

PEACE CORPS  
PARAGUAY



DESCRIPTION OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Victor Daniel Bloomberg  
[Full official name]

100452473  
[Volunteer ID No.]

Paraguay  
[Country]

After a competitive application process stressing applicant skills, adaptability and cross-cultural understanding, Victor Bloomberg was invited into Peace Corps service and assigned to Paraguay as an Urban Youth Development Volunteer.

Mr. Bloomberg entered training on February 2, 2006, participating in an intensive 11-week training program in Guarambaré, Paraguay. Language training included 131 hours of spoken and written Spanish and Guaraní. Area Studies training included 152 hours in the history, economics, and cultural norms of Paraguay, as well as personal adjustment, safety and security, and health training. In addition, as part of the language and cross-cultural component of the training program, he lived with a Paraguayan family for 11 weeks. Technical training included 173 hours of hand on practice.

He successfully completed training and was sworn in as a Volunteer on April 21, 2006. He was assigned to a marginalized neighborhood called Pacu-cua, in the city of Encarnación.

Summary of Volunteer's Accomplishments

The fundamental success was verification that a methodology focused on emergent factors is possible within the structure of the Peace Corps in Paraguay.

- 4 new businesses started, 2 more on the launch pad
- Analytical and methodological tools of Paraguayan leadership expanded as indicated by their invitation to U.S. Ambassador Cason to visit the ground-breaking of a housing project.
- Pedagogical use of video was effective in a community of 62 families that lived and worked in the municipal garbage dump.
- Children and youth pride in their Guaraní language and culture was supported
- Paraguayans were trained in video production and the team learned business practices included: market research, budgeting, and basic bookkeeping
- Video library of cultural materials was produced
- Paraguayans included him in their family activities and friendships formed

**Pedagogical Use of Video**

- *Hogar San Cristóbal* - April 2006 to May 2007
- *El Vertedero/Arapyahu* - May 2006 to March 2008

**Small Business - Creation and Management**

- Solar energy project - May 2006 to March 2008 (Prototypes built)
- USAID/CIRD/PRODECO - June 2006 to March 2008 (Organic Fertilizer, Horticulture, Recycling)
- *Tavarandu Asociados Medios de Comunicación* - August 2006 to March 2008
- *Tavarandu Asociados Empresa Artesanía* - December 2007 to March 2008 (Business planning)

Narrative of Volunteer's Accomplishments

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### **Pedagogical Use of Video**

It was initiated by Paraguayans. It led to the formation of a sustainable video production business that generates income. Video was used by Paraguayan project coordinators to improve planning, evaluation and activities by the project members. All videos produced for community pedagogical efforts were predominantly in Guaraní and included Guaraní titles. The videos and digital archives are retained by the project for future use.

#### ***Hogar San Cristóbal***

The goal was to support pride in traditional culture among youth from poor families that speak Guaraní. Youth provided the Volunteer with Guaraní lessons and the Volunteer provided youth "flash cards"; for some of the group members this was the first time that they had read the language. The soup kitchen was relocated out of Zona Baja. Video compilation of the pre-move cultural program (it included a collection of photographs taken by previous Peace Corps Volunteer) plus additional samples of language and culture were provided to youth, teachers and directors at the new center's inauguration in December 2007.

#### ***El Vertedero/Arapyahu (Training Center)***

The residents and workers of the municipal garbage dump generally do not read or write. There are Paraguayan organizers dedicated to improve conditions even while working towards a life outside of the dump. Assistance was provided to enhance the residents' abilities to evaluate and plan their own development activities: a contaminated well was closed and replaced by a water tank filled by the volunteer fire department; pathological waste is no longer dumped with common waste; a burned down depository was replaced by a larger, brick one; after years of stalling, the city council and mayor approved a housing project that will be financed by the Bi-national Entity Yacyretá

Technical assistance was provided to the director of education and social services through evaluation, planning and provision of materials. In December 2007, a video was made for "La Pastoral de Apoyo a la Niñez Trabajadora de la Calle" and it was provided to the director as an adjunct to the Asunción office's project evaluation. On February 2, 2008, a video report was provided to U.S. Ambassador Cason, after a visit with the Volunteer to a presentation by the *USAID supported NGO Paraguay Vende* in Encarnación.

### **Small Business - Creation and Management**

#### **Solar energy project**

The solar energy project introduced innovation and a method of design through experimentation in the barrio of residence and at *Arapyahu-Training Center*. The project was endorsed by "*la Comisión de Trabajadores del Vertedero de la Municipalidad de Encarnación*" (April 12, 2007). The final design evolved as a result of Paraguayan evaluation of the prototypes. There were three proposals (Plan International, San Diego Peace Corps Volunteer Association, PC SPA); none were funded.

#### **USAID/CIRD/PRODECO**

The Volunteer wrote the management plan for 3 businesses (worm producing organic fertilizer, horticulture and recyclables.) He reviewed 25 surveys for data errors corrected prior to submission for funding. Once funded, he provided technical assistance to the manager during the start-up phase.

#### ***Tavarandu Asociados Medios de Comunicación***

When he arrived, a community radio station was in operation but disorganized, records for financial transactions did not exist, there was no plan for development. These obstacles to success were corrected. *Tavarandu Asociados* was granted a channel by a local cable television company; they approached the opportunity in a manner similar to a hobby. Today the project is earning income through the sale of air time and the production of commercials. The computer needed for production was donated through Peace Corps and additional software and hardware was obtained in the site and

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in the U.S. with the Volunteer's assistance. The Volunteer provided technical assistance for a proposal that was submitted to establish a community cyber café, *Fundación Paraguaya* funded the connection although to date is only being used as Tavarandu Asociados' equipment .

***Tavarandu Asociados Empresa Artesania***

A needs assessment/market survey was completed, inventory of products started, and production target goals were set. Basic bookkeeping practices were established. A proposal was submitted to Peace Corps Partnership; it was not funded because the proposal did not meet the PC Partnership Project requirements. It remains available to the team as the initial business plan.

At the close of his service, Victor Bloomberg was tested by a certified Peace Corps Language examiner and scored Intermediate High in Spanish.

Privacy Act Notice: The information requested herein is collected pursuant to Section 5 of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2504 (f).) The information will be used exclusively to prepare the Description of Volunteer Service Statement which will be permanently retained by the Peace Corps. The Statement will be used to verify service performed.

Pursuant to section 5(f) of the Peace Corps Act 22 U.S.C. 2504(f), as amended, any former Volunteer employed by the United States Government following his/her Peace Corps Volunteer service is entitled to have any period of satisfactory Peace Corps Volunteer service credited for purposes of retirement, seniority, reduction in force, leave and other privileges based on length of Government service. Peace Corps service shall not be credited toward completion of probationary or trial periods or completion of any service requirement for career appointment.

This is to certify in accordance with Executive Order No. 11103 of April 10, 1963, that Victor Bloomberg served satisfactorily as a Peace Corps Volunteer. His service ended on April 10, 2008. He is therefore eligible to be appointed as a career-conditional employee in the competitive civil service on a non-competitive basis. This benefit under the Executive Order entitlement extends for a period of one year, except that the employing agency may extend the period for up to three years for a former Volunteer who enters military service, pursues studies at a recognized institution of higher learning or engages in other activities which in the view of the appointing authority warrant extension of the period.

Volunteer		Group	<u>Guarambaré - 20</u>
	Signature		
Reviewed by			<u>4-2-08</u>
	Michael Eschlema Country Director		Date

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