

In Nicaragua, a SPA grant helped teachers of the Santa Teresa School to recondition a municipal building as a library. The library provides informational resources for teachers and other community members, including health promoters. The library also promotes reading among young children. The librarian and the teachers participated in a four-day skills building workshop in library science and administration conducted by the Ministry of Education. An important component of the project was to provide training in carpentry to local youth, who then built the shelves, tables, and chairs for the library. The library is now part of the country's National Library Network.

Other activities, in Romania, Western Russia, and Jamaica, have reconditioned municipal buildings to serve as community information and resource centers.

Business

In business and small enterprise development, SPA grants principally support activities that provide "hands-on" training to increase skills, employment, and income for groups that do not have access to the capital, equipment, or markets required to earn income. Many of these activities involve women or youth as principal beneficiaries. In helping these groups acquire the skills necessary to operate successfully in the marketplace, SPA grants provide training, either in a formal setting or by establishing business resource centers. Other SPA grants help women, small farmers, or artisans acquire the materials, equipment, and tools they need to improve the quality, and therefore market position, of their products. Volunteers are working to create new businesses and with NGOs that provide services to small entrepreneurs.

In this chapter, you will find examples of:

▶ Training

▶ Business resources centers

▶ Equipment, resources, and instructional materials to support business development

▶ New business development

▶ NGO development

Training

A variety of SPA grants provide training to men, women, and youth to develop their business skills. These grants include training in production-related endeavors ranging from agriculture, aquaculture, and livestock production, to textiles, ceramics, and other handicrafts, to more nontraditional products such as snails and organic fertilizers. Programs also offer training in accounting, financial management, microcredit, marketing, and small business management. Training is usually provided in a workshop format or through programs offered by business resource centers.

Women's organizations in The Solomon Islands have used SPA funds to learn new skills and improve income-generating opportunities.

A wide variety of SPA training workshops provide men, women, and youth the opportunity to improve their skills to increase their knowledge and self-esteem and improve their ability to earn income. Training occurs in traditional skills such as sewing and knitting (Morocco and Cape Verde) or soap making (Togo). Increasingly, Volunteers and their communities are looking for ways to redesign traditional products and identify new products that can supply new markets. These include batiks in Senegal and items made from recycled plastic bags in Mali.

Several training projects in Panama have been carried out with indigenous women's groups. The projects have helped these groups make slight adaptations to their traditional handicrafts to make the crafts more attractive in local markets and to tourists. One SPA grant provided training to young women in Kuna, where the tradition of sewing *molas* was being lost. Molas are small, colorful, and finely sewn tapestries that have been produced by Kuna women for generations. Young women attended a workshop to learn how to design, cut, and sew a mola, focusing on four traditional designs. Another SPA grant helped defray the cost of constructing a two-story artisan center, providing indigenous women with a place to produce their arts and crafts and to hold meetings and seminars. The Volunteer reports that during the project, the women also developed administrative, organizational, and fundraising skills.

Many training projects in the small business sector target women, including projects in Togo, Benin, South Africa, Namibia, and Côte d'Ivoire. In Benin, a SPA grant provided specialized training to women small business owners in Lokossa to upgrade skill levels in accounting, management, and marketing. More than 50 women small business owners attended the seminar series and are now able to set up simple accounting systems, develop marketing strategies, and generally improve the management of their businesses. Another issue facing women small business owners is the need for credit. Many women in Togo want access to credit but lack the skills to properly manage these resources. A workshop was held to introduce members of a women's group to credit systems, and to the advantages and disadvantages of obtaining credit. They also discussed the importance of savings and an internal credit mechanism. Women exchanged ideas and developed their organizational and networking skills.

By the end of the training, the women had formed a regional women's association. This new association later obtained another SPA grant to conduct a technical exchange with managers and representatives of financial institutions in Lome. The women had decided to create a microfinance NGO but lacked the necessary organizational and management skills. In their visits to the Lome institutions, the women gathered information on how to create an NGO and learned more about the management and finance-related skills they would need to develop. They also obtained information about possible sources of financing for their new NGO from local and other sources. All in all, the women learned about the steps required to create a microfinance NGO, how to organize and implement savings and credit services, and further honed their management and documentational skills. Ultimately, they were able to register their new NGO with the appropriate authorities.

Business Resource Centers

Some SPA grants help support the establishment of business resource centers that provide information and other assistance to persons looking for employment. SPA grants supported business centers in several countries in Europe, the Mediterranean, and Asia, including Uzbekistan, Slovakia, Moldova, and Kazakhstan. In the Samarkand region of Uzbekistan, there are few, if any, services that match employers with qualified job applicants. A Volunteer and the economics department of the local university proposed the creation of a career center, which

would include a central job registry and clearinghouse for up-to-date employment information. Using a SPA grant to purchase a computer and software, they established an on-line registry of employment opportunities and potential employees and their qualifications. The project also trained job applicants in the skills needed to obtain productive employment. Staff of the career center were trained in computers, in modern methods of testing, and in the screening and selection of qualified applicants. Users of the center's services will pay a small fee to cover the center's costs in the future. The publicity generated by the project is contributing to improved awareness of merit-based hiring.

Some business resource centers offer training and certification to potential job applicants. In Slovakia, a resource center offered training in business development as well as English language training and certification. English language skills have become quite important to local business operations.

Beyond training, many business centers provide information to small business owners particularly in the area of market research and product development. The Ust-Kamenogorsk Entrepreneurs Organization in Kazakhstan wanted to establish a center to provide business people with information on new products and markets and appropriate marketing techniques. A SPA grant financed the acquisition of a computer, software, and office equipment needed to commence operations. The organization has conducted market research for clients and completed reports on the economic situation in Ust-Kamenogorsk. It has produced training materials as well. User fees are expected to cover the operating costs.

Small Business Development

SPA grants are providing opportunities for men, women, and youth to generate income. In Dominica, a SPA grant helped create an income-generating opportunity for a group of 10 single mothers who lacked sufficient resources to support their families. The Volunteer and the women decided to produce scented candles. The women received training in all aspects of producing and marketing candles, including design and decorative aspects of candle making, presentation and packaging, and the development of effective marketing and sales strategies. SPA funds made it possible for the women to produce their start-up inventory of candles. The Volunteer reports that the activity provides a steady income for participants, resulting in improved health and welfare for the

women and their families and improved self-esteem.

SPA grants are helping rural men and women establish small businesses in poultry (Honduras and Paraguay), dairy (Benin and Kenya), guinea pigs (Ecuador), rabbits (Guatemala), sheep (Côte d'Ivoire), beekeeping (Morocco), and fish (Tonga). In Ecuador several interesting, rural community-based businesses have been established: cheese making, tea processing, snail production, and even the production of organic fertilizers.

In the community of Pueblo Nuevo, 65 percent of families do not own land. The possibility of finding employment

Young people learne about business and technology in SPA-supported Junior Achievement trade fairs and other activites focused on youth entrepreneurship.

in the town is also low. As much as 20 percent of the active work force has left in search of employment in other towns or cities. The situation for rural women is even more desperate. The Volunteer and the local savings and loan organization decided to support the creation of a small business that would grow vegetables and produce organic fertilizers. In an attempt to add value to their production, the women would also process a portion of their vegetables into a Mexican-style salsa. The project is expected to result in several positive changes within the community. The local availability of vegetables will increase, which in turn will improve consumption of vegetables and the diet of families. The use of organic fertilizers will positively impact the environment. The additional income will offset the lack of local employment opportunities, and in effect create new jobs for women. Finally, the credit union will experience an increase in the capital it holds, as women will also be able to save a portion of their income. The project is expected to encourage greater cooperation, unity, and personal growth among the women.

In rural areas Volunteers also are working with communities to identify opportunities to earn income from value-added production or processing. One example comes from Benin, where training was provided to a local commu-

nity in the value-added processing of palm nuts into red oil. Training was provided in all aspects of processing palm nuts into red oil, and in using the remains to produce soap, animal feed, and kindling. In addition, community members were trained in simple bookkeeping and accounting, so they would know how to budget and manage the income earned. By the Volunteer's close of service date, the community had improved processing procedures as well as the quality of red oil.

Youth Development

Other SPA projects target youth and help identify opportunities for gainful employment. Given the difficult employment situation in many countries around the world, the majority of youth-directed grants in the small business sector focus on helping youth develop self-employment opportunities. In many rural areas of Ecuador, the principal food crops for many low-income populations are rice and yucca, and therefore children and their families do not eat a balanced diet. A Volunteer working with one rural community developed an activity that had several objectives: working with children to raise chickens and guinea pigs (*cui)*, introducing protein into family diets, and developing an alternative source of income. Over eight weeks, the Volunteer provided training to the young people in the feeding and care of small animals, for food and as a source of income. The youth also learned construction skills and how to work together.

A series of income-generating activities were carried out in Tonga to teach young people landscaping skills. Around the country, several youth groups set up small landscaping and lawn mowing businesses. Youth were trained in machine maintenance and repair, providing them with another income-generating skill, and they learned how to manage an income-generating activity. In addition to earning income, their efforts also contributed to the upkeep of the local community.

Other youth-focused activities in income-generation and small business development were carried out in conjunction with Junior Achievement programs in Bulgaria, Romania, Kazakhstan, Benin, and Togo. These projects teach students enrolled in school responsible business practices along with how to establish and manage a business.

NGO Development

NGOs have emerged in the area of small business promotion and development. SPA grants in this sector have strengthened the capacity of NGOs to provide services to and generally facilitate the development of income-generating opportunities among men, women, and youth. Within the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region of the Peace Corps, there are many active NGOs. SPA grants have financed improvements for NGO-sponsored business resource and computer learning centers in Uzbekistan, Moldova, Slovakia and Kazakhstan.

SPA grants may also be used to support the development of community-based NGOs, such as the Association of Entrepreneurs in the Clothing Sector (ECS) in Kazakhstan. SPA funds were used to develop links among previously unorganized clothing factories. By forming a new association, the sponsors of this project hoped to overcome constraints on the production of manufactured clothing. They hoped to improve quality control and increase production. They also hoped to redevelop the clothing industry. Increasing production would help re-create jobs in the industry, as many trained factory workers had lost their jobs following the breakup of the former Soviet Union.

Members of the new NGO received training in basic business administration, accounting, and NGO administration and management. A portion of the funds also was used to purchase a sewing machine, seam machine, button press, leather working machine, and steam press. These improvements have resulted in increased sales (market orders increased by 10 percent) and income, providing employment to 80 workers in production as well as marketing. Beyond the income generated, the community has also benefited from the availability of locally manufactured clothing for women and children. The new equipment and access to updated fashion resources will allow the as-


SPA-supported fruit and vegetable processing projects can provide additional income and nutrition to communities.

sociation to add new clothing lines as well. The association is now a registered NGO with its own office. The building also houses a library and computer equipment that members of the community can use for a small fee.

Government and private business in Russia have been unable to completely provide for the needs of the socially disadvantaged. Although NGOs help fill the void, they are hampered by the fact that most NGO leaders and administrators lack professional business and managerial skills. One SPA grant in Western Russia provided NGO leaders with training to strengthen their business skills and their ability to manage their organizations. Although the majority are nonprofit organizations, these NGOs must improve administration and management, including their fundraising skills, so they are able to provide quality services to low-income groups and cover the costs of these services.

Training was provided in strategic business planning, administration and management of nonprofit organizations, and fundraising. Through better leadership, NGOs will develop a broader resource base, enabling them to serve more clients and to become more self-reliant.

Infrastructure
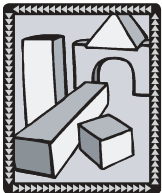
SPA grants help small businesses acquire the infrastructure they need to improve or expand their production and processing. A SPA grant in Guatemala helped a local women's group upgrade its bakery facility to increase production of bread and other baked goods. In Tonga, a SPA grant helped the Nukunuku Youth Group erect a multipurpose, open-air building to be used as a market. In this area, there was a clear need for a well-built, secure building for selling and storage of food. The building could also be used to accommodate various activities such as concerts, dances, fundraisers, fairs, and handicrafts sales. Overall, the objective of the project was to establish a competitive and stable market by providing adequate facilities for both consumers and sellers.

The building was completed, the area surrounding the market was cleaned up, and storage, tables, seating, and a parking area were installed. The Volunteer reports that the entire village has felt a great sense of accomplishment. Project participants learned accounting, organization, and management skills. Young men acquired construction and carpentry skills. The Volunteer identified several indicators that will be used to gauge the progress and success of this project

: frequency of use of the market; improvement in the physical market space; the income and sustainability of the market; and the frequency with which the market is used for concerts, fundraisers, and other events.

Equipment and Resources

Other SPA grants help small businesses acquire the equipment and resources they need to improve production and increase sales. The Mtitatu Coffee Growers' Association in Tanzania is one example. The association received a SPA grant to help fund the purchase of a coffee-pulping machine to improve the group's efficiency in processing newly harvested coffee. The group also developed skills in long-term planning and fundraising, and the small fee members pay to use the equipment will fund maintenance and repair of the equipment.

In Morocco, a Volunteer and the Dar Debaugh Tannery Cooperative identified the problem of quality control in their leather tannery. They attributed difficulties to mold and insect infestation that occurred during the leather drying process; a process that involved drying leather hides on the ground. To remedy this problem, the cooperative and the Volunteer introduced two metal drying racks to dry leather hides off the ground. After delivery and installation of the first drying rack, changes in the design were made, adapting the rack to the specific needs of the tannery operation. Additional training was provided to cooperative members, enabling them to design leather goods themselves.

This project provides an interesting example of the way in which improvements in technology can be introduced without sacrificing or diminishing the traditional aspects of the trade. Older tanners quickly embraced the new technology, with the younger members then following suit. Overall, the Volunteer reports that the project has provided tanners with a sense of empowerment.

The following example, from Mali, illustrates many of the problems and pitfalls of small business development and the incorporation of technology and equipment. A local women's development committee requested SPA assistance for the purchase and installation of a millet grinder. They wanted to ease the burden of women in the highly labor-intensive chore of manual millet grinding while creating a stable source of income for the women and their families. This nascent women's group, however, lacked start-up capital for their business and was trying to operate the business in addition to performing their standard household duties.

During the early planning stages the members of the association came to realize that a business "cannot run itself." Therefore, in addition to requesting SPA resources to purchase the millet grinder, they amended their project plan to include training for their 20 members in basic accounting and management. With these new skills, they would be able to organize and manage bookkeeping and accounting, and track their expenses and earnings.

During the initial installation it was discovered that the grinder was damaged in transit. Although the installation was completed, the grinder did not operate at peak efficiency. Operations were temporarily halted, leading to a period of malaise and disheartenment within the association. Fortunately, core members of the group prevailed, replacement parts were located for the machine, and the grinder was re-installed.

Once the machine was in full operation, income was generated daily. This income can ensure the continued operation of the millet grinder. The community members have agreed on rules to address the management of the millet grinder and how the proceeds of the operation will be distributed. The group will set aside 25 percent of the earnings to establish a separate account for the maintenance and repair of the machine.

SPA-supported trainings have helped Moroccan women generate income and enhance their skills in marketing traditional crafts.

The members of the association have explored other income-generating projects to support the continued development of the women, their families, and their community. A portion of their income will finance new development efforts and create a reserve fund for any unexpected problems that may arise in operating their new business.

The Volunteer reports that in overcoming all of the obstacles encountered during this project the association members have grown in their self-esteem, and they have exercised their new skills in small business management and decision making. The women continue to struggle through the sometimes painful but important learning process of decision making, even when they know that solving one problem often presents another.

At times, SPA grants finance the acquisition of equipment and resources by existing small businesses when the incorporation of such equipment will help increase productivity of the business or expand sales. In Ecuador, the Unorcacht Tea Plantation has been in operation for three years and is run by the local community. Members of the group recognized that additional dryers would be required if the tea-processing operation were to operate at maximum efficiency and maintain high-quality production standards.

With the assistance of a SPA grant, the production group purchased two solar dryers and doubled production volume in just six months. The business plan produced by the production group suggests that the tea plantation has reached self-sufficiency. Production has increased to the point that revenues are sufficient to meet the costs of maintenance and repair or replacement of the equipment. As with many SPA projects, the activity also included training. Members received technical training in improved methods of organic tea cultivation, including ways to ensure that the crop will be bug free without the use of chemicals.

Instructional Materials

The production or acquisition of instructional materials supports many SPA training activities in small business development. In Kazakhstan, a project carried out in conjunction with *Junior Achievement Textbooks* permitted a local high school to acquire specialized textbooks and workbooks, including the Junior Achievement Market Game. These materials facilitated the inclusion

of business and economics in the curriculum. Similarly, in Western Russia a high school acquired marketing texts so that students could receive adequate instruction in marketing. Financial management and accounting texts and workbooks have also been acquired in Romania.

In Benin, a Volunteer working with a local savings and loan organization helped produce a brochure to better inform potential clients about the advantages and disadvantages of entering into credit arrangements. Overall, the savings and loan organization hopes to better inform clients and the community about the use of credit and to reduce the high rate of unpaid loans.

NGO Development

In a newer, but growing sector of Peace Corps programming, Volunteers are assigned to work with nongovernmental organizations. In many areas of the world, NGOs play a major role in delivering education, training, and health services to local populations, either independently or in collaboration with government agencies. Most SPA grants in this sector focus on the organizational development of NGOs. Grants are being used to improve the professionalism of these organizations by strengthening their planning, management, and fundraising skills as well as their ability to provide high-quality services to their clients. An important component of work in this area is providing training, equipment, and materials to NGOs to improve their computer and information technology skills and to develop resource centers that will allow them to provide better services to clients. At the same time, an increasing number of SPA grants focus on strengthening new community-based NGOs, including women's organizations, small farmer associations, and even boys' and girls' clubs.

In this chapter, you will find examples of:

▶ Organizational development of NGOs

▶ NGO resource centers

▶ Community-based NGO development

Organizational Development of NGOs

Many of the NGOs supported by SPA grants work with and provide services to children. In Jamaica, a SPA grant helped a new community-based NGO, Children and Community for Change (CCC), enhance its programs and its image within the community of Mandela Terrace.

There is a high rate of HIV/AIDS transmission in inner city Jamaica. CCC was unable to adequately provide services to the local community because it didn't have sufficient office space for its nine-person staff or to manage its ongoing activities. Obtaining adequate office space was part of the NGO's longer-range plan to diversify its programs and reach additional members of the community.

Ultimately CCC wanted to turn over to the community responsibility for managing a youth-focused program that promotes healthy lifestyles and identifies productive opportunities for at-risk youth.

The new office was completed thanks to collaboration with the Providence Society, which brought strength in organizing infrastructure development projects to the collaboration. Community youth worked alongside skilled tradesmen and were able to improve their skills in masonry, plumbing, carpentry, and electrical installation.

As a result of the project, CCC has gained visibility within the community. Its goal was to reach an additional 350 community residents by providing literacy training, skills training, and support for small business development while maintaining the life skills project for youth 9–16 years of age.

Other youth-focused NGO development efforts include a day-care center in Ecuador. In the communities of La Joya, Punyaro, and Mojandita, women who would like to work outside the home to improve their economic situation have no safe place in which to leave their young children during the day. A SPA grant supported the creation of a day-care center by partially covering the costs of equipping the building where the day-care facility would be housed. The grant also covered the cost of training for parents and day-care staff on such topics as proper child nutrition, first aid, and measures to prevent and treat childhood diseases. These trainings were provided by the new NGO in collaboration with the Red Cross.

Many NGOs have leveraged SPA funds, community contributions and third-party donations to create resource centers.

The center is now providing day care for 10 children on a regular basis. More than 85 people participated in the training classes. Day-care staff improved their skills in early child development and now know how to properly care for young children. To maintain the day-care facilities, parents pay a fee on a sliding scale, according to their income. If they cannot pay anything,

other arrangements are made; they can volunteer their time at the center, cooking or cleaning, or they can make donations of food or other supplies needed by the center. Future activities of the center include preparing a business plan to adequately gauge the capacity of the center, including the number of children the center can receive and care for and still cover its costs.

NGO Resource Centers

SPA grants improve existing infrastructure among established NGOs. In Romania, a SPA grant helped the Eco-Counseling Center Galati (ECCG) develop an informational and resource center for other environmental NGOs. This helped to close the gap in skills and abilities between established and new NGOs in Galati.

A SPA grant financed the acquisition of a computer, installation of a telephone line, and training of NGO members in computer and Internet use. The community contributed office space. Members of the ECCG offered free Internet access to new NGOs; helped them create Web pages for their organizations, and provided information about resources available to support the work of all Galati-based NGOs.

The project created a more open atmosphere among NGOs, encouraging information exchange and other forms of cooperation. The ECCG has increasingly been regarded as a resource for the other NGOs in the city of Galati.

In Moldova, a SPA grant provided support to a NGO resource center, which would provide technical and informational resources to newly formed NGOs and help them with the necessary bureaucratic requirements to register their NGOs. In the Chisinau region, there are few clubs or facilities for youth. Those few programs that do exist are concentrated in the urban area, with only a small number of NGOs in rural areas. The SPA grant financed the acquisition of office and computer equipment, a TV/VCR, periodicals, and other supplies that the new NGOs will need to further develop their youth programs

Community-Based NGO Development

SPA grant funds also help local community associations and community-based NGOs organize grass-roots development activities. Throughout the world there are hundreds of examples of parent-teacher associations working to raise funds or otherwise support primary and secondary schools, youth groups, and environmental clubs involved in conservation and community preservation efforts, and small farmer associations that are learning to market their products to earn income. SPA grants are helping these diverse community-based organizations to become more formally established, helping members gain the skills needed to work successfully together, and generally expanding the associations' roles within the community.

The following examples focus on women's associations in two different parts of the world. In a Moroccan village a women's group formed an association to provide literacy classes to women members. The lack of a suitable meeting space for classes quickly became a problem. Working together with the Volunteer, the association designed a project to build a small, stable structure in which to house the association.

The women gained valuable skills in designing a project, managing funds wisely to complete the project, and managing work contracts (largely performed by men). This new women's center not only provides a place for the women to hold classes, but also serves as a social meeting place. Overall, building the center and completing the project has provided the women with a positive experience to build on; they now feel confident enough to explore other activities involving their members, including several income-generating projects.

Half a world away, in Uzbekistan, a local women's business association used SPA funds to conduct a leadership seminar for rural women leaders. Conducted as a training of trainers, women were invited to participate based on their potential to develop leadership and organizational skills. During the three-day training, women attended sessions on community organizing, effective communication strategies, techniques for nonviolent conflict resolution, gender sensitization, women's legal rights, and basic health care issues. In addition to enhancing their self-esteem and confidence, the training equipped the participants with the knowledge to conduct workshops for women and other village members on many of these grass-roots development issues.

Municipal Development

Municipal development is a new sector of SPA grant activity. In many countries around the world, the responsibility for providing basic goods and services to communities is being decentralized to the municipal level. Mayors and city and village councils are assuming responsibility for such basic services as water and electricity, or a safe and healthy environment for all citizens. A need for training and other forms of assistance is emerging. Many Peace Corps Volunteers are providing this assistance and are using SPA grants to support their efforts. In this chapter you will find examples from this growing sector of SPA grant activity.

To date, most grants have supported municipal government efforts to provide services to their citizens, while a smaller number of grants have helped municipal governments and public agencies develop business opportunities. Good municipal development flows from effective communication between public officials and local citizens. In Tonga, a workshop was held with SPA support for local government officials and village organizations. Workshops of this nature initiate a dialogue about development philosophies and the roles and responsibilities of the public, private, and civil society sectors in the development process. These workshops allow villages to participate in their own development, and help the public sector to respect local priorities. Following the workshop, several villages agreed to create village councils with elected officials from different sectors of the village. The councils planned to continue working together on local development efforts in health, education, agriculture, income-generation, and environment.

Several municipal development projects have been directed toward improving the environmental health of local communities. These projects include community cleanup campaigns and recycling efforts. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, the town of Zouan-Hounien faced major problems

A drainage system is constructed with the support of a municipality in Madagascar.

Many construction and other types of activities undertaken by municipal governments can serve to train youth and adults in a new skill while accomplishing community goals.

resulting from standing water, dirt, and trash blocking the flow of water in the rain-water evacuation canals. Serious health hazards resulted from the absence of trashcans, designated contained dumping areas, and a system for regular trash collection and removal of solid waste.

The town's junior chamber of commerce decided to initiate a town cleanup program. It included awareness-building activities, installation of trash receptacles, and educa-tion in appropriate waste management techniques. They mobilized the local popula-tion and worked to clear rainwater evacuation canals. They placed trashcans around the community. They also built trash disposal areas and placed signs around the community to build awareness about the health benefits of proper trash removal. SPA funds covered the cost of cement and gravel used to build the trash disposal areas and also funded the purchase of wooden and metal trash receptacles.

In Jordan, a Volunteer working with the Near East Foundation, helped construct community recycling centers in heavily trafficked public areas in Amman. They were motivated by the desire to improve the environmental health of the city. They wanted to develop greater public awareness about the importance of recycling and to initiate a community recycling program. The recycling program would create an income-generating opportunity for unemployed individuals and families. SPA funds were used to purchase and construct community recycling center containers, sup-port the public awareness campaign, purchase equipment needed to recycle trash, and provide training to families responsible for the recycling work.

Information & Communications Technology

Another new area of SPA grant activity is information and communications technology. With the support of SPA grants, many schools have incorporated or upgraded computer education labs to provide structured computer literacy courses to both students and community residents. Many SPA grants helped finance the acquisition of computers, equipment and resources, and instructional materials to support computer literacy programs. SPA grants have also made it possible for community-based or NGO-operated resource centers to provide community members with the access and specialized information necessary to improve their skills as well as their future employment prospects. Although the focus is on computers, information and communications technology may involve community access to other communications and audiovisual media as well.

In this chapter, you will find examples of:

▶ Training in computer skills

▶ Computer resource/training centers

▶ Equipment, resources, and instructional materials to support computer training

▶ Income generation to sustain computer labs and training programs

▶ Youth development

▶ Other media

Training

Computer training and access to informational technology is being provided to students, teachers, and community organizations as part of Peace Corps projects around the world. Training occurs in formal settings, in high schools or technical schools, and also at the community level in community resource centers.

In much of Ukraine, for example, business students had few sources of up-to-date information. Instructors also did not have current information and were not able to provide their students with the kind of training and support that would permit them to be successful in the business world. A SPA grant was used to fund a business teacher's workshop. Internet research, word processing, spreadsheet design, and grant writing were the focus of the workshop, with particular emphasis on resources available through the Internet. Written support materials were provided to teachers. As a result of this workshop, teachers have become better able to instruct their students in the classroom and as they search for employment.

Many information technology initiatives are not sustainable because they lack trained repair personnel. A group in The Gambia, Computer Users of The Gambia, decided to resolve this problem by using a SPA grant to hold a training of trainers (TOT) program. The TOT was designed to instruct a core group of individuals in basic computer troubleshooting. After being trained, the participants were sent to computer centers throughout The Gambia to instruct members in computer maintenance and repair, an effort that should greatly enhance the sustainability of both current and future information technology projects in the country.

Computer Resource/Training Centers

In Poland, a Volunteer working with a local foundation helped establish a community computer training center. Entitling the project, "Connecting Computers and Communities," the foundation completed construction of the center and installed 11 computers in a limited area network. They also held five training workshops for foundation members; professionals, including teachers and social workers; and community members. Training was provided in basic computer and Internet skills. Measures of project success include: the number of persons using the center's facilities and the degree of cooperation among community leaders, schools, and the local government.

The integration of information and communications technologies into other sectors can enhance the ability to reach a broader range of individuals and improve the quality of the message. In Moldova, the town of Drochia came together to create a health resource and training center. They used a SPA grant to purchase a computer and obtain training in desktop publishing, which enabled them to publish health brochures and other materials to improve the quality of their health trainings.

Infrastructure, Equipment, and Resources

There are many examples of SPA grants that were used to purchase computers. In Armenia, a local YMCA saw the need for a computer training and resource center to expose the community to basic computer skills and provide access to the Internet. The group used an SPA grant to equip an existing community center with three computers, a printer, USB hook up, paper and supplies, furniture, shelving, tables, and chairs. The center now offers computer and Internet training to schoolchildren and adults, houses a library that provides English-language resources, and also serves as a meeting place for area clubs.

In similar fashion, in Gabon, a local community health project acquired a computer. Computer training was provided to health workers who now use computers to automate routine tasks, and the Internet as an important informational resource.

Instructional Materials

SPA grants also help schools and computer resource centers acquire instructional materials that are used in training programs and as reference materials. In Tanzania, a secondary school received a SPA grant to develop instructional materials in basic computer use. "Best practices" collected from schools across the country formed the basis for the curriculum. The activity was carried out in close cooperation with department of education representatives. The materials are now being used to give secondary students the information technology skills needed to make them more competitive in a global marketplace.

In Tonga, the Taufa'ahau/Pilolevu College used a SPA grant to implement a computer-based reading program. Students recognized words or phrases but had problems understanding full sentences, paragraphs, and passages. Teachers were frustrated in their attempts to teach reading comprehension and identify appropriate reading material for students. They were also finding it difficult to motivate students in literature-based reading practice. The community decided to resolve the issue by using SPA funds to purchase two computers and computer-based reading comprehension software. The activity has given teachers an additional resource to assist students in achieving their educational goals.

Some SPA projects have helped communities acquire instructional materials that rely on media other than computers. For example, in Jamaica, the towns of Amity and Retrieve are located along the Great River Valley of northeast Westmoreland, areas where a high incidence of oral-fecal infections have been reported. A local community health group decided to use a SPA grant to construct a demonstration latrine that could be used to promote the construction of additional latrines based on standards approved by the Ministry of Health. The activity was videotaped with a dual purpose in mind. The video could be shown as part of efforts to obtain private sector support. It could also be used for education and technical training in communities throughout the country. Peace Corps trainees, Volunteers, and other community members distributed the completed video for use.

Income Generation

Many information technology activities require some element of income generation to fund recurring costs, such as electricity or other power source costs; software upgrades; Internet connections for computers; toner and paper for copiers and fax machines; cassettes for tape recorders; and general maintenance for all equipment. SPA grants must focus on sustainability of the project and include plans for how the local communities will cover maintenance, repair, and upgrade costs on their own. For this reason, many SPA-funded information technology projects include an income-generating activity.

In addition to strategies supporting the financial sustainability of the activities, SPA funds have been used to show communities how they can enhance their level of income through the use of information technology. A group in St. Vincent received a SPA grant to organize a workshop focusing on marketing, business communication, customer relations, and Web page design. The goal of the group was to increase the quality of their crafts and learn how to attract new customers through Internet-based advertising and marketing.

In Kazakhstan, staff of a local business center noted that the Internet consisted of largely English content and that Kazakh organizations had achieved only a small presence on the Web. With this in mind, the group decided to undertake a project that would create local language and cultural Web content while providing computer and Internet training and basic training in Web page production. The business center used SPA funding to train 18 community members in Web

page design, and in doing so created a local language website that enabled users to access information more easily. The activity increased participants' technical skills, raised awareness and visibility of Kazakh culture on the Internet, and provided a platform for local income-generating initiatives.

Youth Development

Increasingly, information and communication technology is seen as a tool to interest youth in education, whether the subject is middle school algebra or Web page design. Center "Sunshine," a project initiated by a community group in Western Russia, saw a need to reach out and offer additional educational opportunities to local youth. SPA funds purchased computers to use in school to educate at-risk teenagers in basic computing skills. The project supplemented their formal education, better preparing them to complete their high school education, and go on to university or enter the job market.

The Goroka Demonstration High School, in Papua New Guinea, started training students to design Web pages on computers purchased with SPA funds. The students are now better able to produce and share information among themselves and their peers in the area.

SPA grants in the area of information and communication technology can also be used to reach at-risk youth. In Dominica, the Center where Adolescents Learn to Love and Serve (CALLS) decided to develop the personal and vocational skills of at-risk youth. They used a SPA grant to purchase two computers, software, and various peripherals to upgrade the services of an already-existing community center. The center created a program that sought to improve the overall well-being and self-esteem of trainees while helping them acquire employable skills. Students were trained in computer hardware, software, Internet, e-mail, record keeping and budgeting practices, and small business management. Through the course of the project the community discovered that even slower learners could use the computer effectively. The community observed that the project had positive effects on the students and noted how "the excitement that it generated in them provided a motivation to learn and be excited about school.

Other Media

In much of the world, radio is still the best means to communicate information to a broad segment of the population. One community in Mali decided to use a SPA grant to repair the local radio station, so that it could continue to broadcast programs in the local language. The station's programming included information on basic hygiene, water sanitation, prevention and treatment of diarrhea, oral rehydration, nutrition, HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, as well as information on local health services, medicinal supplies, and updates on the work of the village health committee.
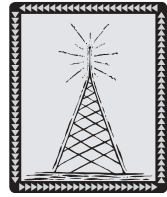
Things to consider when planning an ICT SPA grant activity
(before you submit a proposal)

▶ What priority need has the community identified that can be met through the provision of information technology (such as a computer, fax machine, or photocopier, etc.).

▶ What equipment would you need and how, exactly, would it be used to accomplish the identified goal? Who would use it?

▶ What training would they need, and who would provide that training? Where, when, and how will the training be provided?

▶ Where will you purchase the equipment and how will you get it to its destination?

▶ Has the community discussed ownership? What plans have been made to ensure safe transportation of the equipment to the community? Are community members aware that the Peace Corps cannot replace equipment that is lost or stolen?

▶ Where would the equipment be housed? How are security and access ensured? Are there climate and dust controls?

▶ Has your community group discussed a plan for legal and ethical use of the equipment?

▶ Do you have a reliable power source (electricity, solar power, etc.)? How will continuing costs be met?

▶ What other continuing costs do you need to consider (paper, ink, diskettes, Internet or telephone access, maintenance, and so on)? If recurring costs cannot be funded through the SPA program, how will they be funded?

▶ Who will be responsible for maintaining the equipment?

▶ In determining a budget, have costs for items such as extension cords, cables, and surge protectors been factored in? Have you obtained local price estimates for your equipment (and software, if appropriate)?

▶ Have you placed a value on in-kind contributions? Community and third-party contributions can take many forms, including the in-kind value of the equipment's housing, the donation of training or maintenance service, anticipated monthly electricity costs, as well as cash donations.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 — SPA Proposal Writing Guidelines

Use the following outline as a guide when preparing an SPA proposal.

A. LOCAL LANGUAGE SUMMARY (if applicable)

    1. Brief summary of project

    2. Indicate community support for project

B. STATEMENT OF NEED

    1. Background Information

        a. Community demographics (size, number of families, % women, youth, minority)

        b. Relevant social and economic data on context/beneficiaries

        c. Brief history of group involved (purpose, size, legal status, internal structure, nature of leadership, previous activities undertaken as a group, capacity to manage activity)

    2. Description of the Need/Problem

        a. Describe the need or problem

        b. Who is most directly affected?

        c. Why is this a priority?

C. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

    1. Describe the overall aim or goal of the project (longer-term)

    2. Describe the intermediate objectives (shorter-term results; should be specific, measurable, achievable, time-bound)

    3. Specify who the beneficiaries are and how they will benefit

    4. Specify how project will build on, or otherwise enhance, the community's assets

D.   PROJECT DESIGN & ACTION PLAN

1. List the tasks required to carry out the project

2. Who will carry out each task? (PCV, counterparts, other community members)

3. Describe how the project will be managed

4. For required inputs (including labor, materials, transport), indicate where and how they can be acquired (utilize locally-available inputs whenever possible)

5. If training is required, include training plan (human, material, and financial resources)

6. Marketing plan (if applicable; include such aspects as storage of materials, where and when products will be sold, etc.)

7. If activity will generate revenue, include plans for receiving and handling payments, for bookkeeping, and for distribution/use of revenue

8. Discuss plan for group/community to cover recurring costs for continuing the activity

9. Describe any potential problems that may arise, and plans to cope with them

10. What, beyond your direct control, could cause this activity to fail?

11. Include any other issues of feasibility (e.g., appropriateness of proposed solution and technology, complexity of training or external technical assistance required)

12. Include timeline for implementation of activity

E.   COST BREAKDOWN/BUDGET

1. Demonstrate community contribution, and indicate whether contribution will be cash or in-kind

2. Demonstrate that material/labor costs are reasonable and justified

3. Indicate expected contributions from other sources (e.g., government, NGOs); indicate whether cash or in-kind

4. Clearly detail total SPA funds requested and break down by type of line item

5. Budget figures must correspond to pro forma receipts

6. Include total project cost and provide breakdown (listed as a percentage of the total project cost) of funds requested and contributed as counterpart

F. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1. Provide a monitoring plan for the project (to include the indicators that will be used to track benefits/gains and the activity's progress toward meeting its objectives, who will be responsible for monitoring, how and when monitoring will be conducted)

2. Provide an evaluation plan (to include the indicators that will be used to determine the project's impact/outcomes, who will be responsible for conducting the evaluation, when and how it will be conducted)

3. Discuss the likelihood that the group and the project will continue beyond the implementation period; mention any new projects that are likely to be carried out by the group

G. ADDENDA (include as applicable)

1. Contracts/work agreements with appropriate signatures

2. Diagrams/blueprints/maps

3. Pro forma invoices

4. Letters of support from other organizations participating in or endorsing the project, including a description of the type of support to be provided

APPENDIX 2 — Sample Project Plan

Following is an example of a project undertaken by a Volunteer in Honduras.

A Volunteer was assigned to a rural community of approximately 600 residents. Most families earn their living from agriculture and grow corn, coffee, sugar cane, and beans. However, as the climate is hot and dry during the summer months and there is a shortage of water, many community members also work as seasonal workers in processing sugar cane or producing bricks and tiles for local sales. Although the road leading to the community is passable most of the year, community residents without their own transportation must walk more than four hours to the nearest town to purchase supplies and food staples.

The local community development association approached the Volunteer with an idea to establish a model farm on a plot of land within the community. Their idea was to install an irrigation system as well, so that local farmers would have access to water and be able to grow crops throughout the year, even during the dry summer months. With access to water during the entire year, farmers would be able to grow a greater variety of fruits and vegetables, thereby improving diets and nutrition. Having a more plentiful supply of healthy foods throughout the year would also contribute favorably to family incomes, since they would not have to spend scarce resources to purchase fruits and vegetables.

Over four months, the Volunteer worked with the community development organization to plan the project. Meeting on a weekly basis, they established goals and objectives for their project, designed an action plan, produced a budget, and developed a monitoring and evaluation plan.

Since the community development association was relatively new, the Volunteer helped the members understand the importance of strengthening their skills and their ability to manage their association. Their project expanded to include a series of training workshops in sustainable agricultural practices and leadership development. Women play an important role within the community, and it was decided that they also would play a key role in the project, since they will be the ones incorporating a wider variety of fruits and vegetables into their families' diets. The content of training workshops was expanded to include leadership training for women to strengthen their ability to participate more fully in the association and within the community. The association and the Volunteer planned to complete the project within 10 months.

As they developed their budget, they reviewed the assets available to them within their community. They were fortunate to have access to the services of a local NGO, which had helped to formally establish the community development association a year earlier. Members of this NGO agreed to provide a portion of the labor necessary to establish the model farm, cover the cost of transporting construction materials and tools to the site, and conduct trainings for members of the association. Although members of the association could contribute their labor and a portion of the costs for materials, they realized they would require some external funds to complete the project. They decided to prepare a proposal for submission through the Volunteer to the SPA grant program.

Before submitting their proposal, they discussed how the project could be sustained in the future, following the departure of the Volunteer and without becoming dependent on external funds. The incorporation of a seed bank as a project activity would provide farmers with most of the seeds necessary for each new crop. Working together to maintain the irrigation system would avoid costly repairs. When parts were needed, farmers would contribute the resources or they would sell vegetables to surrounding communities to earn income. Finally, the NGO would be available to provide technical assistance to farmers and help them incorporate the new agricultural practices on their own farms, and two members of the association who had received additional agricultural training would also be available to ensure continued operation of the model farm.

The community's project plan, presented as part of its proposal, follows:

Project purpose: Strengthen the efforts of the community development Association to promote sustainable agriculture among its farmer members and ensure a sufficient supply of food for families throughout the entire year, thereby protecting the environment and improving the health and well-being of farmers and their families.

Objectives:

1. Establish a model farm, to include the installation of an irrigation system that will provide sufficient water and allow members to grow a greater variety of fruits and vegetables throughout the year.

2. Use the model farm as the venue to provide training to farmers in sustainable agricultural practices, including the use of organic fertilizers, soil conservation, and seed management.

3. Support farmers' efforts to grow a greater variety of fruits and vegetables that will improve family diets and nutrition levels.

4. Strengthen the structure of the association and the ability of its members to work together to resolve community development needs.

5. Strengthen the participation of women within the association and within the community.

Action plan:

Objective 1: Establish a model farm, to include the installation of an irrigation system that will provide sufficient water and allow members to grow a greater variety of fruits and vegetables throughout the year.

Tasks/activities	Who will do it?	By when?
1a. Purchase tubing, wire, sprinklers, cement, and other construction supplies and tools needed to install irrigation system on model farm	Community rep, PCV, NGO reps	By the end of the first month
1b. Fence the model farm	Farmer leaders, association members, PCV	By the end of the first month
1c. Prepare for planting by laying out soil beds and preparing the soil	Farmer leaders, association members, PCV, NGO reps	By the end of the first month
1d. Plant winter season vegetables and medicinal plants	Farmer leaders, association members, PCV	By the end of the first month
1e. Install irrigation system	Farmer leaders, association members, PCV, NGO reps	In month #4

Objective 2: Use the model farm as the venue to provide training to farmers in sustainable agricultural practices, including the use of organic fertilizers, soil conservation, and seed management.

Tasks/activities	Who will do it?	By when?
2a. Conduct trainings for association members in: organic agriculture; natural pest management; soil conservation; organic fertilizers; crop management; seed management	NGO reps, farmer leaders, PCV	To begin in first month, and continue throughout the 10 months of the project; one session each month
2b. Offer health trainings on the dangers of using toxic agrochemicals	NGO reps, PCV	To begin in first month, and continue throughout the project

Objective 3: Support farmers' efforts to grow a greater variety of fruits and vegetables that will improve diets and nutrition levels.

Tasks/activities	Who will do it?	By when?
3a. Prepare soil beds for second planting	Farmer leaders, association members, PCV, NGO reps	Eighth month
3b. Plant new vegetable crops using permanent irrigation system	Farmer leaders, association members, PCV, NGO reps	Fifth month
3c. First harvest	Farmer leaders, association members, PCV	Eighth month
3d. Select seeds for seed bank	Farmer leaders, PCV, NGO reps	Eighth month, following harvest
3e. Prepare for summer planting	Association members, PCV	Eighth month #8

Objective 4: Strengthen the structure of the association and the ability of its members to work together to resolve community development needs.

Tasks/activities	Who will do it?	By when?
4a. Hold regular meetings of the association, to reflect on the progress of the project	Association members, PCV	Throughout the project
4b. Discuss and refine goals and objectives of the association	Association members, PCV	Throughout the project
4c. Conduct planning activities with the association	Association members, PCV	Throughout the project
4d. Organize agricultural fair to display products and work of association	Association members, PCV, NGO reps	Tenth month

Objective 5: Strengthen the participation of women within the association and within the community.

Tasks/activities	Who will do it?	By when?
5a. Conduct leadership training for women members of the association	PCV, NGO reps	Throughout the project

Budget:

The budget included the following items:

1. Materials (tubing and sprinklers for the irrigation system; wire fencing materials; seeds for the first planting)

    The community contributed 22% of the cost of materials, the SPA grant contributed 77%, and the NGO contributed the balance (1%).

2. Labor (preparation of the demonstration farm; installation of the irrigation system; planting and harvest; trainers)

    The community contributed 71% of the cost of the labor, while the NGO contributed 29%.

3. Transportation (of the materials to the site)

    Transportation costs were contributed by the NGO.

Budget Summary — The community provided 39.4% of the cost of the project, the SPA grant provided 38.5%, and the NGO provided 22.1%.

Budget Category	Total Community	Total Other	Total SPA	Total
Materials	$550	$25	$1,925	$2,500
Labor	$1,420	$580		$2,000
Transportation		$500		$500

Remember to include any other types of community or third-party contributions, such as land, rental of facility, tools or large equipment by adding additional boxes as needed when calculating your budget.

Monitoring & Evaluation Plan:

What to monitor?	What to monitor? Where to find the information?	How?	Who?	When?
Installation of model farm	Fencing; terraces and soil beds prepared	Observation Farmer field days	Association members PCV	Quarterly
Sustainable agricultural production	Diversity of crops; sustained crop yields; existence of pests	Review farming records – planting, harvest statistics	PCV NGO reps	At beginning of each planting season; following harvest
Improved diets and nutrition	Variety of foods consumed by families; new ways to prepare meals	Observation	PCV Health Post staff	Throughout project
Skills acquisition through training Roles and responsibilities	New techniques practiced by farmers Conduct of leaders in association meetings	Observation Farmer field days Observation	PCV NGO reps PCV NGO reps	Ongoing, throughout project Monthly, during association meetings
Development of the association	Meetings held; participatory decision making; transparency & accountability	Observation; existence of meeting minutes; review of minutes	Community members PCV	Monthly, during association meetings; at formal evaluation sessions

APPENDIX 3 — SPA Project Abstract

SPA PROJECT ABSTRACT

Country: Fiscal Year   Project Number:

Project Title:

Community Group:

Project Implementation Period: From / / To / /

Volunteer Name(s):   COS Date: / /

Peace Corps Assignment:

Projected Number of Beneficiaries / Participants	Male	Female	Total
Community Beneficiaries (include only those community members who will be directly affected by the project)			
Community Youth Beneficiaries			
Project Participants Trained			

PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN (IN $USD):

	SPA Grant	Community Contribution		Other Agency Contribution		Other Agency Name
		Cash	In-kind	Cash	In-kind	
Labor						
Equipment						
Materials/Supplies						
Land/Venue						
Travel/Per Diem						
Materials transport						
Other (be specific)						
Total						

WHAT WILL SPA FUNDS PURCHASE?

Category	Description
Labor	
Equipment	
Materials and Supplies	
Land/Venue	
Travel/Per Diem	
Transportation of Materials	
Other: (be specific)	

Project Classification		
Peace Corps Project Sector Grouping *(Check One)*		
☐ Agriculture	☐ Environment	☐ Water & Sanitation
☐ Business Development	☐ Health	☐ Youth Development
☐ Education	☐ Municipal Development	☐ Other: _____

Priority Grouping		
*(Check the box for the **one** that is most applicable)*		
☐ Infrastructure Development	☐ Resources/ Equipment and Supplies	☐ Training
☐ Instructional Materials	☐ Income Generation	☐ NGO Development

#		
1	What community-identified priority does this SPA Project address? (What is the goal of the project?)	
2	Describe how this project contributes to your volunteer assignment.	
3	What are the objectives of this project? List the principal steps you and the community group will undertake to reach your objectives.	
4	Does the community group have the skills required to implement the project? If not, what specific skills are needed and how will they be provided?	
5	How does the project contribute to building capacity within the community? (Be specific in terms of knowledge and skills)	
6	What benefits/gains do you expect the community to derive from this project?	
7	How will the community be able to sustain the benefits of this project?	

| 8 | How will you know if the project is producing the desired benefits/change?

INSTRUCTIONS for completing Question 8:
Please choose 2-3 indicators that will help you and your community track the progress of your project during its implementation. For SPA projects, you may choose indicators that refer to desired changes in the quality of life for project beneficiaries and/or desired changes in the local organization or community. Indicators describe both quantitative as well as qualitative changes.

Choose only those indicators that best reflect the benefits/changes you hope your project will achieve. Try to choose at least one quantitative and one qualitative Quality of Life Indicator.

In addition, use **Organizational Capacity Indicators** if your project's goals and objectives also focus on organizational or NGO development.

For each selected indicator, include the number of beneficiaries who will experience a change, and what change is expected or how you will know.

Quality of Life Indicators
(Includes basic needs, skills/knowledge, income and self esteem)

☐ **number of participants who acquire new skills** *(Quantitative; may include literacy, technical, or vocational skills.)*
who/how many? _____
what skills? _____

☐ **number of participants who assume new roles and functions**
(Quantitative; relates directly to changes in knowledge, skills, and behavior.)
who/how many ? _____
what roles? _____

☐ **number of participants who perceive a change in their quality of life**
(Qualitative; may be observed through greater community satisfaction with changes affecting diet, medical services, sanitation and hygiene, improved educational or economic opportunities.)
who/how many? _____
what changes? _____
how will you know? _____

☐ **number of participants with changed perception of self and others**
(Qualitative; may be observed through changes in knowledge, attitudes and behavior.)
who/how many? _____
how will you know? _____

Organizational Capacity Indicators

☐ **Demonstrated capacity to define goals and objectives** *(Quantitative indicator; relates most directly to changes in knowledge, skills and behavior, and may include planning skills, ability to set group goals and objectives, and small project design skills, among others.)*
what changes? _____
how will you know? _____

☐ **Management capacity in administration**
(Quantitative; relates directly to changes in administrative and/or financial practices, ability to manage production, marketing or income-generating activities, or ability to obtain financial or technical assistance.)
what changes? _____
how will you know? _____

☐ **Presence of linkages with similar groups or networks** *(Quantitative; number of formal and informal contacts and nature of these contacts)*
how many? _____
what kind? _____

☐ **Group decision making** *(Qualitative; relates directly to changes in attitudes and behavior, and may be observed through more participatory practices, gender inclusiveness, access to and willingness to share information, and financial transparency and accountability.)*
what changes? _____
how will you know? _____ |

SPA PROJECT ABSTRACT

Country: *Your Country of Service* **Fiscal Year** *Oct.– Sept.* **Project Number:** *Assigned by SPA Coordinator*

Project Title: *Please choose a descriptive title which sums up the project in as few words as possible*

Community Group: *The name of the community group requesting/implementing the project*

Project Implementation Period: *From* *month/day / year* *To* *month/day /year*

Volunteer Name(s): *your name(s) Last, First* **COS Date:** *month /day /year*

Peace Corps Assignment: *Your volunteer assignment, i.e. TEFL, Water Sanitation, etc.*

Projected Number of Beneficiaries / Participants	Male	Female	Total
Community Beneficiaries *(include only those* **community** *members who will be directly affected by this project)*	*Include only members*	*those who directly*	*community benefit!!*
Community Youth Beneficiaries	*Youth also*	*included in*	*above total*
Project Participants Trained	*Include only during*	*those project*	**trained**

PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN (IN $USD):

PLEASE, list all funds in US dollars only!!!	SPA Grant	Community Contribution		Other Agency Contribution		Other Agency Name
		Cash	In-kind	Cash	In-kind	
Labor	*Obviously, all SPA funds are in Cash!*	*Cash funds granted to buy goods, services etc.*	*In kind, i.e.goods services etc.other than cash*			*Put the other agency's name in each row next to where it is providing a contribution*
Equipment						
Materials/Supplies						
Land/Venue						
Travel/Per Diem						
Materials transport						
Other *(be specific)*						
Total						

WHAT WILL SPA FUNDS PURCHASE? (Remember, this is only for what SPA funds purchase!)

Category	Description
Labor	*Examples: construction workers building a classroom, or experts conducting skills training. Also includes any salary or fees paid to skilled labor.*
Equipment	*Examples include a new pump for a well, computers, books for a resource center, tools for a construction project etc.*
Materials and Supplies	*This could be as varied as cement for a construction project, notebooks for a training, or cloth for a sewing cooperative.*
Land/Venue	*Examples of this could include: land for a community garden or a library, venue rental for a training, an office for a community group etc.*
Travel/Per Diem	*All costs associated with travel, including food, lodging, or transportation. Also includes any fees/stipends for trainers/speakers.*
Transportation of Materials	*The transportation of materials, supplies or equipment to the community. Note that SPA funds will not pay for transport from the US*
Other	*Use this category for any item that does not fit into the ones above*

Project Classification		
Peace Corps Project Sector Grouping *(Check One)*		*(chose the sector that best fits your project, even if it is not the same as your volunteer assignment sector)*
☐ Agriculture ☐ Business Development ☐ Education	☐ Environment ☐ Health ☐ Municipal Development	☐ Water & Sanitation ☐ Youth Development ☐ Other:
Priority Grouping *(Check the box for the one that is most applicable)*		*Pick the one for which most of the resources are being used, e.g. a project that mainly provides computers is Equipment /Resources, even if computers are for a training center and training will occur*
☐ Infrastructure Development ☐ Instructional Materials	☐ Resources/ Equipment and Supplies ☐ Income Generation	☐ Training ☐ NGO Development

1	What community-identified priority does this SPA Project address? (What is the goal of the project?)	*Describe why the community wants/needs this project, and state the overall goal.*
2	Describe how this project contributes to your volunteer assignment.	*State how the project relates to and contributes to your volunteer assignment, with more detail if the link is not immediately apparent. For instance, a Community Forestry volunteer building latrines would require a more detailed explanation than a water sanitation volunteer building latrines.*
3	What are the objectives of this project? List the principal steps you and the community group will undertake to reach your objectives.	*Use this space to describe the objectives for your project. Also list the major steps for you and the community in the implementation of the project.*
4	Does the community group have the skills required to implement the project? If not, what specific skills are needed and how will they be provided?	*If the answer is no, then list the skills needed and how they will be provided (i.e. through a training by the volunteer, with an outside expert trainer, a skilled craftsman etc.)*
5	How does the project contribute to building capacity within the community? (Be specific in terms of knowledge and skills)	*List any new skills or knowledge that will be brought to the community as a result of this project. (for example: increased literacy, HIV/AIDS awareness, business skills, project planning skills) How has the project increased the capacity of the community? Capacity to do what?*
6	What benefits/gains do you expect the community to derive from this project?	*How will the knowledge/skills improve the quality of life within the community? (for example: better awareness of HIV/AIDS could lead to a lower transmission rate, increased business skills could lead to higher profits for the women's sewing group)*
7	How will the community be able to sustain the benefits of this project?	*In other words, is there a plan for sustainability? How will costs such as maintenance or equipment repair be covered? Will the project bring any new costs? If there has been training or capacity building, how will these skills be practiced, applied, or otherwise developed?*

8	How will you know if the project is producing the desired benefits/change?	**Quality of Life Indicators** *(include basic needs, skills/knowledge, income and self esteem)*

8 How will you know if the project is producing the desired benefits/change?

INSTRUCTIONS for completing Question 8:
Please choose 2-3 indicators that will help you and your community track the progress of your project during its implementation. For SPA projects, you may choose indicators that refer to desired changes in the quality of life for project beneficiaries and/or desired changes in the local organization or community. Indicators describe both quantitative as well as qualitative changes.

Choose only those indicators that best reflect the benefits/changes you hope your project will achieve. Try to choose at least one quantitative and one qualitative Quality of Life Indicator.

In addition, use Organizational Capacity Indicators if your project's goals and objectives also focus on organizational or NGO development.

For each selected indicator, include the number of beneficiaries who will experience a change, and what change is expected or how you will know.

Quality of Life Indicators
(include basic needs, skills/knowledge, income and self esteem)

❑ **number of participants who acquire new skills** *(Quantitative; may include literacy, technical, or vocational skills.)*
who/how many? _____
what skills? _____

❑ **number of participants who assume new roles and functions**
(Quantitative; relates directly to changes in knowledge, skills, and behavior.)
who/how many ? _____
what roles? _____

❑ **number of participants who perceive a change in their quality of life**
(Qualitative; may be observed through greater community satisfaction with changes affecting diet, medical services, sanitation and hygiene, improved educational or economic opportunities.)
who/how many? _____
what changes? _____
how will you know? _____

❑ **number of participants with changed perception of self and others**
(Qualitative; may be observed through changes in knowledge, attitudes and behavior.)
who/how many? _____
how will you know? _____

Organizational Capacity Indicators

❑ **Demonstrated capacity to define goals and objectives** *(Quantitative indicator; relates most directly to changes in knowledge, skills and behavior, and may include planning skills, ability to set group goals and objectives, and small project design skills, among others.)*
what changes? _____
how will you know? _____

❑ **Management capacity in administration**
(Quantitative; relates directly to changes in administrative and/or financial practices, ability to manage production, marketing or income-generating activities, or ability to obtain financial or technical assistance.)
what changes? _____
how will you know? _____

❑ **Presence of linkages with similar groups or networks** *(Quantitative; number of formal and informal contacts and nature of these contacts)*
how many? _____
what kind? _____

❑ **Group decision making** *(Qualitative; relates directly to changes in attitudes and behavior, and may be observed through more participatory practices, gender inclusiveness, access to and willingness to share information, and financial transparency and accountability.)*
what changes? _____
how will you know? _____

APPENDIX 4 — SPA Project Completion Report

SPA PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Country: Fiscal Year   Project Number:

Project Title:

Community Group:

Project Implementation Period: From   / /   To   / /

Volunteer Name(s):   COS Date: / /

Peace Corps Assignment:

Actual # of Beneficiaries / Participants	Male	Female	Total
Community Beneficiaries			
Community Youth Beneficiaries			
Project Participants Trained			

1.	What happened during the project? Did the community reach the goal of its project?	
2.	If the Project goal was not achieved, why?	
3.	How did the project build capacity? What new skills have been learned by the project participants? (Be specific, and refer to the indicators you chose in the Activity Abstract to describe the change.)	
4.	How has the larger community been affected by the project? What has changed in the community as a result of the project? (Use any indicators from the Activity Abstract that will describe the change.)	
5.	What unexpected events (positive or negative) did you encounter during the project and how did you deal with them?	
6.	What are the next steps for	

the community group?	
7. Will there be recurring costs needed to sustain the benefits/gains of this project? How does the community plan to cover those costs?	
8. From what you learned from this project, what recommendations would you have for others interested in implementing a similar project?	

FINAL PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN (IN $USD):

	SPA Grant	Community Contribution		Other Agency Name	Other Agency Contribution	
		Cash	In-kind		Cash	In-kind
Labor						
Equipment						
Materials/Supplies						
Land/Venue						
Travel/Per Diem						
Materials transport						
Other *(be specific)*						
Total						

WHAT DID SPA FUNDS PURCHASE?

Category	Description
Labor	
Equipment	
Materials and Supplies	
Land/Venue	
Travel/Per Diem	
Transportation of Materials	
Other: *(be specific)*	

SPA PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Country: *Your Country of Service*   **Fiscal Year** *Oct - Sept*   **Project Number:** *Assigned by SPA Coordinator*

Project Title: *Please choose a descriptive title which sums up the project in as few words as possible*
Community Group: *The name of the community group requesting/implementing the project*
Project Implementation Period: From   *month/day/year*   To   *month/day/year*

Volunteer Name(s): *your name(s) Last, First*   **COS Date:** *month/day/year*
Peace Corps Assignment: *Your volunteer assignment, i.e. TEFL, Water Sanitation, etc.*

Projected Number of Beneficiaries / Participants	Male	Female	Total
Community Beneficiaries *(include only those community members who will be directly affected by this project)*	*Include only numbers*	*those who directly benefit*	*community benefit*
Community Youth Beneficiaries	*Youth also*	*included in*	*above total*
Project Participants Trained	*Include only during*	*those project*	*trained*

1.	What happened during the project? Did the community reach the goal of its project?	*Describe what happened during the project. Be sure to refer back to the overall goal of your project that you set in question #1 of the project abstract.*
2.	If the Project goal was not achieved, why?	*If the project was not successful in reaching the original goal, explain the circumstances and what was achieved*
3.	How did the project build capacity? What new skills have been learned by the project participants? (Be specific, and refer to the indicators you chose in the Activity Abstract to describe the change.)	*Using the monitoring and evaluation indicators that you picked on page three of the project abstract, describe how the project built capacity among the project participants. Include any new skills learned.*
4.	How has the larger community been affected by the project? What has changed in the community as a result of the project? (Use any indicators from the Activity Abstract that will describe the change.)	*Using the monitoring and evaluation indicators that you picked on page three of the project abstract, describe how the project built capacity among the larger community. Describe any changes in the community.*
5.	What unexpected events (positive or negative) did you encounter during the project and how did you deal with them?	*For example, a positive event could be unexpected participation by, or support for the project from certain members of the community, while a negative event could be a weather-related occurrence that affected project implementation.*

6.	What are the next steps for the community group?	*Describe where the community will go from here – how will they build on this project?*
7.	Will there be recurring costs needed to sustain the benefits/gains of this project? How does the community plan to cover those costs?	*Consider not only costs (though they are important) but also with who will be responsible for continuing the project and/or maintaining the benefits.*
8.	From what you learned from this project, what recommendations would you have for others interested in implementing a similar project?	*Share any recommendations or lessons learned that you would like to pass on to other volunteers. These suggestions can be for those considering the same sort of project, those doing a project in the same country, or general recommendations.*

PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN (IN $USD):

PLEASE, list all funds in US dollars only!!!	SPA Grant	Community Contribution		Other Agency Contribution		Other Agency Name
		Cash	In-kind	Cash	In-kind	
Labor	*Obviously,*	*Cash:*	*In kind:*			*Put the other agency's*
Equipment	*all SPA*	*funds*	*i.e.goods*			*name in each row next*
Materials/Supplies	*funds are*	*given*	*services*			*to where it is providing a*
Land/Venue	*in Cash!*	*to*	*etc.other*			*contribution*
Travel/Per Diem		*buy*	*than*			
Materials transport		*goods,*	*cash*			
Other *(be specific)*		*services*				
Total		*etc.*				

WHAT WILL SPA FUNDS PURCHASE? (Remember, this is only for what SPA funds purchase!)

Category	Description
Labor	*Examples: construction workers building a classroom, or experts conducting skills training. Also includes any salary or fees paid to skilled labor.*
Equipment	*Examples include a new pump for a well, computers, books for a resource center, tools for a construction project etc.*
Materials and Supplies	*This could be as varied as cement for a construction project, notebooks for a training, or cloth for a sewing cooperative.*
Land/Venue	*Examples of this could include: land for a community garden or a library, venue rental for a training, an office for a community group etc.*
Travel/Per Diem	*All costs associated with travel, including food, lodging, or transportation. Also includes any fees/stipends for trainers/speakers.*
Transportation of Materials	*The transportation of materials, supplies or equipment to the community. Note that SPA funds will not pay for transport from the US*
Other	*Use this category for any item that does not fit into the ones above*

APPENDIX 5 — Resources & References

T0119 **Small Project Assistance (SPA) Handbook.** (Peace Corps)
July 2000. 67 pp.

An overview of the SPA program and guidelines for using SPA grants
and technical assistance.

T0107 **The New Project Design and Management Workshop Training
Manual.** (Peace Corps) 2000. 174 pp.

One-and-a-half-to-four-day workshop reinforces the importance of
community participation in designing and implementing local projects.
Intended for use during In-Service Training, sessions show Volunteers
and their Counterparts how to involve and work with the community
through each step of the project design process, from analysis of com-
munity assets and needs to planning, implementation, monitoring, and
evaluation. Initial sessions can be covered in Pre-Service Training.
Supplement to Participatory Analysis for Community Action (M0053).

T0005 **The Roles of the Volunteer in Development.** (Peace Corps). 2002.

A toolkit that focuses on the six capacity-building roles that Volun-
teers will play during their service. The toolkit offers key concepts,
provides information, and includes community-based practice activi-
ties that will help Volunteers and trainees gain the knowledge, skills,
and attitudes needed to perform these different roles and function ef-
fectively as capacity-builder and community partner.

M0053 **PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action.**
(Peace Corps) 1996. 350 pp.

Gender-sensitive tools that can be used to facilitate participatory commu-
nity development planning. PACA tools are designed to communicate in-
formation, identify needs, and lay the groundwork for community action.
They are used by Volunteers with their communities to explore perceptions
of groups within the community, identify common and differing roles and
responsibilities, use of time and space, and needs/priorities.

CD051 **Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Funding and Mobilizing A Community's Assets.** John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight (ACTA Publication) 1993. 376 pp.

Guide to asset-based community development, summarizing lessons learned by studying successful community-building initiatives in hundreds of U.S. neighborhoods. Outlines what local communities can do to start their own asset-based development, including how to rediscover their local assets; how to combine and mobilize these strengths; and how "outsiders" in government can effectively contribute to the process of asset-based development.

M0080 **Idea Book Series: Beyond the Classrooms: Empowering Girls.** (Peace Corps) 2000. 68 pp.

Provides practical advice for empowering young women through everyday activities. Promotes the use of workshops, camps, clubs, special events, and friendly conversations, which present opportunities to encourage goal setting, and positive decision making skills and build confidence. Such events allow Volunteers to help girls change their lives for the better.

M0081 **Idea Book Series: HIV/AIDS — Integrating Prevention and Care Into Your Sector.** (Peace Corps) 2000. 67 pp.

Offers various strategies for evaluating and responding to the affects of HIV in each of the Peace Corps' project areas. Offers examples of creative and efficient plans Volunteers use to include the issues of HIV into their activities through partnership with other sector or by designing activities targeting the areas most affected by AIDS.