CONDUCTED IN ANSE LA RAYE, ST. LUCIA
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Executive Summary

Introduction
The Reaching Children’s Potential (RCP) program is an early childhood development intervention (ECD) program implemented by Global Volunteers in the Anse La Raye community of Saint Lucia. With the endorsement of the Saint Lucian government, Global Volunteers (GV), a nonprofit based in the United States took over the operation of the original Roving Caregivers Program in April 2014 when the St. Lucian government discontinued the program due to a lack of funding. The program was renamed “Reaching Children’s Potential” by GV. Currently, 45 participant households serve as beneficiaries of the program.

The RCP program provides early childhood stimulation and intervention for children from birth to age three through 45-minute home visits provided by caregivers. The caregivers are four young to middle-aged women who have received on the job training in parenting and child development. They usually visit an average of twelve families twice a week. These visits focus on teaching parenting skills, appropriate child rearing practices, and monitoring the child’s developmental milestones. Additionally, GV provides EarthBoxes (moveable container gardens) to mothers for easy and affordable access to fresh produce. A third component of the program consists of a monthly parent meeting where discussions on parenting, stress management, children’s health and well-being, nutritional awareness, children’s rights, and child safety take place.

Global Volunteers commissioned a research team in May 2015 comprised of three Masters of Development Practice students from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs from the University of Minnesota to assess how the use of foreign volunteers affects the delivery and outcomes of services provided by the RCP program. The purpose of the evaluation is to help GV understand how participants view the use of foreign volunteers, the distribution of EarthBoxes and the parent meetings so GV can use the information for programming decisions and improvement.

Background
About 29% of the population of Saint Lucia is estimated to be poor. The districts of Anse La Raye, Soufriere, Choiseul, Laborie, and Micoud exhibit even higher rates of poverty. Female-headed households are common on the island and poverty and unemployment inhibit the mothers’ abilities to provide the basic needs of their children. Daycare and preschool facilities
are privately run and therefore expensive. To address the issue of limited access to pre-school programs, GV started working in the Anse La Raye community in 2012.

Evaluation approach
The evaluation was designed to collect information to answer the following questions:

- To what extent do short-term volunteers influence the delivery or outcome of services?
- In what ways does the addition of EarthBoxes and parent meeting influence participants?

In order to answer these questions, qualitative and quantitative data were collected from 40 families who had participated in the program for more than one year. Quantitative data were collected using a spoken survey and qualitative data were collected using the Most Significant Change methodology. Local staff of caregivers, the RCP program manager, and the GV country manager were interviewed individually. The spoken survey was undertaken to triangulate the information collected from the participants whereas the staff interviews were conducted to gather different perspectives on the various program components.

The spoken survey administered to program participants included questions on activities conducted as part of caregiving, use of EarthBoxes, parent meetings, and mothers’ perceptions of the assistance provided by volunteers in caregiving, EarthBoxes and parent meetings. The MSC methodology consisted of asking program participants to share an experience that represented the most important change that resulted from participation in the program. The MSC interview questions were stated as follows:

1. Tell me how you (the storyteller/program participant) first became involved with the Reaching Children’s Potential (RCP) program.
2. What is your current involvement with the Reaching Children’s Potential program?
3. Since Global Volunteers started working with RCP in January 2012, they have:
   - used foreign volunteers to come along with caregivers
   - introduced EarthBoxes to families
   - held parent meetings
   Please describe one experience that tells about the most significant change for you, from any of these.

Stories were recorded and transcribed by the evaluation team. Predetermined groups of stakeholders (GV international staff, GV local staff, donors/volunteers, and Saint Lucia Ministry of Education representatives) were selected to review and choose most significant change stories. The selection process did not follow any specific criteria but was based on
the rationale put forth by the stakeholders. The overarching question that guided the selection process was stated as:

*From among all these stories, which do you think represents the most significant change?*

Each group selected four stories that represented the most significant change for the program participants, from their own perspectives. Thus, the evaluation findings are supported by:

1) Analysis of the **selected** MSC stories
2) Quantitative assessment of the spoken survey responses
3) Qualitative analysis of all **40** MSC stories and
4) Qualitative analysis of staff interviews

**Findings**

Following the selection process with the four stakeholder teams, MSC stories 2, 4, 5, 11, 16, 18, 20, 22, 23, and 28 (refer to Appendix A) emerged as the top stories that represented the most significant change experienced by participants. The local staff, the GV international staff, the donors/volunteers and the MOE chose different stories for different reasons underscoring the different vantage points of each selection team. Although there were some overlaps in the stories selected as well as the reasoning given by the selection teams, most of the selected stories and their rationale were unique to each selection team.

Stories 2, 5, 18 and 23 were chosen by more than one selection team. The local staff and the GV international staff chose story 18 for similar reasons: presence of a volunteer-specific experience and the intercultural learning that resulted from their presence. Story 23 was chosen by the local staff, the GV international staff and the volunteers/donors. The overarching reason for selection of this story was the value that the parent meetings provided for the participants. Story 2 was chosen by the local staff, the volunteers/donors and the MOE. Story 5 was chosen by the GV international staff and the donors/volunteers. In the selection of this story, both teams emphasized the recommendations provided by the participant as part of the most significant change experience.

The following section summarizes the findings for volunteers, EarthBoxes and parent meetings, which are the program components of interest for this evaluation:

**A] Volunteers:** Among the 40 participants interviewed, 37 (93%) of them said that they had a foreign volunteer visit them at their homes. The participants described volunteer influence in the areas of child development, parenting skills and knowledge, and other learning that came through their interactions with the volunteers.

**Child development**
The MSC stories and the spoken survey indicated that parents believed that their children’s interactions with volunteers helped in their cognitive development as well as enhanced faculties such as hearing and vision, in some cases.

**Parenting skills and knowledge**
Roughly one-third of the mothers discussed the role of volunteers in advising them about their child’s nutrition, health, and safety. In one of the MSC stories, a parent remarked that the skills she learned were aspects of parenting she did not know before. This new learning was also perceived as important by the Ministry of Education team as they selected one of their top four MSC stories.

**Interactions:** In regards to their interaction with the volunteers, the participants mainly spoke about the forthcoming and open nature of volunteers and how the interactions paved the way for intercultural exchange and sharing of experiences.

The staff highlighted the exchange of experiences between the participants and volunteers as an important component of the program. They also appreciated the training they received in the area of early childhood development from the volunteers. One of the concerns raised by the staff was that the presence of volunteers made children shy or fearful during the home visits, which may have interfered with the work of the caregivers in some cases.

Both parents and staff talked about having more volunteers with specific skill sets such as physiotherapists, social workers, and speech therapists. These volunteers, according to them, were better capable of handling issues not necessarily catered to by the staff.

**B] EarthBoxes:** Out of the 40 participants surveyed, 28 (70%) said that they own and use an EarthBox regularly. The participants spoke about the benefits of the EarthBoxes in terms of:

- its ability to serve as a source of food
- increased variety of food available
- contributing to a healthy lifestyle by providing fresh food and increased activity involved in planting, watering, and harvesting produce from the EarthBoxes
- decreasing the amount of money spent on purchasing food from the market
- increased knowledge and skills in planting and gardening
- providing leisure activities or a hobby, which also brought the family together
- providing benefits to community and extended family through sharing of the vegetables produced

While the Ministry of Education selection team corroborated the participants’ perspective on the ability of EarthBoxes to serve as a source of food, the GV international staff talked
about how the EarthBoxes contributed to empowerment and autonomy as they selected one of their top four stories.

In regards to the feedback on improving the benefits resulting from the EarthBoxes, the participants were keen on receiving more EarthBoxes since they believed it would help them grow more than one type of vegetable thereby minimizing market purchase. They also signaled a need for continuity in planting the EarthBoxes. The local staff also shared the same sentiments regarding the frequency of planting the EarthBoxes. One of the staff members also spoke at length about the need for using organic fertilizers in the EarthBoxes.

C] Parent meetings: Most of the parents who participated in the RCP (88%) said that they had attended parent meetings provided by RCP program at some point. Their comments about parent meetings are summarized below in terms of the topics covered in meetings, the value of meetings for parents, and comments about how the information was delivered during meetings.

Topics covered: The participants talked about various aspects of child health and wellbeing covered by the parent meetings. Several parents described a meeting where they were taught to make daily-use items by using things available at home. For many parents, this contributed to easing the financial burden associated with buying toys and supplies. They also valued lessons in sanitation and hygiene, nutritional awareness, child safety and child rights delivered through the meetings.

Value: For some participants, the meetings taught them ways to cope with parental stress whereas for others it served as a relaxation or break as the caregivers took care of the children while the mothers focused on the activities. Some also spoke about self-care activities such as massage and spa treatments that they received while others emphasized the parenting skills training imparted at the meetings. Some also talked about how the meetings served as a platform for socialization with other parents.

Delivery: Some participants spoke about how the parent meetings used effective and creative methods of communicating with the parents including audio-visual media. A few of them were impressed by the simple and effective terms or ways used by volunteers to convey messages.

From the local staff’s perspective, the value of the meetings came from providing a platform for the mothers, which fostered learning from the fellow participants, caregivers
and volunteers. They also emphasized that the skills they learned at the meetings were ultimately passed on to the mothers.

In regards to the feedback on parent meetings, participants wished that the meetings could provide more training in specific skill sets such as making quilts, books and so on.

Although the evaluation focused on the additional program components (volunteers, EarthBoxes and parent meetings), many MSC stories participants told spoke at length about how they benefitted from the caregivers. In the spoken survey and in the MSC stories, RCP participants spoke about how the support of the caregivers had extended beyond the caregiving provided during the twice weekly visits. They described how the different activities performed by the caregivers helped in their child’s cognitive and social-emotional development. Some remarked that they were able to take better care of their children because of the training provided by the caregivers. One of the parents spoke at length about how a caregiver had assisted her child in developing social skills; something the child struggled with prior to visits from the caregiver. Both the Ministry of Education and the GV international selection teams chose a story that underscored the caregivers’ role in developing the child’s social skills, as one of their top four stories. The volunteer/donor MSC story selection team specifically highlighted the role of caregivers in supplementing primary care in one of their top four stories.

**Conclusion**

The program is highly valued by both the participants and the staff with the EarthBox and the parent meetings being the most popular program components. The EarthBox was popular mainly due to its ability to serve as a source of food. The usefulness of parent meetings was discussed by participants in areas ranging from child health and safety to nutritional awareness and parental stress management. Both parents and staff were appreciative of volunteer presence and the intercultural learning that came along with it. Overall, the parents and the staff were satisfied with the program as well as the three additional program components initiated by Global Volunteers.
Problem Statement

Saint Lucia is an island country in the Caribbean with an estimated population of 172,547. The population is relatively young with roughly 77% under 50 years of age. The youth (persons between the ages of 15 to 29 years) make up 26% of the population. (CSO, Saint Lucia) With a high unemployment rate of 23%, the large percentage of youth puts pressure on an already burdened economy. (CSO, Saint Lucia) As per 2006 figures, about 29% of the island population is estimated to be poor. Poverty is found to be concentrated in the rural areas with the districts of Anse La Raye (45%), Soufriere (42%), Choiseul (38%), Laborie (42%) and Micoud (44%) exhibiting relatively higher rates of poverty. While close to 51% of those living below the poverty line are under the age of 20, about 8% in the age group of 0-4 and 14% in the age group of 5-9 live below the poverty line. (KAIRI, 2006)

Female-headed family units are common on the island with the male member of the family often living in a separate household. This family structure has a direct impact on the women and the children. The women share a disproportionate share of responsibility which also keeps them out of the labor force. Poverty and the resultant lack of educational opportunities also prevent participation in the labor force and contributes to the mother's inability to satisfy the basic needs of her children. This impacts the children’s educational attainment and physiological development. Moreover, daycare and preschools are privately run and charge a tuition fee that make them inaccessible to many families.

Early Childhood Development: The What and the Why

As outlined by UNICEF, early childhood development (ECD) refers to a comprehensive approach to policies and programs for children from birth to eight years of age, their parents, and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child’s rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social, and physical potential. The period from birth to eight years of age is important because the brain reaches half its mature weight by the age of six months and 90% of its final weight by age eight. Inadequate nutrition before birth and in the first years of life can seriously interfere with brain development (UNICEF).

In ideal circumstances, early intervention starts with a comprehensive assessment of the child's and the family's strengths and needs. It extends through the provision of appropriate supports and services to active monitoring and reevaluation as the child develops. Early childhood interventions can range from education to cash transfers for nutrition and care. However, interventions that are either educational or mixed (e.g. stimulation and nutrition, care and nutrition) have found to have the greatest effect on cognition, in comparison to interventions.
that are cash transfers or solely nutritional (Nores et al, 2009). Moreover, early education and care programs aim to enhance those intellectual and social abilities of children that are the basis for their subsequent development. They aim to provide children with a favorable start at school and to prevent adverse developments such as school failure, grade retention, or the need for special education services. Further, many ECD programs strive to establish equality of educational opportunity for children from different social backgrounds because children growing up in environments with little cognitive stimulation do not have the same chance to develop their abilities as children from more privileged families. (Burger, 2009) Early intervention is also deemed essential to prevent mental retardation and poor intellectual development in children whose families do not provide adequate stimulation in the early years of life. (Ramey et al, 1998) Further, a research conducted on Guatemalan adults showed that improving nutrition in early childhood (through the medium of atole supplements) led to substantial increases in wage rates for men, thereby suggesting that investments in early childhood nutrition can be long terms drivers of economic growth. (Hoddinott et al, 2008)

History: From Roving Caregivers Program to Reaching Children’s Potential

Roving Caregivers Program (RCP)
The Roving Caregivers Program (RCP) was first launched in Jamaica in 1993 and was later replicated in five countries in the Caribbean: Saint Lucia, Dominica, Grenada, Belize and Saint Vincent. The original program was focused on early childhood, early stimulation, and early intervention. RCP sought to support mothers with children age birth to three who would otherwise not be given the opportunity to be part of an early stimulation or early development program. Before the Roving Caregivers Program was replicated in Saint Lucia, the government of Saint Lucia commissioned the Bernard van Leer Foundation to study the early childhood programs across the Caribbean and make a recommendation as to which program was the best for Saint Lucia. The Roving Caregivers Program was chosen as the most suitable and culturally appropriate.

Roving Caregivers Program had been under the supervision of the Early Childhood Education Unit of the Ministry of Education in Saint Lucia since 2004. The Bernard van Leer Foundation, a grantmaking organization based in the Netherlands, privately funded and operated the Roving Caregivers Program. The government of Saint Lucia and UNICEF often provided supplemental funding for training activities. When the program expanded to Saint Lucia, participant
communities were selected based on the national poverty assessment report. The program, through the Bernard Leer Foundation, began in the north and east of Saint Lucia. By 2007, the program was expanded to the southern regions of the island covering Anse la Raye, ultimately reaching the whole island. The RCP Program provided children from birth to three years with early childhood stimulation and intervention through home visits twice a week for 45 minutes per visit. These visits, conducted by full-time paid caregivers, focused on parenting skills, child health and nutrition, developmental milestones, appropriate child rearing practices, and interactions between parent and child.

According to an impact evaluation, statistically significant results were reported to show the success of the program (Janssens, Rosemberg, & van Spijk, 2009). These results were reported in 2009, using propensity-score matching method (Janssens, et al., 2009). The study reported significant improvements in the cognitive development of children aged 6 to 18 months, but not for the older group aged 18 to 30 months. The scores of the Visual Reception and Fine Motor Skills scales showed substantial increases, almost half of a standard deviation higher than the control group (Janssens, Rosemberg, & van Spijk, 2009, p.22-23). This study therefore suggested that the program was successful for children age 6-18 months.

Reaching Children’s Potential (RCP-GV)

Global Volunteers (GV) is an international non-governmental organization (INGO) that engages consecutive, short-term international volunteers on long-term projects to create, nurture, and sustain the well-being of program participants by offering a comprehensive set of services in developing countries. GV is building a framework to measure the impact of its international volunteers on host communities. Its activities include teaching conversational English and helping local organizations deliver essential services intended to eradicate hunger, improve health, and enhance cognitive ability in children of all ages.

The RCP-GV program evolved from the Roving Caregivers Program, an initiative the Saint Lucian government implemented in 2004. The Early Childhood Education Unit of the Ministry of Education managed the Roving Caregivers Program until the end of March 2014, when the government discontinued funding. With the endorsement of the Saint Lucian Government and the Ministry of Education, GV took over the operation of the original Roving Caregivers Program in Anse la Raye, St. Lucia. Although RCP-GV assumed full financial responsibility in March 2014, its involvement in the Anse la Raye community began in 2012.

RCP-GV hired the previous RCP staff to continue their work in part due to the statistically significant improvements reported in the 2009 evaluation of the Roving Caregivers Program. Currently, the program is run by six staff members consisting of Director of RCP-GV, Saint Lucia
Country Manager, and four caregivers trained in early childhood development. All of the caregivers that are currently in RCP-GV were previously employed by the government. The program is free for mothers/guardians to join. RCP-GV program participants are approached by GV staff during their pregnancy or as soon as the child is born. Most of the past and current program families are unemployed and female-headed with a single parent. There are currently 45 mothers actively participating in the RCP-GV program. Parents range in age from 14 to 45, where young mothers make up a significant proportion of parents. Although the program focuses on its work with mothers, the physical presence and active role of fathers is highly encouraged.

RCP-GV’s primary activities consist of two weekly 45-minute home visits by trained caregivers who are often accompanied by volunteers. These visits focus on teaching parenting skills, appropriate child rearing practices, and monitoring developmental milestones. The program expanded its service by creating two new components to broaden the scope of service. For nutrition, GV now provides EarthBoxes to mothers with children birth-age three to provide easy, affordable access to fresh vegetables and herbs. EarthBoxes are small, self-contained gardens in which program participants can grow micronutrient rich foods to supplement their daily diet. Each household can receive up to two Earthboxes, which are planted with the help of GV volunteers who are trained by a Saint Lucian agronomist.

GV raises awareness of nutrition and general well being for the mothers and children through monthly parent meetings where staff and global volunteers facilitate discussions on various subjects. These health and wellbeing workshops include topics ranging from parenting, stress management, children’s health and well-being to nutritional awareness, children’s rights, and child safety. The meetings are often held in the local parish hall, an accessible and convenient location for most of the participants. Many mothers have indicated the parent meetings are empowering, encouraging, fun, informative and helpful. The parent meetings serve as the central hub where mothers also come to receive peer support in addition to program support. It is in these spaces that they learn and acquire knowledge from fellow participants.

Finally, the RCP program’s distinguishing feature is that some of its services are offered through the assistance of international volunteers in cooperation with local staff. Almost all of volunteers come from the United States and range in age from ten to retirement age. Most of the volunteers who participate in the program thus are professionals and/or students at the college level. The volunteers are predominantly Caucasian and are at different stages of their career. The length of time volunteers serve ranges from one to two weeks and at times as long as one month. Once a volunteer’s application is processed through the headquarters, the local
staff places them in one of the program services provided by GV in Saint Lucia. The program services include the RCP program; primary school tutoring; assisting preschool that serves ages 3-5 and supporting the CARE program which provides training in practical skills to high school dropouts. Based on the background and skillset volunteers have, they are placed in one of the four services. Majority of the volunteers are placed to tutor the primary school children while only 10% are placed in RCP since it requires specific backgrounds in early childhood development. In the past, physiotherapists, neonatal nurses, social workers and speech therapists have been placed in the RCP program. Of those placed in RCP, the volunteers with necessary skillsets and expertise often facilitate discussions on specific topics during parent meetings. In some cases, customized parent meetings are held with foreign volunteers for parents with specific need for their children (ex. speech therapy). If volunteers are placed in the RCP program, they either accompany caregivers to home visits or assist with parent meetings (if they come with a specific background in relation to ECD). For parents placed in tutoring primary school, they support primary school children with help in math, reading and other areas.

Evaluation: Approach and Limitations

Evaluation Questions

Through the commissioned evaluation, GV wants to investigate the perceptions of the families it serves in regards to its adapted RCP program. With new additions to the original government-administered program, it is important for GV to understand what changes, if any, has influenced the program’s delivery and outcomes. To evaluate the program, GV has set out to answer the following evaluation questions:

1. To what extent do short term volunteers influence the delivery or outcomes of RCP services?
2. In what ways does the addition of EarthBoxes and parent meetings influence participants?

Evaluation Approach and Methodology

GV is working with an evaluation team to implement a mixed-method evaluation, which employs the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Critics of quantitative methods argue that using quantitative data alone does not tell the full story and often fails to identify the nuances in numerical representations (Collins & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Critics of qualitative methods argue that such data is subjective and that different analysts or evaluators can arrive at different interpretations (Bamberger et al., 2011). In order to combat the shortcomings of using only one data-collection method, the evaluation use a mixed method approach to collect and compare both types of data.
The quantitative evaluation focused on a theory-based approach. A theory-based approach maps out the chain of events from inputs to outcomes and impact in order to understand and develop proper evaluation questions. In the case of GV, this chain is depicted in the logic model (see Figure 1). In order to answer the evaluation questions, quantitative data was collected via a spoken survey, which was read aloud in order to avoid misinterpretations arising from cultural or language barriers. In an effort to maintain continuous monitoring of the influence of volunteers, the collection of qualitative data utilized a Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology (Davies & Dart, 2005). GV program participants were asked to share stories that they believed represent the most significant change experienced due to services offered by GV’s international volunteers. These stories could portray either positive or negative experiences and were collected by the evaluation team through the use of a short, semi-structured interview protocol. Pre-defined groups of stakeholders then selected the most significant stories through a transparent, systematic process (Dart & Davies, 2003, p. 137).

Using a mixed-method approach allowed for triangulating data in two different ways, confirming the validity of data and sources as well as ensuring the data’s completeness (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

The evaluation plan is included in the appendix. The evaluation plan maps out the sources of all the data collected for this study. It also explains how the data was used to answer our evaluation questions.

**Limitations**

The study was conducted in a different cultural setting and by a team of three evaluators who brought along their own experiences and interviewing styles. Thus, the following aspects must be considered while interpreting the data.

*Different Interviewing approaches*

Given that the evaluation team is made up of three individuals with a vast array of different experiences and skill sets, the way the interviews were conducted differed from person to person. With the structure of the MSC protocol, there were times when the team had to use probes in order to get a full account of the story the respondent was trying to tell. As a result, it was difficult to remain uniformity in the interviewing style across all respondents. This led to some respondents being probed more than others. Ideally the team would have conducted the interviews together to minimize this limitation but given the time restraints, the work had to be split up individually.

*Sample Size*

The sample size of the study is smaller than what the team would preferred but given the nature of the program, there wasn’t a way to increase the number of participants included in the study. There were five families in the program who were not included in the study because
they were new to the program. Having a large sample size reduces uncertainties and increases confidence in the results. However, the small sample size allowed for in-depth data collection from the parents and staff.

**Comfort Level of Respondents**

Some of the MSC stories were not as detailed as the team anticipated. Most of the participants were shy and did not say much when they were asked to talk about an experience that they found significant. Before the team started conducting the interviews, they spent a week going around with the caregivers on their home visits and also attended a parent meeting. The team did this as a way of familiarizing themselves with the program and also to allow program participants to get to know the. However, the team realized that it would have been helpful to spend a longer time period orienting themselves with the program. But time constraints did not allow this flexibility in schedule. Although respondents were told they could respond in Creole and have it translated by the caregivers, they refused to use this option. GV’s local staff members said that this was possibly because respondents did not want to come across as people who could not speak English. However, responding in English may have restricted their ability to express themselves fully.

**Country Specific Approach**

*The evaluation team made every effort to* include the local team’s inputs when designing the protocol. However, it was difficult to do so without being in the country to observe what was actually going on. There were multiple sections of our protocol that had to be changed over the course of the evaluation to suit the cultural context in Anse La Raye.
**Figure 1: Logic Model**

**Problem:** Poverty inhibits access to daycare and preschool, which reduces opportunities for appropriate early childhood development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Activities involving 45 parents and their children</th>
<th>Outcomes -- Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local caregivers, program director, GV country manager</td>
<td>Caregivers visit homes twice a week home to perform - early child stimulation - parenting skills training - nutritional awareness counselling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GV foreign volunteers</td>
<td>Volunteers plant, fertilize and distribute EarthBoxes to each participant family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donors</td>
<td>Volunteers accompany caregivers on home visits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
<td>Staff and volunteers conduct health and wellbeing workshops (parent meetings) every month covering issues ranging from child safety and nutrition to parental stress management and effective communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate GV staff</td>
<td>Agronomist trains volunteers in planting EarthBoxes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertilizers, soils, and plants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toys and books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RCP office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parish hall (space for parent meetings)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation and accommodation for foreign volunteers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Assumptions** The children consume the food from the EarthBoxes; the mothers are available and willing to let the caregivers and volunteers visit their homes; mothers attend parent meetings

**External Factors** Availability of fertilizers, availability of volunteers

**Children:**
- Increased daily activity and interaction
- Increased consumption of healthy and nutrient rich foods

**Parents:**
- More can identify discrepancies (if any) between the developmental milestones and children's growth curve
- More engage in unsupervised & appropriate child rearing practices
- More can identify problems (if any) pertaining to their child's health and well being
- More parents feel empowered
Demographics

For this study, 5 of the 45 families were not included because they were new to the program and had very limited experience. Out of the 40 that were interviewed, there were two males and 38 females, including a grandmother taking care of a child in the program. Out of the 40 respondents, 50% are single and 50% are married or living together with a partner. The age ranges for the respondents can be seen in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 – Number of Participants in Each Parent Age Groups

Based on the number of children reported in each household, 40 interviewed participants had 177 people living in the household in total with a maximum of seven, a minimum of two and an
average of about four people residing in the household. 93 of the 177 children were under the age of 18 and the breakdown of their ages can be seen in Figure 3.

There are two families with two children each in the program so there are 42 enrolled children included in this study. Almost half (48%) of the 42 children are females and 52% are males. With GV’s emphasis on the importance of nutrition, respondents were asked about breastfeeding and the liquid intake of their child(ren) the day before the interview. Of the 42 children included in the study, 86% of parents reported the child had been breastfed at some point since birth and 14% had never been breastfed. Of the 36 children who had been breastfed at some point, 47% were still being breastfed and 53% had stopped. The frequency of breastfeeding can be seen in Table 1 below.
Table 1 – Breastfeeding Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of breastfeeding</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>When the child wants.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out of the 17 children who were currently being breastfed</td>
<td>9 (53%)</td>
<td>3 (18%)</td>
<td>4 (23%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were also asked about child liquid intakes in which the majority of the highest the their child took the day before the interview. The highest numbers of parents reported their child had consumed water (39/40 parents) or juice (33/40 parents). Almost none of the parents (40) gave their child soft drinks and none reported giving them alcohol. Parents were almost evenly split in terms of giving their child infant formula with 21 saying they did provide formula and 20 saying they did not. We were not able to get responses for all 42 children as to what liquids they took the day before because a respondent was uncertain since the child was not with her the day before. The information for the 41 children whose liquid intake we were able to obtain is summarized in Figure 4.

Figure 4 – Types of liquids parents reported providing for their child the day before the interview
Results

The following section summarizes findings related to each of the program components: volunteers, EarthBoxes and Parent Meetings

**Evaluation Question 1: To what extent do short-term volunteers influence the delivery or outcome of RCP services?**

**Volunteers**

Almost all of the interviewed parents (93%) have had a foreign volunteer visit their homes and out of 35 who have attended a parent meeting, (86%) have attended one with a foreign volunteer present. Volunteers also interacted with program participants when planting the Earthboxes. At the time of the interview, 28 (70%) program participants currently had an Earthbox and (89%) have had a foreign volunteer work with them on their Earthbox. Of those parents who had worked with a volunteer to plant their Earthbox, 92% said they found the assistance very helpful and 8% said it was somewhat helpful.

**Influence of Volunteers on Child Development**

One of the main ways volunteers influence the delivery and outcome of RCP services is through their interaction with parents. Throughout our analysis, it was evident that parents acknowledge that their interactions with volunteers is helping their children develop cognitive
skills. One respondent stated that through the love volunteers showed towards her child, she found that the child was learning faster and reaching milestones such as hand clapping quicker than expected. Others spoke of how their children are learning faster because volunteers sing to the children. Another example involves a mother who needed assistance on how to improve her child’s hearing and sight and a foreign. However, a volunteer was able to explain to her how to enhance these faculties and the mother was very appreciative to learn many early stimulation activities. One mother stated that it was not the big things but the small things that the volunteers did that she really liked. Singing to the child and making the children move their bodies was something that the mothers appreciated because it kept the children entertained, helped them move and develop their motor skills.

**Volunteers: and Parenting Skills and Knowledge**

Several mothers spoke of nutritional awareness during their interviews. They remarked that volunteers advised them what to feed their children and what not to feed them. These parents also learned skills such as what to do in the case that their child was choking. Not only did participants appreciate the skills they learned from volunteers, they also liked how the information was presented. Parents appreciated that volunteers simplified things and presented the subject matter in ways that were easy to comprehend. One mother demonstrated how she would perform the Heimlich maneuver in the case of this emergency. In addition, parents talked about parenting skills they learned from interacting with volunteers, in regards to child safety and nutrition. These were echoed by the Ministry of Education selection group when they selected a story because of the emphasis shown on parenting skills. The team discussed how the participant showed that she was now taking care of the baby in a different manner, which illustrated a change in her parenting skills. Intergenerational habit was also changed in that the parent spoke about how she was taking better care of her younger children than her older ones because of the skills she acquired at the parenting meetings and from global volunteers.

**Volunteer Interactions with Parents**

The parents spoke a great deal about what made the interactions with volunteers productive and enjoyable. Respondents talked about how open and forthcoming the volunteers were when they visited them. Parents said volunteers were not shy and talked to them like they already knew them. The approach volunteers took appeared to establish a connection with parents and created an environment that fostered learning. Some respondents said they enjoyed it when they were asked questions because it gave them a chance to share their experiences and find out more about the volunteers during. Volunteers usually shared stories about their experiences, about their own children, and their lives in general. A parent
mentioned a volunteer who took pictures of bananas, pawpaw, and lemons because they were different than what the volunteer had at home. Some parents said that talking to volunteers helped them learn something different about the volunteers and this intercultural exchange helped all parties involved. They also appreciated it when the volunteers were kind, caring, and showed an interest in the wellbeing of the child. One parent talked about a volunteer she admired because the volunteer was a young lady who appeared to be very knowledgeable and involved in life. There was a connection right away and it helped make that experience one that she would always remember. Positive volunteer interaction was seen as necessary and important to the success of the program and was a central element by three of the four MSC selection groups who selected a story based on this reason.

Story 18 was chosen by the local GV staff because it highlighted volunteer involvement in the program. The staff was of the opinion that it was necessary to have this story in order to give a true picture of the program components. The staff attached importance to the intercultural learning that the parent benefitted from due to the presence of the volunteers. They felt that the story talked about a learning experience for the participant as a result of the volunteers’ presence. Her recommendation regarding the consistency of the Earthboxes was also highlighted by the staff.

Story 18 was also selected by the GV international staff because it indicated the productivity of volunteers. It demonstrates the impact of volunteers at two levels. The first level is the exchange of experience and “waging peace” which is a big part of Global Volunteers’ values. The parent talked about learning from the different volunteers that visited her and their different experiences. She said she also learned from being able to share her own experience with the volunteers through their interactions. The other level involves sharing useful knowledge and other skills related to caring for the child. One of the skills that the parent described was how to handle a choking child. As a result, this selection group felt that this was a very strong story.

The GV Volunteer and Donor selection group chose Story 2 because it was a success story. The respondent showed appreciation for learning and expressed how what she learned will help her become a better mother. She had a positive response to the interaction with the RCP program and seemed to enjoy the interest volunteers had in her. The story is upbeat and to the point about how a mother can interact with a volunteer and improve a child’s potential. Another reason why this story was selected was because of the many wonderful adjectives and expressions the mother uses; one of them being “It’s the bomb for now”. 
Staff Analysis - Volunteers

The staff believes the program creates an opportunity for volunteers to share their experiences and give different perspective on parenting to both the caregivers and parents. The staff highlighted the exchange of views and perspectives to be a unique component of the program. According to a staff’s description, getting used to frequent visits of mostly Caucasian volunteers every two weeks took getting used to but improved over time as the program established itself in the village of Anse la Raye. As one staff described the situation, :

> When the volunteers came first, the participants’ reaction at first was standoffish. Like these people are coming in and watching my business. The white people... you know a cultural division but after you have established a relationship with... it's not with the volunteers per se. It is with the organization. So when the volunteer comes in, it's a continuation of what has been established. So it's like from the first time they go with the caregivers, the volunteers are accepted. There's no resentment, just camaraderie and understanding. GV has been in that village for almost three and half years so that relationship is already established.

During the home visits, the volunteers are allowed to interact, participate, sing, and assist caregivers with home visit needs. The caregivers said they found find the assistance they receive from the volunteers valuable. Staff used words like “different perspective”, “exchange of views”, “nice company”, “encouraging”, and “helpful” to describe the presence of volunteers when making routine home visits.

The staff were even more appreciative of professional development trainings given by foreign volunteers with specific backgrounds in early childhood development. They said they found these trainings to be effective and believe that it equipped them with the necessary skills to continue helping mothers and children in the long run. The trainings provided opportunity for volunteers to take more of an active role compared to the role they have when they accompany caregivers to homes.

When asked if the presence of volunteers interfere with their work, some of the staff members said yes and pointed out that sometimes, they are not able to work because the children get shy when they see a new face in the room. They are only able to play with the ball, roll the ball, shake the shakers and sing a few songs. However, the caregivers also point out that they believe that experience is part of the program and that children
need to be socially adaptable. It is a child development target that will not be reached if they do not learn how to meet new people. One of the caregivers went on to say “I tell the parents it is a process as a child. It is always good to introduce new faces but not too much at a time”.

While the staff said they found the support of volunteers beneficial, they also discussed some drawbacks of having foreign volunteers for a short-term service work in the field of early childhood development. These challenges include the short time span volunteers serve, lack of adequate volunteer exposure to early childhood development, physical constraints when visiting homes without the use of transportation, and language and cultural barriers. To make the transition smooth, the staff assists volunteers to adjust to the culture, ways of living, explain the socioeconomic surroundings, and cultural dynamics. The majority of the staff agree not all volunteers adjust quickly and some expect things to run from their own perspective without giving consideration to the cultural and economic surrounding.

Lastly, staff records indicate that out of the volunteers coming to serve in Saint Lucia, only roughly 115% of all the volunteers coming to serve in St. Lucia are assigned into RCP while the rest are assigned to the primary school or other projects. This is because RCP seeks volunteers with adequate experience in early childhood development. According to staff, trained or experienced volunteers in fields related to early childhood development have been tremendously helpful during monthly parent meetings. They use their specific backgrounds in speech therapy, physiotherapy, nutrition, art, early childhood and education to pass on knowledge and provide direct support during parent meetings or customized cluster meetings. Overall, trained or experienced foreign volunteers in fields related to early childhood development who provide trainings to caregivers and facilitate parent meetings seem to effectively contribute to the delivery and outcome of RCP services.

**Evaluation Question 2: In what ways does the addition of EarthBoxes and parent meetings influence participants?**

**EarthBoxes**

According to the spoken survey conducted with 40 program participants, 28 of them have an EarthBox. The open-ended spoken survey results suggest the 12 remaining participants do not have/or use an EarthBox because they are just joining the program or discontinued use of EarthBox for various reasons such as lack of space for the EarthBox or unsuccessful planting due to excessive heat. Of the 28 that use it regularly, 75% of them have fed their child vegetables or
herbs growing in the box. The survey shows that over 20% of the mothers use produce from the EarthBox on a daily basis while the majority uses it on available basis. It is important to note that at the time of the survey in June, nearly half of the participants who use EarthBoxes regularly have not been growing since March 2015 due to the halt in replanting by Global Volunteers until supplies for organic fertilizers are available.

Out of the four MSC selection teams, the local GV staff team, the Ministry of Education-Early Childhood team and the GV international/headquarters team selected stories they believed represented the impact EarthBoxes have on participants. Story 2 (refer to Appendix X) was one of their top four MSC stories chosen by local staff because it mentions how the participant benefited from all aspects of the RCP program and especially focuses on the EarthBox. The staff also believed that the parent in the story seemed satisfied with the program and testified how her son and family benefited from the use of EarthBox. The local selection team also believed the story depicted the overall positive impact RCP has on the mother from parenting help to nutritional assistance through the EarthBox.

The Ministry of Education-Early Childhood Unit selection team chose Story 20 (refer to Appendix X) as one of their top four MSC stories. The selection team believed the EarthBox had a positive impact on the participant and the family in the story. The team believed the importance of the EarthBox was highlighted in this story as the mother discussed how the produce is helping her put food on the table and provide for the family. Additionally, the team pointed out how involved the entire family is in the planting process as depicted. The story represented the type of positive change the selection team looked for.

Lastly, the Global Volunteers (GV) International Staff selected Story 11 (refer to Appendix X) as one of the four MSC stories because it was indicative of progress. The team agreed the story had a nice balance to it because it contains both negative and positive aspects of the EarthBox and it is very instructive. Although the respondent in the story had not had much success with the EarthBox, she still chose to talk about it as her most significant experience and the group thought that was telling. This story also reinforces one of the efforts of GV, which is to include nutrition due to its positive effect on early childhood development. Story 11 also demonstrated, for some, a key part of development, which calls for empowerment. By providing people with the tools and skills needed to make their own decisions, they become empowered, which is an important part of development. This selection group felt that the parent felt empowered because she can grow her own food. This story illustrates the autonomy that EarthBoxes can provide. The qualitative team analysis of all 40 stories also suggests that the Earthbox provided a way of sustenance, increased variety, a healthy lifestyle, and economic support for
participants. Furthermore, it encouraged participants to be self-sustainable and acquire knowledge about proper gardening habits and plant maintenance. The maintenance process of the EarthBox also served as a leisure/hobby and an opportunity to engage the family together. The staff indicate that the EarthBox is opening ways for the participants not only to plant but also serves as a way to learn about proper nutrition for their children and families. For some, the benefit of the EarthBox extended to the other family members and at times other community members where they were able to share the harvest with other family members or friends. The spoken survey suggests this outcome since participants indicated other members of the family who ate food from the EarthBox comprised the mother herself, the father of the child, other children in the house, and in some cases the family’s friends, relatives, or neighbors.

According to the open-ended survey items, when asked why participants were not growing anything in the EarthBox, reasons revolved around lack of plants or seeds, excessive heat causing the plants to die, replanting halted by Global Volunteers due to unavailability of organic fertilizers and lack of freedom to plant on their own since replanting can only occur only when volunteers are present. Moreover, when asked why they were not eating food from the EarthBox, reasons included: the child not accustomed to eating vegetables, child not able to eat yet due to age, and not enough to feed him/her regularly or unable to grow in general. According to the responses to the spoken survey, parents have grown: tomatoes, bell peppers, Chinese cabbage, lettuce and celery. Out of those who had EarthBoxes, about 40% had grown one type of vegetable. About 60% had grown more than one type of vegetable and a maximum of four types of plants since they got the EarthBoxes.

**Parent Meetings**

A qualitative analysis of the 40 participant stories shows that ten parents highlighted the parent meetings as the most significant experience or change for the parents. As a result of the program. The value of the parent meetings as the most significant experiences for the participants was confirmed by the selection of three stories that described parent meetings (4, 23, and 28) among the top ten selected by the four stakeholder groups.

Parent meetings seem to be well attended. While 88% of interviewed participants said that they have attended RCP parent meetings at some point, 49% indicated said that they attend the parent meetings ‘almost always’ whereas 14%) said that they attend the parent meetings ‘often’. Only four (11.4%) said they attend the parent meetings rarely.

**Topics Discussed at Parent Meetings: what is done**
About 10 (25%) of the total number of the participants spoke of the parent meetings as their most significant experience. Some of them spoke of parent meetings in combination with other program components – volunteers, EarthBoxes or caregivers. One of the mothers spoke about how the parent meetings included lessons on making items such as toys and mobiles. She said this helped her make things by herself rather than buying them from the market thereby contributing to easing the financial burden on the family. The participant also spoke about lessons in sanitation and hygiene such as appropriate methods of hand washing imparted during the parent meetings. In addition, the participant touched upon the role of the parent meetings in learning parenting skills.

Some of the mothers who spoke about parent meeting as their most significant experience said the meetings had contributed to their nutritional awareness in terms of breastfeeding practices as well as the type of food that should be given to the child. Some of them also highlighted how they were made aware of handling child safety issues such as choking during the meetings. One of the mothers even demonstrated what she had learned about handling a child who was choking. Another mother spoke about how the parent meetings had highlighted the importance of child rights.

**Usefulness of Parent Meetings: why it’s done**

Over half of parents (57%) who attend the parent meetings said they found them very helpful and 14 (40%) said they found them helpful. Only 1 (3%) of parents found them only ‘a little helpful’. Out of the 34 who responded to whether they would invite a friend to attend a parent meeting or not, 27 (79%) responded yes and 7 (21%) said no. Most of the participants who responded positively said that the parent meetings provided knowledge and training in appropriate child rearing practices, which was why they would recommend the meetings to a friend. Some of them found the meetings educational and informative while some others said that they helped them gain knowledge about child safety issues such as choking as well as helped them socialize. These were all skills they said they would like other mothers to learn.

One of the participants who discussed the parent meetings as her most significant experience talked about the role of the meeting in helping to cope with parental stress in addition to providing parenting knowledge and skills. She used parenting as an umbrella term to describe what she had learned, including how to manage her child and what to feed him. The MSC group comprising local staff also stressed the importance of the parent meeting in relation to coping with parental stress when they chose story 28 as one of their top four stories.
Some of the participants who spoke about parent meetings as their most significant experience appreciated the self-care in the form of a spa day as well as the socialization that came in the form of outings, dinner, and warm up activities before the meeting. The fact that the children were taken care of by the caregivers while the mothers focused on the activities being conducted during the meeting was also emphasized by one of the participants. She said that it served as a relaxation or break for the mothers.

**Parent Meetings-How it’s done**

One of the participants spoke about how the parent meeting effectively used creative ways to convey a message. She spoke at length about how listening to a poem made her reevaluate herself as a parent. The same participant also explained how some of the volunteers who were part of the parent meetings used simple ways or terms in order to convey a message. The participant also talked about her experience wherein audio-visual media was effectively used to cater to different learning styles of the parents.

This aspect of effective communication and a simple and straightforward approach to learning through the medium of the parent meetings was also underscored in the MSC story selection process. The volunteer and donor selection group in chose Story 23, which touched on this issue, as one of their top stories. The stakeholder group comprising the local staff also discussed the parents’ appreciation of the use of different learning styles when they chose Story 23 as one of their top four stories.

**Staff Views of Parent Meetings**

According to the staff, the parent meetings serve as a supportive environment where mothers learn helpful information from each other, staff and foreign volunteers. Staff indicated that a plethora of topics are covered ranging from child rearing practices, importance of musical movement, language development, nutrition, child rights, literacy, distressing, coping mechanisms, and time management. These parent meetings have been particularly helpful because of the foreign volunteers who provided expertise and support to participants and caregivers. Caregivers recalled many of the things they learned and were now able to pass on to participants.
Caregivers

The local caregivers play a prominent role to support program participants through routine home visits twice a week and assisting in facilitating parent meetings. According to parent testimonies, the caregivers’ support extends beyond caregiving to the child and benefits the mothers since they serve as a crucial support system. Qualitative analysis of the 40 MSC stories suggests that mothers find the support of caregivers central and pivotal to the program. Mothers identified caregivers role in helping the children learn through play, improving developmental milestones (social, cognitive, and physical development), sharing parenting skills, focusing on appropriate child rearing practices, and helping with early child stimulation. Because of the caregivers, most of the mothers affirm they are able to take better care for their children, learn about child safety, make creative toys/learning materials and understand the importance of early stimulation. Mothers, in selected stories, praised caregivers for the knowledge they have acquired about early childhood development. Parents appeared to value the relationships formed with the caregivers.

Three out of the four MSC selection teams picked stories that highlighted a significant change due to caregivers. The Ministry of Education chose Story 16 because of the changes shown in the child’s socialization skills as a result of caregiver support. This story was selected because the mother was able to describe specific changes she noted in her daughter’s behavior. The mother describes the daughter as being less afraid of people and less fearful as a result of time spent with the caregiver. Similarly, the Ministry of Education selected Story 22 because the mother shows she learned something that really amazed her and a specific technique she picked up from caregivers. The mother specifies the things she can do to assist her child now. The team said, “this shows a change in her capabilities as she kept referring to things she didn’t know before and things she can do now. The mother goes on to imply that if she were to have a child in the future, she would apply the new skills she learned from the caregivers.” To the team, a change is shown in the story as the mother describes her acquired parenting skills. Two of the top four stories selected by the Ministry of Education revolved around caregiver influence. The two stories selected by the Ministry of Education highlight the most significant changes that occurred for the mothers and/or children because of the time spent with caregivers.

The Global Volunteers (GV) International Staff chose Story 5 because it was a good example of one of GV main goals of affecting child development. The parent recognizes that the program, especially time spent with caregiver has had an effect on the development of the child and that the child is now able to speak and socialize better, which are important skills. The respondent
also shows that she has a good knowledge of the history of RCP program and talks about changes that can be made to make the program even more beneficial for participants during the summer break when volunteers are away. The Volunteers/Donors selection team also picked Story 5 but for a slightly different reason. The team selected Story 5 because it showed a different perspective. The parent talks about the differences and changes that exist between the Government-run RCP and Global Volunteers-run RCP, highlighting the changes that exist between two. Although the story is not specific about what the problem was, it is still an eye opener and resonated well with a member of the group due to his presence on site during the transition. The selection team highlights the importance of the established relationship with the caregiver and how that helped the child socialize.

Lastly, Story 4 was also selected by the Volunteer and Donor selection group because it shows how caregivers can augment the pediatric care. It shows the importance of the relationship the RCP program can provide as a supplement to the type of clinical care the participants receive elsewhere. This respondent in the story acknowledged that caregivers were able to help and give her the attention she needed in ways that her healthcare provider could not. The story, to the group, demonstrates the impact from health aspects of the program which helps the parents learn how to care for their babies. Story 4 is a positive and concrete story that is along the lines of what the RCP program is trying to do a customized and personal follow-up with participants.

**Conclusions**

Overall, both program participants and staff seem to be very content with the program and are appreciative of its presence in Anse La Raye. One program participant said:

“it’s a wonderful program because it helps them (the kids)...like I told you, majority of the things they teaching them, a lot of us, we don’t know. We probably don’t know. So it’s a wonderful program and I hope it will last for the future. Maybe if they had that program way way way back, maybe a majority of us probably will be way better (now)”.

Another described the program as
“a good program. You start at your home before school. That’s good. The start of...a good start of something for the child.”

These sentiments are shared by the staff as well as one of them said:
“GV, just keep it going because it is for the wellbeing of our children, our community and I know that it will pay off. It will be for a better future.”

The program is viewed in a positive light by everyone that is involved and the EarthBox and parent meetings are very popular among parents. With the EarthBoxes, all interviewed program participants who already have an EarthBox said they would like to get another one and those who do not have one would like to get one or more. Participants with earthboxes also said the EarthBoxes should be planted more often and the general consensus is that it should not be dependent on foreign volunteer presence. Both participants and staff enjoy volunteer presence in the community due to the positive interaction and intercultural exchange that occurs during their visit to the community.. As a participant said during her interview, RCP “is the bomb for now” and it appears that is a shared sentiment.

Both staff and program participants provided feedback on what they believe are ways in which the program can improve. This feedback has been organized in the table below by program component and the evaluation question to which they provide an answer to. The source of each feedback is also included for clarification.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Question 1</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“It would be beneficial for volunteers to fully understand the program and what it entails before coming to St. Lucia. Because we have had a problem in the past where we don’t even know who is coming and their field of work. And when they come in, they expect us to know and put things in place for them so they will feel useful and we have no prior knowledge of who they are and what they do. So we need to know these things in advance so we can plan ahead to help them feel like they are of help to the program. GV headquarters should communicate with us about who is coming and then letting the volunteers know what the program is. What they can do and what they can’t do so when they get here, they don’t have a different expectation”. - Staff</td>
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<td>“We would like more volunteers who work as social workers or persons with early childhood backgrounds so we would learn from each other”. - Participant</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Some of the preferred qualifications for volunteers include: background in early childhood, psychosocial experts, volunteers with knowledge in various educational topics, nutritionists, speech therapists, neonatal nurses, and physiotherapists. A major area of need is counseling and psychosocial support for mothers and trained volunteers in early childhood stimulation”. - Staff</td>
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### Evaluation Question 2

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<tr>
<th>Earthbox</th>
<th>“Organic fertilizer is better for the Earthboxes than inorganic fertilizer. The one we used to get from Global Volunteers is an organic fertilizer that is 777 (7% nitrogen, 7% phosphorus, 7% potassium). It has worked really well. It is good for all kinds of plants. Since the program stopped distributing organic fertilizers due to cost, we have been trying to experiment with organic fertilizers from local sources. I have experimenting with fish meal and bone meal but it is not always reliable and sometimes not available. Replanting has been on hold for 3 months because of that.”</th>
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<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>“Replanting done only when volunteers are there is not beneficial to mothers. For continuity sake and particularly with the children and consumption, it would be worthwhile to continue when the volunteers are not there because there are many empty boxes that cannot be replanted due to lack of volunteer presence.” - Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>“We need to get more (earth) boxes. I want another box. And I want somebody to come check on the (earth) boxes and I think they give something to spray the plants but I never got it; only once somebody came to spray. So if somebody could come. Somebody who knows about farming, about gardening, about plants, could come and check on the plants to see that they are healthy because that would be a good thing. And also to keep the program (RCP) going. That’s a very good program. To help my community.” - Participant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>“(My daughter has benefited) a lot (from the earthboxes). Because she eats from it...the vegetables...because normally it’s vegetables they give us. So it help us a lot. The EarthBoxes...what I find about the EarthBoxes...it should be more constant and we should get more boxes and like we normally plant every 2 months...it should be more constant”. - Participant</td>
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<tr>
<th>Caregivers</th>
<th>“We need more time and more days (with the caregivers). Two days is not enough for me” - Participant</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>“I believe the (home) visits should be more frequent. So far it’s going good so I can say for the other parents too, I’m sure they working hard and simply that the children are well taking care of. But I don’t know if their responsibility is to also report if the children are being neglected in any way so I believe that’s a good thing if they’re doing those reports to see to it that the children are not being abused so that’s a good thing”. - Participant</td>
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<td>Program as a whole</td>
<td>“As caregivers we feel like we work hard, roaming around with heavy bags. It is always good to motivate the caregivers. Having some form of motivation for us would help. Anything to show us a little appreciation. This is a problem we had with the Roving Caregivers. We felt they didn’t show appreciation to what we did. We felt burnt out at the end of the term. No thank you, no nothing that says here you go, treat yourself. Not a big effort but something to say thank you. Something to say we appreciate your hard work. That goes a long way”. - Staff</td>
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<td>“You all could have more certified programs. You all could have a two week seminar or something. Make it a certified program, change it, and rotate it around. Because a lot of the parents are unemployed and I mean if you all could ... because as y’all come down, sometimes we get a lot of professionals from you, we have doctors, we have this and that so you all can make some way and let them...probably a way to empower them (the local people) rather. Some of y’all come with your soft skills, I’m sure ... and there must be something y’all come teach...be it quilting or something of that sort. Something simple...at least a parent would be very happy to do that during their reign with y’all, that they were able to do such .... For example I bought a book for my daughter, and the book is quite simple. It is just touch and feel so it just put a ... a piece of sandpaper, you know you put a little of ...some different thing so if a parent can do something like that...probably she never feel like she can do a book on her own...but by just doing this small program of one day or two, then they will say they did that book and I think that’s nice”. - Participant</td>
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References


