

A Closer Look at Working with PCVs and the Peace Corps

In my experience Peace Corps Volunteers have been invaluable in awareness raising/education efforts, developing distribution chains, mobilizing resources/writing proposals, facilitating and integrating the use of outside agencies like MFIs, women's groups, government ministries, etc

Reasons to Work with Peace Corps Volunteers and some of the Benefits that they might realize include:

1. PCV's are frequently looking for things to do, either to fill up their time or to better serve the communities in which they serve, or both.
2. PCV's could work as renewable energy "evangelists" or any other kind of evangelists, doing awareness raising, etc. (education, marketing)

Reasons that Working with Peace Corps Volunteers and some of the Benefits that Solar Cookers International might realize including:

1. They're free! Free labor will stretch project budgets.
2. Many PCV's have extensive local knowledge and they are trusted in the communities in which they serve, enhancing viability
3. PCVs could provide long term continuity to a project, enhancing sustainability
4. Having Peace Corp Volunteers involved would, at least to outsiders, lend credibility to the project.

Reasons that Residents of Recipient Communities might consider Working with Peace Corps Volunteers on solar cooking *initiatives and* some of the Benefits that they might realize including:

1. Many PCVs are trusted in the communities in which they serve
2. PCV's could be used to facilitate and integrate the use of outside agencies like MFIs, women's groups, government ministries, etc.
3. PCVs could provide long term support and continuity to a project, encouraging skeptics and stragglers to get involved/adopt

Reasons that Peace Corps might consider supporting solar cooking initiatives and Solar Cookers International including:

1. In line with first Peace Corps goal: To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women (technical *assistance*.)
2. In line with four of six work sectors including: Education, Health, Environment, and Community Economic Development
3. Busy volunteers are happy volunteers

As I see it, working with PCVs can be a plus for all parties involved. They are a potential resource that seems too valuable to be left to chance. In my opinion, the remaining question is how best to engage PCVs, on an institutional level (PC-DC) or an ad hoc (post by post) basis.