Using case study design to evaluate impact: An international example

Kerry Zaleski
Jennifer Kushner
Samuel Pratsch
Claire Clugston
Larry Jones
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**Dominican Republic**
Dr. Rafael Ledesma, Country Coordinator  
Mabel Barinas Vizcaino, Field Officer  
Felipe Peguero, Field Officer  
Juan Villar, Field Officer  
Ana Gonzalez, Administrative Assistant

**Guyana**
Kelvin Craig, Country Coordinator  
Ryan Nedd, Field Officer  
Sigmund McKenzie, Field Officer  
Shaun Francis, Field Officer  
Colwayne Morris, Field Officer  
Deoranie Arjune, Administrative Assistant

**Haiti**
Benito Migny Jasmin, Country Coordinator  
Anderson Pierre, Field Officer  
Gerald Michael Joseph, Field Officer  
Josephine Pierre, Administrative Assistant

**Nicaragua**
Dr. Ronald Blandon, Country Coordinator  
Elisa Estrada Guido, Field Officer  
Daniel Ingram Miranda, Field Officer
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Acronyms
CASRI: Caribbean Self Reliance International
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FTF: Feed the Future initiative
F2F: Farmer-to-farmer
GTIS: Guyana Trade and Investment Support
IDB: Inter-American Development Bank
IICA: Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU: Memorandum of Understanding
POA: Partners of the Americas
USAID: United States International Development Agency

Overview
A case study design is often used to deeply understand a process or situation and explain how and why particular results occur. This paper provides an example of how case study design was used to evaluate a complex, multi-dimensional international development program in four different countries. In this situation, the evaluation team aimed to capture relevant information that helped identify a variety of factors that contributed to a program’s achievements in different contexts by studying in detail the collection of people, activities, policies, strengths, problems, or relationships. Strengthened by the triangulation of data sources and methods, information collected through this process revealed reality-based stories that helped describe how the program operates in different situations and to what extent they share common characteristics or conditions.

Although case studies are not meant to generate “generalizable” results that represent the whole, they can suggest particular traits, characteristics, or factors that work well or not-so-well together in specific contexts.

In summary, case study evaluations are helpful when measuring change across diverse contexts and cultures, in situations that are complex and layered, and when quantitative indicators alone are unable to provide a full picture of what and how changes occurred as a result of program activities. This paper is intended to help evaluators, practitioners, program managers, and decision-makers recognize case study as an appropriate and valid evaluation design for gaining a full understanding of how, why, and to what extent programs or services made a difference in people’s lives.

Executive summary
The purpose of this case study evaluation is to document, in rich detail, the impacts of the Partners of the Americas (POA) farmer-to-farmer (F2F) program in order to contribute to organizational learning and program improvement. For the current grant cycle, October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2013, POA recruited volunteers from the United States to provide technical assistance to Guyana, Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic. The program’s focus is on strengthening the agricultural sector in partnering countries to bring about increased food security and improved economic conditions. The program works with small- and medium-scale agricultural producers, organizations, agribusinesses, and academic institutions throughout agricultural value chains. A multiple case study evaluation design was used to explore the benefits of the program to individuals, families, organizations, and communities. In addition, the case study evaluation looked at strategies and lessons learned for successful implementation of the program in each country.

This case study evaluation discovered that the F2F program has contributed to change at multiple scales: individual, organizational, and system (agriculture sector). A number of the POA F2F hosts have experienced significant economic gains as a result of changes in practice. In addition, this evaluation reveals a number of other benefits that hosts have received through the successful and unique implementation of the program in each country. This study found that a number of factors contributed to this success, including the presence of professionals in the countries (F2F staff and partners), the focus on sustainability of efforts through in-country capacity development, an emphasis on innovation, and strong host-volunteer relationships.

This report provides a number of recommendations for future POA F2F program implementation that are based on the lessons learned from this case study evaluation. The recommendations range from enhancing learning and decision-making at every level of the program to expanding the program design to an agricultural innovation systems model. Other recommendations include developing a contextually appropriate monitoring and evaluation system, expanding efforts to build human and institutional capacities across the agricultural innovation system, and stronger coordination across volunteer assignments with a common agenda for each assignment to show how it fits into the wider program goal of strengthening the agricultural sector in each respective country.

Introduction

The POA F2F program aims to increase the vitality of agricultural value chains while preserving natural resources through technical assistance to developing and transitional countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region. Funded by the United States Agency on International Development (USAID), the program recruits volunteers from the United States to work with local agricultural producers, organizations, agribusinesses, and academic institutions to share knowledge, skills, and perspectives in areas of technology, farming practices, organizational development, and environmental sciences. The overall aim of the program is to generate “rapid, broad-based, and sustained economic growth in the agricultural sector,” with a secondary goal of creating awareness about international development work among people living in the United States. Partners of the Americas has been implementing the program in Haiti, Dominican Republic, Guyana, and Nicaragua for the duration of the current grant cycle: October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2013. The four broad areas of intended impact include: economic growth (productivity and profitability), organizational development, environmental conservation/natural resource management, and access to financial services.

A team of evaluation specialists from the University of Wisconsin-Extension was invited to contribute to the final program evaluation by implementing a case study evaluation of the program. For over a year, they visited each country at least twice and looked deeper into
the unique implementation of F2F in each context. This document provides a summary of the case study evaluation.

**Purpose of evaluation**
The purpose of this evaluation is to document the impact of the POA F2F program, to contribute to organizational learning and program improvement, and to help guide the development of future F2F programs.

**Guiding questions**
The guiding evaluation questions the team sought to understand include:
1. What is the strategy for successful implementation of the program in each country?
2. What difference did the program make to individuals, families, organizations, and communities?
3. What allowed, or did not allow, the participants to achieve their objectives through this program?

**Methodology**
A multiple case study evaluation design was used to study the phenomena, situational complexity, and uniqueness of the program in different contexts. Primary methods of data collection included participant observation, face-to-face and phone interviews, document/media analysis, meetings, and focus groups. Participants included select F2F hosts, in-country staff, POA Washington D.C. staff, partners, and volunteers. Documents reviewed include volunteer reports, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) trip reports, country-based data collection forms/tools, and POA semi-annual and annual reports. Translators were used for interviews and focus groups in Haiti and Nicaragua and all were audio taped and transcribed. Those that were conducted in Spanish were both transcribed and translated into English. Nvivo09 software was used to code and analyze data. The team discussed and interpreted the key themes that were highlighted in order describe the F2F story in each country and across all four programs. In this design each country was treated as a case, with subcases to support the larger narrative.

Data collection occurred in three phases.

- The purpose of Phase 1 was to understand the strategy and context guiding program implementation in each country. Phase 1 visits were approximately one week in length with teams of two or more members. Data was collected from in-country staff through semi-structured group and individual interviews, mapping of key players, rich picture design, and theories of change visual diagrams. Country strategies for implementing the program provided the framework for the case in each country. The second purpose of phase 1 was to identify subcases that exemplified the defined strategy in each context. Subcases were selected based on a set of criteria developed and agreed on as a collaborative effort between UW-Extension and in-country teams.
• The second phase included data collection from hosts, in-country staff, and selected partners. During phase 2, specific volunteers were identified for interviews. Participant observations, interviews, and focus group discussions were the methods employed. The third phase of the study involved collecting remaining data from volunteers via phone interviews, analyzing and interpreting the data, and writing up the final report.

• The final phase of this case study evaluation involves disseminating the results to key stakeholders, including the implementing organization (POA) and program participants. Data was collected between January 2012 and February 2013 (see table 1).

**Protocol for using case study design for evaluating the F2F program**

This protocol offers a common set of guiding principles for multiple case studies that cut across value chains, sectors, and countries. Case studies will be used to help describe the impact of the F2F program in Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Guyana, and Haiti over a five-year grant cycle. The case study design will use a mixture of methods to collect data, including tapping into the data already being collecting by F2F staff (e.g., USAID baseline and impact surveys, annex data, existing record keeping systems) and information from volunteers. The goal is to provide a full, in-depth understanding of what, how, and why things are happening or have happened in each particular case.
Table 1. Data collection plan for case study design: F2F program final evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation question</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. What is the strategy for effecting change in each country?</strong></td>
<td>In-country staff</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are the key components of the strategy?</td>
<td>POA-DC</td>
<td>Document review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How has this evolved over the course of the program?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mind mapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What has worked particularly well about this strategy?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• What has not worked so well in implementing this strategy?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has gender been explicitly considered in the strategy?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, how?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has environmental conservation been explicitly considered in the strategy?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, how?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. How do particular subcases exemplify the country program strategy?</strong></td>
<td>In-country staff</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who are they (e.g., individual farmer, processors, private business, university)?</td>
<td>POA-DC</td>
<td>Group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How were they selected to participate in this program?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mind mapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How long has the host been receiving support from F2F?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Existing records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is their level of engagement?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In what areas did the subcases receive F2F support? From whom?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What other support does the subcase receive?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. What and how has F2F strategy contributed to change in each country?</strong></td>
<td>In-country staff</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What have been the key changes in practice as result of F2F activities?</td>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What were the results of these changes?</td>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>Document review (reports, existing data)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What all contributed to the change?</td>
<td>Selected hosts</td>
<td>F2Fnet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What specific activities took place?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who participated in these activities?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who was involved in facilitating these activities (e.g., POA in-country staff, POA-HQ staff, volunteers, collaborative partners)? To what extent were the different players involved?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What recommendations were made? By whom?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Were these recommendations adopted? If not, why not?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Were these recommendations adapted? If so, please explain how.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• What else influenced change (e.g., other projects, policy, weather patterns, donations, leveraging resources, access to finances, willingness to take risks, cross-program learning)?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In what area (economic growth, environmental/NRM, access to financial resources, organizational development) was the impact?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• How has F2F helped improve the agricultural sector at various points along particular value chains?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• How has the program tapped into existing local knowledge?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. What are the lessons learned from these case studies?</strong></td>
<td>In-country staff</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Were there any unintended outcomes or consequences of F2F program activity, either positive or negative?</td>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What worked particularly well?</td>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>Document review (reports, existing data)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What challenges, if at all, did program teams face in implementing the program?</td>
<td>Selected hosts</td>
<td>F2Fnet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are there any promising practices or approaches that could be further explored for program improvement purposes?</td>
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</table>
Purpose:
To identify and describe factors that influenced the success of the F2F program and the overall theory of change. The underlying intent is one of appreciative inquiry; studies will focus on the unique country-specific strengths, approaches, and results. Who the host is, coupled with particular volunteers and who they are, may lead to certain outcomes. By using case study design, we will seek to understand the following:

- The level of impact F2F has had on individuals, families, communities, organizations, and countries
- What worked well, or not so well, for particular hosts (e.g., individual farmers, organizations, private enterprises, academic institutions) in achieving their goals
- The contribution of F2F to particular links in value chains
- Promising practices or approaches, if any, to be further explored for program improvement purposes

Key steps:
1. Explain case study design and protocol for in-country staff
2. Determine and define the research questions
3. Select the cases in each country
4. Determine data collection and analysis methods
5. Prepare to collect the data
6. Collect data in the field
7. Extract data from F2Fnet where appropriate
8. Compile and analyze the data
9. Prepare the report
10. Disseminate and articulate findings to all relevant stakeholders
11. Use results to inform design and implementation of future F2F programs

Figure 1. Key impact evaluation questions

1. What difference has F2F made to individuals, families, organizations, and communities?
2. How has F2F helped improve the agricultural sector at various points along the value chain?
   Producer > Post harvest handling/collection > Processing > Marketing > Commercialization > Consumers

What is a case study?
A qualitative method for finding out “how or why” an intervention works well.
—Yin 2009

A non-experimental design that provides an in-depth comprehensive description and understanding of an intervention as a whole and in its context.
—Imas and Rist 2009
Guiding principles:

- Two lenses: 1. Value chain contribution; 2. Area of most significant impact.

- Country staff will be trained in the purpose, use, and benefits of case study design.

- Partners of the Americas staff in D.C. and in-country will be involved in selection of hosts and volunteers to study.

- Results of the case study will be disseminated to all relevant stakeholders, including selected hosts and volunteers.

- Cross-cutting issues, including gender and environment, will be explored in all cases, in order to gauge the level of consideration that has been given to these issues, per USAID requirements (see RFA).

- Existing data sources will be applied whenever possible, particularly F2Fnet.

- Country teams are encouraged to supplement particular evaluation questions or issues of special interest that are relevant to their own situations or context.

- Adequate time must be allocated for data collection in each country.

- Focus on small number of hosts (three to five) per country project and at different points in the value chain.

- May focus on a U.S. state and the volunteer story related to that state (may be of interest to clients).

- Stories of interest will include innovation, new approaches, and capacity building.

- Samples are “purposeful,” versus random.

- Focus on distinctiveness; what sets this host apart from the others?

- Include both intended and unintended impacts.

- Triangulation of data will be used to reduce bias as much as possible. Sources of information will include various host types (e.g., individual farmers, cooperatives, organizations, agro-enterprises, academic institutions), volunteers, in-country staff, and partners. If host is a larger organization or institution, information will be gathered from various members or actors within that system (e.g., directors, managers, technicians, consumers).
Limitations of the study

Case study design—and this case in particular—has several limitations. This case study is intended to provide an in-depth look at phenomena within a particular context. The context in each of the four countries is highly complex, as is the nature of change that F2F seeks to engender. Given limitations on time, geography, and resources, we were only able to select a certain number of participants and visit a certain number of times. Thus, our data collection does not represent all perspectives and impacts. Additionally, collecting data across cultural contexts adds complexity to discerning the true meaning of what is being shared.

A secondary issue is that F2F programming exists and is successful in relation to other development efforts and local capacity. An evaluation that seeks to understand and describe impact that is attributable to an intervention (F2F program) is problematic. Our approach was to seek understanding on the contribution F2F made in bringing about change. In addition, three of the four countries (Haiti, Nicaragua, and Guyana) began implementing the program prior to the current funding cycle.

Although this evaluation sought to describe change in the past five years, many of the impacts achieved are a result of many years of learning and improving the program, through a combined effort of many actors. Lastly, our position as evaluators creates both opportunity and challenge. When most people hear the word “evaluation,” they often assume they are being assessed and they or the program is at risk. Given this, it is possible that what is revealed under these conditions may not reflect true experiences or perceptions. We addressed this limitation by being explicit throughout with staff and participants about the purpose of the study and our intentions for using what they shared.

Factors contributing to success

Each country uses a unique strategy to implement F2F in an effective way, relevant to the country’s context. We identified several factors across countries that contributed to program success.

In-country professionals

(2F staff and partners)

Staff capacity was identified as a significant variable in the success of the program across all four countries and validated by hosts, partners, and volunteers. Country coordinators were found to be essential in shaping the strategy in each country because they are well connected to local networks, understand local politics, and have experience with assets and barriers to change in their respective countries. The POA’s selection and support of its country coordinators played a direct role in the program’s success. Staff and volunteers recognize the value in having effective leaders who are able to get things done because they know the right people and are able to cultivate strong partnerships and leverage resources in ways that result in the longer term sustainability of program efforts. One
F2F is very much a big part of who I am. The experiences over the years, all of our travels, will live with me for a very long time.

—Shaun Francis, former F2F Guyana field officer

program officer in Nicaragua told us: “We alone (program officers) would never be able to schedule a meeting with UNA. All Ronald has to do is pick up the phone and he gets it, because of who he is.”

Furthermore, the expertise of field officers in agronomy or agriculture contributes significantly to the ongoing capacity building of hosts and partners. In-country staff expressed how the program has allowed them to develop professionally from what they learn from volunteers and what they gain from information-sharing across countries. This capacity allows them to offer greater follow up and sustained assistance. In many cases the regional workshops sparked new ideas for country coordinators about how to run their programs. For example, Guyana started doing more information dissemination about the shade house project after learning about the benefits of using media for teaching others about dairy farming and consumer education in Nicaragua.

In Nicaragua, a number of repeat volunteers observed the professional development of one particular field officer, Elisa Estrada Guido:

*Elisa has definitely gained information around horticulture in terms of content. Because I hear her when she interprets, in her explanation or additional questions that she asks, that she has picked up more and she has said so specifically to me, that by being in that role she has increased her knowledge.* —F2F volunteer

**Focus on sustainability of efforts through in-country capacity development**

In-country capacity building occurred at individual, organizational, and system levels, including farmers, in-country staff, organization and community leaders, academic staff, and students; partnering local organizations, governmental ministries, business associations, and academic institutions; and other international development organizations. Linking volunteer assignments to existing, ongoing efforts in the country, rather than working with hosts disconnected from local networks, proved to be the most effective way to ensure long-term change.

Volunteer assignments that used a train-the-trainer approach to organizational development, team building, monitoring and evaluation, and network development were highlighted as responsive to stakeholder needs and contributing to reducing vulnerabilities associated with poverty and food insecurity. Examples include:

- Fostering coordination among cross-sector agencies, peer organizations, governmental ministries, and local community groups in Haiti, while being intentional about the inclusion of women.
- Working with cooperatives to strengthen the linkages between different stages of the dairy value chain in Nicaragua, including consumer education on nutrition and hygiene.
• Establishing a collaborative of shade house technicians in Guyana to spread the practice of natural food production among vulnerable households in a way that multiplies among those households.

• Connecting academic curriculum and research around environmental protection, natural resource management, and climate change to the needs of communities in the Dominican Republic.

• Monitoring, evaluation, and leadership workshops in Haiti for members of Makouti Agro-Enterprise and staff from local peer organizations and the Ministry of Agriculture to help develop work plans, improve communication and decision-making, and measure progress towards program objectives and business goals.

Self-empowerment models
It was clear from interviews with key stakeholders that F2F has a greater likelihood of longer-term impacts related to food security, environmental protection, and economic growth when self-empowerment models are applied. When individuals, organizations, and communities participate in processes that allow them to self-identify their own strengths and needs, they are more likely to take ownership of change. Some volunteers were more effective at this approach than others. Those who built on existing systems, structures, and local knowledge were highly valued by F2F hosts and partners.

Innovation
F2F country staff and volunteers played a key role in identifying and supporting “early adopters” of agricultural innovation systems. Innovation champions who were able to turn their interaction with F2F into rich, life-changing experiences and who played a role in multiplying those efforts through strong influence and reach to others were identified in each country. Several of those featured in this report reflect these “early adopters and developers of agricultural innovations.” Their stories are critical in extending and multiplying the reach and impact of F2F. Peers look to many of these innovators as credible sources of knowledge and as role models for new practice. Additionally, many are actively engaged in the informal teaching of others.

One example is Erenda Lopez, a farmer in Nicaragua who, as a result of her learning from F2F, has turned her backyard into an organic production learning center. She has trained over a thousand women across the country who then returned to their own communities to start organic gardens and who continue to spread knowledge to their peers. Over the course of this program cycle, this innovative host has created a business for herself and is now a well sought-after agricultural and climate-change education consultant for women’s groups, agricultural organizations, government ministries, and schools in Nicaragua.

Several other of these innovators are featured in the cases section of this report.
Host-volunteer relationships
Participants in the case study, including hosts, staff, volunteers, and partners, all commented on the value of relationships formed through the F2F program. Important elements include trust, respect, cultural competence, follow up/feedback, and ongoing communication.

According to stakeholders, a number of factors enhanced the effectiveness of volunteer assignments. Assignments led to fruitful results when recommendations or advice from volunteers were appropriate for the context in which they worked. For example, consideration of material costs and availability, infrastructure (e.g., electricity), labor requirements, climate issues, common pests, and soil type were important and often different than what the volunteer was used to. Many respondents felt that repeat volunteers tended to be more effective for a number of reasons: they are able to hit the ground running, have a better understanding of the context, and have already established trust with the participants. Volunteers with prior international experiences, such as the Peace Corps, that help build capacity in cultural sensitivity, adapting work practices, and working with limited resources seem to benefit the volunteer experience.

Participants also explained the importance of receiving follow-up support after volunteers left the country. Many talked about having contact with volunteers directly for support, while others engaged with the F2F in-country staff to ensure they were on the right track. Hosts who received ongoing support from other Extension agents or partnering organizations in country felt that this was necessary for the sustainability of their change in practices.

Many volunteers conveyed that pre-trip preparations and orientation were important to their ability to achieve their objectives in country. In some cases, volunteers had an opportunity to communicate with previous volunteers and field staff prior to their departure, which seemed to greatly increase their understanding of the project objectives and how their assignments fit into broader program goals. A number of volunteers felt it provided a clearer understanding of the country context, helping them plan and facilitate their assignments effectively.

Common impacts across the four countries
The overall change that the USAID F2F program seeks is to generate rapid, sustained, and broad-based economic growth in the agricultural sector. This case study evaluation reveals that the implementation of the POA F2F program has resulted in improvements in agricultural production, productivity, handling, processing, business management, marketing, sales, consumer education, and other aspects of agricultural development. For example, a number of the POA F2F hosts have clearly changed their practices as a result of participating in the F2F program and adopting volunteer recommen-
dations. These changes in practices include how they care for their livestock and other animals, manage pests and diseases, market their crops and products, and add value to their products, resulting in increases in annual gross sales and income for the host. In addition to these economic benefits, this case study evaluation reveals a number of other changes or benefits that hosts have received beyond the primary goal of agricultural improvement. Below are some key impact themes that case study participants spoke to.

**Self-empowerment and thinking differently**

Many of the hosts we spoke to talked about feeling empowered by the opportunity to earn money, learn new skills, or improve farming practices. Being connected to others through the program had a positive effect on the way participants felt about themselves. This inspired them to try things. Numerous participants expressed a sense of pride in what they were able to accomplish, whether learning how to save money, lowering the burden of work, or having more money to spend.

This stood out among many female hosts in particular. Many hosts said they began to think about their practice differently as a result of their experience with F2F volunteers. Often this was due to being introduced to new perspectives and trying out new practices. For example, one host said:

> I tried using the type of pipe he told me to use and it did not work. But I knew what he was telling me. I had to find a way to bring the water up to irrigate the beds. So I looked around my farm, and found some old tubes (with smaller girth), and it worked. —F2F Guyana host

Another expressed outcome was the mental health benefits from working with plants. Several participants mentioned feeling less depressed, more spiritually alive, and more relaxed and at ease when they are working with their plants. Many hosts expressed appreciation for F2F volunteers for opening their hearts to the benefits of horticulture beyond monetary gain.

**More children in school and more healthful food for the family**

Additional impacts related to improved educational access and food security for families. Many participants talked about using increased income from product sales to pay school fees for their children. Aside from increased access to education, participants are producing more food and using it for household consumption and selling it. Participants reported having more healthful food and a better understanding of the nutritional aspects of the food they serve their family. At the same time, a number of participants are applying improved food handling practices, resulting in a more hygienic preparation of food and a reduced risk of food-borne illness. These impacts align with key indicators of the USAID’s Feed the Future
initiative goal of “sustainably reducing global poverty and hunger,” measured in part by the “improved nutritional status of women and children.”

Bi-directional learning

In-country stakeholders talked about the benefits of external (volunteer) expertise in a number of ways. A common description of volunteers is that they provide hosts, staff, and partners with new perspectives, insight into specific problems, and possible solutions. Their questions, thoughts, and sharing of experiences spark innovation, creativity, new ideas, and new ways of thinking about agricultural practices. Volunteers can provide more specialized technical assistance for generalists in the country, and repeat volunteers are able to reaffirm what other volunteers have recommended, providing a sense of encouragement to hosts as they try out new practices.

Overall, hosts enjoyed learning about alternative ways of doing things, whether a new practice or technology or a different style of teaching or engaging people. At the same time, volunteers were asked how, if at all, their experiences resulted in learning that benefited them personally and/or professionally when they returned home. A number of volunteers talked about appreciating their increased understanding of international development work and the situations of people in resource-deprived environments. For the most part, volunteers expressed deep gratitude for the people they worked with in country because they made them feel welcome and allowed them to try out new ways of working.

Many also expressed how the F2F experience improved their ability to work with different attitudes, learning the importance of letting go of typical American norms such as an intense focus on time. Volunteers said they learned to relax, be flexible, and honor the things that people in other cultures value more than money, such as social gatherings and sharing food. Others talked about learning from people who have undergone severe political, social, and environmental changes, learning to adapt to new situations, to work with limited resources, and to resilience through challenging times. In the words of one volunteer:

It has impacted my views around my work. One of the things that struck me while I was in Nicaragua was the resourcefulness and strength of all the people I met and worked with. Their ability to recognize the resources they have around them and use them in some way was amazing. Especially coming from a place where we have so much. I have become more aware of what I do have and what I have access to and thinking about different ways to use different things in both my personal and professional life.
—F2F Nicaragua volunteer

Those who engage in community development in their home states talked about applying what they learned to their work with diverse communities and feeling more comfortable engaging people in ways

that are conscious of underlying assumptions and sensitive to cultural considerations.

**Recommendations**

This case study evaluation has been useful for many reasons. It has provided an in-depth analysis of the program and identified what worked well and the impact the program is having on the lives of its recipients. It has also provided an opportunity to systematically review lessons learned during the last five years and hopefully apply that knowledge to future programmatic decisions. The following recommendations for future POA F2F program implementation are based on the lessons learned from this case study evaluation.

**Integration of program development, implementation, and evaluation**

First, increase the overall effectiveness of the program by integrating program development, implementation, and evaluation. F2F operates in a complex and changing environment that involves multiple actors working across sectors with different historical and cultural backgrounds. This complexity can undermine a shared understanding about the unique role F2F can play within a particular context. A number of frameworks are well suited for this context, including collective impact and whole measures. These frameworks can provide a common language for enhanced learning and decision-making at every level of the program.

Then, reframe and expand the program model from expert to knowledge exchange. In recent years, an agricultural innovation systems model has emerged that portrays multiple, interacting forces influencing decision-making, rather than the linear, one-way flow of information. Innovation comes from many sources and involves the co-production of knowledge through collective effort. Some of the volunteers themselves acknowledged the importance of such an approach. In the words of one:

"I want to engage, learn from them, know what they are doing, and then figure out how to take that and add to it. That was a bit of a struggle because their understanding is very much centered on the expert model, where I come and give and they receive it."

**Contextually appropriate monitoring and evaluation system**

Developing a monitoring and evaluation system that informs the decisions made by hosts, program staff, in-country partners, and USAID is a fundamental challenge to the sustainability of any impact beyond a particular program cycle. Addressing this challenge begins with identifying baseline data of relevance to hosts and the decisions they face. Once identified, program staff and those responsible for
monitoring and evaluation can then translate these data to the mon-
itoring, evaluation, and reporting requirements of USAID. This over-
all approach is relevant across USAID’s priorities for the program.

**Economic development**

USAID interest in the development of the agriculture sector begins
with the hosts operating at different levels within and across sec-
tors. Putting the host at the center requires identifying economic in-
dicators and proxy measures that inform their decisions. For exam-
ple, small business owners are interested in information that informs
their decisions related to planning, reducing cost, and understanding
the growth of their respective businesses. Once these indicators and
measures of interest are identified, they then can be translated into
the results of interest to USAID.

**Organizational capacity**

With an increased focus on capacity building at organizational and
systems levels, M&E systems should include appropriate tools and
indicators to measure organizational development of individual insti-
tutions as well as across value chains and sectors.

**Environment**

Procedures need to be developed and implemented that review and
audit the compliance of the program with the USAID environmental
guidelines. A baseline understanding of key environmental threats
in each particular context is necessary in order to measure change,
mitigate any adverse impacts, and ensure compliance with interna-
tional environmental regulations. Systematic consideration of the
impacts of hosts and F2F activities on the environment is essential
for ensuring sustainability.

**Gender**

Participation, opportunity, benefit distribution, and burden of work-
load are just a few examples of what needs to be considered in
order to promote gender equity throughout the program. Utilizing
findings from existing studies in these areas and analyzing the
situation of women and men in each context at the outset of the
program will help develop a system to support capacity building,
program management, and monitoring and evaluating impacts
related to gender.

**Change in practice**

Whether measuring outcomes related to economic development, en-
vironmental conservation, or gender equality, monitoring and evalu-
adesign should focus on change in practice rather than recom-
mandations adopted. The term “adoption” infers that a new practice
was tried out and maintained as a new way of doing something
and that farmers are implementing it without the need for technical
support. Because many of the assignments were recent, and many
hosts are still testing them out, caution must be used when report-
ing actual “adoption” of recommendations. Many
farmers also reported having to adapt, rather than adopt, new prac-
Adaptation is a valuable measure in learning and practice. It reflects a deep understanding of the concept or practice rather than a ritually compliant behavior. This is important in terms of knowledge transfer from one practice to another.

### Capacity building

USAID’s Feed the Future initiative emphasizes the importance of addressing human and institutional capacity issues, focusing on strengthening actors across the agricultural innovation system. Through its multi- and cross-sector relationships at the country level, F2F can uniquely position itself to address this priority. One strategy is to be more intentional about coupling the capacity building of staff with that of partnering organizations. While ample evidence demonstrates where this has taken place in areas of more technical agricultural knowledge and expertise, more can be done when it comes to enhancing the educational outreach capacity of universities, ministries of agriculture, regional and national associations, and cooperatives. Areas of particular importance are leadership development, planning, research, evaluation, and educational program design.

### The cases: Guyana

#### Context and country strategy

The F2F program strategy in Guyana looks at the best way to adaptively achieve change, defined by the in-country staff as “overall improvements in the quality of life of Guyanese people.” They define success as “an improved standard of living for the host, based on a strategy that focuses on upward mobility, connectedness, and market-based stakeholders.” The country coordinator, Kelvin Craig, looks for opportunities to establish new connections, strengthen existing relationships, and identify areas for synergy while ensuring no harm to the environment. For example, through a partnership with the local POA chapter and Caribbean Self Reliance International (CASRI), the program began to collaborate with an innovative shade house project funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in 2010. Through this partnership, they have been able to leverage volunteer resources in a sustainable way by filling the gaps of ongoing services and programs and complementing, not duplicating, the work of others.

#### Contributions to success

Peers describe the leadership style of Guyana’s F2F country coordinator as unique. He is intentionally focused on mentoring and building the capacity of “young heads,” a term used to describe young people in Guyana. He describes himself as an “old head,” an experienced person who benefits from the rising generation’s new ideas and motivation. The principles that guide his strategy in implementing the F2F program have been realized over many years of managing the program. They include:
The main thing is that F2F cannot work alone. I don’t see how it could work alone in any country. It has to link with something else with just technical support. It’s not money. It’s not policy. It can’t change government policy. Countries like Guyana from time to time may not have certain inputs of fertilizers or whatever. It can’t do that either. It has to rely on its intended link into something else, something bigger.

—Country coordinator, F2F Guyana

- Identifying and establishing strategic alliances and networking with ongoing efforts in the country
- Selecting the right people
- Capacity building and education at all levels
- Evolution through evaluation and
- Empowering people

**Strategic alliances**

The key to F2F Guyana’s effective implementation of the program is based on their concerted efforts to identify, establish, and maintain strategic alliances with other ongoing agricultural efforts within the country. F2F Guyana’s emphasis is on providing technical assistance in areas of special need and avoiding the duplication of efforts with other agricultural service providers. The initial plan for this program cycle was to piggyback the F2F program on the Guyana Trade and Investment Support (GTIS) project, funded by the USAID mission in country. The project aimed to increase nontraditional and value-added exports in Guyana and envisioned that F2F volunteers would provide much of the technical support to farmers.

However, GTIS ended up taking a different direction, hiring field-based technical specialists from another firm. The country coordinator explained how he needed to re-conceptualize in order to leverage the F2F volunteer resources in the most effective way. He then turned to his network of partners, including EMPRETEC, a United Nations program focused sustainable, innovative, and internationally competitive enterprises, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), and the local POA chapter to look for other ways F2F could be built into existing efforts. He became intrigued by an IDB call for proposals for a new shade house project in 2010 and volunteered his time to help the two implementing partners, the local POA chapter and CASRI, design the project in a way that would utilize the expertise of F2F volunteers.

The project ended up being the biggest site for F2F volunteers over the five-year grant cycle, with 12 volunteers supporting the project in various ways. “We created the need without having to ask the head of another agency what they thought,” says the country coordinator. He explained that it is typical for Guyanese farmers to benefit from several public and international technical assistance agencies at a time, and a stand-alone technical assistance program is rarely successful. According to Craig, the network of strategic alliances related to agriculture in Guyana meets to discuss collaboration and accountability regularly.
Selecting the right people
In-country staff described the factors that contribute to a successful assignment. Some of the core characteristics include the relationships that took place between the various stakeholders and how selecting the right people and finding the right fit made all the difference.

Hosts. The F2F Guyana team is strategic about pairing volunteers with hosts who are innovative, willing to take risks, committed, and linked to other agriculture sector development efforts. After an initial volunteer visit, the F2F team assesses whether the host has demonstrated the above qualities. Once identified, these hosts continue to participate in volunteer activities in order to continue their learning and skill building throughout the program cycle.

Staff. The country coordinator is intentional about hiring field staff with a background in agronomy, as he feels this is important to providing ongoing support to farmers. Throughout the program cycle he has recruited younger field officers whom he thinks offers a complementary perspective to the “old heads” (older experts) in Guyana. He takes pride in acting as a mentor and bringing along his staff to meetings with key stakeholders in an effort to better connect them to the networks in country.

Partners. When seeking out partnerships, the F2F Guyana team looks for projects that are well resourced in terms of finances, human resources, and materials but lack expertise in particular technical areas. The country coordinator feels collaborations with projects that already provide technical expertise is not an effective use of F2F resources. From his perspective, an important expectation for the partnership is that partners must be able to agree on common objectives and the principles that guide their work.

Volunteers. Just as important as the right host and right field staff is the right type of volunteer. The country coordinator dedicates the first few days of the volunteer assignment to assess the volunteer, including his or her way of working, preferences, teaching style, experience working cross-culturally with people from diverse backgrounds, ability to relate to local farmers, and level of understanding about the Guyana context. Some volunteers require more “hand-holding” than others. He feels the most effective ones are those who have experience with the program, are flexible, and can adapt practices to the particular circumstances under which people live and work.

Capacity building at all levels
It was clear that the F2F volunteers contributed much more than direct support to farmers. Having a base level of expertise that grew over time strengthened the shade house project in particular. Field staff employed by the project and the F2F program reported learning a great deal over the course of the two-year project from a number of sources: IICA, St. Stanislaus college farm, and F2F volunteers. Outside experts built on their existing knowledge from their

Affirming recommendations
When asked about the contributions of specific volunteers, evaluators commonly heard that the volunteers did not always bring new information, but rather affirmed what others had advised. In-country staff felt that reinforcing recommendations acted as a catalyst for change. They explained that repeating recommendations also had the potential to reach a wider scope of operators. As one field officer put it, “each volunteer brings at least something new,” whether it be a new practice, a new technology, or a different style of teaching or engaging others.

The country coordinator gave the example of volunteer Samuel Shaefer-Joel, whose assignment focused on pesticide management. He worked largely in-house with shade house project staff after conducting a field visit. Together, they agreed on a small number of operators to pilot a natural pesticide. The idea was to test it out, collect results, and be in touch with the volunteer after he left. As it turned out, a number of staff did not feel competent to do this on their own. Subsequent volunteers helped build their confidence and make sure they applied the pesticide correctly, as it was also a new practice for them.
own academic training in agronomy, and their personal and professional experiences in the field of agriculture in Guyana.

Volunteer Howard Fenton talked about the importance of developing the in-country capacity at an organizational level in order to be able to follow up with hosts after leaving. He believes in order for volunteer assignments to be truly effective, it is necessary to train others in country to be able to pass the information on to them and reach more farmers.

Most of the hosts we interviewed could not recall the names of the volunteers who had visited them on their farms, and when asked about their source of knowledge, their first response was “Panday” or “Gavin,” staff employed by the shade house project. Some of them also mentioned F2F field officers. This demonstrates the indirect learning that takes place when volunteers not only strengthen the capacity of producers but do this alongside field officers.

As Franklyn Harvey, the project director of CASRI, explained:

They (volunteers) have gone into the field but they can’t sustain it. As I mentioned, farmers will see it, hear it at one point, but if left for 6 months, they will go back to whatever, it doesn’t stick, it doesn’t stay. That’s where the field extension officers come in... the real training should be with the field officers.

He also suggested that if volunteers communicate with each other before traveling to Guyana, they can make better recommendations based on learning from previous volunteers.

A former field officer who worked with the program for nine years was able to apply what he learned from volunteers to achieve a graduate degree in agronomy in the U.S. He talked about how he was able to transfer knowledge gained through the program to students in the U.S. He believes that the bi-directional exchange of information benefits people in the U.S. and people in the F2F core countries.

**Evolution through evaluation**

The Guyana country coordinator identifies areas of potential and growth and seeks to build off of previous assignments in order to support sustainability. When something does not seem to work well, or a partner shifts directions, he tries something new. He is also aware that innovation requires patience, persistence, and flexibility. He explained how he is intentional about continually testing the waters:

I knew this was not sustainable in certain areas. Even the first set of handouts we gave out, we said there were other options beside sand and paddy husk... you have to have open ears on the ground, listening all the time. You are never sure that any one thing is going to work, until it works.
Empowerment
The country team believes helping to fuel self-empowerment is an important aspect of the work. They intentionally look for ways to involve people such as women and unemployed youth who have not had opportunities to engage in income generation activities.

Patricia Fellows, a volunteer who produced videos about particular hosts and their stories, talked about the impact of the program on women in terms of empowerment and the benefit of showcasing these stories to encourage others to get involved:

_I think that the impact of that (the video) is that the people who see it are going to say, “wow, I can do that and I can start feeding my family and sustaining our family economically. I didn’t think I could do that as a woman.”_

The subcase: Shade house project
The first few years of the program were more about, in the words of the country coordinator, “nibbling at the bits.” What he meant by this was that volunteers were sent in different directions, but were unable to fully integrate with other existing agricultural development efforts.

The shade house project was a two-year intervention funded by the International Development Bank in 2010 and implemented by two partnering organizations: the Partners of the Americas Guyana Chapter and Caribbean Self Reliance International (CARSJ). The project aimed to improve the economic welfare of rural households and disadvantage populations through self-employment by mobilizing human and other resources, rehabilitating and constructing at least 20 shade houses, providing learning materials and training on shade house design and production for farmers, and promoting marketing and networking of hydroponic vegetable producers.

The country coordinator saw this project as an opportunity to write F2F volunteer assistance into the project in order to build the capacity of shade house operators, extension agents, and local partners in specialty areas related to shade house construction, production, management, and marketing.

The project has demonstrated not only great potential for impacts at all levels (individual, family, community, country, and even regionally) but also short-term outcomes that seem to have improved the quality of life of Guyanese people by providing an alternative to traditional farming. The collaboration worked well, with the project providing inputs (plastic sheeting, fertilizer) and in-country Extension agents, and F2F providing technical expertise in particular areas related to hydroponics and shade house operations, including construction, substrate preparation, care and management of plants, sanitation, marketing, networking, and basic record keeping. The opportunity allowed for capacity building, learning, and sharing among new shade house operators, in-country professionals, and F2F staff.

It just so happens that the shade house project and F2F have something in common with my own DNA, and that is EMPOWERING PEOPLE.
—F2F country coordinator, Guyana
F2F not only supported the project with technical assistance but brought volunteers Patricia Fellows and Cheryl Diermyer from Wisconsin to produce low-cost videos showcasing the success of independent producers whose lives have been changed by the initiative. This has created both a buzz and buy-in from the Ministries of Agriculture and Education and other international development organizations working in areas of food security and climate change. Several of these, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and IICA, are starting to see Guyana with the potential to feed the entire Caribbean. The videos are also being used as an educational tool to promote hydroponics and shade house production among farmers in country and to motivate them to get involved.

By the end of the two-year period, the project had constructed 52 shade houses against a target of 20, trained 79 new shade house operators against a target of 75, and trained 475 home-based operators against a target of 200. Forty-one percent of the shade house operators and 58% of the home-based operators trained were women. Additionally, an entire component of the shade house project was devoted to network development. In 2012, the Ministry of Agriculture convened a group of partners around the country to meet regularly to share information around hydroponics and shade house operations, including IICA, the POA country chapter, and F2F staff.

*It started from zero when I was there the first time, and the last time I was there, there were 36 in operation and a bunch of others under construction.* —Pete Wotowiec, volunteer

The benefits of being able to easily access expertise in the areas of need was highlighted by F2F staff and the former shade house project coordinator:

*It was a great help. They came with knowledge and experience, taught us a whole lot of things. Even if we have people like them in Guyana, to access them takes a lot of time, most will be working with government systems and hard to get. They really complement the project on both sides. The F2F program benefited the shade house project and vice versa.* —Gavin, shade house project coordinator

While the shade house project hired extension agents to follow up with producers on a regular basis in the field, F2F was able to fill the gaps in areas where the extension agents did not have expertise. The country coordinator said that having volunteers work directly with farmers fosters trust. “If you can have more direct access to the people who matter, and by that I mean farmers and agri-businesses, you have more success than trying to go through the Ministry,” explained Mr. Craig. Having technical experts from outside Guyana come for a focused, short-term assignment was also highlighted as a unique and important component of the program design:
Two weeks is a non-threatening period of time. Volunteers do not come to take over the job of someone in country. A short, focused assignment allows the volunteer to concentrate fully on what he or she is doing in country and not feel burdened by personal or other work issues. —F2F Guyana country coordinator

Benefits of shade house production
Stakeholders involved with the shade house project identified a number of benefits of this type of farming for people in Guyana. It is weather-resistant; shade house beds are protected from rain and wind by plastic sheeting, and beds are raised to avoid flooding. Also, there seems to be a common sentiment among numerous producers that horticulture is therapeutic. Christine Wotoweic, an F2F volunteer, came to talk about the therapeutic benefits of working with plants. According to the former shade house project coordinator, “It makes people feel good, it is empowering, therapeutic, and low maintenance.” He said this is especially true for elderly people, housewives, and young people. The practice provides a relaxing, enjoyable outlet for people.

Impacts
Hosts who received support in shade house production and marketing reported a range of benefits, including:

- Increased income from selling produce at the market
- Household savings from eating what they grow
- Supplementing other family members’ income
- Improved business outcomes from better planning
- Reducing costs and understanding the growth of their business
- Improved environmental practices and natural resource management

A description of key impact areas and relevant changes in practices are highlighted among select hosts in table 2. Table 3 lists appropriate practices associated with particular volunteers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host</th>
<th>Impact area</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Associated change in practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Valentine/Kitaka     | Economic growth              | Increased annual net income from $491 to $5,000 over the 5-year program period | Improved irrigation system  
Making compost tea and using it for fertilization  
Aeration of soil flushing  
Use of natural pesticides and sanitation of beds to reduce pests  
Use of new plastic bags to store lettuce  
Use of insect traps to ward off insects (traps brought in from the US by Kitaka) |
|                      | Environmental conservation   | At least 15 staff have improved working conditions. Consumers of his produce have reduced health risks due to the elimination of all synthetic pesticides since 2011. |                                                                                                                                                               |
| Olive Goochran       | Economic growth              | Started selling produce at local market  
Extra income spent on clothes and other commodities such as jewelry for herself  
Increased household savings from consumption of the produce she grows | Shade house construction  
Weeding  
Pest identification and management  
Application of fertilizers  
Marketing  
Watering plants, overall management of shade house has a therapeutic effect on mental health |
|                      | Improved quality of life     | Reports feeling happier, more relaxed                                      |                                                                                                                                                               |
| Kemwattie Ramnarine  | Economic growth              | Reports making money from selling quality vegetables at the market         | Shade house construction  
Pest management using natural pesticides  
Use of raw materials – paddy husk and sand; water-based                                                                                               |
|                      | Environmental conservation   | Replaced chemical pesticides with natural ones  
Has increased the use of raw materials to conserve water             |                                                                                                                                                               |
| Earnest Cummings     | Economic growth from producing and selling high quality lettuce         | Income increased by $400 per year in under two years                        | Shade house construction  
Pest management  
Shade house management  
Record keeping using ledgers  
No longer uses chemical-based weedicides; applies a natural weedicide using garlic and peppers taught to him by an F2F volunteer |
|                      | Environmental conservation   | Reports discontinuation of use of chemical herbicides                      |                                                                                                                                                               |
| Sigmund McKenzie     | Organizational development  | Simple record keeping system in place. Reports improved planning and decision-making | Record keeping using simple ledgers; documents income, sales, and expenditures on monthly basis                                                                 |
|                      | Economic growth              | Increased income by $245 per month over an eight-month period               | Better planning, improved nursery management, including transplanting seedlings                                                                          |
Table 3. Appropriate practices associated with hydroponics and shade house production linked to F2F volunteers, Guyana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate practice</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>Specifics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction/Location</td>
<td>Pete Wotowiec</td>
<td>Construction of shade house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection/Preparation of substrate</td>
<td>Pete Wotowiec, Obadiah M. Njue</td>
<td>Anchor plants, produce proper aeration, hold moisture, plant multiple crops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care and management of plants</td>
<td>Grady Sampson</td>
<td>Initial drip irrigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obadiah M. Njue</td>
<td>Pest and disease management, Plant inspection, Harvesting, Sanitation, General shade house management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pete Wotowiec</td>
<td>Nursery management: type of medium (sterile) fertilizer used (hydroponic fertilizer); moisture content of substrate planting space and depth; fertilizing and watering; plant inspection (pest and diseases); IPM; sanitation; harvesting (post and pre); record keeping (production)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robin Brumsfield</td>
<td>Record keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Howard Fenton</td>
<td>Record Keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Derek Carmona</td>
<td>Seedlings, Disease identification for celery (Cercospora fungus) Reinforced what Dr. Njue said, Nursery management: sowing, transplanting (seedlings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christine Wotowiec</td>
<td>Horticulture therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michael Driver</td>
<td>Drip irrigation, Compost tea, Fertilizing and watering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and distribution</td>
<td>Robin Brumsfield</td>
<td>Record keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mike Harker</td>
<td>Group marketing, Quality of products, Contracts, Uniformity, Contracts (word of mouth/written)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Howard Fenton</td>
<td>Record keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Mike Harker</td>
<td>Group marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cheryl Diermyer and Pat Fellows</td>
<td>Low-cost video production and use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Howard and Sam Katzman</td>
<td>Step-by-step video</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A number of the shade house operators have tapped into new opportunities to expand their business and some have even spun off into new directions. For example, both F2F field officers have started their own shade house operations as a result of what they have learned. They are now able to better support participants with lessons from their own experiences. Others reported feeling an increased sense of community connection by participating in shade house workshops, exchange visits, volunteer visits to their operations, and other learning forums.

Environmental stewardship has also increased as a result of F2F. Many of the shade house producers have replaced chemical pesticides with a natural one made of garlic and pepper, a recipe introduced by a volunteer. With the introduction of hydroponics and use of paddy husk and sand instead of soil, producers are using less chemical fertilizer. At the same time, shade house operations are allowing farmers to cope with the threat of floods as the raised beds and plastic sheeting help prevent rain damage to their crops.

**Driven by persistence: Earnest Cummings**

Earnest Cummings presents a special story of a persistent young man from a nonagricultural background. Cummings was trained as an accountant. By the time he reached his thirties, he was volunteering his time to conduct audits, but he did not feel genuinely passionate about numbers. In 2010, his friend Sigmund McKenzie told him about an opportunity to become trained in shade house production. Cummings was intrigued. After attending a number of workshops about shade house construction, natural pest control, feeding, record keeping, and lettuce production through hydroponics, he confirmed his love of agriculture.

Over the initial six-month period, Cummings worked day in, day out to get his structure just right. Why he never gave up is believed by some to be a result of his character: “It was just his inner strength; it had nothing to do with us,” says the F2F country coordinator. Cummings was described by F2F staff as a “shining example of persistence,” meticulous and committed. “Let’s say he’s in there (the shade house) for an hour. The hour is well spent on whatever he is doing. You never hear about him having a lot of pest problems. He would check daily,” reported an F2F field officer who says not all producers are as observant as Cummings. This is a prime example of how choosing the “right” host is an important variable in an effective F2F program. According to staff, Cummings is motivated, willing to take risks, and innovative in his thinking.

During a participant observation visit by the M&E team, Cummings talked about his longtime interest in farming and how his reason for choosing to study accounting was due to external pressure. “I always loved farming... I think it’s more relaxing, much more than sitting down and putting figures down. It’s not too heavy on the mind.” His accounting background, however, proved not to be a waste. He attended a training with volunteer Howard Fenton on how to create simple ledgers to keep track of basic information such as monthly sales, expenditures, and income and how to use the in-
formation to inform business decisions. Cummings described the benefits of this new skill set: “If you want to manage and want to get ahead then you have to think of little ways to do so with cutting costs and everything. This is something new and I would never have thought of it.”

Cummings currently has contracts with Winjama International Hotel and Snack-it restaurant. He supplies them regularly with lettuce and sometimes celery and tomatoes grown in his 18’ x 24’ shade house situated on the land he lives on. The money he receives from these sales is his primary source of income. Since he started, his annual income has increased by approximately $400 USD every year. He also reported a change in his environmental protection practices: “We no longer use weedicide (herbicide). We no longer encourage that.” He made this change after learning about natural pesticides from an F2F volunteer. In addition to volunteers, Cummings attributes his learning to the shade house project staff and other hosts, most notably Fitzroy Valentine.

What keeps him motivated? He responds, “I love the fact that I can get up in the morning and work and at the end of it you know why you’re working. At the end of it you sell and you have something growing.”

The “Boss Lady”: Khemwattie Ramnarine

Khemwattie Ramnarine is another example of a natural-born entrepreneur. When the shade house project began, it was her husband, Kentolall, who attended the initial trainings in Georgetown. Unfortunately, he soon after suffered a stroke, which left him unable to carry on with the operation. Ms. Ramnarine immediately stepped in, attending workshops and hosting visits from a handful of F2F volunteers. According to the F2F country coordinator, “she became the boss lady,” meaning, she has taken charge of the operation. She now has four covered shade houses and four tables for home-based production. One section uses a water-based system, consisting of a water base and sand paddy husk. Another section is dedicated to “normal” shade house production, using inorganic fertilizers under the plastic shade. After realizing how plastic roofing increased the amount of produce she was able to grow and improved its quality, she invested in plastic roofing for all of her beds. Prior to her and her husband’s involvement with the shade house, she had no material. She credits her success to the initial donations of plastic and paddy husk from the shade house project, and the technical support and training she received from shade house extension agents and F2F volunteers.

Spinning off new businesses: Sigmund McKenzie

According to the country coordinator, the F2F work in Guyana has been opportunistic. In other words, he looks for ways to position the program to address unmet needs and in areas where there is potential to grow. Through his involvement with the project as an F2F field officer, Sigmund McKenzie identified a seedling gap and decided to grow a business out of it. When the shade house project started
in 2010, the only seedling supplier was located in an area far from Georgetown, where many producers reside. McKenzie took what he learned from F2F volunteers such as Derek Carmona, who taught him about nursery management, and started his own seedling business.

After visiting McKenzie’s shade house, which is situated on the land next to his home in Georgetown, the evaluation team learned that it took him nearly six months to become successful. He had a number of trials and errors to learn from before he was able to grow high quality seedlings. McKenzie speaks of a ledger-based record keeping system as key to his planning and decision-making. He uses the information he collects to project future production, weekly sales, and incidentals. He says the system also helps with reducing costs by calculating exactly how many seeds he needs to buy to cover a bag of the planting medium. Overall, it helps him understand the growth of the business. For example, he’s been able to see his progress, moving from an income of $5 to $250 U.S. per month over an eight-month period. McKenzie reduced his appointment with F2F to part time in order to dedicate more time to his seedling business. He continues to share lessons learned with other producers, including his message that patience is a virtue. He says new shade house producers should not expect to make a lot of money for the first four to five months after starting a new operation. However, if persistent, they will eventually reap the rewards.

Learning from natural born innovators: Fitzroy Valentine

Referred to by staff and volunteers as “an ideal host,” “a natural born entrepreneur,” and “a veteran of shade houses,” Fitzroy Valentine (nicknamed Valo) is a perfect example of an F2F host who thinks in innovative ways. He has been involved with the F2F program since its inception in Guyana in the 1990s, through his membership with Marfriends Cooperative. He exemplifies the country strategy focus on choosing the right people. This has been made obvious by his commitment to the program, willingness to adapt and build on recommendations, creative thinking, resourcefulness, and relentless optimism towards making things work. He was one of the first participants to benefit from the POA/CASRI shade house project in 2010, building upon knowledge and skills gained from previous F2F assignments. Valentine has demonstrated progress in a number of areas, most notably increased production, increased sales, increased income, expansion of markets, and environmental conservation practices. He and his new partner, Kitaka Craig, now operate the largest shade house operation in the entire country.
Unique to this host are his innovative thinking, ability to adapt recommendations to his own situation, and supporting the growth of others by helping them see things from a different perspective. He keeps records of all volunteer assignments, dating back to 1994. The records are detailed and neatly organized in a three-ring binder kept at his farm. Randomly choosing any name in the book, he can explain the ways in which he benefited from each specific volunteer. From Dr. Obadiah Njue, who left him written guidelines for pesticide management, to Peter Wotowiec, whom he refers to as his “rock of knowledge” for helping him turn his chicken coop into a well-constructed shade house. Off the top of his head, he mentions the following as key areas of learning attributed to F2F: soil analysis, drainage systems, orchard management, and of course, shade house construction and management. He continues to list the key messages that he regularly passes on to new operators, such as consistency in timing of feeding the soil and watering plans.

As he talks about what he has learned, either directly from a volunteer or from a field officer connected to the program, he says, “This program can really change lives.” He then points to his 8,000-square-foot shade house operation and says, “F2F transformed this whole thing.”

When volunteer Pete Wotowiec recommended an irrigation drip system that he didn’t have money for, he experimented by making an overhead system out of local pipes that was less labor intensive (figure 2).

After visiting a number of F2F hosts/shade house operators, members of the evaluation team came to understand that many of the new shade house producers were introduced to hydroponics and shade house production after visiting Valo on his farm. “They just keep coming!” he says. He thinks that seeing the success of others motivates new producers to start their own operation. He attributes his own growth in shade house production to the opportunity to teach others. “You never really understand until you become a teacher.”
Valo credits F2F for increasing his credibility and ability to link up with other opportunities, including the Church of Latter Day Saints for seeds, fertilizer, and insecticide, an E.U. microfinance project, U.S. Ambassador funds, and a conference in the Caribbean as a member of the CASRI/POA shade house operation.

A number of volunteers who were interviewed mentioned Valo without prompting. Volunteer Obadiah Njue reported him as a dedicated host: “Valentine was very good. I was pleased following up when I visited. He was adopting things that we shared with him and because of that his production system was improving.”

Since the beginning of this particular program cycle, Valo has gained new knowledge and changed his practices in the following areas related to environmental conservation and natural resource management: drip irrigation, aeration of soil, flushing, use of natural pesticides (he completely eliminated all use of synthetic pesticides in 2011), sanitizing beds to reduce pests, application of insect traps to ward off insects, and making and applying compost tea as a fertilizer. He has also begun implementing more hygienic handling practices such as the use of new plastic bags for storing lettuce.

Last year, Valo partnered with a young man named Kitaka Craig, who had recently returned to Guyana after earning a graduate degree in computer science in the US. Kitaka focuses on the marketing aspect of the business while Valo remains focused on the production front. It was after this partnership began that the business started really taking off. The enterprise has increased income from a couple hundred US dollars to approximately $5,000 per year, with sales increasing from about $1,500 to more than $10,000 U.S. per year. They have so much demand from restaurants, hotels, and fast-food joints they are unable to keep up. Valo says one of the things he values most about the program are the relationships he has made.
Table 4. Select hosts who have demonstrated changes in practices associated with USAID Impact Areas, Guyana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USAID impact–related areas</th>
<th>Ramnarine</th>
<th>McKenzie</th>
<th>Cummings</th>
<th>Valentine/Craig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of natural pesticides/manual control of pesticides</td>
<td>X (experimental)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of sand and paddy husk (locally available raw materials)</td>
<td>X (also uses water-based)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycled wood for construction of shade house/discardd containers for home based</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water conservation: use of containers to recycle water for afternoon use</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing of technical (things to do with pests and disease, managing substrate, any production practices, marketing information, site visits)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint marketing</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of produce: visual – size, no insect blemishes (evidence is sales)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common brand: sign board hung on shade house to increase awareness</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic bags with logo (not used yet, plans for phase 2)</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New and improved packaging</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
<td>Planned for next phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency (does not include incidental customers)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 X=currently practicing

A discussion with in-country staff indicated that many of the hosts have not yet reached the marketing goals, as this is something they have just recently focused on. The goal is that, through support from the successor shade house project, producers will achieve their marketing goals (table 4).

The cases: Haiti

Context and country strategy

F2F in Haiti is implemented through the grassroots Haitian organization Makouti Agro-Enterprise. Makouti employs a number of key strategies in service of their mission, which is to “Increase the value of everything Haitian.” Makouti relies on F2F for capacity building and technical expertise to effect change at the individual, organizational, and community/country scale. According to F2F country director and staff, there are six core principles, operationalized in strategies that inform their approach. Described below, these can be thought of as core elements of Makouti’s “theory of change.” That is, to bring about the change they seek (increasing the value of everything Haitian) they employ these strategies.

The multiplying effectiveness of F2F in Haiti can be attributed to its integration within a local organization. F2F contributions toward
agriculture sector change and beyond are leveraged and multiplied through Makouti. Makouti is distinctive in that it is explicitly guided by a philosophy. The philosophy informs two core commitments of the organization: developing Haiti’s agricultural sector and supporting its members by developing the organization. These are both where F2F has made a significant impact. At its core, Makouti philosophy is grounded in a deep understanding of the relationship between development and capacity. In the context of F2F in Haiti, capacity is understood as including a psychological or empowerment dimension.

Contributions to success

Makouti formed as an organization in order to respond to conditions related to the status of agriculture and communities in Haiti. As such, they approach agricultural development in an integrated way that includes economic, socio-cultural, and environmental strategies. This is a core element of their philosophy, which has to do with addressing root causes of problems and issues. The staff and technicians are intentional about role modeling this philosophy by embedding it in daily practices and policies and by sharing leadership in ways that take advantage of each person’s strengths. In addition to the principles described below, the following are several additional elements of Makouti philosophy: Do things that are acceptable socially, foster ecological practices that pay back to the environment, respond to the needs of beneficiaries, create pride, create quality standards, go slowly and get quality right before growing, be self-sustaining, and return 20% of profits back to producers in the form of services or reduced-cost supplies.

Makouti has engaged F2F volunteers in operationalizing these principles, such as fostering ecological practices and creating quality standards.

Theory of change and applied philosophy

In addition to implementing the following core strategies, the staff engages in three practices that cut across these strategies: ensuring that conditions for success exist, monitoring and evaluation, and being adaptive to changing conditions and opportunities. They refer to the people they serve as “beneficiaries” rather than the term “host” used in other F2F countries.

Makouti theory of change & applied philosophy

The key principles of Makouti’s philosophy are:

- Do what we say we will do
- The success of one depends on the success of all
- Build confidence and competency
- Education with, for, and by everyone
- Gather people and organizations together to...
- Intentionally role-model philosophy

Q: What makes contact with Makouti different from all the other organizations?

A: The way they started with us and wanted to know our condition...
Do what we say we will do. The term used by staff to describe their commitment to deliver on promises is “exactitude.” This element of Makouti philosophy is an effort to be responsive to historical issues of political corruption, lack of follow-through on social or economic policy, and unstable infrastructure. Their understanding of this issue came from a study that assessed impact of various donors working in Haiti. The study found that these historical conditions have led to low confidence and distrust of support systems. Makouti determined that in order to have a lasting effect and shift what they refer to as the “Haitian mindset,” they must address these issues in an intentional way. As such, they maintain a commitment to providing reliable and consistent technical assistance and other supports. Some of the core strategies they employ include investigating problems, making course corrections quickly, and being intentional about not creating false hopes about what they can deliver. Farmer-to-Farmer plays a critical role in helping Makouti provide reliable and consistent technical expertise and building staff and system capacity related to that expertise.

Success of one depends on success of all. Makouti engages numerous intentional strategies to ensure the success of all, including its staff, its members, its partners, and the communities it works in. With regard to its members, when Makouti begins working with a producer to provide technical assistance and support, it sets up a contract with the entire family, not just the individual. Training opportunities and other resources are then made available not just to the main producer, but to his or her family. This level of engagement contributes to a higher level of buy-in and support from the family system and from their perspective is more likely to lead to a successful enterprise. Additionally, Makouti is intentional about employing “women-specific” strategies to better foster participation by women. For example, when they realized women were not able or being allowed to travel to attend trainings, they took the trainings to women’s homes.

Within the membership, Makouti staff and technicians encourage sharing of reports and information across people and communities. Their thinking is that if people are connected to each other and sharing experiences, they can learn from each other. They are also intentional about building friendships with the people they serve in order to engender trust.

Makouti is distinctive in thinking about partners as equal and necessary collaborators in bringing about their vision. They look for ways to reinforce the efforts of and support other organizations whose work is in alignment with theirs. For example, when an F2F volunteer is doing trainings, providing technical assistance, or building capacity in other ways, Makouti will invite members from their peer/partner organizations to learn alongside their members.

A core focus of their individual, organizational, and system capacity building is leadership. As staff they role model and encourage role modeling of success. They select producers to work with who demonstrate potential as influential community or organizational

Because of the principles of Makouti... we’ve sworn to do things with exactitude... if Makouti can’t deliver... it undermines trust between beneficiaries and Makouti.

—F2F staff member

(Leadership development) brings freedom from being mentally enslaved... so that we can be creative, empowered... and realize our full potential.

Competency includes knowledge of the site, it includes integrity; in Haiti we have a problem with trust and that is why a lot of projects fail. There is a lack of connection between beneficiaries and NGO... knowledge of the site includes our culture... because if you don’t know the culture it will be difficult to get the message across.

—Benito Jasmin

Development is not only money, it is the brain... the ideas.

—Beekeeper
leaders. Referencing one of the beekeepers who has seen tremendous success, both monetarily and personally, one staff member says: “Nicodeme... doesn’t have a degree... Makouti chooses to work with him because of his capacity... in his mind has a place where he is going... vision.”

Another key aspect of collective success is to engage producers across the generations. This reflects the organization’s interest in sustainable approaches and commitment to cultural values.

*When Haitians were brought from Africa, the collective values were broken. We’ve broken our value of education... and the value of education across generations.*
—Benito Jasmin

And lastly, the staff is intentional about who they engage with and support as a member or beneficiary. Their strategy involves providing initial opportunity to a wide range of people but then watching closely to see who demonstrates commitment and potential. They have criteria they use to select who they ultimately end up supporting. Volunteers may provide an initial training to a larger group, but then do focused one-to-one work with selected members or beneficiaries.

**Build confidence and competency.** In addition to building knowledge and skill, Makouti is intentional about building confidence and creating conditions for success. F2F offers technical assistance that contributes to individual and organizational capacity building through volunteer assignments focused on technical assistance and organizational development. Some of the core strategies they employ include member care, frequent communication, protecting personal information, and giving people a chance to experience success. Informing all of these is the development of an organizational and program culture that encourages entrepreneurship and innovation. They create conditions for effective risk-taking by building relationships of trust (delivering on promises), communicating and responding to needs, demonstrating learning from “mistakes,” cultivating shared leadership and problem solving, and putting in place supports that help mitigate risk (e.g., an insurance system).

Leadership development, in addition to technical knowledge/skill development, is central to building capacity in that it helps producers believe in themselves and allows them to plan effectively.

**Education with, for, and by everyone.** Farmer-to-Farmer volunteers are central to this core strategy by providing formal training and on-the-ground demonstration of agricultural and business practices. Farmer-to-Farmer field staff and office staff then provide ongoing follow up on what was learned after the volunteer leaves. Participants at trainings are often given something to take home to share with other family members, encouraging the spread of information. Makouti encourages an organizational and network culture where people learn with and from each other.

*We did not have enough food growing up, but my mom taught me to share. Whatever I had, I shared. I have that still...when in school they called the names of kids whose families could not pay... we 10 of us stood in solidarity...we created a coop inside the school for food. This was my first experience with organizing.*
—Benito Jasmin
One example of this is a practice Makouti has of bringing together community leaders on a regular basis for the purposes of sharing experience and learning together. One of the functions of the Makouti network is to facilitate exchanges across producers and communities. Benito Jasmin’s radio show on Radio Nirvana also provides a venue to reach many others with information sharing related to F2F. Additionally, they bring people together who work at different places in the value chain in order to learn from each other and problem solve together. In the words of one F2F beneficiary, “Makouti is a place where we share knowledge.”

**Gather people and organizations together to....** F2F plays a key role in Makouti’s approach to bringing people together across geography, sector, location in sector, or organization. For example, when a volunteer comes on assignment, Makouti uses that as an opportunity to build system capacity by inviting multiple diverse players to trainings or meetings. For example, a marketing volunteer may do a training that brings together beekeepers, rabbit producers, fruit products processors, environmental programs staff, and peanut producers, all with an interest or need to learn about marketing. In the words of F2F and Makouti office manager Josemine Pierre, Makouti/F2F serves as a “network provider” by building connections across contexts. Their purpose in bringing people together across locations includes the following:

- Understand and address root causes of issues
- Integrate efforts across economic, social, and environmental domains
- Learn from each other’s experience and knowledge
- Coordinate diversification of effort, which expands markets and reduces risk

**Intentionally role-model Makouti philosophy.** Like most successful programs, F2F’s success in Haiti is related to its leadership both in-country and at the program level in Washington, DC. In-country, Benito Migny Jasmin provides vision for the strategic direction of the program and the organization and shares leadership with a highly engaged and competent team: Gerard Michel (Papy) Joseph, Anderson Pierre, and Josemine (Jojo) Pierre. The vision of the organization and some of its core commitments/strategies that F2F supports can be traced to Benito’s early experiences. Their philosophy reflects this vision, as well as leadership from Anderson, Papy, and Jojo on program management, implementation, and evaluation practices that support the vision. F2F program staff at Partners of the Americas provide top level strategic leadership for the program in a way that supports the program design within the country context.

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All the Makouti staff are amazing. Benito is definitely a good leader. It is great to see how he motivates the people. Anderson and Papy are impressive when they interact with the people. I have seen them going from knowing a little bit yet sharing everything they can with the people. Jojo works to make sure that the volunteers are taken care of professionally.

—Bob Spencer, volunteer
The subcases: Developing the agricultural sector and member support

Development of the agricultural sector

Makouti engages with F2F to develop the agriculture sector in two primary ways: working across the value chain and building capacity. The way they work across the value chain is integrative rather than summative, meaning they engage strategies that further develop the relationship between key points on the value chain, rather than just working to improve each element. F2F volunteers have contributed to development of the agricultural sector with regard to rabbit production (figure 3), beekeeping, horticulture, coffee, peanuts, and fruit products. In each of these value chains, Makouti and F2F have engaged producers, processors, distributors, marketers, and consumers in ways that are integrative by bringing people together who would not normally do so, to learn and problem solve. For example, when they identified a problem with peanut butter sales, Makouti pulled together people from all places in the value chain, including consumers, to identify the root causes of the issue and to problem solve collectively. From this process, they were able to identify needs for technical assistance from F2F volunteers.

F2F volunteers play a critical role in helping Makouti build individual, organizational, and system capacity by working directly with producers and staff, who provide ongoing support when the volunteer leaves. Volunteer assignments may focus on agricultural or business practice, but they may also focus on organizational development, leadership, and monitoring and evaluation. Makouti builds system capacity of the sector by inviting peer and partner organizations to participate alongside their members in training and other capacity building efforts. Additionally, Makouti builds system capacity by providing contract services to other organizations and, through those contracts, helping to disseminate best practices, both agricultural and organizational.

Without this insurance my kids wouldn’t be able to go to school this year: it is from what I have generated, I invest and get something back.
—producer

Makouti is different than other organizations because of the sum of their trainings and their philosophy. The difference is that the trainers are excellent.
—producer

Figure 3. Improved rabbit cages, rabbit production site, Haiti
Supporting members
A core aspect of Makouti philosophy is to improve the conditions of beneficiaries and to help them be successful. It recognizes that in order for that to happen, many need additional support to help mitigate risk. As a local, grassroots organization, Makouti understands the contextual barriers to success. F2F training and volunteer assistance is an essential component in how Makouti supports its members. As part of its strategy, Makouti seeks long term relationships with a small handful of their volunteers in order to provide institutional memory and trust building.

In the words of repeat volunteer Myriam Kaplan-Pasternak:

*I think what has made the greatest difference is that I continue to come back, so that I have provided a skeleton upon which the Makouti crew relies on for early objective observations.*

In addition to volunteer assistance, Makouti has a set of other member supports such as access to loans, inputs, insurance, and technical support follow-up on volunteer recommendations by staff. More systemic forms of assistance include helping create markets, delivering consumer education, and working to build the capacity of government organizations such as the Ministry of Agriculture. Members who participated in a focus group related to these supports described Makouti as transparent, practical, supportive, and working for them, not for themselves.

Impacts
F2F contributes to impact for individuals, organizations, communities, and thus overall development in Haiti. Major impacts from the beekeeping project just in the last year include dramatic increases in sales of honey, significant increases in honey production by the network, no colony loss, and increase in value of Makouti honey on the market. In the small animal project, primary impacts in the past year include increases in market development and demand, increased sales, and improved meat quality. With partner organizations, the impact has been related to increased capacity of those organizations to support agriculture and other aspects of development. All partner organizations participating in the case, including the Ministry of Agriculture, indicated Makouti helps them much more than they help Makouti. Data related to final impacts will be available in the final report; however key insights to program impact are included here.

Producers

*(Makouti/F2F) helped me send all my kids to school. I do a lot of activities with the money from the honey. I thought this could help me take care of my family and now I am taking care of other families.* —Beekeeper

*I can say it is unquestionable the importance of the seminars. Before Makouti and F2F started helping me, my level was*
very low. That is to say I couldn’t produce; I wasn’t making any money. Now I am working for an organization that pays me 3,000 Haitian dollars per month... I travel to the US because of my business in apiculture, my whole family gets jobs from that; I pay for school for my kids.... —Beekeeper

We got the means to test the quality of our honey and we know how to market. Our honey is cleaner, we have labels, and we sell our honey quicker. We get more money.
—Beekeeper

Before Makouti I was not at the level I was today economically or technically... I started building a house, my kids go to school without any problem of money, I can even go to the hospital if I am sick.... —Rabbit producer

I eat veggies myself now; now I have enough carrots that can be sold for 500 Haitian dollars and this money has been invested to buy goat and make other gardens.
—Horticulture producer

We think it is we beekeepers, because of the training we get, that we keep planting, protecting, and preserving the few trees we have left. All of this is because of the experience with F2F and Makouti. —Beekeeper

Organizations
Working with Makouti/F2F is very important—big change, multiplied effort, and capacity built, we now know what we can do. —Partner organization

We got everything from Makouti and F2F. From this partnership the students will have visiting a lot of settings and had more experiences.—Ministry of Agriculture and University farm manager

Because of Makouti and F2F, we have reached the entire department. —Agronomy technician

The natural treatment we learned from Makouti with the Americans. —Partner organization (Codcoa)

Volunteers
A lot of times I have to debate if I am the one who taught more or learned more. —Myriam Kaplan-Pasternak, volunteer

I went with one set of expectations but after farm visits I realized I have to listen... it has humbled me more. It has made me a better presenter. —Bob Spencer, volunteer

I have learnt so much and it has changed who I am in a positive way.... Beekeepers are always very innovative and so wherever I am, I am always learning. The people in Haiti were great, and I learned much from them. —Ed Levi, volunteer
Table 5. Key indicators by type of change, Haiti

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased self-sufficiency</td>
<td>Rabbit manure used for composting</td>
<td>Family cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase income</td>
<td>Number of planted and surviving trees (indigenous/fast growing)</td>
<td>Beneficiaries emerge as leaders in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to compensate for expenses through barter/product exchange</td>
<td>Water quality improvements</td>
<td>Women become emancipated (work is respected by men, ability to travel to trainings, ability to participate in opportunities to meet with other women, money is in the hands of women, increase in women leaders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase # of women as producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Payment of school fees throughout the year...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kids go to school throughout the year</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff members have identity/status as leaders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indicators

In addition to USAID indicators, the Haiti F2F team has identified economic, environmental, and social indicators that are relevant representations of change or success within the Haitian context (table 5). The team looks for evidence of these indicators to help inform programming and demonstrate impact.

Overall, the impacts from F2F volunteer technical assistance and programmatic support from Partner of the Americas reach across scale (individual to sector/system) and across impact domain (economic, environmental, social). This is very much related to the infusion of Makouti philosophy into daily practice and a strong organizational culture of valuing monitoring and evaluation as a tool for improvement and learning. Table 6 represents significant recommendations by volunteers related to apiculture.

Specific recommendations that have significantly led to impact include:

- Jonathan Fisher: introduced a pressing/filtering process to get pure honey; people are now selling more honey
- Ed Levi: introduced a new system to raise queens; more queens has meant more honey production
- Donald Hopkins: one of first volunteers to come and address varroa mite problem
- David Huang and Zachary Huang: addressed varroa mite resistance
- Lambert Kanga: addressed varroa mite treatment
Table 6. Key practices associated with F2F volunteers, Haiti

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key practices</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>Specific activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Space and location of hives</td>
<td>Donald Hopkins, Doug Corbin</td>
<td>Field visits that focus on space and location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hive management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hive construction</td>
<td>Sofie Geckler</td>
<td>Helped make Kenya top bar hive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hive management</td>
<td>Sofie Geckler, Ed Levi, Doug Corbin, Tim Schuler, Buck Chaman, Dennis Vanengelsdorp, Steven Lukefahr</td>
<td>Protective gear-veil, Queen production, Smoking &amp; division, Swarm management, Queen production, Spacing between frames</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ed Levi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doug Corbin and Tim Schuler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buck Chaman</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dennis Vanengelsdorp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steven Lukefahr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID/Disease prevention/Treatment</td>
<td>Dennis Vanengelsdorp, David Huang and Zachary Huang, Lambert Kanga, Donald Hopkins</td>
<td>Treatment of varroa, Amitrac, Tested varroa resistance using different products (both), Disease treatment and prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey preparation</td>
<td>Jonathan Fisher, Lonnie Funderburg, Doug Corbin and Tim Schuler, Steven Lukefahr</td>
<td>Honey processing, filtration, Hygiene, Bottling and storage, Extracting and harvesting, Harvesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lonnie Funderburg, David and Flo Wagner</td>
<td>Labeling, Business plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercialization/Marketing</td>
<td>Lonnie Funderburg, David and Flo Wagner</td>
<td>Labeling, Business plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This type of program builds capacity, it gives the opportunity to them [host] to build opportunity and strengthen their skills in different things. That can open the doors to be like a trainer, in the case of Donna Erenda (host); this program gave her the knowledge to run a small enterprise.

—F2F staff, Nicaragua

Method

Data was collected through participant observation, interview, and focus group methods. Interviews included key people at select partner organizations, including the Ministry of Agriculture, AAV2 and Codcoa, as well as staff and volunteers. Focus groups were conducted with these populations:

1. Makouti members who receive Makouti services (loans, insurance, “toket” system, or investment). Mixed male and female group.
2. Makouti members and non-members involved in rabbits at any stage of the value chain. This data will feed into the “Developing the Ag Sector” and “Developing Makouti” subcases. Mixed male and female group (three female, four male).
3. The honey and hive products value chain. Members and non-members involved with any stage of the value chain. There was only one female among the group of seven, as beekeepers tend to be male. They represented different regions.

The M&E team also attempted to understand how Makouti addresses issues of gender and how they foster environmentally sound practice/stewardship.

University of Wisconsin-Extension 39
The cases: Nicaragua

Context and country strategy
The overarching goal of the F2F Nicaragua program is to improve people’s lives through providing technical assistance at different points along the value chain, from production to consumption (figure 4). The dairy and horticulture sector value chains were chosen to maximize the impact of the program and to reach as many people as possible. The dairy value chain is a major component of the agriculture sector in Nicaragua and thus strengthening it will have a big impact on the country. The horticulture value chain plays an important role in the food security and health of Nicaragua citizens. F2F Nicaragua volunteers play a critical role in providing technical assistance to individual producers, cooperatives, and private companies working within primary production, collection centers, processing, marketing, and consumption points of the dairy and horticulture value chains. For example, F2F volunteer assignments focused on primary production in the dairy sector range from forge production to best milking practices (BMP).

The basic theory of change for the F2F program in Nicaragua is grounded in a belief if producers increase their skills in livestock management and BMP they will increase the health of the herds and produce more and higher quality of milk. In turn they will sell more milk to collection centers, which then can send more milk to processing plants to make cheese, cream, yogurt, and other milk products. The impact of this increased milk in the market is that people have more options to choose from, prices drop, and more people

Figure 4. Rich picture of the F2F Nicaragua strategy
can afford to buy healthful and nutritious milk products. If consumers increase their awareness about benefits of dairy, more people will go to market and make better choices, eat healthful food, and lead healthier lifestyles. The same basic theory of change also guides the F2F Nicaragua program in the horticulture value chain.

The F2F Nicaragua program realized that there were a number of challenges in helping those different links in the value chain continue to improve, such as infrastructure, technology, and financial services. Thus the value chain approach has evolved over the course of this grant cycle to thinking about how to assess other services in country and how to link hosts to those existing services. An idea they plan to implement is to focus on identifying existing services (e.g., micro-credit), understand who is and is not accessing them, and then to look for ways to increase access based on an understanding of usage. In the words of the country director, “The issue is not that we don’t have resources. It is that people don’t access them.”

**Contributions to success**

There are several key ingredients to the implementation of the F2F Nicaragua strategy. One of the most important factors is the leadership of the in-country program and relationships the F2F Nicaragua office has formed with partners, hosts, and volunteers. One F2F Nicaragua volunteer comments on the importance of leadership and relationships:

> What is needed is someone in the country, on the ground who knows the industry and what their people need and can pair up the skills of the volunteer with what is needed with the farmers. In this particular case, the head of the F2F is also the head of the cattleman organization and also a veterinarian. And he is excellent at seeing where to plug people in... He (F2F Nicaragua Director) has the connection to the industry, he puts you in front of the right group, gets you out to the right farm. I felt my time was utilized effectively.
> —F2F Nicaragua volunteer

These good relationships have facilitated another key ingredient of the F2F Nicaragua program strategy: finding the right people. Finding the right partner, host, volunteer, and staff is critical to the success of the program. For instance, much consideration goes into identifying hosts who are committed to change, motivated, and willing to try new things/practices recommended by volunteers. There is a deliberate focus on producers or entrepreneurs who are innovators and who can influence others. Once hosts have been found, the F2F Nicaragua office identifies problems that are appropriate for technical assistance and then solicits volunteers who are well suited to provide recommendations that address those identified problems.

Once the right people are found, the F2F Nicaragua program builds the capacity of those individuals to train others on new, innovative practices and techniques. For example, the F2F Nicaragua office provides training to partners and holds large workshops that con-
nect and involve technicians from around the country. Their capacity building efforts are effective because of the practical, hands-on learning that occurs and can apply to other people. In the words of one field technician, “I am very grateful for all the knowledge that volunteers have given me... because all that helps and also I can convey all this knowledge to producers.” This technician clearly sees the connection between the technical assistance he has received from F2F Nicaragua volunteers and his role in disseminating that information in order to improve the livelihoods of producers he assists.

**Impacts**

This case study evaluation demonstrates that the F2F Nicaragua program strategy to provide technical assistance at various points throughout the dairy and horticulture value chains has been successful because of the leadership of the Nicaragua office, the relationships they have built, the ability to identify the right people, and their capacity-building approach. Due to the successful implementation of its strategy, the F2F Nicaragua program has resulted in a number of significant changes including increased knowledge and skills of hosts that have led to increased production and sales of vegetables and dairy products.

In addition to learning new things and skills, hosts also reported a more profound impact on their work. They credit the F2F Nicaragua program with helping them to think differently about how they do their work. One of the results of thinking differently about their work is that hosts also reported a new level of self-empowerment as a result of the F2F Nicaragua program. In the words of one dairy producer,

> So many times the producer is eager to improve, because if their milk is better, they will have more income... if production is good, there’s more money... then you can do more things, you can keep improving the family’s lifestyle and after that, much more... My goal would be that every producer, every day, get a little better because that influences my work. I have to always ensure that they are always looking for improvement. —Field technician, Nicaragua

**Alberto Ordóñez, dairy producer**

Alberto Ordóñez runs a small-scale dairy operation in the department of Rivas, Nicaragua. He runs the farm with the assistance of his wife, two sons, and daughter. His family manages 80 acres of land that are divided into four main production types: 2 acres of grass cutting, 6 acres for planting corn, sorghum, and rice, 5 acres for reforestation, and 67 acres for grazing. Alberto and his family have received F2F Nicaragua volunteer assistance in the following areas: forage tree crops, reproduction and animal health, natural resource management, and grain storage (table 7). As a direct result of the visits of volunteers, they have changed numerous practices in their production system. The two most notable are improving the overall sanitation of their milking operation and the

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**For example, the family has more opportunities to do other things. I do not know. Because your life is better, right, because you have more money. You know when I’m going to feel better; when I’ve taken advantage of all the benefits and when I can rebuild my house because this is poverty. And I do not want poverty. I hate poverty. And this is an opportunity for me to be less poor if I make a sacrifice to make things right. But if I do not make a sacrifice and to do my things well, I will always live in poverty. Until that point, I’ll tell you, I have taken advantage of the knowledge, I have achieved to the maximum the knowledge of the volunteers.**

—Dairy producer, Nicaragua

One (contribution) that is very tangible, is that it looks like there is going to be a soil and forage testing laboratory that is being provided by the private sector in Nicaragua. And me and my colleagues really brought that about. We made a presentation down there, where the manager of this cooperative were intrigued by it and asked if they came to Wisconsin, would we host them and take them to commercial laboratories here which were did. So they were very impressed by what they saw here and we have kept up with them. And now they are building an addition to their building so they can have the laboratory. We have them connected with the commercial labs here as well as with the university at Marshville.

—Jerry Nolte, F2F volunteer, Nicaragua
development and use of silage to feed their dairy cows. These changes in practices have resulted in a number of benefits for Alberto and his family. For example, the family is realizing an economic benefit from the changes in practices they have made. They have increased their annual income by $9,288 U.S. In addition Alberto and his family express an increase in their self-empowerment as a result of the F2F Nicaragua program.

**El Centro de Aprendizaje PIO XII**

El Centro de Aprendizaje PIO XII is located in the community of Nandasmo, in the department of Masaya, Nicaragua. The center has strengthened productive capacities and the quality of life for their families in the Nandasmo community and across Nicaragua through its training programs. Erenda Lopez is the founder and director of the center and has been a very active leader in the community. She started the center in response to a recommendation given to her by an F2F volunteer (from an earlier project cycle) to plant cilantro seeds in her back yard. She did and years later the result is a learning center that trains thousands of women on small-scale organic production methods. El Centro de Aprendizaje PIO XII has received F2F Nicaragua program assistance through volunteers in many different areas including organic production, value-added products, marketing, nutrition education, and curriculum development (table 8). Erenda has been able to leverage the assistance she has received from F2F volunteers to start her own consulting work with environmental and agricultural development programs in the country.

> The first F2F volunteer who gave me seeds has had a huge impact on the family. In my son, it helped him go to college. But we survived from those seeds. I told the F2F Nicaragua Director look what would have happen to us if we did not get those seeds at such an important time of need... Because the result is this, selling skills. I mean, there is work, but it

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**Table 7. A selection of F2F Nicaragua volunteers and key recommendations for Alberto Ordóñez**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer</th>
<th>Dates of assignment</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Gonzalez</td>
<td>5/16–5/30/2010</td>
<td>Maintain adequate udder and milking area cleanliness. Increase amount of minerals fed to cows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Ward</td>
<td>12/5–12/17/2010</td>
<td>Calves should be weaned earlier and limited in amount of time spent with cow; this will increase milk solid. If crops are mature or dry, add water to the level of a heavy dew to allow the silage reaction to progress; one cup of urea can be added to every four wagon loads of crops, especially if sugar cane was used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Jacobsen</td>
<td>3/9–3/24/2012</td>
<td>Should initiate and utilize more rotational grazing opportunities. Producers should use microwave, food dehydrator and scales to measure dry matter and accurately calculate total mixed ration. Increase dry matter, carbohydrates and protein amounts in feed. Should focus on better quality and utilization of hay, silage, and minerals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8. A selection of F2F Nicaragua volunteers and key recommendations for PIO XII

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer</th>
<th>Dates of assignment</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arlen Albrecht</td>
<td>1/9–1/22/2011</td>
<td>Look for diamond back cabbage moth worms and hand remove from cole crops and put a little detergent in the bio repellent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Mitchell</td>
<td>5/8–5/22/2011</td>
<td>There is a need for more nitrogen to fight disease in corn and improve the size of the cabbage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Longland</td>
<td>8/30–9/13/2011</td>
<td>Avoid repeatedly using the same class of pesticides in a season to minimize potential for resistance to develop in the pest/disease.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Monitor regularly (e.g., a minimum of once per week) so that you can identify when a problem has started, whether it is increasing/spreading or plateaued, and if it has been successfully managed. Monitor the whole season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heath Henderson</td>
<td>8/30–9/7/2011</td>
<td>Formulation and fortification of community ties for knowledge sharing purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Meunier</td>
<td>10/30–11/12/2011</td>
<td>Construct composting pits (limit size to 1m wide, 1m deep) and create a ridge on the lower side of each pit to slow and capture runoff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase nitrogen levels in crops by planting them in 100% compost or inter-planting them with a legume cover crop.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Make transplanting bags from newspaper and other natural materials.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elevate rabbit cages to allow for improved capture of manure during the rainy season.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue developing the walking trail to include benches and informational placards to point out interesting plants and horticultural practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Look into making the trail handicap-accessible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Morse</td>
<td>11/19–12/3/2011</td>
<td>Perform a self-evaluation of product quality and sales each time the product is sold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Griffis</td>
<td>11/19–11/27/2011</td>
<td>To prevent blossom-end rot, measure the pH of the soil (if possible), which should be maintained at 6.5. Add lime to supply necessary calcium, and make sure the crop is getting adequate water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy Baumann</td>
<td>1/8–1/21/2012</td>
<td>Use solar dryer to develop marketable products such as herbs and Jamaica flowers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Kneeland</td>
<td>1/8–1/21/2012</td>
<td>Obtain proper supplies and equipment for wine vinegar making and follow instructions in manual provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krista James</td>
<td>1/8–1/21/2012</td>
<td>Women should include more fruits in their salads as was seen in the food demonstration. They should also cook, grill, and boil their “gallo pinto” and other foods instead of frying them with oils. Boil water to make it safer to drink and wash hands prior to handling or eating foods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Hall</td>
<td>2/12–2/27/2012</td>
<td>Identify and share perennials and find funding for plastic bag sealers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
costs much to access the work... So, we have learned a lot because of the volunteers. They have taught us to sell that knowledge, because here in Nicaragua there is little knowledge of climate change... I told them that we had twelve years of experience with F2F Nicaragua... And we could talk of climate change, but if they agreed with the topics that we would show them. So we started from the ground. What is the agro ecological part? What is soil? Why we must conserve soil and water? —Erenda Lopez

Doña Erenda is a shining example; she has a very innovative way of thinking about and going about promoting the benefit of growing and consuming. She thinks of it on all different parts of the continuum. I think her business savviness is something she just has but, also, she has seen more opportunities with organization she is connected with. And I would also say F2F has helped her know to take advantage of these opportunities.—Kshinté Brathwaite, F2F volunteer, Nicaragua

So what you have given us is an expansion on our thinking, because we were asleep. We feel grateful that we continue to move forward and advance, with our capacity, right. We feel that we have been advancing with the knowledge that you have given to us... If you are willing everything is possible. Why? Because every time you give me knowledge, it is better for me. I enrich my mind and my family. We all share that. Why? Because I do not want to be stuck here, I want to move forward. Now I’m on a very low level, but I feel like my mind is enriched.

—Alberto Ordóñez
The cases: Dominican Republic

Context and country strategy
The F2F Dominican Republic (DR) program strategy is to form strategic alliances with non-governmental organizations that are organizing and working with producer associations. The main objective is to build the capacity of the field technicians working in these organizations through volunteer trainings and visits to producers.

In this approach the F2F DR volunteer works both with producers and field technicians. The volunteer trains the field technicians to help the producers in an ongoing and continual way. The capacity building is done through hands-on activities in the greenhouse and in the field in which the volunteer teaches both the producer and technician. In addition, the technicians also receive more formal training through workshops. As country director Dr. Rafael Ledesma explains, “Production will increase if the capacity of technicians is strengthened.” One potential benefit of this approach is the idea that the field technicians will spread the technical assistance provided by the F2F DR volunteers and follow up on their recommendations.

In addition to providing technical assistance in agricultural production systems, the F2F DR program also provides support to host organizations and producers in a number of other ways. In the words of the Dr. Lesdesma, “We do more than just technical agriculture... We do education, organizational development, exporting, finding markets—we train people to grow, develop.” One example of this is the organizational and curriculum development work the F2F DR program has done with the Jarabacoa School.

Contributions to success
One key ingredient to the success of the F2F program strategy is the relationship between the F2F DR country director and the directors of the NGOs within the strategic alliances. In the words of one NGO director, “Well, the relationship we have is with Dr. Ledesma. He is a person who we know from many years ago. And he has been very close to my organization.” These types of deep professional and personal relationships are the threads that weave together the strategic alliances.

Impacts
The successful implementation of the F2F DR program has resulted in a number of changes in practices that have led to increased production and income for host organizations and producers. For example, in the avocado production system field technicians used to only support production and harvest, but they did not support the post-harvest phase of the system. Thanks to F2F DR volunteers training producers and field technicians in post-harvest management techniques, there has been marked improvement in the quality of avocados going to market and thus a higher price for the producer. In the words of one avocado producer, “Well, like I said, the impact
We also recognized that we needed to start building the capacity of NGO staff there. Right away we recruited technicians and did workshops with them. We wanted them to have the tools to continue the work we started after we were gone.
—F2F Dominican Republic volunteers

is good because they bring us good knowledge and we learn to do things differently with them than what we did before.” This producer goes on to describe how he has benefited from these changes, “For example, I have my home... with the first harvest of avocado; I remodeled my house and so the benefits are visible and continue to be seen.”

Another example of changes in practices is the women’s greenhouse associations that have been directly supported by F2F DR volunteers and indirectly through the capacity building that field technicians working with these associations have received from F2F. One woman greenhouse producer describes the impact as follows:

We have learned how to apply ourselves, the insecticide to the plants. And also, fertilize, irrigate. We know of many plant diseases. We do not have to wait for the technician to tell us what happens to the plants. We know when the plants are sick, and what disease they have... for us it has been a great satisfaction because we are farmers, women farmers, we learned a lot. Besides with what we produce we have been helped financially and thus give better support to our families. —Female greenhouse producer

In the words of an NGO field coordinator:

Because with the trainings that have been received from both parties, not only of F2F, but the technicians have to apply their experience with women’s associations and producers. And really the change in the field is quite appreciable. We have farmers who properly manage their plantations... In the case of greenhouses that are managed by women, they themselves create organic pesticide. They apply the organic pesticide. They know how to dispense each product. So, there is a change that can be seen. They know how to identify diseases, pests. When there is a disease, a plague that is attacking the crop. They also know, with the magnifying glass with the microscope, when a disease or pest is attacking the plant. It is very significant in this regard. —NGO field coordinator

Another woman greenhouse producer describes how she used the increased income that resulted from the changes in practice:

We supply the needs of the family. And sometimes, we may also invest in other things, because in my case I have invested in my house. I only had two bedrooms, a small living room and I have been able to expand my house. And also some women bought things for the house. Things they need. Also, we had family problems and illnesses; we have been able to overcome that. —Female greenhouse producer

Aside from the real income benefit these women greenhouse producers have received as a result of the F2F DR program, some of the producers also speak of an increase in self-empowerment. In the words of one woman greenhouse producer, “And often many of the men said that we were not able to do work that a man does.
And we, I say it is a great satisfaction, because if we are looking for equity, then we already do jobs that men do too.” One F2F DR volunteer also perceived this increase in self-empowerment. She said, “My perception and assumption is that the activity of asking poor women their opinion was very significant. It appears that was new to them, that their opinion had never really been asked as seriously in the context of that work.”

From the perspectives of these hosts and producers it is evident that the F2F DR program is having an impact on their work and lives. The following sections describe in detail those impacts from the perspective of two subcases: the Jarabacoa School and the Maria Trinidad Sanchez Greenhouse.

The Jarabacoa School
When F2F DR volunteer Brett McLeod visited the Jarabacoa School for the first time, he says, “The school was literally in shambles, you know, both physically and also in terms of being short staffed or not staffed and all the rest.” This institution, which is run by the Dominican Ministry of Environment, was in the process of transforming itself from a school focused purely on forestry to one that trained the students in more general themes of natural resource management and environmental management. Although the Ministry of Environment had decided that this change was necessary, the director, Martha Fernandez, did not have the knowledge or support to effectively transform the curriculum alone. For her, “The curricular issue was like a headache. Because where do we start, where do we go?”

After hearing about Martha’s difficulties, F2F DR country director Rafael Ledesma said that he believed he could help her. Brett McLeod and Andrew Egan traveled to the Dominican Republic together as F2F DR volunteers to assist with curricular development. Says Martha, “The work that they did was the base for the curriculum that we are using here right now… they were those who originally opened the door.” This year, the school will graduate the first class of technicians trained in environmental management and natural resource management. These students have benefited, not only from the work of Professors McLeod and Egan, but from the lasting relationship that has been built with the F2F DR Program.

One of the more recent initiatives has been a new ecotourism curriculum that the director and teachers hope to implement soon. In an interview for the F2F DR program evaluation, Professor McLeod said that although he himself became too busy to finish the ecotourism curriculum, he sent a colleague, Joe Daty, “just because I wanted continuation of the project.” This is just one example of the level of commitment and sustained contact that F2F DR volunteers have had with the Jarabacoa School.

F2F DR volunteers have worked with teachers and students on assignments ranging from ecotourism to watershed management to strategic planning (table 9). Volunteers develop “deliverables” such as a strategic plan or a mini course for the students. However, perhaps even more importantly, they also build the capacity of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer/Focus of assignment</th>
<th>Dates of assignment</th>
<th>Key recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Egan</td>
<td>9/28/2009–10/12/2009</td>
<td>Initiate a discussion with representatives from the forestry school in Jarabacoa on developing a partnership with Paul Smith’s College that would include faculty and student exchanges between the two schools. Follow up these discussions by implementing exchanges and workshops and curriculum development activity on-site in Jarabacoa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brett R McLeod</td>
<td>5/30/2010–6/12/2010</td>
<td>Develop an ongoing process of curriculum development and revision that includes the following elements: 1) needs assessment; 2) a program plan, including program mission, goals, objectives, and learning outcomes; 3) a curriculum with master course outlines (MCOs) consistent with learning outcomes outlined in the program plan; 4) a curriculum map (matrix) indicating how learning outcomes are achieved in the curriculum; 5) program assessment, including input from the Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Higher Education, advisory boards, employers, faculty, and alumni; and 6) continued program revision and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Egan</td>
<td>2/26/2011–3/12/2011</td>
<td>Develop a model of student involvement in eco-tourism; community outreach by students; cafeteria and gift shop run by the Escuela Ambiental using students and locals. Improve opportunities for students to interact with local communities in areas related to natural resources, such as trash, water, and fuel wood. Install interpretive trails, signage, and a visitor center on campus/near the entrance to the Jimenoa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Lewis</td>
<td>4/10/2011–4/24/2011</td>
<td>Use research based learning approaches to produce qualified technicians to meet the country’s demand for expertise in managing the environment and natural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Perry</td>
<td>11/16–11/25/2012</td>
<td>Conduct a feasibility study on a no-sort recycling system in Jarabacoa and solar panel installation at the school’s welcome center.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
teachers and staff at the school. In the words of one teacher, “I learned a lot from Dr. Daty. He brought many experiences of how to develop a curriculum.” Another teacher asserted that an F2F DR volunteer taught him “the direction of the strategic plan. How we can design our own strategic plan at a specific time.” Volunteers also expressed that their roles were greater than their specific projects. When asked if he thought he had an impact on the Jarabacoa School beyond the curriculum that he created, Dr. Egan talked about collaboration as something that he utilized in his F2F DR volunteer assignments. This method, according to Dr. Egan, is something new in the DR.

By sharing their own experiences and knowledge, volunteers have opened students’ and faculty members’ eyes to concepts and ideas that they had not previously been exposed to. In an interview, one student mentioned spending a day with a volunteer who was studying woodpeckers for his PhD. In the words of this student, “It was very interesting because very few people study the behavior of these birds.” Another student said that he learned about construction with alternative materials, something that in his words is “not common for us.” Even the director alluded to eye-opening concepts she had learned from volunteers. She said that one of the volunteers who came had told her about birds and the importance of planting and preserving trees for them. In 2012, a group came to camp at a campsite that had been built as part of an ecotourism project. Later, the group that had gone camping told Martha that they had felt like they were part of the natural world while listening to the birds in the morning. The director made the connection that the volunteer had told her that birds were a tourist attraction: “She is right... it is new for us.”

Another element that makes the collaboration between the Jarabacoa School and F2F DR powerful is that the networks and relationships that have been formed through this alliance extend far beyond these two institutions. One such example is a train-the-trainer course, which was organized by F2F DR volunteer Craig MacFarland after an assignment with the Jarabacoa School. At the end of his assignment, MacFarland went to the capital city of Santo Domingo with Martha to meet with various officials at the Ministry of Environment. This laid the groundwork for a train-the-trainer course for park rangers with the Ministry of Environment. According to MacFarland, the idea behind this course was to train a group of people in the Dominican Republic so well that they would not have to rely on outside trainers. Although this course was funded with money entirely outside of the F2F DR program, MacFarland says that POA remained connected and was, in his words, “very positive.”

Another powerful partnership that has extended beyond official F2F DR assignments has been a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Jarabacoa School and Paul Smith’s College. This MOU was set up through the work of Dr. Egan, who used to be the dean of Paul Smith’s, and Brett McLeod, who is still a professor at the institution. Through this MOU, a group of Paul Smith’s students traveled to Jarabacoa and two students and a professor from the
Jarabacoa School had the opportunity to travel to the United States to participate in an outdoor leadership course. One of the students who participated in the course stated, “It was a lot of knowledge that I could acquire there and also that I could implement here in the school.” In particular, the participants learned methodologies for outdoor activities that the school now uses in the trips that students take.

After the first group of students trained in environmental and natural resource management graduate this year, they will have the chance to disseminate the knowledge that they have gained even more widely. In interviews, the students expressed a sense of duty to serve as multipliers and to teach communities in the Dominican Republic about environmental issues. The understanding of natural resource and environmental management that these students have gained through the curriculum developed by F2F DR volunteers will enable them to fill a much-needed niche in the country. Currently, Dominicans in rural areas have very little knowledge of environmental issues. The Jarabacoa School is the only environmental technical school in the Dominican Republic. According to Martha, this school is unique and important because a technician is more adapted and more prepared to work in rural communities than an individual trained in a university.
Bibliography


Guide: Case Studies. n.d. Welcome to Writing@CSU. Available at: [http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research](http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research)


Partners of the Americas-Guyana Chapter. n.d. IDB Call for Proposals from Civil Society Organizations for Community-Based Development projects.


Additional resources

Videos
GREEN GOLD: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ss_H2OCQC8
VALO’S JOURNEY: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_pIs7cVQgcg
REAP THE FRESHNESS: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgL9Nlk95G0&feature=plcp

Blogs
http://dgesinternational.blogspot.com/2013/01/and-what-has-myriam-been-up-to.html#!/2013/01/and-what-has-myriam-been-up-to.html
Appendix

Volunteers interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of volunteer</th>
<th>U.S. state</th>
<th>F2F country</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howard Fenton</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>2/14/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pete Wotowiec</td>
<td>TN</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>2/21/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Fellows</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>2/25/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obadiah Njue</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>2/25/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald (Jerry) Nolte</td>
<td>MN</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>3/19/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Jacobsen-Mispagel</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>3/19/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kshinté Brathwaite</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>3/25/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan Bowen</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>3/26/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batya Silva</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>4/1/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myriam Kaplan-Pasternak</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>3/19/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Spencer</td>
<td>TN</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>3/21/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed Levi</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>3/25/2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellen D. Lewis</td>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>3/19/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Egan</td>
<td>NM</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>3/19/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brett McLeod</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>3/25/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip Phillips</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>3/25/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochelle Sherlock</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>3/26/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig McFarland</td>
<td>CO</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>4/23/2013</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Semi-structured interview with in-country staff – Phase 1

Strategy
1. Review of Mapping Exercise: Describe key players in the agricultural sector, including Ministry of Agriculture, USAID Mission in country, and other organizations and projects.
2. How do these players relate with one another?
3. How has FTF collaborated with these players? Are there any written MoUs?
4. Are FTF activities coordinated with USAID mission programs and staff? If so, how?
5. Are any hosts receiving support ONLY from FTF?
6. How does FTF identify hosts?
7. Explain the communication protocols between: FTF and hosts; FTF and partner organizations, and partner organizations and hosts.
8. How do you define success? (Probe for specific indicators of what “success” looks like. What is the program aiming to do? At what level?)
9. In your mind, what is meant by a “strategy”?

10. What is your current strategy for achieving the successes you have mentioned?

11. How has this strategy evolved since the start of the current program cycle? (Refer to original country project strategy documents)

12. How has this strategy considered gender equality, if at all?

13. How has this strategy considered environmental conservation/NRM, if at all?

Outcomes
1. What and how has change happened?
2. How has FTF contributed to change? At what levels?
3. Individuals: does the program target any specific populations, income levels, educational background, gender, etc? What changes have been identified? What contributed to those changes?
4. Families: Does the program reach different family members in different ways?
5. Communities: How has FTF helped strengthen communities?
6. Organizations/Societies/Associations/Cooperatives/Institutions (i.e., groups of people working under a common structure). In what ways has FTF helped strengthen organizations?
7. Agricultural sector: In what ways do you think FTF has helped build your agricultural sector or country?
8. How has FTF improved environmental and NRM in this country?
9. Other
10. In your opinion, to what extent does the success of the FTF program depend on:

11. The volunteers
12. The implementing organization (POA)-HQ
13. The in-country staff
14. The strategy (current strategy)
15. The donor (USAID)
16. Other?

Volunteer recommendations
1. How are recommendations documented?
2. How are they followed up on? (Who, when, how often?)
3. How is follow-up documented?
4. Is there a system for entering volunteer recommendations and follow up data into F2Fnet? Please explain.
5. If you had an opportunity to provide recommendations to USAID, what would they be?
Subcase selection
1. Based on how you have defined your strategy, what criteria would you set for selecting hosts that BEST exemplify the strategy? (Refer to case study 2-pager criteria, adding or modifying where appropriate.)
2. Thinking about this criteria, which hosts best exemplify the country strategy?
3. Which ones stand out from the others? Why?
4. Which hosts have been particularly successful in making progress towards their goals? How?
5. Where are the opportunities for learning?
6. Enter existing background data on subcases and volunteers into Excel spreadsheet format.

Questions for in-country staff – Phase 2
1. In your opinion, what is the most important role in-country staff play in implementing the F2F program successfully?
2. Has the role of in-country staff evolved over the course of the program? If so, how? Why?
3. Do you believe there are opportunities for professional growth by working with F2F? If so, please explain.
4. What are some of the most important things you’ve learned from working with the F2F program? What facilitated or contributed to your learning this?
5. How have you applied your learning (e.g., own agricultural practice or business, teaching others)?
6. What are your professional goals? Do you have a plan to reach these goals? Is it supported by your work with F2F? Please explain.
7. Have you been trained as a trainer or have you trained others about skills or knowledge you gained from working with F2F? Please explain.
8. Approximately how much of your time is spent conducting workshops, trainings, on-site, or other support to hosts outside the presence of an F2F volunteer?
9. If you could influence the program in one way, with regards to in-country staff, what would it look like?
10. How does your personal leadership style and philosophy inform the program strategy?
11. Is there anything else you’d like to tell me?
Interview questions for partners/peer organizations – General

1. Could you please describe your relationship or interaction with the F2F program? When did it begin? How did you learn about the program?

2. Thinking about the past 5 years, what would you say has worked well in your interaction with F2F?

3. Is there anything that you think could be improved about your interaction with F2F?

4. What role (if any) have F2F volunteers from the US played in contributing to change in this country or the host’s practices?

5. What role has F2F staff played in contributing to change in this country or in this particular host’s practices?

6. Were there any unintended outcomes or consequences of F2F program activity, either positive or negative?

7. Does this particular host (refer to subcase) have goals that are clearly laid out? Please explain.

8. If yes, what worked particularly well for particular hosts in reaching their goals? What were the factors that contributed to this success? Who all was involved and to what level?

9. What challenges did/do particular hosts face in reaching their goals?

10. Has F2F helped improve the agricultural sector at various points along particular value chains? How?

11. Do these points along the value chain link to one another? If so, how?

12. In your opinion, how or where is F2F having the most significant impact (individuals, families, communities, organizations, country)? Please explain.

13. Are there any promising practices or approaches, related to particular hosts or overall, that could be further explored for program improvement purposes?

14. Capacity building: Are there any areas where F2F has supported your own capacity building? If so, in what ways?

15. What have you learned from your experience with the F2F program? What has worked particularly well or not so well?
**Volunteer interview questions**

**Overarching questions**
1. What do you see as your most significant contribution to the F2F program in X country?
2. What, in your opinion, are the most important factors for an effective and sustainable volunteer assignment?
3. What would you say was the biggest challenge you faced in your F2F assignment(s)?
4. Did your assignment help build the capacity of anyone other than those we refer to as F2F “hosts”? Probe: in-country staff, partners, MoA, etc.
5. If so, do you see this as a benefit to the program? Please explain.
6. Do any of the F2F hosts or others that you worked with stand out in your mind as someone particularly innovative and/or successful? What do you think this is attributed to?
7. Have you done anything differently in your personal or professional life as a result of your experience with F2F? (Probe: how has working internationally changed the way you think, work or behave back home; can you provide examples of how you have applied something you learned through this experience, any change in “world view,” etc.)
8. If you could offer one piece of advice to the F2F program, what would it be?
## Participant observation guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question prompts</th>
<th>Observation prompts</th>
<th>Notes (Key: [...] = Observations; &quot;...&quot; = Quotes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Host/F2F relationship</strong>&lt;br&gt;• When did it begin?&lt;br&gt;• How did it begin?&lt;br&gt;• How is it currently?</td>
<td>• How does the Host/Field officer interact?&lt;br&gt;• Anything stand out about their perceived relationships?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Host/Volunteer relationship</strong>&lt;br&gt;• What volunteers do they remember?&lt;br&gt;• What do they remember about their visits?</td>
<td>• What stories do they tell about the volunteer?&lt;br&gt;• How do they talk about the volunteer?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Recommendations/Changes in practices</strong>&lt;br&gt;• What recommendations do they remember?&lt;br&gt;• Have those recommendations been adopted?&lt;br&gt;• What changes in practices have they made? What were these a result of (volunteer, F2F, other program/organization)?&lt;br&gt;• How much risk did they take when changing practices?</td>
<td>• Is the change in practice observable in their operations?&lt;br&gt;• How do they demonstrate recommendations/changes in practice?&lt;br&gt;• Does it appear to be significant or not significant?&lt;br&gt;• Any perceived risks or negative consequences of change in practices?</td>
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<td><strong>4. Impacts of change in practices/volunteer visits</strong>&lt;br&gt;• What have been the impacts of adopting recommendations or changing their practices?&lt;br&gt;• Have there been any negative consequences?</td>
<td>• Are the impacts they mention observable?&lt;br&gt;• Are there any other observable impacts they don’t mention?</td>
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<td><strong>5. Definition of success</strong>&lt;br&gt;• How do they define success?&lt;br&gt;• Have the impacts of the change in practices they mentioned contributed to their success?&lt;br&gt;• What else contributed to their success?</td>
<td>• How do they talk about external factors such as weather patterns, policies, donations, materials, resources, access to finances?&lt;br&gt;• What are the observable signs of their definition of success?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6. Other programs, organizations or networks</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Do they partner/collaborate with any other people, programs, organizations or networks?&lt;br&gt;• How do these partnerships/collaborations contribute to their success?&lt;br&gt;• How does F2F fit into these partnerships/collaborations?</td>
<td>• How do they talk about their partners?&lt;br&gt;• Anything stand out about their perceived relationships?&lt;br&gt;• How do they talk about F2F role in their partnerships?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7. Capacity building</strong>&lt;br&gt;• How have they built the capacity of others?&lt;br&gt;• Whose capacity have they built?&lt;br&gt;• How has F2F helped them build capacity of others?</td>
<td>• Are there other peers present during the visit?&lt;br&gt;• How do they interact with these peers?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8. Uniqueness of subcase</strong>&lt;br&gt;• What stands out about this host?&lt;br&gt;• How does this host stand out from the rest?&lt;br&gt;• What is unique about this host? Why?&lt;br&gt;• What are the opportunities for learning?</td>
<td>• What observations stand out? Why?</td>
<td></td>
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Program information

Program name: John Ogonowski and Doug Bereuter
Farmer-to-Farmer Program

Program goals: To generate rapid, sustained, and broad-based economic growth in the agricultural sector
To increase the American public’s understanding of international development issues and programs and international understanding of the US and US development programs

RFA number: M-OAA-EGAT-605

Program life cycle: October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2013

Implementing organization:
Partners of the Americas
1424 K Street, NW, #700
Washington, DC  20005

Sub-contracts:
J.E. Austin and Associates
University of Wisconsin-Extension
TSC Systems Ltd.

Program funding:
United States Agency for International Development
Office of Economic Growth and Agricultural Development
USAID Cooperative Agreement (EDH-A-00-03-00020-00)
Washington, D.C.