Intercultural factors in the Peace Corps' role as a change agent in the empowerment of rural Guatemalan women

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INTERCULTURAL FACTORS IN THE PEACE CORPS’ ROLE AS A CHANGE AGENT IN THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL GUATEMALAN WOMEN

by

Devon A. Baird

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS

School of International Studies Intercultural Relations

University of the Pacific
Stockton, California

in collaboration with

The Intercultural Communication Institute
Portland, Oregon

2013
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by

Devon A. Baird
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the incredible women of Santa Cruz El Chol, Guatemala. I came to teach you, but you taught me so much more in return. Mi admiración por ustedes jamas dejará de existir.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this thesis has been quite a journey and embodies my Peace Corps experience. My time in the Peace Corps was life changing, and helped to turn me into the person I have been hoping to become for years. At times, the path to completing my thesis became unclear, frustrating, and seemingly impossible, especially as I adjusted to big life changes, transitions, and losses. However, I did it, and I have many people to acknowledge for their support and encouragement during these last few years.

First, I would like to thank my family, who has never flinched in their belief that I would succeed. You have not only been there for me in many ways since my return to the United States, but you taught me early on about how to keep persevering against obstacles with integrity and humor.

Next, I am sincerely grateful for all the help of my Guatemalan friends and adopted family in El Chol. I am especially thankful for the camaraderie of my former coworker in the Municipal Women’s Office, Mélida Peláez Peláez. You are a model for women in your country, and a close friend whom I will always cherish. I would also like to give special thanks to Víctor Genaro Reyes Gonzalez and Norma Reyes Corzantes and her family. You were my “people” in El Chol and never let me down. I will always remember what you did for me, and always hold you in my heart.

Additionally, I want to thank all the participants, including the Guatemalan women participants in El Chol, Peace Corps staff, and returned Peace Corps volunteers,
who shared their opinions and experiences via interviews, surveys, and written or electronic questionnaires. You took time out of your busy lives to contribute to my thesis, and without you, none of this would have been possible!

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my wonderful thesis committee, comprised of Dr. Michael Osmera, Dr. Elizabeth Kirkhart, and Dr. Kent Warren, for their encouragement as I worked against tight deadlines, and flexibility in accommodating my schedule and needs.
Intercultural Factors in the Peace Corps’ Role as a Change Agent in the Empowerment of Rural Guatemalan Women

Abstract

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2013

The purpose of this research study was to analyze the success of the Peace Corps’ Municipal Development Program in its role as a change agent in the empowerment of rural Guatemalan women, and includes an exploration into the intercultural factors that may have affected the outcomes. I used my Peace Corps site of Santa Cruz El Chol, Guatemala as the case study for this research. I reviewed literature in five areas to use as a foundation to guide my research. This included literature regarding Guatemalan history and Guatemalan women’s issues, women’s empowerment in the international development context, Peace Corps, change agentry, and intercultural relations. I obtained data from four different groups. I interviewed a focus group of female leaders from El Chol, obtained questionnaires from 42 rural women from El Chol and its surrounding villages, interviewed three Peace Corps Guatemala staff members, and gathered surveys from 18 returned Peace Corps volunteers. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered via open-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, and scale-based questions.
An analysis of the findings revealed implications in three areas. The first area focused on Guatemalan women who are especially vulnerable to institutional and domestic violence, which leads to a lack of educational and economic opportunities and continues to prevent their empowerment. Next, the Peace Corps volunteers were generally satisfied with their service, but felt traits of Guatemalan society and culture prevented them from positively influencing women’s empowerment. Additionally, findings revealed that Peace Corps volunteers served as change agents in that they saw themselves and were seen by others as positive role models for the Guatemalan women with whom they worked. Finally, time management styles, differences in perception of gender roles, and direct versus indirect communication styles sometimes clashed to cause issues in U. S. American and Guatemalan abilities to work effectively together.
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Chapter 1. Introduction and Contextual Background

Introduction

In the early 20th century, Chinese statesman Mao Tse-Tung was quoted with a saying that has now been immortalized as a call to women’s empowerment worldwide:

“Women hold up half the sky.”

When I read this quote on the cover of a book by authors Nicolas Kristoff and Cheryl DuWunn, I had recently returned from two and a half years working as a Municipal Development Advisor for the Peace Corps in Guatemala. From my time there between 2009 and 2011, I had lived among women who were working to empower themselves and their communities in a country where the odds were stacked against them because of a variety of sociocultural, political, and economic challenges. I had been sent to live and work in the small, rural municipality of Santa Cruz El Chol, which was located in the heart of Guatemala. During my time there, I worked with the support of my program to help women to understand their worth as human beings, organize them into groups, and teach them about citizen participation so that they could be active participants in their own empowerment. I also formed many close friendships with Guatemalan women in my site.

After having served successfully as a volunteer and having had formed so many close relationships with people in my site, the return to life in the United States was much more difficult than leaving for Guatemala had been. Upon returning to the United States,
I felt very satisfied with my personal and professional growth and accomplishments as a Municipal Development Advisor in the Peace Corps.

However, there were also many challenges to my work and interactions in working to empower these women during my time as a volunteer. Personally, I experienced great challenges brought about because of the traditional, patriarchal systems that are still so ingrained at all levels of life in Guatemala that left women out. Additional challenges were due to the intercultural differences that existed between me, as a U. S. American, and the Guatemalans with whom I worked. I knew I was not alone in my frustrations because of having had shared similar experiences with fellow Peace Corps volunteers.

Upon my return to the United States in late 2011, I began to develop my thesis question based on thinking about how these intercultural differences may have affected the Municipal Development program’s effectiveness in terms of the empowerment of rural women. Additionally, the program had been terminated in October 2011 per a decision by the U.S. Congress regarding Peace Corps’ restructuring, so the replacement of old volunteers with the new did not occur as had been originally planned. Therefore, the sustainability of the program was affected. I was interested to see what other volunteers and the Guatemalan women with whom I had worked thought about the termination of the Municipal Development Program, and curious to find out what they believed would happen in terms of the women’s possibility for continued advancement without Peace Corps support.
**Purpose.** The purpose of this study was to explore which intercultural factors may have impacted the role of the Peace Corps’ Municipal Development program as a change agent in the empowerment of rural Guatemalan women in Santa Cruz El Chol. The timeframe for investigation covered the period between 2007 and 2011, because that is when there was a Municipal Development Program presence working within the Municipal Women’s Office of El Chol.

I have always been passionate about working to empower women, and I was fortunate to have been given the chance to work directly with women to do this in the Peace Corps. I believed in the goals of Peace Corps and the Municipal Development Program, so, upon learning that the program would be terminated in Guatemala, I wanted to investigate how this might have the program’s original goals and sustainability. I thought it appropriate to consider the elimination of the program in El Chol in order to understand the larger impact on the empowerment of rural women in the country. I also wanted to investigate my impact on the women with whom I had worked in El Chol.

Next, because intercultural factors always come into play when culturally diverse groups come together, I looked at specific intercultural factors in interactions between U. S. Americans and Guatemalan women, including returned Peace Corps volunteers, Peace Corps staff, and the women of El Chol. This was done in order to give my thesis more focus and to make it more directly useful to the intercultural relations field.

**Definition of terms.** Some of the words and phrases that should be clarified and that appear frequently throughout the chapters to follow are *change agent, empower*, and *intercultural factors.*
Change agentry is an idea that is core to the study of intercultural relations. In terms of my thesis question, the definition of what change agent means will be taken from Rogers (2003). He stated that a change agent is defined as “an individual who attempts to influence clients’ innovation and decisions in a direction that is deemed desirable by a change agency” (p. 37). For the purpose of this study, the change agencies refer to the Municipal Women’s Offices, guided by the Peace Corps’ presence. The clients are the rural women of Guatemala and specifically the women of El Chol.

Next, the word empower, for the purposes of this study, is best defined under the broader context of power. “Power,” according to Weber (1978), “is the probability that the actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out [her] own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which power rests” (p. 53). Therefore, to empower is to give power to rural Guatemalan women so that they may carry out their own will.

Finally, Ting-Toomey (1999) defines intercultural factors as those factors that “include beliefs, values, norms, and interaction scripts (p. 16). Additionally, Bennett (1998) defines intercultural factors as the specific types of cultural values, or “patterns of goodness and badness people assign to ways of being in the world” (p. 23). Therefore, based on these definitions, the intercultural factors I looked at for this study were the cultural differences between the U. S. American volunteers and Guatemalans. I also analyzed how these factors interacted to impact communication with one another. These intercultural factors may have helped or hindered understanding of one another, and, therefore, affected, in one way or another, the work the volunteers came to accomplish.
**Significance of the research question.** By investigating the intercultural factors that may have come into play in terms of volunteers’ success with their work to empower rural Guatemalan women, this study hoped to accomplish the following goals. First and foremost, I hoped it could be used as a tool by international development workers and those who work with culturally diverse groups domestically here in the United States as well in their quest to empower women. By understanding the specific factors that came into play in Guatemala, others might be able to use this information to adjust and focus their own work with similar populations. Specifically, the information may be especially useful for those working with Latin American women in the U.S. and abroad.

Another goal was to analyze the Peace Corps’ Municipal Development Program’s effectiveness in the context of how it worked to empower rural women. This was done in order to help Peace Corps and its volunteers to understand how the program succeeded, which areas it needed to change, and how to use this information in future policymaking and programming adjustments.

Additionally, there are several groups who may see the findings of this research question as especially helpful in their work and study. First, this information could be potentially helpful for Peace Corps Guatemala staff and current volunteers, returned volunteers, and administrators who were involved with the Municipal Development Program or who have an interest in Guatemalan women’s empowerment. Next, these findings could also be interesting and valuable for international development professionals, and for Peace Corps as an agency in order to understand how and why early termination of programs such as the Municipal Development might affect rural
populations. Finally, it could be of use for scholars in intercultural relations, especially those who are interested in investigating the particular intercultural factors that come into play between U. S. American and Latin American interactions.

**Limitations.** There were several limitations to the study. The first limitation was that I only interviewed Guatemalan respondents from one Peace Corps work site rather than gathering data from all the other sites where Municipal Development volunteers worked with women. Gathering information from these other areas would have made the study more well rounded in general, in terms of its ability to be applied to other areas of Guatemala. However, gathering this additional data was not a logistic possibility.

Next, the study was limited in that the Peace Corps returned volunteers who were sampled represented a small sampling of the total number of volunteers from the Municipal Development Program who had served during a certain timeframe of service. Additionally, not all Municipal Development volunteers were surveyed. I only surveyed those who had worked primarily in the women’s offices as opposed to those who had worked in the Municipal Planning Offices. I did this because of the specific information I needed to gather regarding women’s empowerment. Surveying a larger group of volunteers might have revealed more common trends in volunteer experiences.

Ideally, I would have interviewed all Municipal Development volunteers since the program started in 1999, in addition to the women with whom they had worked since then. This would have allowed me to obtain information from a longer timeframe and therefore be informed about some of the longer-term advances in women’s empowerment that may have occurred as a result of the program.
Summary of chapters. The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I has provided an overview of the purpose, definition of terms, value of the research question, and limitations of the study. Next, this chapter continues to provide contextual background information regarding the history and goals of the Peace Corps and the Peace Corps’ Municipal Development Program. This is followed by information regarding Guatemalan history and women’s situation within that history.

Chapter II provides summaries of the relevant literature that relates to the research question and helps to give a better understanding of the topics. There are five areas covered by this literature review, including relevant Guatemalan history and specifics of women’s situation within that context, women’s empowerment within the international development context, Peace Corps history and context within Latin America, change agentry, and intercultural relations between United States Americans and Latin Americans.

Chapter III explains the methodology I used to gather data for my thesis, from the resources I used to gather literature, describes the types of qualitative and quantitative measures I used in data collection including the questionnaires, surveys, and interviews I designed and delineates why I chose to use these tools. This chapter discusses the groups I chose as my respondents and why. Finally, I discuss how I analyzed my data.

Chapter IV presents the findings of my data analysis. These findings are presented for each of the four sets of participants from which data was collected. It is then broken down into sections depending on the types of questions that were asked and the kind of information gathered. For example, because the Peace Corps returned
volunteer surveys included a separate section of scale-based questions, those findings are presented separately.

Finally, in Chapter V, findings are reviewed for each group of respondents. These reviews are divided into sections that correlate to the sections of questions in the respondent surveys and interviews. The findings are then interpreted in the context of three areas that developed as a result of their review. This chapter ends with conclusions, including implications of the findings in three dimensions that surfaced as a result of distilling the findings and their interpretations. These areas include conclusions regarding rural women’s situation and needs in Guatemala, the Peace Corps’ Municipal Development Program as a change agent for rural Guatemalan women, and intercultural issues in volunteer success. Finally, limitations of the study are revisited and expanded upon, and recommendations for future research are presented.

**Contextual Background- Peace Corps’ Municipal Development Program**

**History and goals of the Peace Corps.** The Peace Corps was officially established via executive order on March 1, 1961 by the late president John F. Kennedy (Banerjee, 2000, p. 183). The Peace Corps was a grass-roots response turned federal institution to the growing need for a positive American presence in foreign policy after decades of war in many countries throughout the world. Its three goals remain the same today as when the agency was founded over fifty years ago: “to help countries meet their need for trained men and women; to promote a better understanding of Americans Overseas; and to promote a better understanding of foreign peoples and cultures here at home” (p. 138).
At a U.S. Senate Hearing in October 2011, former Peace Corps director Aaron S. Williams discussed how, fifty years later, the Peace Corps’ goals “are not only still relevant; they are more important than ever in an increasingly complex world” (p. 29).

Since its founding, the Peace Corps has had an impact on other countries, as well as on the volunteers who have served. Since 1961, over 200,000 Americans have served in over 139 countries worldwide. As of October 2011, about 9,000 volunteers from all 50 states were serving across the globe, in programs ranging from Youth Development, to Food Security, to Healthy Communities (Peace Corps, 2011, p. 29).

By becoming mini-ambassadors for positive American traits such as hard work, compassion, and commitment, Peace Corps volunteers became involved in their communities and helped host country nationals to relate to Americans on a personal level. Graul (1998) discussed how Peace Corps volunteers are overwhelmingly satisfied with their experiences, and come home having grown by leaps and bounds both personally and professionally.

However, as with any agency, the Peace Corps has had its share of criticisms from former volunteers and policymakers alike. Some of these criticisms that were discovered included that the agency is too broad-minded and should be refocused, that little positive change is actually accomplished and is hard to measure. Indeed, even during Peace Corps beginnings in the 1960s, it was argued that the agency’s greatest impact was on people’s attitudes (Rice, 1985, p. 287). Volunteers, Rice goes on to explain, usually described their impact in personal terms (p. 288).

This study examined the experiences of a specific group of volunteers, who perhaps have some of the same praises and criticisms for the Peace Corps.
The Municipal Development Program in Guatemala. Now that an overview has been given regarding the Peace Corps in general, the history and goals of the Municipal Development Program in Guatemala follows in order to give us a specific context for understanding this study.

The Municipal Development Program began in Guatemala in 1999 as a response to the need for more support and training in the Municipal Women’s Offices. The program was developed as a reaction to the new roles of municipal governments that had emerged from the Peace Accords, after the end of the civil war in Guatemala. It was one of the newest programs implemented by Peace Corps at the time. The signing of these Peace Accords supposedly ushered in an era of peace and progress, because “the municipal governments were expected to take on more of a role as promoters and investors in projects aimed at improving the living conditions of their inhabitants” (Peace Corps, 2009, pp. 4-5). The Municipal Development Advisors, specifically, worked “to increase citizen participation in local development,” and they did this in the framework of three laws that had been developed in the country in order to create more transparency and participation in government. These laws were passed in 1999 as a follow-up to the Peace Accords (p. 2).

From 1999 to 2009, 10 groups of volunteers had been sent to work as Municipal Development Advisors in Guatemala. From 2009 to the program’s termination in 2011, four additional groups were sent.

The overall goal of the Municipal Development Program was to “facilitate and strengthen the relationship between the municipal government, particularly the planning office, and the citizenry so that the local government provides services that satisfy the
demands of the population” (Peace Corps, 2009, p. 6). There were two specific parts to this programmatic goal.

Goal 1, according to the Peace Corps (2009), was “to improve the management ability and strengthen the organizational capacity of municipalities, through their Municipal Planning Offices and Municipal Women’s Offices, to deliver quality services to the population” (p. 6).

Goal 2 was “to empower and motivate community groups to actively participate in the identification, design, and implementation of sustainable-integrated community development projects and/or activities” (p. 7).

For this study, I asked Peace Corps volunteers and staff to respond to how they felt the overall goal of the program was met or needed improvement, and asked the Guatemalan participants to identify what they believed to be the goal of the program.

**Contextual Background- Rural Guatemalan Women’s Situation**

**Guatemalan history.** It is imperative to learn about the history of Guatemala in order to understand the complexities in which volunteers worked. Such information also serves as a foundation for understanding the complexities surrounding women’s empowerment in the country.

As Grandin, Levensen, and Oglesby (2011) remarked, “most people in the United States likely know Guatemala for two things: tourism and terrorism” (p.1). Guatemala is a country that has had a tumultuous past marked by many of the common issues that arise with colonialism, oppression, and corruption in so many Latin American countries and, unfortunately, in much of the developing world in general. The county had a past
characterized by these challenges, as well as a history of conflict and discrimination between groups of indigenous versus European-descent.

In 1944, the election of President Jacobo Arbenz ushered in a temporarily refreshing era of political pluralism. During his presidency, Guatemalan women gained the right to vote. In 1954, however, a U.S.-sponsored coup, the result of fears of the possible existence of communism in the country, marked the start of a violent, thirty-year civil war between the leftist guerrilla movement and the conservative Guatemalan government. According to Wilkinson (2004), this war was characterized by genocide against the indigenous populations of the country in the name of eradicating communism, and during this time, over 200,000 people were killed and terror used as a political tool to oppress the masses (p. 36).

In December 1996, after a tumultuous decade characterized by Guatemala’s attempt to find its identity again after having been internally destroyed, politicians and guerrillas finally came together and offered a new hope for a new era with the signing of the Peace Accords, marking the end of the decades-long civil war.

With the help of international development agencies and nongovernmental agencies, such as the Peace Corps, the implementation of the Peace Accords has been the catalyst for slow, steady, and positive change in Guatemala. A subsequent set of laws passed in 1999 were aimed at creating transparency and encouraging citizen participation within the municipalities, and agencies such as the Peace Corps have been instrumental in helping to enact these laws. For example, the Municipal Development Program was designed to directly address the needs in getting these laws to work for the Guatemalan citizenry.
However, there is a lot of work to be accomplished still when it comes to Guatemala’s development after such a prolonged period of destruction. As Jonas (2000) stated, despite the efforts of politicians and agencies to improve the situation in the country, “the Guatemalan state has remained dysfunctional…and hence incapable of implementing a strategy for sustainable development” (p. 185).

**Rural Guatemalan women’s current situation.** Women’s situation in Guatemala has always been especially challenging because they have traditionally been excluded from policymaking decisions and their unique needs have therefore not been considered. Jonas (2000) explained how and why women have been left out of current Guatemalan policy:

Largely because of the long-standing lack of attention to gender issues by both negotiating parties and the late development of the women’s movement in Guatemala, the negotiation agenda never included a separate accord on women’s rights. As the process continued, however, special provisions concerning women were introduced into the accords; those provisions increasingly brought a gender perspective into the definition of public policy (p. 86).

The fact that women were left out of their own society created other issues for them, including lack of educational and economic opportunities. What was more, Guatemalan culture is especially patriarchal and marked by the *machismo* that is present in most Latin American countries (O’Kane, 2004, p. 52). This characteristic has added to the subjugation of women in Guatemala, where the traditional gender roles of machismo do not allow for their participation and advancement.

Finally, violence has characterized the lives of Guatemalan women, past and present. In the past, women were easy targets during the civil war. Although the civil
war has ended, Guatemalan women still remain victims of violence. More currently, Torres and Carey (2010) have reported that Guatemalan women have continued to be the targets of a new type of violence called “femicide,” which means they are being killed simply because they are females (p. 143). “Today,” Torres and Carey go on to explain, “Guatemalan women are killed at nearly the same rate as they were in the early 1980s when the civil war became genocidal” (p. 142).

Godoy-Paiz (2011) also summarized Guatemalan women’s contemporary situation. “Gender-based violence in Guatemala,” she explained “is embedded in enduring legacies of state violence and military power, vast socioeconomic inequalities, and political and cultural ideologies that work to justify violence towards certain segments of the population, including women” (p. ii).

The information above is provided in order to help the reader to see how Peace Corps volunteers working for women’s empowerment faced many challenges in working within this pattern of exclusion and discrimination against women in Guatemala. It is important to understand some of the background information about Guatemala and women’s situation within the country in order to understand volunteer responses in this study.
Chapter 2. Review of Literature

In order to grasp the full breadth of knowledge necessary for a thorough understanding of how intercultural factors came into play in the Peace Corps’ Municipal Development program’s ability to serve as a change agent for rural Guatemalan women, I reviewed five major areas of literature. These areas included: Guatemalan history and Guatemalan women’s issues, women’s empowerment in the international development context, Peace Corps, change agentry, and intercultural relations.

I initially focused my review on sources from the Intercultural Communications Institute (ICI) and the University of the Pacific (UOP) libraries. This included correspondence with ICI staff, which resulted in lists being sent to me and some scanned materials being emailed to me. With regards to the UOP library, I took two trips to the location on the Stockton campus, where I met with a librarian about the process and how to use the system. I began those searches in September 2012 and completed my review and collection of sources in December 2012. During that time, I augmented my sources as needed from California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo, California, if they were not available at either of the two aforementioned institutions. My sources included many books, as well as online journal articles, theses, and dissertations from all three locations. Finally, I used many of the resources I already had and had received during my MAIR coursework period from 2007 to 2009, including books, readers and articles.
I began my review of the literature by focusing on Peace Corps volunteer experiences, change agentry, and intercultural relations between U.S. Americans and Latin Americans. I reviewed some literature for background information regarding Guatemalan history and women’s issues, but soon discovered that I needed to augment my review to include information about women’s development in a more broad international context in order to be able to understand more clearly how Guatemalan women’s unique experiences and Guatemala’s especially turbulent history may have played a significant role in how U.S. American Peace Corps volunteers interacted with rural Guatemalan women.

**Guatemalan History and Guatemalan Women’s Issues**

There is a fair amount of literature available specifically regarding Guatemalan history because of its notably tumultuous history and U.S. involvement in its violent past. It is important in regards to this thesis in order to understand how this past may have had an effect, and still has an effect, on the rural women of the country.

As Grandin, Levensen, and Oglesby (2011) mentioned, “most people in the United States know Guatemala for two things: tourism and terrorism” (Grandin et al., 2011, p. 1). A review of the literature concerning Guatemala uncovered that this statement is generally true. There were as many guidebooks and travelogues that praised the natural beauty and rich demographics of the country as there were memoirs and historical nonfiction focused on the violence that unfortunately has come to characterize Guatemala. Specifically, this literature described the impact of Guatemala’s thirty-year civil war that began with a U.S.-sponsored military coup in 1954 and lasted for another three decades. This conflict was between the Guatemalan government fearful of
communist tendencies in its population, and guerrilla factions that operated at a grass-roots level. It would leave a trail of genocide and destruction that would impact the citizens of the country for decades to come and leave a mark on the national consciousness. This legacy of terror and the United States’ involvement would not go forgotten in the pages of history, however. As Grandin et al. continued to explain, “the CIA’s 1954 orchestration of a coup that overthrew a democratic government is so well documented that it has become the example of choice by teachers, historians, reporters, and politicians when they want to illustrate the misuse of United States power in Latin America” (p. 1). Therefore, it is imperative to understand this background in understanding the environment in which Peace Corps volunteers worked in Guatemala.

According to Jonas (2000), in 1996, Peace Accords were signed between the guerrilla movement and Guatemalan government, which signaled the end of la violencia or violence, which had come to characterize the nation (p. 241). The signing of the accords would signal the end of an era and ideally would have ushered in the beginnings of a peace process, but as the literature regarding Guatemala’s history revealed, that future has been marked by continued turbulence as the country struggled to find its identity as a peaceful democracy amidst a myriad of other challenges. As Jonas continued to explain: “instead of becoming functional, the Guatemalan state has remained dysfunctional, and hence incapable of implementing a strategy of sustainable development” (p. 185).

Rather than ushering in a period of development and harmony, after the signing of the accords, inequalities between social groups not only continued, but, according to literature on the subject, apparently became even more stratified. “In the 1990s,” Jonas
commented, “Guatemala [had] one of Latin America’s highest poverty rates, with 80-90 percent of the population living in extreme poverty” (p. 183). “Guatemala,” she went on to elaborate, “is also one of the three Latin American countries with the greatest disparities between rich and poor” (p. 183).

In order to understand how its history has created such a profound mark on the current situation in Guatemala and in order to begin to relate to its people, Wilkinson suggested the following:

Imagine living [in fear] day after day, year after year, until the most we could hope for was to be left alone. If we do this, we may begin to grasp what hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans experienced during the war. For Guatemala was a place where terrorism did, in fact, win (p. 352).

**Women’s situation in Guatemala.** A review of the literature on pre and post-civil war Guatemala suggested that women were especially affected by the disparities of the post-Peace Accords situation in Guatemala. Because an understanding of Guatemalan women’s experiences is so central to my thesis, I focused my literature review on this material more specifically in the context of greater Guatemalan history.

There were several factors that interacted to hinder women’s development.

With regards to the government and internal changes during the time of the Peace Accords signing in 1996, women were simply left out of the equation. “The negotiation agenda never included a separate accord on women’s rights,” Jonas (2000, p. 86) explained in her investigation of Guatemala’s peace process. Women, according to O’Kane (2004) had experienced more freedom prior to the 1954 coup, which marked a “return to the predominantly conservative and patriarchal values which still reign in Guatemalan society” (p. 53). O’Kane also mentioned that women obtained legal suffrage
prior to the coup in 1945, twenty-five years after the United States granted suffrage rights to its female citizens (p. 53).

During the civil war, women were subject to violence and sometimes singled out as targets and used as weapons of war, as illustrated by such stories such as Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchu’s (1984) award-winning, allegedly autobiographical work *I, Rigoberta Menchu*. This story was an example of how indigenous Guatemalan women faced more discrimination than Guatemalan women of European descent, or *ladina* women. O’Kane (2004) gave an example of the differences between *ladino* versus indigenous cultures in Guatemala. “To be a Ladino,” she wrote, “means better access to health and education, jobs, the media, representation in the political system, as well as a higher standard of living” (p. 77). This study dealt with the predominantly ladina population of El Chol, but it was important to understand indigenous group experiences because they comprised a large percentage of Guatemala’s population. Also, such works as Menchu’s brought to light how the *ladino* population experienced the brunt of the violence during the civil war.

O’Kane (2004) mentioned another factor that is part of Guatemala’s history and especially relevant for understanding women’s situation. This factor was how Guatemala’s patriarchy, “marked by the machismo present in most Latin American countries” was especially pronounced during the civil war and a factor that still prevents women’s participation and inclusion in their own society (p. 52). O’Kane continued to describe how women’s political organizing began to become possible under the presidency of Arturo Cerezo from 1986 to 1991, and how a “number of feminist
organizations [appeared], and more information on the situation [began to be] gathered” (p. 53).

The most recent literature regarding Guatemalan women and their situation revealed a trend towards discussing not only violence against women, but the phenomena known as femicide, which specifically targets females and is described as the “the killing of women because they are women” (Silva Zuniga, 2012, p. 1). Carey and Torres helped us to understand the gravity of this trend in Guatemalan society by explaining how, “today, women in Guatemala are killed at nearly the same rate as they were in the 1980s when the civil war became genocidal” (Carey & Torres, 2010, p. 142). They noted that, from 2000 to 2010, more than five thousand women and girls were murdered, targeted because of their gender (p. 142). Various researchers theorize why femicide rates have been higher in Guatemala, and generally seemed to agree that the systematic killing of women in the country was a result of a combination of factors, including the lasting legacy of violence and impunity in a post civil-war society, the patriarchal systems being deeply ingrained in the Guatemalan culture, and the powerlessness of a weakened and corrupt government to control the phenomena. “Uncovering the historical precursors to femicide” Carey and Torres noted, “reveals a pervasive tolerance of violence.” (p. 143). Silva Zuniga also referred to femicide as “a crime associated with the impunity the perpetrators are granted by the state” (p. 142).

**Women’s Empowerment in the International Development Context**

When it comes to understanding rural Guatemalan women’s experiences and how Peace Corps might assist in their empowerment, I began to notice trends in my literature review that led me to investigate sources related to women’s empowerment in general in
developing countries, rather than focusing specifically on Guatemala. There was specific literature about Guatemala and its women, but most of that focused on indigenous women’s experiences during the armed conflict, and the violence of the armed conflict in general. Therefore, I found it was necessary to expand this review in order to understand more completely my subject matter, to learn about the experiences of other international development organizations, and to see how Guatemalan women might fit into the greater context of the development puzzle.

In order to understand women’s empowerment, it is critical to understand what it is that is being sought. Weber (1978) defined power, in this specific context, as “the probability that the actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out [his/her] own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this power rests (p. 53).” Edward T. Hall (1976) also recognized how power and lack thereof has become an issue in societies. “A major and continuing source of frustration exists because the many gifts and talents of women,” he wrote, “and others are frequently are not only unrecognized but frequently denigrated by members of the dominant group” (p. 6.) When thinking about women’s lives in places like Guatemala in the context of this definition, it was clear that they lacked power due to their inability to make decisions about a wide range of topics that affected them.

Once I understood empowerment within this context, I went on to review aspects of how women in developing countries might become empowered. Becker, Fonseca-Becker and Schenck-Yglesias (2006) revealed that women’s empowerment in developing countries such as Guatemala seems to be related to education, economic opportunity, and organizing. Becker et al. explained how “education and earning status are key
The determinants of [a woman’s] decision-making power within the household” (p. 2313). So, if a woman had educational and economic opportunities, and was able to take advantage of these opportunities due to organizing with other women, she would have more power within the home and therefore, become empowered. As Becker et al. went on to say, “the level of a women’s decision-making power in the household is one indicator of her empowerment” (p. 2313).

The first pattern in the literature that related to women’s empowerment is education. Educating women, according to Blumberg, Rakowski, Tinker, and Monteón (1995), Harrison (1991), and Kristoff and DuWunn (2010) became synonymous with greater societal advancement and good. “Education” Blumberg et al. claimed, “has long been documented as one of the most important factors stimulating development” (p. 5.). Furthermore, Harrison echoed this claim when he stated that “education is the key to progress in dynamic societies” (p. 34). More specifically related to females, “educating girls”, Kristoff and DuWunn explained, “will help address global poverty” (p. 237). “The best way to reduce fertility in a society is to educate girls,” Kristoff and DuWunn went on to explain (p. 237).

Blumberg et al. (1995), Becker et al. (2006), Bose and Acosta-Belen (1995), and Kristoff and DuWunn (2010) discussed how economic opportunity is another factor that is positively related to women’s empowerment. Authors Blumberg et al., in their analysis of women’s global empowerment, echoed Becker et al.’s sentiments from the previous paragraph. “Women’s control of economic resources, especially income” they explained, “is the most important predictor of the degree of gender equality” (p. 1). Becker et al. also noted that the “extent that women control the income . . . typically has multiple
positive consequences, starting with women’s greater self-esteem and stronger voice(s) in household decision making (p. 3).” Bose and Acosta-Belen discussed how women’s economic advancement is important as well because they “tend to be much poorer than men” (p. 235). Kristoff and DuWunn tied women’s empowerment to even broader positive economic consequences, noting that “the key to economic progress lies in unleashing women’s potential” (front cover).

Organizing, according to Blumberg et al. (1995), Deere (2001), and Godoy-Paiz (2011), is the third trend regarding women’s empowerment. Blumberg et al. listed organizing, along with increased education and economic opportunities, as factors that lead to women’s empowerment (p. 12). In Guatemala’s case, women faced difficulties in organizing themselves due to differences, for example, between ladina and indigenous women. Godoy-Paíz explained that the women’s movements of Guatemala have been “historically fragmented along ethnic, class, geographical, and political lines” (p. 197). This lack of cohesion, Godoy-Paíz noted, was due to the many factors that has limited women’s empowerment in Guatemala and other developing countries. However, she also stated that once they did begin to organize around something they could all relate to, such as the elimination of violence, they began to experience more empowerment (p. 197).

Deere, in her exploration of the empowerment of women in Latin America, also mentioned the organization of women and what she referred to as “participatory spaces” as important precursors to women’s empowerment (p. 23). Kristoff and DuWunn listed “building coalitions” as a principle for the empowerment of women as well (p. 244).

How might such empowerment begin? What is the spark that lights the fire of transformation? In general, the literature uncovered that women find themselves
empowered in situations where “new, nontraditional opportunities arise”, because “traditional opportunities tend to be gendered already; in most cases, controlled by men” (Blumberg et al., pp. 289-290). Empowerment must be induced, Deere (2001) argued, by first creating awareness of gender discrimination, and in order to “to facilitate the conditions that encourage such changes is the role of external agents” (p. 25). The Peace Corps and other agencies of international development, then, may be just the kinds of “external agents” of change that women need to facilitate their empowerment. I will discuss the literature regarding change agentry in a following section of this review. It is important to note that international agencies may have been particularly instrumental when it came to women’s empowerment in Guatemala. For instance, “international agencies”, Deere explained, “rather than national consensus, were responsible for issues of gender equality figuring so prominently in the [Peace] accords” (p. 171).

Finally, when speaking to women’s empowerment, Blumberg et al. reminded us to be cognizant of including men into the equation as well. They said, “failure to use a holistic . . . approach, will limit our understanding” (p. 294). Other authors echo this sentiment. For example, Fernandez Kelly (1994) commented that “the study of women cannot be conducted in isolation from an examination of the parallel experience of men” (p. 21).

**Peace Corps**

A review of literature regarding the Peace Corps came up with mostly historical information about the formation of the organization and its early years. However, other sources were discovered that provide relevant information for this thesis topic, especially with regards to how Peace Corps fits in to the international development world as a
whole and what volunteers think of the organization. This section, therefore, will be broken down into the following sections: general history and relevant background information, the Peace Corps’ role in international development work, and analysis of the Peace Corps: criticisms, praise, and volunteer perspectives.

**General history and relevant background information.** The United States Peace Corps was officially established on March 1, 1961, after a formative process over several years in a post-war America. Rice (1981) provided an excellent overview of how the organization got its start, with specific dates and notable accomplishments of the organization’s first twenty years. A few years later after his original publication, Rice (1985) took a closer look at the agency’s contributions and concluded that “the Peace Corps’ greatest impact was on people’s attitudes,” (p. 287) and noted the importance of Peace Corps as one of the first grassroots-level approaches to international development work. Dichter (2003) also helped us to understand how Peace Corps came to be in his discussion of how the 1960s became America’s “decade of development” and technical assistance to other nations after the hardships faced by the Cold and World Wars.

Literature regarding Peace Corps’ general history and background information was common; however, more specific information about the Municipal Development Program in Guatemala was sparse, limited to the Assignment Booklet from Peace Corps Guatemala received as part of my early Peace Corps training in August 2009. This booklet provided a detailed overview of the purpose and history of the Municipal Development Program, and its context within Peace Corps Guatemala. Furthermore, literature that helped to understand why the Municipal Development program was cut from Peace Corps in 2011 included Dichter (2003) who discussed the restructuring that
went on within the organization as a result of Peace Corps’ need to focus on its own survival, and Lowther (1978) who had argued years ago that the Peace Corps should downsize. Additionally, in a Senate hearing in October 2011, former Peace Corps director Aaron Williams described the agency’s plans for restructuring and refocusing its programs on those with the greatest impact and ability to provide direct technical assistance (Peace Corps, 2011).

The Peace Corps’ role in international development work. In order to understand the Peace Corps in a broader context of international development work, I reviewed sources that helped to give an idea of where Peace Corps may fit into the development puzzle and to help understand any criticisms and praise of the organization. Kiehl (2006), for example, argued that organizations like the Peace Corps, in order to become more effective, should focus on public diplomacy in its work overseas. Some other criticisms of the United States’ development agenda were also valuable in order to help one understand Peace Corps’ role. Dichter (2003), for example, argued that organizations like Peace Corps have increasingly had to focus their efforts on their own survival, and that development work largely cannot and has not worked in the past because of human nature and the existence of too many programs. Dichter argued for a “less is more” policy when it came to development work. He believed in weeding out many organizations, helping developing countries to begin to find their own strengths without foreign aid. Lowther (1978) echoed this idea in his earlier discussion of the Peace Corps. Fischer (1998) presented more criticisms of development work that were focused on intercultural relations. He argued that Americans will never fully come to
understand cultural others, and that the Peace Corps is one example of this overly idealistic nature of United States development agencies.

**Analysis of the Peace Corps- Criticisms, praise, and volunteer perspectives.**

Along with the literature noted above, there were sources that analyzed the criticisms and praises of the organization.

In the research findings of Banerjee (2000), volunteers praised the organizations’ bipartisan support in Congress and demand by host countries, while simultaneously doubting their own contributions and criticizing Peace Corps’ administration.

Continuing to look at volunteer experiences, Graul (1998) looked at the long-term impact of over 1,000 Returned Peace Corps Volunteers’ (RPCV) service from 1961 to 1995. Her study showed that most respondents reported personal growth, increased cultural sensitivity, a broader world outlook, and more informed world citizenship. Similarly, Banerjee (2000) discussed how volunteers are the “prime beneficiaries of their service abroad” (p. 104).

C. M. Hall (2011) provided an analysis that is even more specifically relevant to this thesis in her look at the Peace Corps’ presence in Central America from 1973 to 1999. In her research, Hall discovered the relationship between the existence of U.S. friendly governments and long-standing Peace Corps presence. Specifically in Guatemala, Hall noted, this was the case as well. Peace Corps has had a longstanding presence in the country since 1963 (p. 41). It stayed throughout turbulent times because of what Hall described as “U.S. friendly right-wing government” (pp. 44-45).

Lombas (2011) looked at the American ideals that Peace Corps volunteers have embodied, such as individualism and progress, in their work overseas, and how the most
important impact they have had is related to relationships with host-country nationals for both those individuals and the volunteers. Lombas echoed Rice’s (1985) sentiments from years earlier regarding the importance of how American values came into play in Peace Corps’ successes. Along the same lines, Fischer (1998) argued that American individualism has essentially prevented Peace Corps volunteers through the years from accomplishing what John F. Kennedy originally had in mind when it came to development work. Instead, volunteers focused on their own goals that generally related to middle-class cultural values.

When it comes to discussions of improvements and changes for the Peace Corps as an institution, the literature revealed a common thread that encouraged downsizing and focusing in on specific volunteer skills. Lowther (1978) called for a smaller Peace Corps full of “teaching technicians” rather than “well-meaning but unprepared generalists” (p. 1). Lowther went on to say that most Peace Corps volunteers arrive unprepared for their assignments and, therefore, have not kept Kennedy’s promise of what the organization was created to accomplish (p. ix). Lowther’s (2003) sentiments matched what Dichter (2003) called for in a “less is more” focus in the United States international development work agenda. Another criticism of the agency noted by Dichter was that volunteers need more financial resources to be able to accomplish their goals.

Carrying on a similar thread in the literature, in the hearing before Congress titled *Peace Corps: the next fifty years* (2011), it was simultaneously argued that Peace Corps’ existence is still relevant and important in today’s complex geopolitical landscape, and that it needs to be restructured and refocused. This hearing’s suggestions for the agency echoed both Lowther’s (2003) and Dichter’s (2003) calls for more technical assistance.
This hearing also looked into the satisfaction of Peace Corps volunteers with regards to their service, and, in a survey of hundreds of volunteers conducted by the organization, 98% of respondents would “recommend Peace Corps to their child, grandchild, or close family member.” This reflected what Graul (1998) also found; that RPCVs were content with their experience, in her survey of returned volunteers.

**Change Agentry**

When thinking about the literature on change agentry, I knew I would find many sources amongst our course work for the MAIR program. I used these resources and expanded my search to include several sources regarding change agentry in Latin America in order to hone in more succinctly on my topic. The resulting sources will be divided into the following categories in this section of the literature review: concepts and theories and change agentry in the Latin American development context.

**Concepts and theories.** There are several researchers who are especially important to discuss in order to gain an understanding of change agentry and its relevance to this thesis. These include Marris (1975), Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1974), Tannenbaum and Hanna (1985), Kanter, Stein, and Jick (1992), and Rogers (2003).

Marris’ (1975) early contributions to the topic of change agentry included a discussion of how change is managed via a process of letting go and holding on, and how this process resembles the stages of grief. He discussed how change affects one’s identity and concept of reality, and how these phenomena regarding change processes are universal.
Watzlawick et al. (1974) discussed problems that occur in change processes, and concluded that differences between two groups or individuals create more problems rather than solve them, that issues at the individual, personal level may also be generalized to larger social systems, and that change may be best implemented by focusing on small, attainable goals rather than lofty ones.

Tannenbaum and Hanna (1985) mirrored Marris’ (1975) assertions in their description of a process of change that is governed by letting go versus holding on and human nature’s reluctance to change, but expanded upon Marris’ work by giving several specific recommendations for organizations about how to manage change. They suggested that organizations become cognizant of the need for transition in all its forms, that organizations should not resist change but accept it as normal and move on, and that organizations should realize when “one or more subsystems, or the entire organization need to die” (p. 116).

Continuing to analyze the challenges faced in organizational change, Kanter et al. (1992) corroborated some of the other theorists’ thoughts about what makes change difficult, but also described what makes change work. Change within organizations and systems, according to Kanter et al., should be organic, moving and evolving (p. 12). For example, these writers encouraged us to see organizations as “bundles of activity with common elements” (p. 12).

Finally, Rogers (2003) confirmed some of what Watzlawick et al. had stated regarding how and why parties who are different from one another face challenges in making change work. His book also served as a guide for understanding the problems that change agents face and factors in change agent success. Specifically, Rogers argued
that successful change agents have high social status among their clients, higher education, and a way of interacting with others that develops from having interacted with many different types of individuals, or what Rogers’ described as “cosmopoliteness” (p. 343).

**Change agentry in the Latin American development context.** Although it is important to understand change agentry in general, it is also important for this thesis to understand how change agentry may fit in to the Peace Corps experience in working with rural Guatemalan women. In helping us to understand this situation, a review of the literature revealed the trends faced by development workers in this region.

Briton (1994) revealed one trend that called for a need for work to focus on education for successful change agentry to occur in Latin America. Briton’s work also described social change in more detail with regards to its importance in a modern Latin American society that has been heavily influenced by Western society.

While Briton’s work looked at change in Latin America, Ritchie-Dunham (2007) looked to the results of a study that addressed Guatemala’s specific needs via a gathering of non-governmental organization stakeholders in the region. In this specific case, positive change was curtailed in Guatemala because of the history of deep conflict that engendered an “us versus them” mentality and a deep focus on one’s own interests. (p. 14). In this same study, the following areas of concern were identified by stakeholders as central areas needing positive change in Guatemala: equality, human development, preservation of culture, dignity and equality in the home, understanding of other people, colonialism, and opportunities for women (p. 8).
**Intercultural Relations**

In order to understand intercultural relations, it is important to understand what the word culture itself encompasses. A Peace Corps (2011) publication was used to train volunteers on cross-cultural preparedness and included definitions of the word “culture” by intercultural theorists Hofstede, Kluckhohn, Hall, and Kohls (pp. 16-26). When we combine these separate definitions and look at their similarities, we come up with something along the lines of “patterns that help to shape a society and its people.” These patterns may be in assumptions, values, beliefs, and behaviors, and help to define the identity of a group of people (p.16-26).

According to Bennett (1998), cultural values might also be defined as “patterns of goodness and badness people assign to ways of being in the world” (p. 23). Hofstede (1980) further discussed different cultural values as “mental ‘programs’ which are developed in the family in early childhood and reinforced in schools and organizations, and . . . contain an element of national culture (p. 11).

Hofstede’s (1980) work was especially valuable to the study of intercultural relations because he found patterns after studying forty different countries with regards to power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism and masculinity/femininity. Theorists in the United States and elsewhere began to identify and study these differences in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the post World War and Cold War shifts that were happening across the globe and as it became more imperative to begin to develop an understanding of cultural others in order to work and live amongst them in a changing global environment. E. T. Hall (1966) explained the importance of Hofstede’s (1980) contributions: “Knowledge of the cultural dimensions as a vast
complex of communications on many levels would be virtually unnecessary,” he wrote, “if it were not for two things: our increasing involvements with people in all parts of the world, and the mixing of subcultures within our own country” (p. x).

It is this “involvement with people in all parts of the world” that is especially relevant for Peace Corps. Additionally, for this study, it is particularly important to understand the differences between United States Americans and Latin Americans, and how intercultural factors interact to affect relationships between the two groups, especially in a development work context.

Because an in-depth understanding of intercultural relations is central this study and necessary to interpret the findings of data analysis, this review of literature regarding intercultural relations will be divided into several sections, including United States American culture, Latin American and Guatemalan culture, intercultural factors in working with cultural others, intercultural relations in the Peace Corps, and intercultural factors in United States and Latin American interactions.

**United States American culture.** Several authors identified patterns in US American culture that are unique to our cultures and simultaneously important to an understanding of our cultural values.

Bennett (1998) summarized some of the traits of U.S. Americans. He noted that they possessed a “doing” activity orientation, equal and informal social relationships, achievement-driven motivation, a perception of the world based on material rather than spirit and focused on the future, a perception of the self as an individual, time as lineal, space as non-territorial, and essence/energy as matter (p. 159-167).
Additional patterns were found in the literature regarding traits mentioned that seem unique to North American culture. Gorden (1974), Harrison (1991), Kohls (1988), Peace Corps (2011), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) noted that, in the United States, equality and democracy in social relationships, and a focus on rules and laws being applied universally, as a common cultural trait. Next, Gorden (1974), Hall (1976), Kohls (1988), Lindsley and Braithwaite (1996), Pai (1990), Peace Corps (2011), and Ting-Toomey (1999) mentioned directness and “step-by-step” styles in communication style and conflict resolution as typical North American characteristics. Finally, E.T. Hall (1983, 1990), Harrison (1991), Kohls (1988), Pai (1990), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) explained the monochronic, segmented, future-oriented, and doing versus being focus with regards to how North Americans deal with time and its management. For example, Guatemalans in my site often noted how surprised they were by my punctuality to events, and my ability to meet deadlines.

Still others showed how American culture rates compared with other cultures. For example, Hofstede (1980, 1983) showed that Americans scored fairly low in power distance and uncertainty avoidance when compared with dozens of other countries throughout the world, yet scored highly when it came to individualistic tendencies.

**Latin American and Guatemalan culture.** A review of literature regarding traits common to Latin American culture revealed several patterns, including specific information about Guatemalan culture. A look at the research about Latin American cultural traits revealed the following. First, Gorden (1974), Hall (1976), Lindsley (1996) Pai (1990) and Ting-Toomey (1999) mentioned an indirect and high-context style of communication, which also related to the face-saving, indirect style of conflict common
to Latin Americans. Next, Hall (1983), Harrison (1991), Pai (1990), Ting-Toomey (1999), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) connected in their discussion of Latin Americans’ more polychronic and flexible relationship to time was mentioned by many authors as a distinct cultural trait. Furthermore, Lindsley (1996), Pai (1990), and Ting-Toomey (1999) agreed about how Latin Americans represented a culture that focused on collectivity rather than individuality.

E. T. Hall (1990) and Mirandé (1997) mentioned machismo is another Latin American trait that made the culture especially different from North American culture.

Finally, Harrison (1991), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) revealed that a tendency to believe in a hierarchical, unequal power structure void of universal rules had been accepted in Latin American culture.

There were several sources that listed Guatemala-specific cultural traits that help to paint a picture of some of the issues faced by U.S. Americans in interaction with its people. Hofstede (1998) identified Guatemala as possessing a large power distance, meaning it valued hierarchy in social structure, and as highly valuing masculinity rather than femininity (p. 81). He also found that Guatemala scored as one of the least individualistic and therefore one of the most collectivistic countries, and as one of the countries with the highest level of uncertainty avoidance (p. 268). Hofstede (2001) showed how Guatemala was one of the countries with the highest amount of fear of disagreeing with their employer, representing not only a conflict-avoidant society but also one that valued power distance (p. 123). Furthermore, Hofstede (2001) showed that Guatemala was rated at number thirty-seven out of fifty on the masculinity index,
reflecting the country’s high levels of *machismo* and its positive associations with male traits rather than female traits (p. 286).

**Intercultural factors in working with cultural others.** When working with individuals and groups from different cultures, there are some specific intercultural factors, as the literature revealed, to take into account. Anbari, Khilkhanova, Romanova, and Umbleby (2004), in a table adapting information from Kohls (1981) and Marquardt and Kearsley (1999) listed intercultural factors that, if they clashed, had a negative impact on the outcomes of project management. Some of the factors on this list indicated where North American and Guatemalan cultures would clash included egalitarianism vs. hierarchy, time is money vs. time is life, action/doing vs. being/acceptance, tasks vs. relationships/loyalty, directness vs. indirectness, and control vs. fate (p. 271).

Bennett (1998) identified six stumbling blocks to effective intercultural communications, including assumption of similarities, language differences, nonverbal misinterpretations, preconceptions and stereotypes, and high anxiety (pp. 173-183).

Gorden (1974) explained how, when adjusting to life in a foreign environment, goodwill and intelligence were helpful but not enough, facility in the language was necessary but not sufficient to guarantee cross-cultural communication, and seemingly trivial misunderstandings often lead to basic mutual misperception and generated hostility or alienate (p. 3). Furthermore, Gorden (1974) showed how what Hall (1966) described as the “the hidden dimension” of nonverbal communication could cause issues because of the unconscious and/or false expectations of many intercultural interactions (p. 89). “Cross-culturally dissonant silent assumptions,” Gorden explained, “act as barriers to communication for anyone immersed in a foreign culture” (p. 161). Finally, Gorden
(1974) noted how misuse of knowledge and/or understanding might lead to problems in intercultural interactions (p. 163). One should combine, he argued, an understanding of both verbal and nonverbal communication in order to more fully comprehend intercultural interactions (p. 177).

**Intercultural relations in the Peace Corps.** With regards to the specific topic of this thesis and how Peace Corps volunteers may have adjusted to working in a different culture, Elzey (2003) pointed out that volunteers with prior intercultural travel and/or experience were more likely to have a positive attitude regarding their experience than those with no intercultural exposure (p. 76). Additionally, volunteers who identified some type of pre-departure transition prior to leaving for the Peace Corps reported less stress than those who did not (p. 80). This finding correlates with change agency theory per Marris (1975) and Tannenbaum and Hanna (1985) regarding the importance of transitions in order for positive change to become possible.

Additionally, the Peace Corps (2011) provided a comprehensive book regarding intercultural relations that is uses for volunteers’ first three months of service, called *Culture Matters*. This book covered topics such as cultural value orientations, gave examples of how to handle cultural differences, and discussed intercultural theory. Volunteers worldwide have used this book to complete weekly activities related to its content in order to get a better understanding of intercultural relations. Many theorists from our MAIR curriculum made contributions to this book, including G. Hofstede, C. Kluckhohn, E. T. Hall, and M. Bennett.
Intercultural factors in United States and Latin American interaction.

Overall, trends in the literature revealed that there are indeed broad cultural differences that tend to make relationships more challenging between U. S. Americans and Latin Americans, especially when working within a development context. The importance of understanding the unique differences between North Americans and Latin Americans was presented by Harrison (1991) who claimed that “the indispensable starting point [for making progress happen in Latin America] is broad recognition that the traditional values present an obstacle to progress” (p. 261). Harrison claimed that progress in Latin America would require a displacing of its traditional values (p. 272). Still others, including Gorden (1974), showed how there was a “general dissonance … a general pattern in the conflict of silent assumptions” between some Latin Americans and North Americans working abroad (p. 51).

There were several specific factors of cultural variability that were recurrent in the literature review when looking at specific intercultural factors that may affect relationships between United States Americans and Latin Americans in a development work context. The first factor was individualism versus collectivism, which “is a major dimension of cultural variability isolated by theorists across disciplines” (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1998, p. 40.). Individualism versus collectivism was also mentioned by Hall (1976), Hofstede (1980, 1983), Kohls (1988), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) as an important cultural variable that, when in discord, created confusion and lack of understanding between cultures. They explained how individualism was common of United States culture and marked by a focus on the individual rather than the
group, whereas collectivism, typical in Latin American countries, including Guatemala, was identified by a focus on the group as a whole.

Another factor in the unique interactions between United States Americans and Latin Americans were their communication styles. Specifically, low versus high-context communication was noted via a review of the literature. This variable, according to theorists Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1998), was important because it, like individualism/collectivism, was a variable in intercultural relations that was “broader and more encompassing than other dimensions” (p. 39). It is important to understand what “context” meant to these theorists. It is the “amount of innate and largely unconscious understanding a person can be expected to bring to a particular communication setting” (Peace Corps, 2011, p. 86).

The Peace Corps (2011) went on to explain how low context cultures, including the United States, were more heterogeneous and individualistic, and had therefore developed a more direct style of communication in order to be able to understand different cultural groups. High context cultures, such as Guatemala, were more homogenous and collectivistic; therefore, because they already knew and understand one another, their communication had evolved to be more indirect. It was argued that these cultures favored face-saving and the maintenance of harmony, and, subsequently, avoidance of confrontation (p. 86).

Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1998) showed how the low versus high context communication style variable might be connected to a culture’s individualism/collectivism variable, as “it appears that low and high context communication are the predominant forms of communication in individualistic and
collectivistic cultures,” with highly individualistic countries favoring low-context communication, and highly collectivistic countries leaning towards high-context communication (p. 44). E.T. Hall (1976) described how the context variable, additionally, reflected the conflict style of each culture and suggested possible issues associated with what happened when different conflict styles collided (p. 138).

Next, the review of the literature revealed U. S. American and Latin American viewpoints regarding time orientation. As Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1998) stated, these orientations, “like oil and water, don’t mix” (p. 128). Hall (1983) described how Latin Americans operated on “P-time,” or polychromic time, and held more fluid attitudes towards time and its management, whereas North Americans operated on “M-time,” or monochromic time, strictly adhering to time and its limits, and only engaging in one activity at a time (p. 129). Harrison (1991), Kohls (1988), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), Anbari et al. (2004), Bennett (1998), and Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1998) mentioned relationship to time as an especially central cultural value orientation that could help or hinder relationships with cultural others. Because Latin American and North American views on time and its management are so different, it might be deduced that this variable could have played a big role in Peace Corps Volunteer and rural Guatemalan interactions.

A final unique variable in United States American and Latin American interactions, according to the literature review, was the existence of machismo and the role it played in Latin American culture. Machismo is defined as “the concept and cultural imperatives associated with masculinity in Latin American cultures” (Mirandé, 1997, p. 142). Guatemala, according to O’Kane (2004), could be described as a “strongly
patriarchal society, marked by the *machismo* present in most Latin American countries” (p. 52).

Fernandez (1994), Hall (1990), Godoy (2011), Jonas (2000), Blumberg et al. (1995), Carey and Torres (2010), Silva Zuniga (2012), Ritchie-Dunham (2007), Hofstede (1998), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), and Peace Corps (2009) also discussed *machismo* in Latin American culture, and addressed the problems created via the gender inequalities brought about by machismo, such as women’s subjugation and lack of opportunities.

In the literature about North American value orientations, however, gender was almost never mentioned as an issue, and *machismo* did not have a direct translation into English. This is a possible reflection of the more egalitarian, equality-centered principles that characterized the United States. The prevalence of *machismo* within the patriarchy of Guatemalan society, versus the relative equality and independence of women in North American society, was another factor in intercultural relations between the two groups that could be conflict inducing.

There were many intercultural differences revealed by a review of the literature that presented potential issues to development work between Latin Americans and United States Americans. Latin American researchers themselves noted the differences that might discourage development work in their countries. Harrison (1991) quoted Latin American author Mario Vargas Llosa who described the difficulties brought about by cultural differences: “Our mentalities are very far from being democratic,” Llosa stated. “They remain populist and oligarchic … flawed by social and racial prejudices, immensely intolerant” (p. 27). Harrison (1991) also identified ten key factors that
influence progress when United States Americans work in Latin America. The factors he identified as those that influenced progress if they were not in harmony were time focus, work ethic, frugality, education, merit, sense of community, ethics, justice, authority, and secularism (pp. 31-39).

These understandings of the unique intercultural interactions between Latin Americans and North Americans were central to developing an understanding of the unique interactions between Peace Corps volunteers in the Municipal Development program and rural Guatemalan women. Rural Guatemalan women, particularly, are at risk for lack of educational and economic advancement, unlike their city-dwelling female counterparts who have had access to more opportunities by virtue of where they live. This phenomenon was discussed in particular by the Peace Corps staff interviewees, who have intimate knowledge of both the city and country life in their country. A discussion of the methods used to obtain information from these volunteers and the other groups of Guatemalan participants is to follow.
Chapter 3. Method

This chapter will describe the methods used for the design of my research, and provided the rationale for using a combination of qualitative and quantitative means to gather data. It will also talk about the specific sampling techniques used and examine the evolution of the research questionnaires and interviews. Finally, the chapter shall conclude with an explanation of how the data was analyzed, along with ethical considerations to data collection and analysis.

Rationale for Use of Both Qualitative and Quantitative Measures

There were two groups from which I collected data for this thesis, using various methods, in order to gain the most information possible about the impact of the Municipal Development Program on rural Guatemalan women from 2007 to 2011 in El Chol. These two groups were rural Guatemalan women in El Chol who interacted with Municipal Development volunteers, including the Municipal Women’s Committee and women’s groups from nine rural villages, Peace Corps in-country staff, and returned Peace Corps Volunteers who had been involved in the Municipal Development Program from 2007 to 2011.

The methods I used to collect information from the Guatemalan women included a focus group with the Women’s Committee and written surveys administered to rural women’s groups. I did a focus group with the Municipal Women’s Committee because of the smaller size of the group and because this method, as R. B. Rubin, A. M. Rubin,
and Piele (2005) described in their work with communication research strategies, is an “intensive group interviewing that seeks to understand … attitudes and behavior” (p. 230). Additionally, Bailey (1994) explained how a focus group can “provide more flexibility and opportunity to probe than in a large survey” (p. 192).

For the rural women’s groups, I used written questionnaires to gather data. I used a questionnaire rather than a focus group with this population for three reasons. First, I had worked less closely with these groups during my time in El Chol and therefore had less confianza, or trust, with these groups. Confianza, in my experience in Guatemala and as expressed by Peace Corps’ training in the country, is an integral part of Guatemalan culture, especially when interacting with others and sharing potentially personal information and opinions. This characteristic was reflective of Guatemalan culture’s high-context communication style, collective versus individualistic tendency, and high power distance which all contributed to how Guatemalans relate to outsiders, especially those who were perceived as authority figures because of knowledge and/or country of origin (Hofstede, 1998, p. 81, 286).

Therefore, gathering data by means of written questionnaires allowed the women to work collectively in groups of other Guatemalan women with whom they had more confianza, while honoring their need to be guided by an authority figure because of their high power distance cultural trait.

Second, there were over sixty participants in nine different communities for the rural women’s groups, so questionnaire use was more time effective for me because of my limited time in the country, but also for the participants, who primarily consisted of busy housewives who had little time to devote to anything outside their familial and
household duties. Third, and finally, I decided to use a questionnaire with simpler questions than I did with the focus group because of the lower education levels of the rural women, who generally had an elementary level education or less. I used both open and close-ended types of questions in order to allow for a variety of different types of responses, because, as Bailey (1994) stated, “most questionnaires contain a mixture of [both types of questions]” (p. 122). In this case, the closed-ended questions included Likert-style scale questions and multiple choice questions. There were also spaces to write open-ended responses to the majority of the questions. The women were encouraged to work in groups in order to help them understand the questions, but were also told not to copy one another’s answers. They were assisted by community group leaders who were present at the meetings. In addition, I assisted them along with a Guatemalan friend who had worked with these types of groups as a literacy coach, and who had provided transportation for me to the villages, known as aldeas, for the administration of the questionnaires.

As for the collection of the Peace Corps data, I interviewed the present and former Peace Corps Guatemala APCDs (Associate Peace Corps Directors) and the Project Specialist of the Municipal Development program personally in Guatemala when I was there in April 2012. I chose to interview them individually because, first of all, I was going to be in Guatemala with time to meet with them, and, second, their schedules were also very full and it would have been more difficult to obtain the depth of information needed via telephone or electronically. Furthermore, personal interviews were advantageous in that they allowed for more flexibility of responses, spontaneity, and greater complexity of the questionnaire (Bailey, 1994 p. 174). The interview questions I
developed for Peace Corps staff were much more complex than the questions used with the Guatemalan women, not only because the Peace Corps staff was more familiar with analyzing the program but also because we had more confianza having had worked closely together during my time in the Peace Corps.

Next, information from returned Peace Corps volunteers from the Municipal Development program was collected via surveys administered electronically. Additionally, there was one survey administered over the phone with a Peace Corps volunteer who I replaced in El Chol, and who preferred to complete the survey verbally rather than in writing. With the returned Peace Corps volunteers, I felt it would not only be easier for them to complete electronic surveys due to their different locations throughout the country, but also knew their time was limited as many of them were working and/or job searching, and I wanted to make the surveys as easy to complete as possible. Bailey (1994) echoed these ideas in listing “time savings, ease of completion, and remote locations” as some the advantages of using electronic questionnaires (p. 204).

**Criteria for Selection, Sampling and Setting**

In this section, I provide more detailed information about each method used to obtain my data, the criteria for selection of participants, the sampling process, and the setting for each group with whom I worked. I discuss each method and group in an order that reflects when and where I collected my data, starting with my trip to Guatemala in April to interview the rural women and Peace Corps staff, and ending with the collection of surveys via email from returned Peace Corps volunteers.
Focus group with Municipal Women’s Committee. I returned to Guatemala in April 2012 after having had been back in the United States after my Peace Corps service since November 2011. I came to conduct part of the data collection for my thesis. I spent a month in the country gathering data and interviewing individuals and groups. I decided to start my data collection with a focus group conducted with the Municipal Women’s Committee of El Chol because I had the most confianza with them and it would be easier to start off where we had left in November. In the rural and traditionally conservative area where I worked, confianza played an especially major role in host country nationals’ culture and ability to share information with others, especially with non-Guatemalan foreigners. I had spent extended time with this group of women during my Peace Corps service and I knew they would be more comfortable sharing information, since they knew I was coming back due to word of mouth. However, the rural women’s groups were not aware of my return due to their geographic isolation and difficulties in communicating with them, and therefore would need more time to warm up to the idea of a focus group discussion.

The Municipal Women’s Committee consisted of seven individuals, including a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and three vocales, or extra representatives. The committee had been formed after a process of training and elections in 2011. The Women’s Committee had been formed via this process, facilitated by myself and my counterpart, as part of our with via the Municipal Women’s Office, and these women were especially involved in the community and had been elected by the community as leaders. After locating and getting in contact with the members of the Women’s Committee upon my arrival to El Chol, we set up our focus group meeting for April tenth.
at two o’clock in the afternoon. I coordinated with my former counterpart to conduct the focus group at her home, as that would be a comfortable place for the women to meet, and one with which they were already familiar because it was their normal place for monthly meetings. We decided to meet in the afternoon, as that was easiest for the women because it was between their familial obligations. I printed the questionnaires for us to use as guides and advised the women that we would be tape recording the focus group. When we met for the focus group, we first discussed what to expect and I went over consent forms with the women and had each sign a consent form. I then facilitated the focus group interview using the questions I had developed earlier as a guide, and recorded it with an audio recorder. Our focus group lasted for about two hours and I gave the women small gifts from the United States and a snack as incentives.

**Group questionnaires with rural Guatemalan women.** Aside from the Municipal Women’s Committee with whom I had worked closely as a Municipal Development volunteer for two years in El Chol, the women’s groups that we had formed in the surrounding, smaller *aldeas* were also vitally important as far as helping to understand the impact of the Municipal Development program on women’s empowerment in El Chol. I worked closely with the Municipal Women’s Committee because they were centrally located. Although I did not work as closely with the rural women’s groups, due to the logistical difficulties throughout my service of getting to their villages, I did serve as a facilitator, along with my counterpart, and helped to form the groups and provide educational workshops and several projects for them.

When creating my proposal for this thesis, I noted that I would use a different method for obtaining information from the groups of rural Guatemalan women from the
villages because I had not worked with them as closely during my time in El Chol. As mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, I had less *confianza* with those groups and would need to take that into consideration for their comfort levels. Their lack of formal schooling was also a consideration in the research methods design. Because of this, I decided to administer questionnaires in groups that required written answers, but that would be facilitated by me and allow for peer support in completing the questionnaires together.

The criteria for selection of these women were that they be part of the rural Women’s Group of their *aldea* and that the group would have been formed prior to my departure in November of 2011. There were seven individuals in each group, including a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and three *vocales* or, extra representatives. There were nine *aldeas* surrounding El Chol; therefore, there were approximately sixty-three people to whom I would administer the questionnaires. However, not all potential respondents showed up to complete the questionnaires. I had a total of forty-two respondents.

In order to identify and get in contact with these women, I met with the new Municipal Women’s Office Coordinator who had begun after the Municipal election in September 2011. She had lists of each group and their contact information that my counterpart and I had left behind after the change of administration. This was necessary because my counterpart had not continued to work as the Municipal Women’s Office Coordinator after the elections. I contacted the women’s groups and arranged visits in their communities for the second and third week of my visit to El Chol. I met with the
women’s groups in the community meeting place they identified for each *aldea*, which ranged from a school to a soccer field to a community leader’s home.

**Interviews with Peace Corps staff.** The gathering of information from the women of El Chol regarding how the Municipal Development Program had an impact on their empowerment was critical. It was equally important to gather information from the Peace Corps side, including the Peace Corps Guatemala staff who represented the Municipal Development Program. Specifically, I interviewed those staff most closely connected to the Municipal Development Program, including the current and former APCDs and the Project Specialist for the program. The criteria for selecting these individuals were that they were staff in the program and familiar with its volunteers from 2007 to 2011 and therefore would be able to provide more in-depth information than other Peace Corps staff. One APCD had served until 2010, and the other began in 2010 and continued until the program’s restructuring in late 2011. The Project Specialist was with the program throughout the entire period from 2007 to 2011.

The interviews were done on the third and fourth week of my month long trip to Guatemala in April 2012. I developed the interview questions based on perceived impact and effectiveness of the Municipal Development Program, specifically focusing on Peace Corps staff’s specific role and perception regarding the Peace Corps’ impact on women’s development in Guatemala. These questions were more complex than those requested of the El Chol women’s groups because of the Peace Corps staff’s familiarity with the program. Prior to my arrival, I had coordinated via email prior to my arrival with the Peace Corps staff regarding when and where to meet for these interviews, and confirmed with them prior to meeting. I conducted three separate, individual interviews: the first
with the former APCD at a shopping center in Guatemala City, and the second and third at the Peace Corps center in Santa Lucia Milpas Altas, near the former capital and tourist center of Antigua. These locations were chosen by the participants. The interviews took about an hour each, and each participant was given a consent form to read and sign prior to the interview. The interviews were tape recorded in order, to be transcribed later. Participants agreed to be tape-recorded. We conducted the interviews in a mixture of Spanish and English, as these three individuals were all fully bilingual. This allowed for a more natural conversation and more open dialogue. I gave the three participants a gift from the United States as an incentive.

**Surveys for returned Peace Corps volunteers.** Finally, I collected data from returned Peace Corps volunteers themselves. The criteria for selection of this group were that they had to have been a Municipal Development volunteer in Guatemala sometime during the period of 2007 to 2011, because that is the time period I focused on for this study. Additionally, I only surveyed volunteers who had worked primarily in the Municipal Women’s Office during that time, because of my focus on rural women’s empowerment in Guatemala. The volunteers who worked primarily in these offices were more familiar with the issues surrounding rural Guatemalan women’s development and had worked closely with both the Municipal Development Program staff and with local women. The sample of volunteers was selected by contacting the returned volunteers via email who had served primarily in Municipal Women’s Offices from 2007 to 2011. Their email addresses were obtained via Peace Corps’ email lists that had been sent to me during my service in order to be able to get in contact with one another. I had developed the survey before my return trip to Guatemala. In the survey, I asked a series of
questions related to volunteers’ experiences and perceptions of the Municipal Development Program. Some of the questions required qualitative responses and were more open-ended, whereas other questions were scale-based in order to analyze responses and to come up with a more quantitative measure. I designed the survey in this way because I knew the returned Peace Corps volunteers would be able to respond to more analytical and complex questions than the rural Guatemalan women I had surveyed. I also believed the returned volunteers would find it more convenient to answer questions via email.

I sent the survey and consent forms to potential participants the first time in early September 2012. I pre-tested the surveys with coworkers and MAIR cohorts, and estimated that they would take approximately twenty to thirty minutes to complete. I received several surveys back after initially sending them to participants. However, I needed to have more data to analyze in order to make the data significant, so I sent the surveys out again in late September. By mid October 2012, I had received thirty-five percent of completed surveys and consent forms from the potential participants, so I sent all participants a Target gift card as a small incentive.

Additionally, I did one final survey via phone with the volunteer I had replaced in El Chol on October 14th, 2012, because she had requested to complete the survey via a telephone interview rather than completion of the survey online.

Data Analysis

There are four sets of data that were analyzed in order to synthesize the information about how the Peace Corps’ Municipal Development Program played a role as a change agent for rural women in Guatemala, using El Chol as a case study.
First, the focus group data was analyzed by transcribing the recorded discussion and by looking at the respondent’s notes. I noted any patterns via writing down a tally of common words and phrases I read in responses, with regards to how the women perceived the program and its impact on themselves as women in El Chol and, more broadly, on the issues that Guatemalan women face.

Second, from the questionnaires, data was tabulated into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for the closed-ended responses, and patterns noted in the more open-ended questions for each village’s women’s group. Again, I noted patterns by keeping a tally of repetitive words and/or phrases in the women’s responses. I found percentages for the closed-ended and scale-based responses.

Third, Peace Corps staff audio interviews were transcribed and patterns discovered, and I looked at my notes, again making a tally of repetitive words, phrases, and ideas that may have developed during each interview, for further insights.

Finally, the Peace Corps volunteer questionnaires were tabulated into an Excel spreadsheet for the scale-based responses, and patterns noted via the same simple tallying method used with the other groups, in the more open-ended responses. I also calculated percentages for closed-ended and scale-based question responses.

For all data, I kept a focus on what the literature had revealed about how certain intercultural factors may have played a particular role in the interactions between rural Guatemalan women and Peace Corps volunteers. I also needed to consider how change agentry works best in international development, the history of Guatemala and its people, and the Peace Corps as important factors in understanding the specific impact of the program.
Ethical Considerations

I explained to all participants in writing, and verbally when possible, that their personal information would be kept confidential, and that records with personal information would be destroyed after my thesis’ completion. I explained that any information would be kept locked up in a secure location so that others would not have access.

Additionally, I discussed informed consent with participants verbally and/or in writing, as part of their signing of the consent form. I reminded participants that their partaking in the activities was completely voluntary and that they could decline to participate, or stop participation, at any time. I read the consent forms to the individuals and groups with whom I met with in person, and made sure all returned Peace Corps volunteers understood the consent form and sent it back to me, signed, along with their completed surveys.

As Bailey (1994) stated, informed consent is crucial to ethical considerations with social research because they make the participants “fully aware of the purpose of the study, its possible dangers, and the credentials of the researchers” (p. 458).

In working with the Guatemalan women, it was especially necessary to discuss the confidentiality of their responses, not just because it was ethically correct to do so, but because Guatemalan culture relies so heavily on the idea of confianza in social relationships in order to share potentially sensitive information.
Chapter 4. Findings

In order to show the findings of this study, I have divided this chapter into four sections, organized in the chronological order of when the data was collected.

First, I present the qualitative findings from the Municipal Women’s Committee Focus Group. Next, I discuss the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of the Rural Women’s Group Committee questionnaires. Third, I present the qualitative patterns I found in the three interviews with current and former Peace Corps Guatemala staff. Finally, I show the quantitative and qualitative outcomes from the returned Peace Corps volunteer electronically administered surveys.

Municipal Women’s Committee Focus Group

As mentioned in Chapter 3 of this study, I chose to start my data collection with the Municipal Women’s Committee of El Chol, in April 2012. The interview was divided into the following sections, and had been designed to correlate to the other interviews and surveys administered to the different groups that comprised my thesis participants: experience with the Municipal Women’s Office, experience with Peace Corps volunteers, and Intercultural Differences.

I translated the tape-recorded interview into English and transcribed the responses into a blank copy of the interview. Finally, I noted any written responses the women had made. It is important to note here that I did not collect specific demographic information such as age and level of education from the focus group participants, as I did with the
rural women’s groups, because I did not want the women to feel uncomfortable sharing such information in such a small, intimate group. In Guatemala, verguenza, or shame, is something to be avoided at all costs. Sharing information such as age in front of one another would have embarrassed this group of women.

**Experience with the Municipal Women’s Office.** When asked how they had been involved in the Municipal Women’s Office, two participants each referred to the celebrations in which they had partaken, such as the celebration of Mother’s Day and International Women’s Day and the classes they had taken, including sewing and cooking classes. In the written responses, two women noted the marches for women’s rights they had participated in, which had been sponsored by the Women’s Office.

Next, the women were asked how they thought the Women’s Office had helped the women of El Chol, and what the office still needed to do to empower women. Verbal and written responses centered around how the group believed the Women’s Office encouraged more women’s participation and leadership, where there had been little or none before, and affected women individually by lifting their self esteem and showing them that they had value despite the machismo that was common to Guatemalan culture. One woman expressed the message she took away from working with the Women’s Office: “Levántate! Vales mucho. Eres mujer y puedes trabajar a la par del hombre” (Lift yourself up! You are worth a lot. You are a woman and you can work alongside men.).

As for the work the Women’s Office should continue to do, three women expressed the need for the work that had been started to keep going. In our discussion, one woman specifically noted a project where several recipients were to receive houses built with federal government funds, but did not because of many impediments. The
beneficiaries, including this individual, had been waiting almost two years for their homes. Apart from this, one woman mentioned the importance of continuing with community diagnostics. Finally, written responses reflected the verbal responses and no differences were notable.

**Experience with Peace Corps volunteers.** In this section of the focus group interview, the women were asked about why they thought Peace Corps volunteers were sent to Guatemala. They were asked to comment about how volunteers helped in the Women’s Office of El Chol, and what they thought would happen now that the volunteers had been removed indefinitely from El Chol. Three of the women believed Peace Corps volunteers had been sent to work in the Women’s Office to help with the needs of the community and women. Two others mentioned that the volunteers having had been sent to their small town made the women feel important. Additionally, three written responses confirmed what the women said about believing the volunteers came to assist with the needs of the community and with, specifically, women’s needs.

In regards to how the volunteers helped in the community, two women mentioned specifics like English classes. More generally speaking, three women noted that the volunteers had initiative, ideas, and that their presence alone was a help to the community. My former counterpart mentioned the challenges I had faced in working with a male-dominated administration, noting that many of my ideas and ideas that came from both of us out of the women’s office were initially rejected by the administration then “stolen” by male Municipal workers or council members. She then explained how this was especially frustrating, because we were working to bring things to the community that were really needed, whereas the mayor and his friends perpetuated
*machismo* and patriarchal leadership with their choices to build, for example, a soccer stadium rather than vocational training center.

Finally, the women were asked to share their thoughts regarding the departure of Peace Corps from El Chol due to security concerns and restructuring. Generally, the women expressed concern and worry that the progress that had been made already with the women in their community would stop. Specifically, they mentioned the volunteers as allies who put pressure on the administration to include women in Municipal decision-making processes. One woman even said she believed “everything would fall apart now.” The written responses in this section also reflected what was said verbally.

**Experience with intercultural differences.** Getting the women to open up and speak to intercultural differences between Americans and Guatemalans was difficult. At first, no one wanted to speak, but finally, my counterpart noted some differences. These included punctuality on the part of Americans and lack of planning and organizational skills on the part of Guatemalans. Eventually, two women noted differences in food, language, and other more superficial differences, but generally the women were not comfortable speaking about the differences. Instead, they wanted to focus on the similarities. As one woman said, “we have the same heart and we share a lot in common as women.” The women, in general, expressed an awareness of cultural differences, but seemed to accept the differences as normal and expected.

When asked about the challenges faced due to these cultural differences, one woman mentioned language and punctuality as differences that could cause challenges for Guatemalans and Americans working together. Two mentioned the transportation issues I had in El Chol due to not being permitted to ride motorcycles, where motorcycles
were a common and efficient means of transportation. One respondent even mentioned the fact that Americans were not used to snacking or doing *dinamicas*, or icebreakers, which are customs in Guatemalan meetings, as a challenge in working with U.S. Americans. Written responses in the intercultural differences section of the interview did not reveal anything that was not also mentioned verbally during the session.

In conclusion, all seven participants thanked me for my service and requested continued communication and help where possible for their efforts. I told them how proud I was of them for forming the committee, and hoped they would continue working hard to empower themselves and others in El Chol.

**Rural Women’s Groups Questionnaires**

The questionnaires I administered with the rural women’s groups of El Chol were divided into three categories of questions, also designed to coincide with the themes of this study. The categories were as follows: experience with the Municipal Women’s Office and in the women’s committee of their *aldea*, experience with Peace Corps volunteers, and thoughts on intercultural differences between Guatemalans and U. S. Americans. There was also a small section at the beginnings of the questionnaire to collect demographic information about the women.

**Demographic information.** In order to give context to the answers given during this questionnaire, and to help understand some of the challenges in working with this particular population, I included a section on the questionnaire requiring demographic information. In this section, I asked participants about their name, age, village name, role in committee, level of education, and type of work or vocation.
The average age of all participants was approximately 39 years old. The youngest participant was 19 years old, and the oldest participant was 70 years old. The names of the villages were Los Amates, Pacoc, Ojo de Agua, Agua Caliente, Los Jobos, Los Lochuyes, Lo de Reyes, El Apazote, and La Concepción. The education level of participants varied. The highest education levels were in particular aldeas, including Los Amates and Los Lochuyes, where most of the women had a sixth grade education. The lowest levels of education were in Lo de Reyes, where the average education level was about the second grade. This aldea was also one of the farthest aldeas, geographically, from the city center. Six participants reported having had no formal education, which comprises approximately 14% of the women surveyed. As for the type of work the women identified as their own means of economic income, 97.6% reported domestic work as their vocation, or identified themselves as a “housewife.” Only one participant did not respond to this question.

Experience with Municipal Women’s Office and women’s committee. The first question in this section asked the women how long they had been involved in the rural women’s committee of their aldea. Answers varied and reflected the involvement of the Municipal Women’s Office in their area. The women from La Concepción, Los Amates and Agua Caliente had the longest involvement in their committee, of one year or more. These groups had always been especially active and interested in empowering themselves when I was working in El Chol as a volunteer. Women from Los Lochuyes and Lo de Reyes reported one month of involvement in the committee, as the new Women’s Office coordinator had recently reorganized the committees. The rest of the
aldeas did not answer this question, because they either did not recognize themselves as a formal committee, or did not understand the question.

This first section of the survey continued with three multiple choice questions regarding the women’s direct involvement with their committee and the Municipal Women’s Office. These questions asked, first, why the women had become involved in their committee, second, which events and activities they participated in, and finally, what things that Women’s Office had offered that helped the most with women’s empowerment. Results showed that 18 women identified their reason(s) for joining the women’s committee of their aldea as wanting to improve the situation for women in their community. The next most common response came from 17 respondents, who said they wanted to improve their life and their family’s life. The women of Lo de Reyes identified wanting certain projects as their reason for involvement. The next question revealed that a significant number of women, approximately 19 respondents, said they had participated in educational talks, or charlas, and celebration of Mother’s Day, as far as participation in activities and events sponsored by the Municipal Women’s Office. The last multiple choice question in this section revealed that the 27 women, representing the majority at 64% of responses, believed that the charlas where overwhelmingly the most beneficial activity or event, sponsored by the Women’s Office, in terms of empowering the women of El Chol.

Question five and six of this section of the questionnaire were open-ended questions designed to illicit the women’s own responses. For question five, women were asked to elaborate upon their response to question four, and explain why they thought the activities and events they identified were especially empowering to local women. A large
number of women who answered this question, approximately 17 respondents, explained that the charlas were most beneficial because they provided a way for the women to learn new things. Four women also noted that the benefits of how the activities and events either lessened machismo and maltreatment of women in the community. Finally, three women explained how the activities and events sponsored by the Women’s Office were beneficial because they were things that mattered specifically to women, rather than just geared towards men.

Question six revealed what the women would like to see from the Women’s Office in the future. The most significant data revealed was that 16 women mentioned they would like to see more specific classes offered, including cooking and dessert classes, and more specific projects brought to their aldeas. Additionally, five women mentioned wanting help specifically with a chicken coop project.

In closing this section of the questionnaire, the women were asked to rate what they thought of the ability of the Women’s Office to empower rural women. Answers, on a Likert scale of 1, representing “no change,” to 5 representing “much change,” resulted in 15 respondents answering that they believed there was “some change.” The next most common response was by 11 respondents, who said there was “much change.” In the aldea of Lo de Reyes, however, the women answered unanimously that there was “no change” in regards to the empowerment of women via Women’s Office involvement. This aldea was one of the least visited by the Women’s Office during both my time in El Chol and my predecessor’s.

Experience with volunteers and perceived goals of Peace Corps. This section of the rural women’s group questionnaire asked the women to reflect upon their thoughts
regarding their experiences with the Peace Corps volunteers that came to work with women in El Chol. I also asked respondents to discuss what they perceived to be the goals of Peace Corps and its volunteers. There were three multiple choice questions and one Likert-style scale-based question with an option to elaborate upon this response.

Question one of this section had the women to reflect upon the overall purpose of Peace Corps. The vast majority, approximately 26 respondents, believed the purpose of Peace Corps was to help the people of interested countries to meet their need for trained men and women. The second most common responses by seven respondents were that Peace Corps existed to help to promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served, or respondents said they did not know or understand the purpose of the Peace Corps.

The next question requested participants to tell why they believed Peace Corps volunteers had been sent, specifically, to help in the Women’s Office of El Chol. A majority of 21 responses revealed that they believed volunteers had been sent to improve the management ability and strengthen the organizational capacity of the municipality. The next most common response was made by 17 respondents, who thought the purpose was to empower and motivate community groups to actively participate in projects and activities.

As for the third question, women rated the helpfulness of Peace Corps volunteers in women’s empowerment in El Chol on a scale of 1, “not helpful,” to 5 “extremely helpful.” The majority of respondents, representing approximately 12 responses each, rated volunteer’s helpfulness in empowerment as either ”helpful” or “extremely helpful.” Two aldeas unanimously rated the volunteers’ helpfulness as low, including Lo de Reyes,
where the women rated the volunteers at a score of 1, “not helpful,” and the women of Los Jobos rated them as 2, “somewhat helpful.” Again, these two *aldeas* were some of the most geographically distant and, therefore, received fewer visits from the Women’s Office staff and Peace Corps volunteers due to transportation issues. La Concepción and Agua Caliente, however, unanimously rated the helpfulness of the volunteers as extremely helpful. As I mentioned in the previous section, the Women’s Office interacted more frequently with the women from these two *aldeas*, who were, in turn, more participatory in events and activities the office sponsored.

Question four, also a multiple-choice question, asked the women what they believed would happen with regards to women’s empowerment now that Peace Corps would no longer be present in El Chol. I explained to the women how the project had been removed from the area for security reasons. The majority of women, approximately 12 for each response, said that they believed it would be more difficult to continue with women’s empowerment, or that they didn’t know what would happen. Nine women also chose to write their own responses, and these responses varied from that they believed there would now be no support, that there would be no more training, and that they must keep progressing on their own.

**Experience with intercultural differences.** The final section of questions for the rural women’s committee questionnaires focused on intercultural differences between U.S. Americans and Guatemalans. Specifically, this section asked about differences encountered between the Peace Corps volunteers and the women’s committees, and how these differences either helped or hindered the empowerment of women via the
volunteers’ work in El Chol. This section was composed of one scale-based question and six multiple choice questions.

The first question and the only scale-based question of the section, asked women to rate the differences between Guatemalans and Americans on a scale of 1, “not different,” to 5, “very different.” Women were also given the option in this question to write additional remarks about why they answered the way they did. Most women, approximately 16 and 20, respectively, rated the differences between Guatemalans and U.S. Americans as “different” or “very different.” One woman responded that Guatemalans and U.S. Americans were not different, and another woman gave a neutral response. In explaining why they answered this way, the women identified cultural differences, including language, culture, food, color of skin and hair, the fact that there was more discrimination in Guatemala than in the United States, that the United States had more opportunities and economic resources, that U.S. Americans are well-educated, and, finally, that U.S. Americans are “more caring.” Five women did not respond to this question.

The next two questions in this section, and first multiple choice questions, asked the women to reflect upon the challenges they faced and the benefits gained in working with Peace Corps volunteers. For question two, regarding challenges faced, the majority of women, approximately 17, claimed that the most difficult thing for them in working with Peace Corps volunteers was that it was difficult to understand their Spanish. The next most common response, by 16 women, was that they felt shy about interacting with [the volunteers] because they were different. Two women made a separate note for this
question, writing that they did not experience any challenges in working with Peace Corps volunteers.

For question three, regarding benefits of interacting with Peace Corps volunteers, the three most common responses, made by 15 women each, were that it made the women want to help other women to become empowered in their community, that the volunteers helped them to feel more confident in expressing themselves, and that they learned that they had things in common with U.S. Americans.

Now, the questions shifted focus to ask the women to reflect upon the challenges and benefits for the Peace Corps volunteers in working with rural Guatemalan women such as themselves. Question four revealed that many women, 9 in total, believed that seeing the poverty in the villages and working with people with little schooling may have been especially challenging for Peace Corps volunteers in their work with rural women. When speaking to the benefits for Peace Corps volunteers in working with rural women, the majority of respondents, approximately 21, believed that it was good work experience for the volunteers and that it gave them a chance to make new friends.

Finally, after having had a chance to reflect upon both their experiences with the volunteers, and the volunteers’ experiences with them, in question number six the women were asked to think about how intercultural differences may have affected the volunteers’ ability to help to empower women via their work in the Municipal Women’s Office. The answers to this question varied more than any other question in the rural women’s committee questionnaires. Twelve respondents each, or 28.5% for each response split three ways, said that cultural differences were so great that Peace Corps was not able to
help much, that cultural differences played a minor role in Peace Corps’ effectiveness,
and that cultural differences did not affect the Peace Corps’ ability to help.

In concluding the questionnaire, a notable majority of 30 total, or 71% of the total
respondents, also elected to write something in this optional space regarding the topics
covered in the questionnaire. The women noted in this section that they were either
grateful for the Peace Corps volunteers’ work and presence in the community, and/or said
they hoped the volunteers would return and keep helping the community in the future.

Peace Corps Guatemala Staff Interviews

In order to capture more information about the perceived impact of the Municipal
Development Program and its volunteers on rural women in Guatemala, I interviewed the
three individuals within Peace Corps Guatemala who had the most intimate knowledge of
the subject: the current and former Associate Peace Corps Directors (APCDs), and the
Project Specialist, of the Municipal Development Program. I arranged and conducted
personal, individual, face-to-face interviews with these individuals in-country during my
return trip to Guatemala in April 2012. I knew gathering this in-depth information from
these specific individuals would be especially informative because they were not only so
closely involved with Municipal Development, but also were Guatemalan and therefore
had a special understanding of gender and intercultural issues. There were three sections
of open-ended questions in the interviews, which I will use as a guide to present the
findings for this section. The categories were regarding the Municipal Development
Program as an agent of change, Guatemalan women’s issues and empowerment, and U.S.
American and Guatemalan cultural differences.
**Municipal Development Program as change agent.** There were three questions in this first section of the interview. First, respondents were asked to describe their involvement in the Municipal Development Program; next, they were asked to analyze the successes and areas to improve with regards to the program’s goals; and finally, they were asked to define change agentry and to analyze the Municipal Development Program’s effectiveness as an agent of change.

Although the three respondents’ backgrounds and time having worked for Peace Corps Guatemala differed, all three believed that where the program had succeeded in its goals was via its direct technical assistance to the Women’s Offices of the Municipalities.

Where the program needed improvement, they unanimously noted as well, was in regards to training for mayors and counterparts who would be working with the Peace Corps volunteers. As for what change agentry meant in this context, answers differed slightly but all three interviewees identified change agents as those who come into an environment with new knowledge to share with others, to promote positive changes and innovation.

With regards to how the Municipal Development Program and its volunteers, specifically, served as change agents, the interviewees all noted that the volunteers’ mere presence in the Municipality affected others in mainly positive ways, for they served as models. The more current APCD gave several concrete examples of how Peace Corps volunteers had served as change agents during his time as an APCD with the program, including a volunteer who built a school and got the municipal administration on board to make the school self-sufficient, a volunteer who started a library project and returned, pleasantly surprised after a trip back home, to see the women had taken over the project
themselves, and finally mentioned my own work with my counterpart in El Chol, and how, even after my departure from site and despite the fact that she no longer worked in the municipality, the women’s groups were still functioning, and the Municipal Women’s Committee self-sufficient, with little or no political support.

**Guatemalan women’s empowerment.** The next section in the interview included questions about women’s empowerment and the role of the Municipal Development Program in the former. This section also included three open-ended questions regarding the following, more specific topics in this category: rural Guatemalan women’s specific situation and their special issues, how the Municipal Development Program addressed these issues, and if the Municipal Development Program succeeded in empowering rural women, and if so, how this was accomplished.

Respondents mentioned various issues that women deal with in Guatemala, but all three mentioned the difficulties faced by women due to lack of formal education. Illiteracy, lack of economic opportunities, violence, and low self-esteem were mentioned as consequences of rural women’s low rates of education. All three respondents also mentioned women being undervalued in society, and not valued equally. The female respondent mentioned *machismo* much more than the male respondents, as an issue that is part of Guatemalan culture and therefore holds women back from advancement. However, two respondents also mentioned how more women and girls participate in the educational system and how this is a sign of slow but sure advancement.

As for what the Municipal Development Program did to address these issues, respondents mentioned the importance of showing women how to organize themselves into groups, then educating them on topics that were important to their development, such
as self-esteem, in order to give them a foundation from which to work from and begin to participate. One respondent mentioned how the Municipal Development Program served to create what he defined “multipliers” of information-counterparts and other female community leaders-who could, even after the volunteers had gone, continue to educate others. Finally, one respondent mentioned again the importance of the Municipal Development Program’s mere presence and how volunteers served as models for women and girls in their empowerment.

All three respondents believed the program had succeeded in helping empowering women. The program was relatively new, one respondent noted, so the change would be difficult to see. However, some changes were obviously already happening: one respondent gave specific examples, such as how, with volunteer support, a domestic violence support center was started and is still ongoing in one site, where no one had talked about the issue before. Finally, the mere presence of the volunteers in the municipalities and how they might have served as models was an example of how the interviewees believed the program helped to empower Guatemalan women. Additionally, one respondent noted that it was especially impactful that volunteers lived amongst the Guatemalan people for years, rather than just coming to educate the public once or twice about a topic as is customary of other organizations in the region.

**Intercultural differences.** With regards to U.S. American versus Guatemalan cultural differences, I focused these questions on addressing what it was like for the Guatemalan interviewees to work with American volunteers. Three questions in this section covered the following topics in this category: noticeable cultural differences in working with Americans, how they dealt with and/or reacted to these differences, and
finally, how these intercultural differences may have either helped or hindered the volunteers in their work within the Women’s Offices.

All interviewees noted the most noticeable cultural differences between themselves and U.S. Americans to be directness and a direct communication style, punctuality, fast-paced work style, and planning. Reactions to cultural differences varied from causing friction at first to being beneficial to the respondent in terms of learning to grow. The difference that caused the most friction, according to the respondents, was direct communication style, which sometimes clashed with Guatemala’s high-context and indirect style, especially in the rural areas where most people had hardly interacted with a U.S. American before. The female respondent noted how uncomfortable she was at first seeing the female U.S. American volunteers doing so much on their own and with little protection in what she perceived to be dangerous situations, but eventually learned that the women were self-sufficient and independent. She then used these lessons towards raising her daughter to be a more independent young woman. Again, Peace Corps volunteers were seen as positive role models.

With regards to how these differences affected the volunteers’ work, interviewees believed the differences both helped and hindered. Specifically, the directness of U.S. American culture helped in many cases when working directly with Municipal authorities, yet not in the rural setting. Additionally, being female, two of the respondents mentioned, was both a help and a hindrance to being able to get work done in a highly patriarchal society that was not necessarily accustomed to value the contributions of women. One interviewee mentioned U.S. Americans’ more fast-paced
work style as a help to their work in that it would ideally motivate others to work harder as well.

**Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Surveys**

As mentioned in Chapter 3 of this study, my final piece of data collected was information from the Peace Corps volunteers who had served in primarily Municipal Women’s Offices during the period from 2007 to 2011. I chose to do this in order to look at patterns during that time in volunteer experiences, as this timeframe coincided with the Peace Corps presence in the Municipal Women’s Office of El Chol, before the end of the program. Of 36 potential respondents, 18 returned volunteers completed the questionnaires electronically, representing a response rate of 50%.

There were two main sections in this survey. First, I included a section of open-ended questions regarding the Municipal Development Program as an agent of change for rural Guatemalan women, next, women’s empowerment, and, finally, U.S. American and Guatemalan cultural differences. There were three questions in each of these sections. The second part of the survey was composed of ten Likert-style scale based questions that measured volunteer satisfaction with their work and the program, change agentry and empowerment of rural women, and issues with intercultural differences. Returned volunteers were also asked to provide information about their dates of service and the location of their work sites, as part of the introductory portion of the survey, and given a space to write any additional comments.

**Volunteer information.** As part of the introduction of the survey, I asked the returned volunteers to provide some basic information about their dates of service, work
sites, and area of work within the municipality. There were four groups of volunteers from the 2007 to 2011 period. These included volunteers whose dates of service were August 2007 to October 2009, volunteers from August 2008 to August 2010, volunteers from August 2009 to October 2011, and volunteers who served from August 2010 to October 2012. Volunteer dates of service fluctuated somewhat depending upon whether the volunteer extended their service or closed their service earlier, but for the most part these were the four time periods during which volunteers served. I received five completed surveys from volunteers who served during the 2007 to 2009 timeframe, four surveys from the volunteers who served during the 2008 to 2010 timeframe, five surveys from volunteers who served during the 2009 to 2011 timeframe, and four surveys from volunteers who served during the 2010 to 2012 timeframe. Volunteer work sites varied, but it is notable that five respondents (28%) had served in the department of Huehuetenango, and five (28%) in the department of El Quiche. This reflected the higher numbers of volunteers Peace Corps placed in these areas, which were areas of highest need within Guatemala. Most respondents reported that they had worked exclusively in the Municipal Women’s Offices of their site; however, five respondents, or 28% of the total respondents, reported that they had worked both in the Municipal Women’s Office and Municipal Planning Office of their worksites.

Open-ended response questions. The second part of the volunteer survey included three sections of open-ended questions with three questions each, including questions regarding the Municipal Development Program as an agent of change for rural Guatemalan women, questions regarding women’s empowerment, and questions
regarding U. S. American and Guatemalan cultural differences. The findings for each section are as follows.

**Municipal Development Program as change agent.** This first section of open-ended questions prompted returned volunteers to reflect upon their involvement with and specific accomplishments in the Municipal Development Program, how the program met or did not meet its goals, and how the program was related to change agentry in Guatemala.

For the first question, several respondents, approximately six, mentioned their involvement with forming, strengthening, and teaching small rural women’s groups and larger women’s leadership networks as an integral part of their work with the Municipal Development project. As far as the types of educational talks, or *charlas*, returned volunteers provided for the women in their site, the more common topics, noted by three to five respondents each, were citizen participation, personal development (i.e. self-esteem), business and economic development, women’s health, and organization and training of the groups. Individual volunteers mentioned specific projects they worked on as well, including a *pila* (sink) project, needs assessments, and the formation of a soccer team.

Next, volunteers reflected upon how the Municipal Development Program either succeeded or failed in reaching its goal of “facilitating and strengthening the relationship between municipal governments and the citizenry so that the local government provides services that satisfy the demands of the population” (Peace Corps, 2009, p. 1). As far as how the program succeeded in reaching this goal, answers varied greatly. The only visible pattern in the responses to these questions was that two volunteers each mentioned
how the program succeeded in that it supported rural women, trained leaders, and taught women what to expect from their municipal government. Otherwise, volunteers individually mentioned everything from how the program put the Women’s Office in a positive light, improved transparency and accountability, taught about democracy and the election process, helped to bridge relationships between the municipal offices and rural women’s groups, built capacity of local leaders, organized groups, and fulfilled the needs of the community.

As for what areas the program needed to strengthen in order to be able to reach its stated goals, there were three more noticeable patterns in respondents’ answers. Most commonly, seven respondents mentioned the challenges due to the environment of working in municipalities, including the lack of transportation to communities and issues associated with the election year, as challenges that prevented goals from being achieved. Next, six respondents mentioned the needs for counterpart training and support in order to be able to succeed as a volunteer. Finally, five volunteers said that the goals of the program were simply too lofty to be attained, and would need to be adjusted or completely changed for the program to have been more successful.

The last question in this section asked volunteers to explain their definition of what a change agent does, and connect this to how the Municipal Development Program and its volunteers may serve as change agents in their work in Guatemala. Although answers to this question varied, there was a pattern in that certain words were used in the volunteers’ definitions of what it means to be a change agent were presented via participles such as “promoting,” “inspiring,” “assisting,” and “facilitating,” reflecting the “active,” “doing,” role of the volunteers in change agentry. Seven volunteers mentioned
one or more of these words in their definition of change agent. Another commonality in their responses was that six volunteers mentioned the word “change” in their definition of change agent, and still others showed how the change agent’s role in others’ development is active, using more words and phrases like “work to,” “to bring,” “actively,” “address,” and “challenging others” in their definitions of change agentry.

As far as how the Municipal Development Program specifically served as a change agent in Guatemala, eleven responded discussing how volunteers were “role models,” “mentors,” or “showed by example”. In other words, they were change agents by being models. Some of the other notable individual responses included that volunteers mentioned the program’s positive impact on children and the next generation, explained how the program created leaders, and brought organizations and groups together.

**Guatemalan women’s empowerment.** In the next section of open-ended questions in the volunteer survey, participants were asked to reflect upon rural Guatemalan women’s situation and issues faced, including why these issues may exist, how the Municipal Development Program and the volunteers addressed these issues, and, finally, if the Municipal Development Program helped to empower rural women and if so, how it accomplished this empowerment.

Answers to the first question revealed that volunteers believed the most prevalent issues specific to the rural Guatemalan women with whom they worked were violence, noted by eight volunteers, and lack of education, mentioned by seven. Other issues reported included sexism, noted by five respondents, women’s treatment as inferior by society, mentioned by four, and the women’s low self-esteem, also noted by four returned volunteers. As for why they believed this issues existed, volunteers were quite varied in
their responses. However, four volunteers each mentioned lack of education and/or ignorance, and women’s internalization and acceptance of their oppression as possible causes for the perpetuation of the issues faced.

When asked how the Municipal Development Program and its volunteers addressed the specific issues that rural Guatemalan women faced, five volunteers responded that the volunteers addressed the issues via education and teaching, including the charlas that were provided to the women on a variety of different topics. Second, four responses each showed that volunteers believed being a positive role model to the women and training or capacity building were other ways the Municipal Development Program and its volunteers addressed the specific issues faced by rural Guatemalan women.

Finally, volunteers were asked to explain if they thought the program and its work helped, specifically, to empower rural Guatemalan women. If so, volunteers were asked to explain how the program was related to women’s empowerment. Sixteen volunteers, a large majority at approximately 89% of responses, said that, yes, the program helped to empower women. Some of the explanations for how the program helped to empower women were that the program helped to create a formal structure for them to become involved in their development and participation and helped to improve their self-esteem. As for the two volunteers who did not believe the program was related to the empowerment of rural women, they explained that the program lacked the sustainability and the Peace Corps volunteers lacked the cultural understanding necessary for real empowerment to occur. Three respondents to this question also mentioned in their notes
how success in empowering women via the Municipal Development Program was dependent upon the volunteer and/or the counterpart.

**Intercultural differences.** In this final section of open-ended questions for volunteers, three questions prompted them to describe the most noticeable cultural differences between Guatemalans and U.S. Americans they observed via their work in their sites, how they reacted to and dealt with some of these differences, and how these differences may have helped or hindered volunteers in their work in the Municipal Women’s Offices.

As for noticeable intercultural differences, ten respondents, representative of a majority and a total of 56%, noted traditional gender roles, *machismo*, and/or sexism as a noticeable difference they encountered in their work in the Women’s Offices. Next most commonly noted by approximately six participants, were the different perceptions of time by Guatemalans versus U.S. Americans. Finally, there was a five-way tie noted by four responses each, noting the cultural differences of fatalism, collectivism, indirectness, slow pace of life, and low motivation and amount of initiative-taking among Guatemalan peers. Volunteers dealt with these differences in a variety of ways, but, more commonly, six noted adapting to the differences, using methods including adjusting their time management expectations, “thinking like a Guatemalan,” or becoming less outspoken. Next most commonly, four respondents each said they either learned to become more patient in general, or simply allowed themselves to be frustrated when confronted with cultural differences. Finally, three volunteers each said that they used their sense of humor or asked for clarification when dealing with cultural differences.
After having had reflected upon the types of differences encountered and how they dealt with these differences, volunteers were asked about how these differences either helped or hindered their work as Municipal Development volunteers working in the Municipal Women’s Offices. Ten respondents noted specific ways in which cultural differences hindered their ability to work effectively in the Municipal Women’s Office of their site, which comprises a majority at 56% of total responses. Dealing with sexism was noted by five respondents as the specific difference that made their work more difficult in the Women’s Offices. Only one respondent believed the intercultural differences could help their work. Specifically, this person noted how the communal attitudes of the women assisted in consensus seeking and cooperation. It is important to also note that five respondents felt that whether intercultural differences helped or hindered the Peace Corps volunteers in their work was dependant on the individual Peace Corps volunteer themselves. As one volunteer stated, “Volunteers are driven to complete goals, so if there were people in the way, they could either go around the obstacles or get stuck in the mud.”

**Conclusion.** At the end of the open-ended questions, I included an optional section where volunteers were encouraged to add anything else regarding the topics they had just described. Eleven volunteers mentioned that the type of change Peace Corps aims to achieve takes time and might not be visible for a long time, and that this was important to keep in mind when “measuring” potential successes of the Municipal Development Program.
**Scale-based questions.** The last section of the volunteer survey was a section of ten Likert-style scale-based questions, where responses were rated on a scale of one to five. In order to display the findings in most efficiently in terms of being able to interpret the results, I will show results to each question below, noting the number of responses to each question out of 18 total responses possible in the boxes:

1. Overall, I am satisfied with the having served as a volunteer in the Municipal Development program.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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The findings for question one showed that the majority of volunteers surveyed were highly satisfied with having served as a Municipal Development volunteer.

2. The Municipal Development program achieved its stated goals in its work in Guatemala.

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The findings for question two showed that the majority of volunteers surveyed felt that the Municipal Development program achieved its stated goals.

3. I felt that I served as an agent of change in my work through the Municipal Development program.

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The findings for question three indicated that a majority of volunteers felt that they had served as a change agent in their work through the Municipal Development Program.

4. The Municipal Development program is structured to help empower rural women via its work in the OMM.

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The findings for question four showed that most volunteer believed that 
the Municipal Development Program was structured to help empower rural 
women via its work in the Women’s Offices.

5. I directly helped to empower rural women via the work and projects I completed in the OMM 
of my site.

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The findings for question five revealed that most volunteers believed they 
directly helped to empower rural women via their work and projects completed in 
the OMM (Women’s Office) of their site.

6. Cultural differences between Americans and Guatemalans were effectively addressed 
by Peace Corps so that we were able to work more effectively with host country 
nationals.

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The findings for question six showed that a majority of volunteers 
believed cultural differences between U.S. Americans and Guatemalans were 
addressed effectively by Peace Corps so that they were able to work effectively 
with host country nationals.

7. Cultural differences kept me from being able to achieve what the women in my site 
needed for their empowerment.

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<tr>
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</table>

The findings for question seven showed that volunteers generally 
disagreed with the perception of cultural differences keeping them from being 
able to achieve what the women in their sites needed for empowerment; however, 
a considerable percentage of respondents believed that cultural differences did 
keep them from being able to achieve what the women needed. The difference 
between those who agreed and disagreed was approximately 5%, with slightly 
more disagreement than agreement.

8. Cultural differences hindered the overall ability of the Municipal Development 
Program in strengthening women’s empowerment in Guatemala.
### Question 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings for question eight revealed that most volunteers disagreed with the idea that cultural differences hindered the overall ability of the Municipal Development Program in strengthening women’s empowerment in Guatemala.

### Question 9

9. Now that the Municipal Development Program has been terminated by Peace Corps, the work I started with the women in site will stop because they do not know how to continue with it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The findings for question nine indicated that most volunteers disagreed with the idea that the work they had started with the women in site would stop because the women did not know how to continue it, now that the Municipal Development Program had been terminated by Peace Corps.

### Question 10

10. What effect will the end of the Municipal Development Program have on the work that has been done in Women’s Offices by the Peace Corps?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Will not effect</th>
<th>Will mildly effect</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Will effect</th>
<th>Will strongly effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings revealed that most volunteers, when thinking about how the end of the Municipal Development program would affect the work done in the Women’s Offices by the Peace Corps, had a neutral response or believed the end of the program would indeed affect the work already completed in the Women’s Offices.

Now that the findings from the data have been revealed, discussion with regards to the findings and conclusions regarding implications in three areas will be presented. Additionally, limitations of the study will be considered, along with suggestions for areas of future research.
Chapter 5. Discussion and Conclusions

In the final chapter of this study, we see how the literature regarding the topics served as a foundation to being able to interpret the data from the findings. This chapter begins with a review of the research findings from the four sets of participants: the Municipal Women’s Committee focus group, the rural women’s groups, Peace Corps staff, and returned Peace Corps volunteers. Based on these discussions, conclusions are presented regarding the implications that these interpretations have in the Municipal Development Program’s ability to have served as a change agent for rural Guatemalan women, and what intercultural factors, specifically, may have been involved in the program’s outcomes. Finally, this chapter concludes with an exploration into the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research regarding these topics.

Review of Findings—Women’s Committee Focus Group

The following review of the findings from the Municipal Women’s Committee focus group is divided into three sections as they correspond to the questions asked during the interview: experience with the Municipal Women’s Office, experience with Peace Corps volunteers, and intercultural differences.

Experience with Municipal Women’s Office. First, finding revealed that this groups’ experience with and understanding of the Municipal Women’s Office was centered around the activities they participated in that included the celebration of events
such as Mother’s Day and International Women’s Day, and partaking in classes. The findings revealed that the interviewees believed the Women’s Office empowered women by encouraging more self-esteem, civic participation and leadership, where there had existed little to no encouragement before. The findings, furthermore, showed that the women believed the Women’s Office should continue to do its work with women and they wanted to see the continuation of projects and plans that had been started before the change of the municipal administration.

**Experience with Peace Corps volunteers.** When it came to their experiences with Peace Corps volunteers, the findings showed that the interviewees believed volunteers had been sent to help the women of the community with their needs. As for what the volunteers actually accomplished, the women mentioned specific projects and classes, but also that the volunteers’ mere presence helped the community and its development. The women also recognized some of the challenges faced by volunteers, including challenges due to machismo that prevented advances. The women expressed concern via their responses about the fact that the volunteers were no longer present in El Chol and believed it could hinder continued development for women.

**Experience with intercultural differences.** Although it took some prompting and encouragement for the women to speak up about perceived differences between U.S. Americans and Guatemalans, some eventually did note more superficial differences such as language spoken, types of food eaten, and that the volunteers were not used to certain Guatemalan customs and transportation style. Findings also revealed how they believed language differences and differences in relationship to time; i.e., U.S. American
punctuality versus Guatemalans’ lack thereof were challenges to intercultural interactions. Rather than focusing on differences in this section of the interview, however, the women were more comfortable in silence or expressing similarities, such as the fact that they considered how both U.S. Americans and Guatemalans “share the same heart,” and had a lot in common with them as fellow women.

**Review of Findings— Rural Women’s Group Questionnaires**

The discussion regarding the review of findings for the rural women’s group questionnaires shall include information about demographic information reported, the women’s experiences with the Municipal Women’s Office and their rural women’s committee, the women’s experiences with Peace Corps volunteers and goals, and, finally, the women’s experiences with intercultural differences.

**Demographic information.** I included a place for demographic information in these questionnaires in order to assess how the women’s age, education level, and type of work, specifically, might have affected their responses. The average age of the women was approximately 39 years old, and the women’s education levels varied from second grade to sixth grade, and 14% of respondents reported no formal education.

**Experience with Women’s Office and rural committees.** The women’s involvement with the women’s committees of their *aldeas* varied from just one month to over a year. Findings revealed that most women had joined the women’s committee of their *aldea* because they wanted to improve the situation for the women in their community, or wanted to improve the lives of themselves and their families. As far as their participation in Women’s Office-sponsored activities, most of the women had
participated in either educational *charlas* or Celebration of Mother’s Day. The women believed the *charlas* were the most beneficial activity, sponsored by the Women’s Office, in the empowerment of the women of the community. Women believed this to be true because the *charlas* provided a way for them to learn new things.

As for what the women would like to see from the Women’s Office in the future, the findings showed that they wanted to see more specific classes and projects. Finally, scale-based responses in a final question in this section indicated that the women believed the Women’s Office was responsible for “some” to “much” change as far as empowering women.

**Experience with Peace Corps volunteers and perception of goals.** The findings showed that the women believed that the purpose of Peace Corps was helping the people of interested countries to meet their need for trained men and women. Specifically, the respondents believed volunteers had been sent to El Chol to improve the management ability and strengthen the organizational capacity of the municipality, and to empower and motivate community groups to actively participate in projects and activities. A scale-based question revealed that most volunteers found the Peace Corps volunteers to be either “helpful” or “extremely helpful.” Finally, in reflecting upon the Peace Corps’ decision to remove volunteers from El Chol, and the end of the Municipal Development program, findings revealed that women either believed that it would be more difficult to continue with women’s empowerment, or did not know what would happen.
**Experience with intercultural differences.** Findings revealed that respondents rated U.S. Americans versus Guatemalans as “different” or “very different.” Specific differences noted were language, culture, food, color of skin and hair, presence of more discrimination in Guatemala, more economic opportunities in the United States, and U.S. American’s higher formal education levels.

As for difficulties faced in dealing with cultural differences with Peace Corps volunteers, the majority of respondents reported issues with understanding the volunteers’ Spanish. When it came to benefits of interacting with Peace Corps volunteers, the findings were equally divided between the following three responses: that the women wanted to help other women to become empowered in their communities, that the volunteers helped them to feel more confident in expressing themselves, and that they had learned that they had things in common with U.S. Americans.

As for challenges and benefits for the Peace Corps volunteers in working with them, the women believed that seeing the poverty of the rural area and working with people who lacked much formal education were especially challenging for the volunteers. The work experience for the volunteers and chance for them to make new friends were some of the perceived benefits.

In analyzing how intercultural differences affected the volunteers’ work, the women’s answers showed that they either believed that cultural differences were so great that Peace Corps was not able to help much, that cultural differences played a minor role in Peace Corps’ effectiveness, or that cultural differences did not affect the Peace Corps’ ability to help.
Review of Findings—Peace Corps Staff Interviews

The individual interviews with the three Peace Corps Guatemala staff members who had been involved in the Municipal Development Program revealed consensus about some aspects of how the program served as a change agent, about women’s empowerment, and, finally, about intercultural differences.

Municipal Development Program as change agent. When discussing the goals of the Municipal Development Program in general, interviewee responses revealed that they believed it succeeded in providing technical assistance to Municipal Women’s Offices. As far as areas of improvement, the interviewees noted a need for more training for mayors and counterparts. Change agentry, to the respondents, generally meant coming into an environment with new knowledge to share to others in order to promote positive changes and innovation. Respondents thought Municipal Development volunteers served as change agents via their presence and subsequent ability to serve as models in this way. Some concrete examples of how volunteers served as change agents were given by one respondent in this section.

Guatemalan women’s empowerment. Lack of formal education and women being undervalued by society were two things gleaned from the findings from these questions regarding the issues Guatemalan women faced. Illiteracy, lack of economic opportunities, violence, and low self esteem were mentioned as consequences of rural women’s low rates of education. According to the respondents, the Municipal Development Program addressed these issues in that it showed the women how to organize themselves into groups, helped to educate them on topics that were important to
their development, such as self-esteem, and provided models via its volunteers who were independent, educated women. Interviewees unanimously agreed that the program had succeeded in helping to empower women, and that this was due to the volunteers’ roles as models for Guatemalan women.

**Intercultural differences.** The most noticeable intercultural differences in working with the volunteers were identified as directness, punctuality, fast-paced work style, and planning. Interviewees said they reacted to these differences with friction, or learned from the differences in order to make them beneficial for their own growth. The difference that caused the most friction was direct communication style, especially for volunteer work with rural populations. Another issue for a respondent was the female volunteers’ independent lifestyle, but eventually she saw these traits as model traits to be taught to her own child. Finally, interviewees believed these differences both helped and hindered the volunteers’ work. U.S. Americans’ work ethic and style helped in that it motivated others to work harder. The direct communication style of U.S. Americans helped in working with officials, for example, but not in the rural areas. Lastly noted were difficulties for females in working in a patriarchal cultural paradigm.

**Review of Findings— Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Surveys**

A discussion of the findings revealed by an analysis of responses to the returned Peace Corps volunteer surveys was divided into the following categories that correspond to the survey questions asked. First, a discussion of the findings regarding the volunteers’ perception of the Municipal Development Program as a change agent will be presented. Next, findings are discussed with regards to volunteers’ perception of
Guatemalan women’s empowerment, followed by a discussion of intercultural differences faced. Finally, findings for the volunteers’ responses to scale-based questions will be discussed.

**Municipal Development Program as change agent.** Findings showed that respondents mentioned forming, strengthening, and teaching women’s groups and networks when it came to talking about their contributions via the program. The most common types of *charla* provided by the volunteers to women were regarding citizen participation, personal development (i.e. self-esteem), business and economic development, women’s health, and organization and training of groups. Many volunteers mentioned specific projects they had accomplished in site.

With regards to the program’s stated goals, findings showed that volunteer responses were quite varied as to whether or not the program succeeded in achieving its goals. When asked what the program needed to strengthen in order to be able to achieve its goals, many volunteer mentioned the challenges associated with working in the municipalities, including having to deal with the lack of transportation and the election year politics. Some volunteers mentioned a need for more Guatemalan counterpart training so that their coworkers in the Women’s Offices would better understand volunteer goals and help them to be more able to accomplish their goals, which corroborates the Peace Corps Guatemala staff’s responses. Peace Corps staff also mentioned the need for more Guatemalan counterpart training as something that was lacking from the Municipal Development Program.

Answers varied when returned volunteers were asked to comment upon what change agentry meant to them. Findings did show, however, that many volunteers’ use
of words like “promoting,” “inspiring,” “assisting,” “facilitating,” and “positive change” in their responses showed their consideration of change agency as an active process. Many volunteers also mentioned the word “change” in their definition of change agency, reflecting a belief that change agency was connected to the act of change itself. When responding to the question about how the program specifically served as a change agent for rural Guatemala, findings showed that volunteers believed they served as models for the women in their sites. This corroborated other findings, specifically from the Peace Corps staff and rural women’s groups.

**Guatemalan women’s empowerment.** Findings showed that volunteers believed the most common issues for Guatemalan women were violence (institutional and domestic) and lack of education. There was no consensus in regards to why these issues existed in Guatemalan society. As for how the Municipal Development Program addressed these issues, some volunteers noted the impact of teaching and education via charlas and workshops. Findings revealed that the volunteers believed that the Municipal Development Program helped to empower women. It did so, they said, via the creation of formal structure and assistance with the boosting of the women’s self esteem.

**Intercultural differences.** Findings in this section of volunteer responses discussed critical cultural differences they encountered in Women’s Office work. Traditional gender roles and their consequences, including machismo and sexism, were important elements. The findings regarding intercultural differences also focused on volunteer experiences with differences in cultural perceptions regarding time. Volunteers dealt with such differences by adapting. When asked if these differences helped or
hindered them in their work, findings showed that volunteers believed these differences were a hindrance to the success of their work. Still more findings from this section indicated that whether or not intercultural differences helped or hindered volunteers in their work depended upon the volunteers themselves.

**Scale-based questions.** Ten scale based questions that covered the same material as the open-ended questions, but in a different format, revealed the following findings:

1. Volunteers were highly satisfied with having served as a Municipal Development volunteer.
2. Volunteers felt that the Municipal Development Program achieved its stated goals.
3. Volunteers believed they had served as a change agent in their work with the Municipal Development Program.
4. Volunteers were convinced that the Municipal Development Program is structured to help empower rural women via its work in the Women’s Offices.
5. Volunteers considered that they had directly helped to empower women via their work and projects completed in the Women’s Office at their site.
6. Volunteers felt that cultural differences between themselves as U.S. Americans and Guatemalans were addressed comprehensively enough by the Peace Corps so that they were able to work effectively with host country nationals.
7. Volunteers generally disagreed with the perception of cultural differences keeping them from being able to achieve what the women in their sites needed
for empowerment; however, a considerable percentage of respondents believed that cultural differences did keep them from being able to achieve what the women needed. The difference between those who agreed and disagreed was approximately 5%, with slightly more disagreeing than agreeing.

8. Volunteers disagreed with the idea that cultural differences hindered the overall ability of the Municipal Development Program in promoting women’s empowerment in Guatemala.

9. Volunteers disagreed with the idea that the work they had started with the women in their sites would stop because the women did not know how to continue it, now that the Municipal Development Program had been terminated by Peace Corps.

10. Volunteers, when thinking about how the end of the Municipal Development Program would affect the work done in the Women’s Offices by the Peace Corps, either had a neutral response or believed the end of the program would indeed affect the work already completed by the Women’s Offices.

**Interpretation of Findings**

In order to interpret the findings in the context of this study’s question of how intercultural factors affected the Peace Corps’ Municipal Development Program in its role as a change agent for rural Guatemalan women, I broke down the question into three parts. First, I interpreted the findings in the context of what they said about the situation of rural women in Guatemala to give us an understanding of why change agentry is
necessary and important for this country. Next, I looked at what the findings showed in regards to the Peace Corps’ Municipal Development Program and its role as a change agent for rural Guatemalan women in order to show how the program is related to change agency. Finally, I used the findings to explore which intercultural differences were most noticeable for both U.S. Americans and Guatemalans in working with one another, and how, subsequently, these differences affected the program’s ability to function as a change agent for rural Guatemalan women.

**Rural women’s situation in Guatemala.** There were several commonalities in the findings that related to understanding rural women’s situations in Guatemala. Rural women’s low self-esteem was mentioned by the focus group participants, Peace Corps staff, and returned volunteers, as an issue for rural Guatemalan women.

Respondents suggested that low self-esteem was a result of both institutional and domestic violence, as well as rural women’s exclusion from society on many levels, including educational and economic opportunities especially. Violence was a common theme in literature regarding Guatemala, and violence against women was a specific trend noted. Grandin et al. (2011), Wilkinson (2004), and Jonas (2000) discussed the violence that characterizes the nation and how it has become ingrained in society. O’Kane (2004), Zuniga (2012), and Carey and Torres (2010) discussed the specific violence that women endure in the country, including femicide.

O’Kane (2004) also discussed how machismo served to exclude women from participation in their own society (p. 52). As for women’s exclusion from opportunities, the rural women’s groups responses, particularly their low levels of formal schooling and participation in mostly domestic and household activities rather than income-generating
ones, illustrated the lack of educational and economic opportunities present for rural women in the country. Furthermore, Becker (2006), Blumberg et al. (1995), Harrison (1991), and Kristoff and DuWunn (2010) discussed how education and economic opportunities were two themes discovered in the literature regarding needs for women’s empowerment in the international development context. Finally, poverty and its consequences was an issue for rural Guatemalan women and an underlying theme in the responses gathered from the four groups of respondents. Godoy-Paiz (2011) and Jonas (2000) spoke specifically to the vast socioeconomic inequalities that have contributed to rural Guatemalan women’s difficult situations.

**Municipal Development Program as change agent.** The overall goal of the Municipal Development Program was “to facilitate and strengthen the relationship between the municipal government, particularly the planning office, and the citizenry so that the local government provides services that satisfy the demands of the population” (Peace Corps, 2009, p. 6).

In general, the Guatemalan women surveyed recognized this as the general purpose of the Peace Corps volunteers’ presence in El Chol and believed that the volunteers were helpful to extremely helpful in terms of affecting positive change for rural women. Peace Corps staff believed the program was extremely successful in empowering women. Returned volunteer reviews were mixed and seemed dependent upon each volunteers’ situation. Specifically, the groups noted how educating women was especially important in order for positive change to occur. Briton (1994) discussed the importance of education in change agentry.
More importantly, all groups of respondents noted how Municipal Development volunteers served as role models for rural Guatemalan women and Municipal administrations alike. The discussion by Rogers (2003) supported this idea of the volunteers as role models in change agentry.

Peace Corps staff and returned volunteers also noted how change on the scale of what the Municipal Development Program aimed to accomplish would be accomplished over the long-term, rather than the short-term, and not easily measured. Instead, they explained how results from this type of development work appear slowly but surely. Watzlawick et al. (1974) and Kanter et al. (1992) supported the argument that real, lasting change agentry is characterized by slow-moving, smaller, changes that are harder to see than larger, faster-moving changes that are perhaps more obvious yet less long-lasting and sustainable.

**Intercultural factors affecting program success.** The Guatemalan women surveyed noted the volunteers’ language difference and punctuality as being the most challenging intercultural differences in working with them, but did not see these differences as negatively affecting the volunteers’ positive impact on their sites nor their abilities to accomplish their work. Peace Corps staff noted several differences but pointed out that direct communication styles and independent, strong, female volunteers working in a patriarchal society were the cultural differences that were most damaging to volunteer successes. Returned volunteers believed differences in time management and differing views on gender roles were the biggest challenges for them in succeeding in their work.

Gorden (1974), Harrison (1991), Kohls (1988), Peace Corps (2011), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) also corroborated what the data revealed about different views regarding gender roles, wherein U. S. Americans see the sexes as equal, in a way that is reflective of their egalitarian values. Hall (1990) and Mirandé (1997) discussed how Latin American culture is marked by a patriarchal point of view and traits that are typical of machismo, and therefore characterized by more traditional gender roles.


The literature also reflected how intercultural factors that clashed had a negative impact on project management (Anbari, 2004). Therefore, it might be deduced that the
differences noted by the respondents, including direct versus indirect communication style, differences in thoughts on gender roles, and differences in time orientation and management negatively affected the program’s goals. Additionally, the literature reveals that language differences, which were noted by the Guatemalan women respondents as a major cultural difference, is one of the six major stumbling blocks to effective intercultural communication (Bennett, 1998).

**Implications of Findings in Three Dimensions**

There were three specific areas where patterns developed between what participants reported in their interviews and surveys, and what the literature review revealed. These patterns will now be reported as they show important implications of the findings. The areas of implication are, first, rural women’s situation and needs in Guatemala. Second, there are implications of the findings in the area of the Peace Corps’ Municipal Development Program as a change agent for rural Guatemalan women. Finally, there are implications in the findings regarding intercultural issues to volunteer success.

**Rural women’s situation in Guatemala.** The results of the findings revealed connections between what the respondents reported about rural Guatemalan women’s situation and needs, and what the literature explained about the situation and needs. This part of the research is especially important to discuss because it gives the reader a foundation from which to understand the overall importance of development work in Guatemala. It also gives some context for understanding rural women’s specific challenges and the resulting Peace Corps volunteer challenges in working with them.
Findings and literature revealed the following connections. First, that Guatemala’s violent past and a sustained volatility has continued to characterize the country, despite the signing of Peace Accords in 1996 that were supposed to usher in an era of tranquility. Regretfully, the violence and volatility continue to have a negative effect on rural women’s development in Guatemala. This legacy of violence, which more recently has morphed into the phenomena of femicide that targets women just because they are women, combined with the cultural patriarchy of Guatemala, both terrorize women and prevent them from being part of their own society. Jonas (2000), O’Kane (2004), Ritchie-Dunham (2007), Carey and Torres (2010), and Silva Zuniga (2012) discussed the legacy of violence and exclusion of women in Guatemala, as well as the current and disturbing trend of femicide in the country. Violence against women is an issue identified by both Peace Corps Guatemala Municipal Development staff and returned volunteers as problematic for Guatemalan women; interestingly, it has not mentioned even once by any of the Guatemalan women respondents in the focus group or rural committees. Wilkinson (2004) and Godoy-Paiz (2011) offered a possible explanation when they described the silence, or “collective amnesia,” that has developed in the country as a coping mechanism for the horrors of the civil war. It could be suggested that this coping strategy of silence, so ingrained in the Guatemalan psyche, has been transferred to women who then do not speak about the domestic and institutional violence they experience regardless of the fact that it is reported in the literature and is confirmed by the observations and work of Peace Corps in the country.

Other issues resulted as a consequence of women’s experience of institutional and domestic violence in Guatemala. Because they are left out of economic and educational
opportunities, they experienced poverty and illiteracy. Jonas (2000), Deere (2001) and Wilkinson (2004) discussed how poverty is an issue in Guatemala, and this was also noted by the Guatemalan women respondents of the focus group and questionnaire. Becker et al. (2006) mentioned lack of education for women as an issue in Guatemala. This was also mentioned by all four groups of respondents in their responses and is therefore a significant connection. It is also notable that the rural Guatemalan women who were administered questionnaires are reflective of Guatemalan women’s typically low levels of formal education, as the average level of education was the fourth grade amongst the 42 participants. Also, six participants reported no formal education.

**Municipal Development Program as change agent.** Another trend that connected the findings and the literature reviewed implied how and in what specific ways the Municipal Development Program served as a change agent for the Guatemalan women with whom the volunteers worked.

The first notable connection was regarding the goals of the Municipal Development Program. In general, the Guatemalan women respondents clearly recognized the goals of the program and appreciated and benefited from the work and presence of the volunteers. Additionally, the Peace Corps staff and volunteer respondents were satisfied with their experience in the program and believed they had helped to empower rural Guatemalan women. Graul (1998), Banerjee (2000), and Peace Corps (2011) corroborated this finding. Their information revealed that Peace Corps volunteers were generally satisfied with their experience in the groups they had surveyed.

Another aspect of the program’s role as a change agent for rural Guatemalan women was revealed in the patterns discovered in the findings regarding the volunteer’s
impact on their sites. The four groups of respondents mentioned how the volunteers served as models to the rural Guatemalan women with whom they worked. The idea of the change agent as a model is congruous with change agentry theory. Rogers (2003) mentioned how change agents should have “high social status and higher education among their clients” (p. 343). The Guatemalan women also mentioned how the education they received from Peace Corps volunteers was most impactful in terms of their empowerment. The fact that they related education to their empowerment was congruous with literature regarding women’s international development, and matched with what was revealed in this study about Guatemalan women’s needs. Specifically, Becker et al (2006), Blumberg (1995), Kristoff and DuWunn (2010) connected education to women’s development.

The responses of Peace Corps staff and volunteers revealed that they realized the type of change Peace Corps required was slow moving and not easily seen. This realization corroborated literature regarding change agentry, especially in a development context. Specifically, Rogers (2003), Kanter et al. (1992), and Watzlawick et al. (1974) discussed how real, long-term changers are generally slow moving and not easily identifiable. Furthermore, Lowther (1978), Dichter (2003), Wazlawick et al. (1974) and Peace Corps (2011) revealed how, in order for change to be successful, change agents should also focus on small, attainable goals, rather than large, lofty ones.

**Intercultural issues to volunteer success.** Directness versus indirectness in communication styles, relationship to time, and different views regarding gender roles were the three issues that volunteers, Peace Corps staff, and Guatemalan women in El Chol found most challenging in working with one another. The Guatemalan women
respondents, furthermore, found the language barrier between themselves and the volunteers especially challenging to the success of the volunteers’ work.

In terms of direct versus indirect communication styles, the Peace Corps volunteers found the Guatemalans’ indirectness to be frustrating in terms of getting work done, whereas the Guatemalans, including Peace Corps staff, found the volunteers’ directness to be too intense, especially in the volunteers’ work in the rural areas with populations who had little or no exposure to U.S. Americans. Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1998) and Peace Corps (2011) confirmed this finding in their discussion of differences between U.S. Americans and Latin Americans in working with one another.

Time was an issue as well in that the volunteers were punctual and linear when relating to time and its management, whereas Guatemalans were not punctual and were flexible in their relationship to time. This finding is congruent with what the writings of Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1998), Hall (1983), Harrison (1991), Kohls (1988), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), Anbari et al. (2004), and Bennett (1998). These authors revealed how it was especially problematic for intercultural relations when the cultural value orientation of time and its management clashed.

Finally, the volunteers were frustrated by the traditional gender roles they encountered in their work, whereas the Guatemalans, including Peace Corps staff, were confused by the volunteers’ independence and strength as females. Harrison (1991) explained how one must understand the traditional values in Latin America, such as views on gender roles, when working with these populations. As far as how language affected the ability of Guatemalan women to work with the volunteers, many simply had
a difficult time understanding the volunteers, and, therefore, understanding what the
volunteers wanted them to do.

Finally, the findings regarding intercultural issues and their effect on Peace Corps
volunteer success in their work were congruent with the literature’s revelations. Anbari et
al. (2004) and Bennett (1998) discussed how intercultural factors that clashed had a
negative outcome on project management.

**Limitations of the Study**

There were several limitations of the study that should be noted. These
limitations related to the respondents I sampled and the timeframe during which they
were sampled. These limitations were also mentioned in Chapter One.

In general, the most impactful limitation of the study was the scope of the study
in terms of what data was actually gathered, versus what data should have been gathered
in order to come up with data that was more applicable to groups as a whole. For
instance, I only surveyed the female leaders from one municipality, rather than obtaining
information from women all over Guatemala who had worked with the Municipal
Development Program. More specifically, in a country that is so diverse, where 22 native
dialects are still spoken by almost half of the population, the sampling of women I
obtained does not necessarily represent the views and experiences of all with whom the
volunteers worked. Additionally, El Chol is a region of Guatemala with a majority of
ladina women, rather than indigenous women. Therefore the groups surveyed were not
necessarily representative of the population of the entire country. As Rigoberta Menchu
(1984), an indigenous Guatemalan women herself, explained in her autobiography, “to be
ladino means better access to health and education and jobs … as well as a higher
standard of living” (p. 77). Therefore, the results from El Chol may or may not represent a more privileged group of Guatemalan women’s experiences.

Another limitation of the study was related to the Peace Corps returned volunteers sampled. I did not survey all Municipal Development volunteers since the program had began, but the volunteers who had served in the women’s offices during the period of 2007 to 2011. I did so because I wanted to look at data that correlated with the time volunteers from the program were present in El Chol, as that was the point of the study. However, it would have been ideal to have interviewed all Municipal Development volunteers since the program started in 1999. This would have provided data from a longer term and, therefore, better information about the impact of Peace Corps volunteers over time. The timeframe from which I gathered my sample of information from volunteers did not reflect any real, noticeable change, as volunteers themselves noted. However, the volunteers also recognized and accepted this fact and focused on personal relationships and small successes in their work. Graul (1998), Banerjee (2000), and Lombas (2011) showed that personal relationships and growth were usually the most valuable parts of Peace Corps service for volunteers rather than the accomplishment of large, sweeping changes. Regardless, real, lasting social changes take time, so it would have been interesting to have been able to gather data from a larger timeframe that might reflect broader social change.

A final limitation of the study was in gathering accurate information from the focus group participants. Because we were in an intimate setting and were already friends, the women did not feel comfortable answering more sensitive questions about cultural differences and difficulties in working with U.S. Americans. This is due to the
fact that Guatemalan culture values face-saving and is highly indirect. Rather than say something that may possibly be perceived as hurtful or too direct by a friend, the women favored staying quiet and simply not answering the more sensitive questions. The rural women’s groups, however, divulged more information about their thoughts on these topics because we did not know each other as well, and they could write responses without having to say them aloud.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the findings and analysis, future research could go in many relevant and useful directions for international development professionals and scholars in the field of intercultural relations.

First, more research is needed in order to understand Guatemalan women’s specific situation within the context of international women’s development work, and how to continue to empower them in a country that is characterized by an especially challenging paradigm in which to work when it comes to succeeding in empowering populations. Guatemala’s political and social landscape is one that is especially stacked against women’s advancement, and there is not a sufficient amount of literature yet with regards to how the international development community can work to empower women within the country. There is plenty of historical information, however, as well as more recent information about the phenomena of femicide in the country, but little literature that directs what, specifically, can be done to empower Guatemalan women. Kristoff and DuWunn (2010) suggested a specific plan for international empowerment of women. Similar works should be undertaken specifically for Guatemala and its uniquely
challenging situation for women. Such literature could be useful to the myriad of international development agencies working in and for Guatemala.

Next, it would be useful for Peace Corps volunteers, staff, and policymakers alike if more research were to become available regarding the Municipal Development Program’s impact on women in other countries. The Peace Corps invested time and capital into the now terminated program, and a larger-scale evaluation of the program and its successes in women’s empowerment would be not only useful to volunteers who invest more than two years’ worth of time and energy throughout the world, but for the agency of the Peace Corps itself as part of its ever-evolving development and restructuring in a changing world full of evolving needs. Because this study focused on the impact in Municipal Women’s Offices, more in-depth research should look at the impact on Municipal Planning Offices. These offices worked more with infrastructure and citizen participation.

Finally, future research should look at female experiences in the Peace Corps when working in highly paternalistic countries. This information could be useful for other international development agencies, as well as for women working abroad, and, finally, for the agencies for which these women work. Peace Corps is not the only international development agency that sends women abroad. My own personal experience in working within a context of such traditional gender roles and blatant discrimination and harassment against women was challenging and frustrating, and my experience connects to what was said by a majority of the female Peace Corps volunteers I knew in Guatemala, not just in my program, but in all the different programs in the country. Male participants had a different experience because of their gender, and were
afforded certain privileges that I did not experience as a female working in Guatemala. It
would be interesting to study the differences experienced by males and females in
traditional countries like Guatemala in order to address the specific issues females face.

Guatemala is a beautiful, challenging, complex, and yet simple environment in
which to work and live. It is part of the development world and holds within its borders
just a tiny fraction of the world’s estimated 3.5 billion women. But because of the efforts
of organizations like the Peace Corps, who send U. S. citizens to live and work amongst
the inhabitants of developing countries as change agents and models with different
perspectives about women’s role in society, women’s situations in developing countries
like Guatemala is improving, as they say in Spanish, poco a poco.

It is my greatest hope that the information in this study may be used by
international development professionals, interculturalists, and policymakers alike as a
guide for their continuing in helping women to hold up half the sky.
References


APPENDIX A. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

Municipal Women’s Committee:  
Focus Group Interview Questions, Spring 2012

I. Introduction: Welcome! Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The information exchanged here today will be kept completely confidential. I will not use your names or sensitive information in the report. If any of the questions make you feel uncomfortable, please do not feel that you must answer them. If there is anything you might not want to discuss in the group, but would like to share with me, please feel free to write it down, as I would like to hear as many viewpoints as possible today. I encourage your participation and honesty as we answer the questions. There are 3 parts to the interview, beginning with a discussion of your experience with the Municipal Women’s Office, continuing with a discussion of the Peace Corps’ presence in the Women’s Office, and ending with an exploration of cultural differences. If there are no further questions, we will begin the interview.

II. Questions
A. Municipal Women’s Office
1. Please describe your personal involvement with the Municipal Women’s Office since it opened in 2008. For example, what activities did you participate in? What events did you attend?

2. How do you think the Women’s Office has helped to empower the women of El Chol?

3. What do you think the Women’s Office still needs to do for the women of El Chol?

B. Peace Corps Volunteers
1. Why do you think Peace Corps was sent to work with the Women’s Office in El Chol?
2. How do you think did Peace Corps’ presence in the Municipal Women’s Office helped the women of El Chol?

3. For security reasons, Peace Corps has decided it will no longer be sending volunteers to El Chol. What do you think will happen now that there will no longer be Peace Corps Volunteers in the Women’s Office?

C. Intercultural Differences
   1. What are some of the cultural differences between Americans and Guatemalans?

   2. What were some of the challenges you or others faced in working with Peace Corps Volunteers due to these cultural differences?

III. Conclusion: Do you have anything else you would like to share before we conclude?
Junta de Mujeres Municipal:
Preguntas para Entrevista Grupal, Primavera 2012

1. **Introducción:** Bienvenidas! Gracias por haber decidida participar en esta entrevista. La información que compartimos aquí hoy se quedará completamente confidencial. No usaré sus datos personales en el tesis. Si en algún momento Uds. se sienten incomodas y no quieren responder a una pregunta, no tienen que responder. Si hay algo que no quieren compartir con el grupo, pero si quieren compartirlo conmigo en confianza, por favor escríbalo y me lo pueden pasar después de la entrevista. Hay 3 partes de la entrevista, empezando con unas preguntas sobre sus experiencias con la Oficina Municipal de la Mujer, después continuando con preguntas sobre la presencia del Cuerpo de Paz en la Oficina Municipal de la Mujer, y al final una sección donde se habla de algunas diferencias culturales. Si no hay preguntas en este momento, empezaremos la entrevista.

II. **Preguntas**

A. **Oficina Municipal de la Mujer (OMMJ)**

1. Por favor, explique cómo se involucró Ud. con la OMMJ desde que se la abrieron al principio del año 2009? (Por ejemplo, en cuáles actividades participaba Ud.??

2. En su opinión, como ha apoyado a las mujeres Cholenses en su desarrollo la OMMJ?

3. En su opinión, que debería hacer todavía la OMMJ para el desarrollo de las mujeres Cholenses?

B. **Voluntarias del Cuerpo de Paz**

1. Porqué, en la opinión de Ud., se las mandaron voluntarias de Cuerpo de Paz para trabajar en la OMMJ?

2. Como ayudaba a las mujeres de El Chol la presencia del Cuerpo de Paz en la OMMJ?

3. Por cuestiones de seguridad, el Cuerpo de Paz decidió que ya no va a mandar más voluntarios/as a El Chol. Que efectos piensa Ud. tendrá en la OMMJ ya que no mandarán voluntarias a la OMMJ?

C. **Diferencia Interculturales**
1. Cuáles son algunas de las diferencias entre los/as NorteamERICANOS/as y los/las Guatemaltecos/as?

2. CUALES SON algunas de los retos enfrentados debido a las diferencias interculturales en trabajar con las voluntarias del Cuerpo de Paz?

**III. Conclusión:** Tiene algo más que le gustaría compartir antes de que terminemos?
APPENDIX B. WOMEN’S GROUPS QUESTIONNAIRE
IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

Rural Women’s Committees of El Chol:
Survey, Spring 2012

I. Introduction: (To be said to participants) Welcome! Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The information exchanged here today will be kept completely confidential. I will not use your names or sensitive information in the report. If any of the questions make you feel uncomfortable, please do not feel that you must answer them. I encourage your participation and honesty as you answer the questions. Please do not copy the answers of your friend, because your viewpoint may be different than hers. The questionnaire should take us about an hour to complete. Please feel free to ask questions if you are not sure about how to respond to a question. There are 5 parts in this questionnaire. First, I will collect your demographic information. Second, I will ask about your experiences with the Municipal Women’s Office and with being a part of your community’s women’s committee. Third, I will ask you about your knowledge about/experience with Peace Corps Volunteers. Fourth, I will ask you about the cultural differences between Guatemalans and Americans. We then will conclude the questionnaire and you will be free to note any additional comments.

II. Questions
A. Demographic Information
1. Name:__________________________________________ 2. Age: ______

3. Village:________________________________________

4. Role in committee:______________________________

5. Level of education:______________________________
6. Type of work: _______________________________

B. Municipal Women’s Office / Women’s Committee
1. How long have you been part of your villages’ women’s committee?
   Year(s)_______ Month(s) _______

2. Why did you become part of your villages’ women’s committee?
   a. Wanted to improve the situation for women in my community
   b. Wanted to improve my life / my family’s life
   c. Was elected by others to be part of committee
   d. Wanted certain projects and/or services. Please list:________________
   e. Other reason(s): __________________

3. What Municipal Women’s Office activities/events did you participate in since the office opened in 2008?
   a. Community diagnostic interviews
   b. Educational talks (“charlas”). Tema(s):
   c. Classes offered by Women’s Office. Please list: ______________
   d. Women’s Municipal Leadership Conferences
   e. Celebration of International Women’s Day
   f. Celebration of International Day of the Elimination of Violence Against Women
   g. Celebration of Mother’s Day
   h. Other activities / events: ______________________________________

4. What Women’s Office activities/events were most beneficial to empower the women of El Chol?
   a. Community diagnostic interviews
   b. Educational talks (“charlas”)
   c. Classes offered by Women’s Office and/or NGOs. Please list: ______________
   d. Women’s Municipal Leadership Conferences
   e. Celebration of International Women’s Day
   f. Celebration of International Day of the Elimination of Violence Against Women
   g. Other: ________________________________

5. Why was this activity/event especially beneficial to the women of El Chol?
   (Please respond below)
6. What other activities/events could the Women’s Office offer now which would be especially helpful for the women of El Chol? Why?

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

7. Please rate the ability the Women’s Office and its activities/events had on empowering the women of your community.

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<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>Some change</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Much change</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please explain your answer here:

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

C. **Peace Corps Volunteers**

1. Why do you think is the purpose of the Peace Corps at a worldwide level?
   a. Helping the people of interested countries to meet their need for trained men and women
   b. Helping to promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served
   c. Helping to promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans
   d. Gathering intelligence information about other countries and their governments
   e. I do not know/understand the purpose of the Peace Corps
   f. Other: __________________________________________________________

2. Why do you think Peace Corps volunteers were sent to help in the Women’s Office in El Chol?
   a. To improve the management ability and strengthen the organizational capacity of municipality
   b. To empower and motivate community groups to actively participate in projects and activities
   c. To gather intelligence information about the Municipality
   d. I do not know why Peace Corps was sent to help in the Women’s Office in El Chol
e. Other: ________________________________________________________________

3. How helpful do you think Peace Corps Volunteers were in empowering the women of El Chol? (Please circle a number)

1 2 3 4 5
Not helpful Somewhat helpful Neutral Helpful Extremely helpful

Please explain your answer here:

________________________________________________________________________

4. What do you think will happen with women’s empowerment now that there will no longer be Peace Corps Volunteers working in the Women’s Office?

a. Nothing will happen. The empowerment of women will go on as normal
b. It will be more difficult to continue with women’s empowerment
c. It will be easier to continue with women’s empowerment
d. I don’t know what will happen.
e. This will happen: ______________________________________________________

D. Cultural Differences

1. How different do you think Guatemalans are from Americans?

1 2 3 4 5
Not different Somewhat different Neutral Different Very different

Please explain the differences or similarities you see:

________________________________________________________________________

2. What were some of the greatest challenges for you in working with the Peace Corps Volunteers who worked with the Women’s Office?

a. It was difficult to understand their Spanish
b. I felt shy about interacting with them because they were different
c. I did not understand what they wanted us to do
d. I had other obligations and it was hard for me to come to meetings
e. Other reason: ____________________________
3. What were some of the greatest benefits for you in working with the Peace Corps Volunteers who came to your community as part of the Women’s Office and its activities?
   a. Working with Americans helped me to understand them better
   b. It made me want to help women to become empowered in my community
   c. The volunteers helped me to feel more confident in expressing myself
   d. I learned that I have important opinions to offer
   e. I leaned that I have things in common with Americans
   f. I learned…(Please write it here)

4. What do you think were some of the challenges for the Peace Corps Volunteers working with rural women’s committees?
   a. Having to speak and learn Spanish
   b. Seeing the poverty in the villages
   c. Understanding the women and their lives
   d. Working with people with little schooling
   e. Other reason(s): ______________________________________________________

5. What do you think were some of the benefits for Peace Corps Volunteers working with rural women’s committees?
   a. It gave them a chance to interact with rural women and understand them
   b. It gave them a chance to practice their Spanish
   c. It was good work experience for them
   d. It gave them a chance to make new friends
   e. Other benefits:____________________________________________________________

6. How do you think cultural differences affected the Peace Corps’ Volunteers ability to help to empower women via their work in the Women’s Office?
   a. Cultural differences were so great that Peace Corps was not able to help much
   b. Cultural differences played a minor role in Peace Corps’ effectiveness
   c. Cultural differences did not affect the Peace Corps’ ability to help
   d. I do not know if/how cultural differences affected the Peace Corps’ ability to help
   e. Other:__________________________________________________________________
III. Conclusion

Please write any other comments you have about the topics covered on this questionnaire here:

__________________________________________________________
Comités Comunitarias de Mujeres de El Chol
Cuestionario, Primavera 2012

I. Introducción: Bienvenidas! Gracias por haber decididas participar en esta entrevista. La información que compartimos aquí hoy se quedará completamente confidencial. No usare su información personal en la tesis. Si en algún momento Ud. se siente incómoda y no quiere responder a una pregunta, no tiene que responder a la pregunta. Si hay algo que no quiere compartir en el grupo, pero si quiere compartir conmigo en confianza, por favor escribalo porque es importante conocer de todas las opiniones de Uds. Por favor, no copia a la respuesta de su compañera porque su punto de vista puede ser diferente que lo de ella. Para cualquier duda sobre cómo responder a una pregunta, síntese libre de preguntar. Hay cinco secciones en el cuestionario. Primeramente, pediré su información demográfica. Segundo, le preguntaré sobre sus experiencias con la Oficina Municipal de la Mujer (OMMJ) y sobre su participación en el comité de su aldea. Tercero, le preguntaré sobre sus conocimientos y experiencia en interactuando con las voluntarias del Cuerpo de Paz. Cuarto, le preguntaré sobre las diferencias culturales entre los/las Norteamericanos/as y los/las Guatemaltecos/as. Al final, concluiremos el cuestionario y estará invitada a anotar cualquier comentario adicional que tenga. Si no hay preguntas en este momento, empezaremos la entrevista.

II. Preguntas

A. Información Demográfico
1. Nombre:________________________  2. Edad: _______

2. Aldea:______________  4. Título en comité: ________________


B. Oficina Municipal de la Mujer / Comité de Mujeres

1. Para cuánto tiempo ha sido involucrada Ud. con el comité de su aldea?
   Años: ________ Meses: ________

2. Porqué se involucraba Ud. con el comité de mujeres de su aldea?
   a. Quiero mejorar la situación de las mujeres en mi aldea
   b. Quiero mejorar mi vida / la vida para mi familia
   c. Me seleccionaron como participante otras miembros de la aldea
   d. Quería ciertos proyectos y/o servicios. (Favor de anotar aquí):
      ____________________________________________________________
e. Tuve otros razones por involucrarme con el comité. (Favor de anotar aquí):

________________________________________________________________________

3. En cuáles actividades / eventos de la OMMJ participaba Ud. desde la formación de la oficina a principios de 2009?
   a. Diagnósticos Comunitarios
   b. Charlas informativas. Tema(s):
       ______________________________________________________________________
   c. Cursos ofrecidos por parte de la OMMJ. Anótalos aquí:
       ______________________________________________________________________
   d. Encuentros Municipales de Lideresas
   e. Celebración del Día Internacional de la Mujer
   f. Celebración del Día Internacional de la Eliminación de la Violencia Contra la Mujer
   g. Celebración del Día de la Madre
   h. Otros actividades / eventos:
       ______________________________________________________________________

4. Cuáles de estas actividades / eventos de la OMMJ apoyaban más para poder empoderar las mujeres de El Chol?
   a. Diagnósticos Comunitarios
   b. Charlas informativas. Tema(s):
       ______________________________________________________________________
   c. Cursos ofrecidos por parte de la OMMJ. Anótalos aquí:
       ______________________________________________________________________
   d. Encuentros Municipales de Lideresas
   e. Celebración del Día Internacional de la Mujer
   f. Celebración del Día Internacional de la Eliminación de la Violencia Contra la Mujer
   g. Celebración del Día de la Madre
   h. Otros actividades / eventos:
       ________________________________________________________________

5. De las actividades / los eventos que escogió Ud. en el [#4], por qué piensa que son un apoyo para poder empoderar las mujeres de El Chol?
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

6. Cuáles otras actividades / eventos pudiera ofrecer la OMMJ ahora para apoyar en empoderar las mujeres de El Chol? Por qué?
   ________________________________________________________________
7. En su opinión, desde que abrió, ayudó la OMMJ en empoderar las mujeres de El Chol?

1 2 3 4 5
No ayudó Ayudó un poco Neutral Ayudó Ayudó mucho

Por favor, explique su respuesta aquí:

C. Voluntarias del Cuerpo de Paz

1. Cuál piensa Ud. es el propósito del Cuerpo de Paz en trabajar al nivel mundial?
   a. Ayudar la gente de países que piden su ayuda en proveer gente quienes les pueden ayudar
   b. Ayudar en promover que se entiendan mejor los/las norteamericanos/as a la gente de otros países
   c. Ayudar en promover que se entiendan mejor la gente de otros países a los norteamericanos
   d. Sacar información sobre otros países y sus gobiernos
   e. No sé cuál es el propósito del Cuerpo de Paz
   f. Otro(s)
   propósito(s): ____________________________________________

2. Porque piensa Ud. que se enviaron voluntarias del Cuerpo de Paz para trabajar en la OMMJ?
   a. Mejorar las habilidades de la OMMJ y reforzar su capacidad organizativa
   b. Empoderar y motivar grupos comunitarios en participación ciudadana
   c. Sacar información sobre la Municipalidad
   d. No sé porque enviaron voluntarias para trabajar en la OMMJ
   e. Otra(s)
   razón(es): ____________________________________________

3. Ayudaron las voluntarias del Cuerpo de Paz que trabajaban en la OMMJ para empoderar las mujeres de El Chol? Indique su respuesta con circulando un numero abajo.

1 2 3 4 5
No ayudaron Ayudaron un poco Neutral Ayudaron Ayudaron mucho
Por favor, explique su respuesta aquí:

________________________________________________________________________

4. Que piensa Ud. que pasaría al tema del desarrollo de la mujer ya que no van a ver voluntarias del Cuerpo de Paz en la OMMJ?
   a. No va a pasar nada. Seguirá igual el desarrollo de la mujer en El Chol
   b. Se va a poner más difícil seguir con el desarrollo de la mujer
   c. Se va a poner más fácil seguir con el desarrollo de la mujer
   d. No sé qué va a pasar
   e. Otra cosa pasaría:

________________________________________________________________________

D. Diferencias Interculturales

1. Cuánta diferencia hay entre la gente de Guatemala y la gente de los Estados Unidos?
   1  2  3  4  5

   No hay diferencia    Hay poco diferencia    Neutral    Hay diferencia    Hay mucha

   Por favor, escribe aquí sobre las diferencias que ha notado entre las dos culturas:

________________________________________________________________________

2. Cuales fueron algunos retos para Ud. en trabajar con las Voluntarias del Cuerpo de Paz quienes trabajaban con la OMMJ?
   a. Fue difícil entender su español
   b. Sentí tímida interactuando con ellas por sus diferencias
   c. No entendí bien que querían que hiciéramos en actividades / eventos
   d. Tuve otras obligaciones que me hicieron difícil participar en actividades / eventos
   e. Otro(s) reto(s):

________________________________________________________________________

3. Cuáles fueron algunos beneficios para Ud. en trabajar con las Voluntarias del Cuerpo de Paz quienes trabajaban con la OMMJ?
   a. Ahora que trabajé con algunas norteamericanas, las entiendo mejor
   b. Me hizo querer apoyar a las mujeres en mi comunidad
   c. Las voluntarias me hicieron sentir más cómoda en expresarme
   d. Aprendí que tengo opiniones que valoren mucho
   e. Me hizo querer luchar para mí y para mi familia para sacarnos adelante
f. Aprendí que tengo cosas en común con las Norteamericanas: (Anótalas aquí):

________________________________________________________________________

g. Otro(s) beneficio(s):

________________________________________________________________________

4. Cuáles puede imaginar Ud. fueron algunos retos para las Voluntarias del Cuerpo de Paz en trabajar con grupos de mujeres en las áreas rurales?
   a. Tener que hablar y aprender mucho español
   b. Ver la pobreza de las aldeas
   c. Entender las mujeres y sus vidas
   d. Trabajar con gente con poco formación escolar
   e. Otro(s) reto(s):

________________________________________________________________________

5. Cuáles puede imaginar Ud. fueron algunos beneficios para las Voluntarias del Cuerpo de Paz en trabajar con grupos de mujeres en áreas rurales?
   a. Las dio la oportunidad de interactuar con mujeres rurales, así entendiéndolas mejor
   b. Las dio la oportunidad de practicar y perfeccionar su español
   c. Fue buena experiencia para ellas en su trabajo
   d. Las dio la oportunidad de conocer a nuevas amigas
   e. Otro(s) beneficio(s):

________________________________________________________________________

6. Cómo afectaban las diferencias interculturales a la habilidad de las Voluntarias del Cuerpo de Paz en poder empoderar a las mujeres por vía de su trabajo en la OMMJ?
   a. Diferencias interculturales fueran tan fuertes que no pudieron lograr mucho las voluntarias
   b. Diferencias interculturales no fueran tan fuertes para las voluntarias en poder trabajar
   c. Diferencias interculturales no afectaron a las voluntarias y su trabajo
   d. No como afectaron el trabajo de las voluntaria las diferencias interculturales
   e. Otro afecto de las diferencias en las voluntarias y su trabajo:

________________________________________________________________________

E. **Conclusión**

Por favor, escribe cualquier otro comentario sobre las temas / preguntas de este cuestionario aquí:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C. PEACE CORPS STAFF INTERVIEW

Peace Corps Guatemala Staff Interview Questions: Spring 2012

I. Introduction: (To be read) Welcome! Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview.

The information exchanged here today will be kept completely confidential. I will not use your names or sensitive information in the report. If any of the questions make you feel uncomfortable, please do not feel that you must answer them. I encourage your openness and honesty as we answer the questions.

There are 3 parts to the interview, beginning with a discussion of your work with the Municipal Development Program as an agent of change, continuing with an exploration of the issues surrounding women’s empowerment in Guatemala, and concluding with an analysis of cultural differences and how these may affect the program. If there are no questions at this time, let’s begin the interview.

II. Questions

A. Municipal Development Program as an agent of change

1. Please describe your involvement with the Peace Corps’ Municipal Development Program.

2. The overall goal of the Municipal Development Program is: “To facilitate and strengthen the relationship between the municipal government and the citizenry so that the local government provides services that satisfy the demands of the population”.

   a. How has the program succeeded in reaching this goal?

   b. What area(s) does the program need to strengthen in order to better reach its goal?
3. What does it mean to you to be a “change agent”? How does the Municipal Development Program serve as an agent of change in Guatemala?

B. Women’s Empowerment

1. Please speak to the situation of rural women in Guatemala. What are the special issues these women face and why do you believe these issues exist?

2. What did the Municipal Development Program, in its work with Municipal Women’s Offices, do to address these issues?

3. Do you think the Municipal Development Program is/has helped to empower rural women?
   a. If so, how?
   b. If not, why not?

C. U.S. American and Guatemalan cultural differences

1. What are the most noticeable cultural differences you have observed in your work with U.S. Americans?

2. How did you react to and deal with these differences in your work with U.S. American volunteers?

3. How do you think these differences have either helped or hindered Municipal Development volunteers in their work in Municipal Women’s Offices?

D. Conclusion

1. Do you have anything else you would like to share before we conclude?
APPENDIX D. PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER SURVEY

Peace Corps Guatemala Municipal Development Volunteer Survey Questions: Summer 2012

I. Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. You are being asked to participate in this survey because you served as a Municipal Development Volunteer in Peace Corps Guatemala during sometime between 2007 and 2011, and worked in a Municipal Women’s Office. The information provided by you in this survey will be kept completely confidential. I will not use your name or sensitive information in the actual thesis report. If any of the questions make you feel uncomfortable, please do not feel that you must answer them. I encourage your openness and honesty in answering the questions. There are three parts to the first set of survey questions, beginning with a discussion of your work with the Municipal Development Program as an agent of change, continuing with an exploration of the issues surrounding women’s empowerment in Guatemala, and concluding with an analysis of cultural differences and how these may affect the project. The last section of the survey will ask you to answer a series of scale-based questions. Finally, at the end of the survey, you will be asked to provide an address for your incentive for participation to be sent via mail.

(Note: please start typing in grey fill areas, and space will be created for you as needed. Take as much space as you need to answer the questions.)

**PLEASE SEND COMPLETED SURVEY AND CONSENT FORM BY SEPTEMBER 24, 2012.**

Name: ___________________________ Dates of service: mm/dd/yyyy ___ to mm/dd/yyyy ___

Work site: ___________________________ , Guatemala

Worked in (mark with an “x”): _____ OMM _____ Both OMM and OMP

II. Questions

E. Municipal Development Program as an Agent of Change for Rural Guatemalan Women
4. Please describe your involvement with the Peace Corps’ Municipal Development Program. Specifically, speak to the work you did with rural Guatemalan women.

(Please start typing here)

5. The overall goal of the Municipal Development Program is: “To facilitate and strengthen the relationship between the municipal government and the citizenry so that the local government provides services that satisfy the demands of the population”.

a. How has the program succeeded in reaching this goal?

(Please start typing here)

b. What area(s) does the program need to strengthen in order to better reach its goal?

(Please start typing here)

6. What does it mean to you to be a “change agent”? How does the Municipal Development Program serve as an agent of change in Guatemala?

(Please start typing here)

F. Women’s Empowerment

4. Please speak to the situation of rural women in Guatemala. What are the special issues these women face and why do you believe these issues exist?

(Please start typing here)

5. How do you think the Municipal Development Program, in its work with Municipal Women’s Offices, address these issues, and how did you play a role in addressing these issues in your work with women?

(Please start typing here)
6. Do you think the Municipal Development Program is/has helped to empower rural women?
   a. If so, how?
      (Please start typing here)

   b. If not, why not?
      (Please start typing here)

G. U.S. American and Guatemalan cultural differences

4. What are the most noticeable cultural differences you observed in your work with Guatemalans?
   (Please start typing here)

5. How did you react to and deal with these differences in your work with Guatemalan’s?
   (Please start typing here)

6. How do you think these cultural differences have either helped or hindered Municipal Development volunteers in their work in Municipal Women’s Offices?
   (Please start typing here)

H. Conclusion

2. Please add additional comments about change agentry, women’s empowerment, and cultural differences specific to your own experience in the Peace Corps here:
III. Scale-based questions

Please answer the following questions by putting an “X” in the box that reflects your response.

**Ex: I ate tortillas in Guatemala.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Overall, I am satisfied with having served as a volunteer in the Municipal Development Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1a. Please explain your response to question #1 here:

( Please start typing here)

2. The Municipal Development Program achieved its stated goals in its work in Guatemala. (Please see Question from section A.2 for stated goals)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2a. Please explain your response to question #2 here:

( Please start typing here)

3. I felt that I served as an agent of change in my work through the Municipal Development Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3a. Please explain your response to question #3 here:

( Please start typing here)
4. The Municipal Development Program is structured to help empower rural women via its work in the Women’s Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4a. Please explain your response to question #4 here:

(Please start typing here)

5. I directly helped to empower rural women via the work and projects I completed in the Women’s Office of my site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5a. Please explain your response to question #5 here:

(Please start typing here)

6. Cultural differences between U.S. Americans and Guatemalans were effectively addressed by Peace Corps so that we were able to work more effectively with host country nationals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

6a. Please explain your response to question #6 here:

(Please start typing here)

7. Cultural differences kept me from being able to achieve what the women in my site needed for their empowerment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

7a. Please explain your response to question #7 here:

(Please start typing here)

8. Cultural differences hindered the overall ability of the Municipal Development Program in strengthening women’s empowerment in Guatemala.
8a. Please explain your response to question #8 here:

(Please start typing here)

9. Now that the Municipal Development Program has been terminated by Peace Corps, the work I started with the women in site will stop because they do not know how to continue with it.

9a. Please explain your response to question #9 here:

(Please start typing here)

10. What effect will the end of the Municipal Development Program have on the work that has been done in Women’s Offices by the Peace Corps?

10a. Please explain your response to question #10 here:

(Please start typing here)

End of Survey Questions; please proceed below to the end.

Below, please provide an address in the United States where I may send your incentive for participation ($10 Target gift card). I will send your incentive to you as soon as possible after your survey’s completion:

Name of person at address (if different from your own): _

________________
THANK YOU for completing this survey!
¡Muchísimas gracias por tu apoyo!
APPENDIX E. FOCUS GROUP / WOMEN’S GROUPS CONSENT FORM IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

INFORMED CONSENT for Municipal and Rural Women’s Committees of El Chol

“Intercultural Factors in the Peace Corps’ Role as a Change Agent in the Empowerment of Rural Guatemalan Women”

You are invited to participate in this study I am using for my thesis because you interacted with Municipal Development volunteers in El Chol and participated in Municipal Women’s Office activities and/or events during this time. My name is Devon Anne Baird, and I am a student in Intercultural Relations at the University of the Pacific, School of International Studies. The purpose of this research is to analyze the intercultural factors that played a role in the Municipal Development Program’s ability to serve as a change agent in the empowerment of rural women, in order to assess the program’s effectiveness. My work site, El Chol, will be used as a case study. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in a focus group interview in the urban center of El Chol / written survey in your community. Your participation in this study will last approximately 2.5 hours.

There are minimal psychological risks for you due to talking about potentially sensitive information. Other minimal risks include expressing your opinion which may be different from others regarding the participation of women outside the home, and a minimal potential for loss of confidentiality should others learn of your participation. However, there are also many benefits to this research, particularly that women will be able to discuss matters that they might not normally be given the chance to discuss that relate to their own empowerment and community involvement, and will get to spend time with friends and like-minded women.

If you have any questions about the research at any time, please call me at 5185-1459 in Guatemala, or (001)805-769-7251 in the United States. You may also reach me via email at devon.baird@gmail.com. You may also contact my thesis advisor, Kent Warren, at (001)503-297-4622. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Research & Graduate Studies Office, University of the Pacific (001)209-946-7367 in Stockton, California. In the event of a research-related injury, please contact your regular medical provider and bill through your normal insurance carrier, then contact the Office of Research & Graduate Studies.
Any identifying information obtained about you will be maintained in a safe, locked location and will be destroyed after a period of three years after the study is completed.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

You will be offered a copy of this signed form to keep. Thank you for your participation.

Signature                      Date
__________________________________________  _________________________________
HOJA DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADA:

“Factores Interculturales en el Papel del Cuerpo de Paz como Agente de Cambio en el Empoderamiento de Mujeres Rurales de Guatemala”

Ud. está invitada como participante en un estudio de investigación para mi tesis que involucra un análisis de los factores interculturales entre Guatemala y los Estados Unidos y sus efectos en el trabajo del eficaz del Cuerpo de Paz en el programa de Desarrollo Municipal como agente del cambio para las mujeres rurales de Guatemala. Estaré estudiando El Chol como un estudio de caso.

Mi nombre es Devon Anne Baird, y tengo mi Licenciatura en Comunicaciones y en Español. Ahora estoy estudiando en la Universidad del Pacífico, Escuela de Estudios Internacionales, para lograr mi Maestría en Relaciones Interculturales. Estoy estudiando el tema en el título de esta hoja para mi tesis. Ud. ha sido seleccionada como participante en este estudio porque conoció y trabajó con las voluntarias del Cuerpo de Paz en el Programa de Desarrollo Municipal quienes trabajaban en la Oficina Municipal de la Mujer y la Juventud.

El propósito de esta investigación es para analizar los factores interculturales cuales afectaban a la eficaz del programa de Desarrollo Municipal para servir como un agente de cambio para las mujeres de El Chol. Si Ud. está de acuerdo y quiere participar, pediré que Ud.: A) participe en una entrevista grupal con la Junta de Mujeres Municipal / B) complete una encuesta con el Comité de Mujeres de su aldea. Su participación duraría 3 a 4 horas.

Hay algunos posibles riesgos pequeñas en su participación, incluyendo posibles riesgos psicológicas por hablar de información sensible y/o riesgos sociológicos debido a algunas actitudes sobre la participación de la mujer en actividades fuera de la casa. También hay muchos beneficios a participación, incluyendo que será un espacio para poder compartir con otras mujeres sobre temas que quizás no se habla en la vida cotidiana, que estará contribuyendo a un proyecto que ayudará entender la situación de las mujeres Guatemaltecas y cómo empoderarlas, y puede servir como un ambiente de descanso y diversión.

Si tiene preguntas sobre la investigación en cualquier momento, me puede llamar a las 5185 1459 en Guatemala, o (001)805-769-7251 en los Estados Unidos, o a mi correo a devon.baird@gmail.com. También puede ponerse en contacto con el asesor de mi tesis, Kent Warren, en el estado de Washington, EEUU, a (001)503-297-4622.

Toda la información que obtengo por medio de este estudio y en la que se puede identificar a las personas será mantenida con llave y solo será compartida con otras personas con su permiso. La información sería guardado para 3 años, y después destruida.
Su participación es voluntaria y puede decidir que no ya quiere participar en cualquier momento.

Su firma abajo significa que ha leído el contenido de esta hoja, que quiere participar, que puede terminar de participar en cualquier momento sin consecuencias, que recibirá una copia de esta hoja.

Firma_________________________  Fecha____________________________
APPENDIX F: PEACE CORPS STAFF / PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT for returned and current Peace Corps Guatemala Volunteers in the Municipal Development Program

“Intercultural Factors in the Peace Corps’ Role as a Change Agent in the Empowerment of Rural Guatemalan Women”

You are invited to participate in this study because you were / are a volunteer in the Peace Corps’ Municipal Development Program in Guatemala who works / worked primarily with your site’s Municipal Women’s Office (OMM) sometime during 2007 to 2011. My name is Devon Anne Baird, and I am a student in Intercultural Relations at the University of the Pacific, School of International Studies. The purpose of this research is to analyze the intercultural factors that played a role in the Municipal Development program’s ability to serve as a change agent in the empowerment of rural women in Guatemala, in order to assess the program’s effectiveness. My work site, El Chol, will be used as a case study. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a written survey which will be sent to you via email. Your participation in this study will last approximately 1 hour or less.

There are minimal psychological risks for you due to talking about potentially sensitive information related to your Peace Corps service. However, there are also many benefits to your participation, including the fact that you are contributing to valuable research that will help to assess how the Municipal Development program helped to empower rural Guatemalan women. You will also be able to express valuable opinions specific to your Peace Corps experience.

If you have any questions about the research at any time, please call me at (805)769-7251, or via email at devon.baird@gmail.com You may also contact my thesis advisor, Kent Warren, at 503-297-4622. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Research & Graduate Studies Office, University of the Pacific 209-946-7367 in Stockton, California. In the event of a research-related injury, please contact your regular medical provider and bill through your normal insurance carrier, then contact the Office of Research & Graduate Studies. Any identifying information obtained about you will be maintained in a safe, locked location and will be destroyed after a period of three years after the study is completed.
Your participation is entirely voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

You will receive a small incentive for participation. Please return this signed consent form to me at devon.baird@gmail.com, and you are free to keep a copy of this consent form.

Signature __________________________ Date (MM/DD/YYYY)