

Peace Corps Holds Regional Renewable Energy Workshop at Zamorano University in Honduras

January 17-21, 2011

The purpose of the workshop was to build the capacity of Peace Corps staff from ten Peace Corps ECPA posts, to strengthen their capacity to lead the PC ECPA initiative, focused on benefitting rural communities, and to prepare them to lead training events for Volunteers and host country partners. Facilitators from Zamorano University and an energy specialist from the National Renewable Energy Laboratories in the US trained more than two dozen Peace Corps employees and Volunteers.

Key elements of the workshop were:

- An introduction to and field practice with installation of low-cost photovoltaic systems
- An introduction to improved cookstoves, both rocket and TLUD (Top-lit updraft), and a field practicum in conducting part 1 of the water boiling test.
- An introduction to low-cost household biodigesters, and participant sharing of Peace Corps experiences and materials on this topic.
- An introduction to nano-hydro and micro-hydro systems
- "World-Café" style discussion tables on sustainable approaches to renewable energy in rural communities, including community members, NGOs, currently serving Peace Corps Volunteers, community leaders, and microfinance institution representatives.
- Field visits and conversations with users of community installations of cookstoves, photovoltaics, and nano-hydro facilities.
- A presentation and discussion with a microfinance institution that provides loans to small-scale photovoltaic systems in rural Honduras.



The last day of the workshop, posts developed country-specific ECPA action plans, which include in-country workshops for Volunteers and host country partners to be held between March and October 2011.