



BUILDING A SKILLED WORKFORCE,
GROWING BUSINESSES, CREATING GREEN JOBS.

CONSORTIUM FOR WORKER EDUCATION



Customer Satisfaction Survey REPORT

Pathways Out of Poverty Grant

US Department of Labor

Employment and Training Administration

February 2013

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Pathways out of Poverty Grant

INTRODUCTION

From 2010 to the end of 2012 the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE) created and managed a three-year workforce development project for green jobs training in New York City's Borough of the Bronx. The project was funded, in part, from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act administered by the US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. CWE, in conjunction with its local service partners, established the "Center for Environmental Workforce Training" to prepare residents to meet green employers' workforce needs. As we designed and delivered these workforce development services for jobs in "green" industry sectors and energy efficiency we decided to assess the efficacy of the services of the collaborative using a participant customer satisfaction survey. The use of a customer assessment of services can advise correction or strengthening of future grant activities and informs the conceptualization and design of future multi-agency collaborations. However, we were cognizant that this survey provided us with an opportunity to not only assess participant customer satisfaction with provided workforce services, but also with the opportunity to capture data that informs us about changes participant customers implemented regarding individual energy efficiency, sustainable practices, and environmental stewardship.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CWE surveyed our participant customers in the last five months of the grant. We documented a deep satisfaction with the program services and the workforce training and education courses. Responses also showed that many of the participant customers reported behavioral changes regarding environmental issues after their participation in the training and education. Changes included measurable increases in energy and water conservation,

material consumption and recycling, eating sustainable, organic or locally grown foods, and involvement in environmental stewardship issues with local organizations. Additionally, the responding participant customers overwhelmingly reported sharing program-derived knowledge with their colleagues, friends and families. The survey found that “currently employed” or “unemployed” status (at the time of the survey) did not affect either satisfaction with program services or the behavioral changes regarding conservation and environmental stewardship when comparing results between these groups. The finding results are overwhelmingly clear that an enhanced environmental understanding through the education and training provided was seen as a major added value of the program by participant customers.

GRANT DESIGN

The overall grant goal was to train 600 unemployed, WIA eligible Bronx residents from neighborhoods that had over 15% unemployment. Our targeted area, (the South Bronx and the 16th Congressional District) had a poverty rate of over 40% at time of grant award. CWE partnered with a number of community based organizations to provide specific screening, education, workforce training, job placement and support services to participating customers. All participants were required to take a basic environmental literacy course, (Roots of Success) designed by the Environmental Literacy Curriculum Project with the teaching objective of becoming familiar with opportunities and skills required for employment in green industry sectors. Upon completion of this course, participants were then able to choose from a range of different courses in energy efficiency and renewable energy that aligned with the requirements of their individual employment plans. The grant served individuals with limited English proficiency, veterans and eligible spouses, persons with criminal records, disconnected youth, and women.

The grant design rested on a partnership of five “wrap-around” organizations (Osborne Association, South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation, Sustainable South Bronx, Nontraditional Employment for Women and Project HIRE) to perform outreach, recruitment, assessment, supportive services and job readiness training.

Five training organizations (Association for Energy Affordability, Hostos Community College, New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health, Solar One and the New York Botanical Garden) delivered occupational training and certifications to those referred by the wrap-around organizations. The Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation helped CWE forge a business network, Big Apple Green Network, to support employment opportunities and business growth in this sector. The Association for Energy Affordability was the largest training provider by far, providing several courses for industry recognized credentials as well as a primer course in energy efficiency. The New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health trained almost every participant in the OSHA construction safety course.

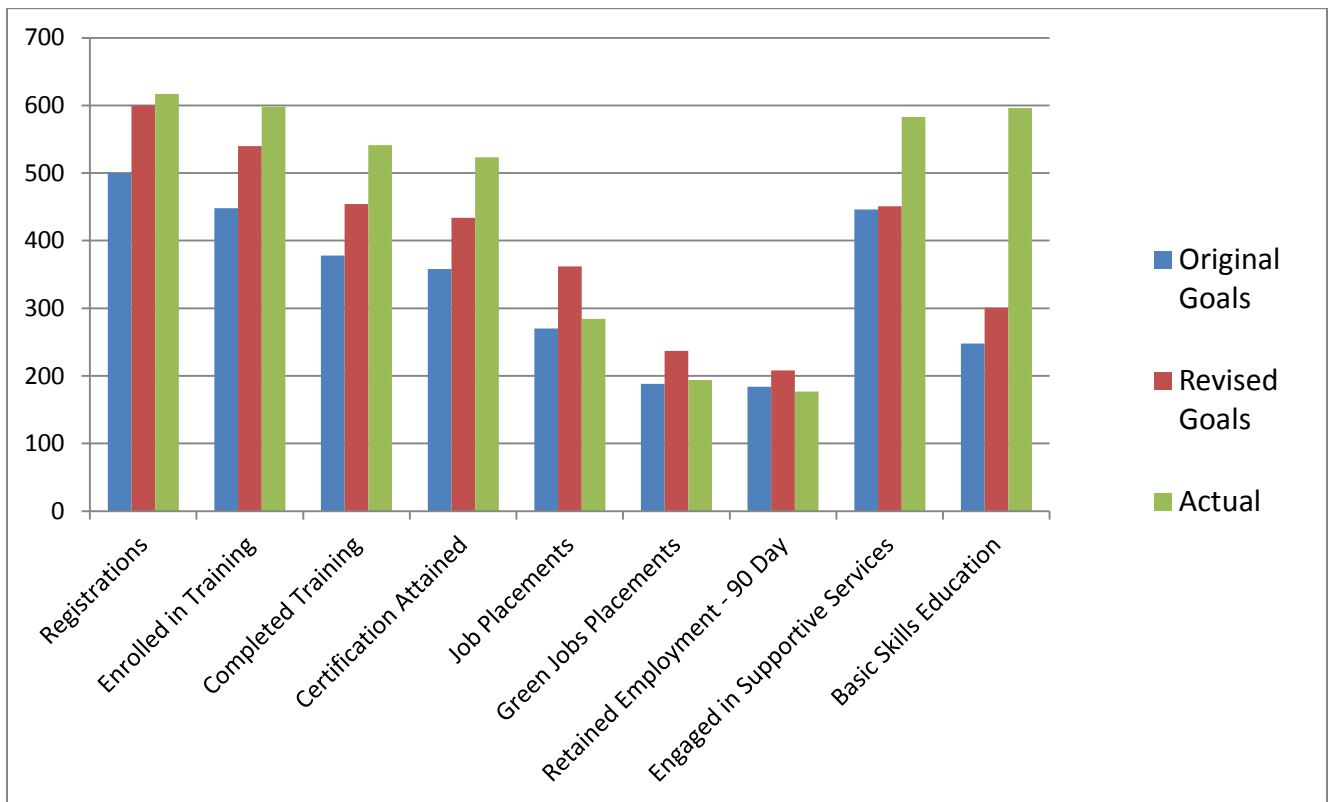
Every wrap-around provider hosted the environmental literacy and job readiness course “Roots of Success”, with every applicant being required to take the fundamentals module, after which they were enrolled in the program. This curriculum, its subsequent modules on Energy, Buildings, Waste, Health, Food and Agriculture and additional occupational skills courses all set the stage for the program within the context of environmental awareness.

GRANT PERFORMANCE

The overall project performance completed at:

- 617 people registered,
- 598 entered training,
- 541 completed training,
- 524 attained certifications,
- 284 placed in employment,
- 194 placed in green jobs,
- 177 retained for 90 days in employment,
- 583 engaged in supportive services and
- 596 received basic skills education services.

The bar chart below illustrates this performance against the original goals and the no-cost extension's revised goals.



Seventeen people were accepted in to **union apprenticeship** programs with the Carpenters Local #257, the Laborers Local #78, Sheet metal workers Local #28 and the Electricians Local #3. Altogether, 218 **businesses** hired POP participants. 124 (57%) of these are **green businesses**. Osborne Janitorial, a social enterprise of a partner agency, hired 18 graduates. Association for Energy Affordability hired 18 graduates. Four businesses participated in providing On-the-Job Training opportunities, with a total of 13 graduates hired after the subsidized training period. Three **community gardens** in the south Bronx received over 2,000 hours of service work by 68 students on seven different projects. Classes delivered within the project scope stood at 261 environmental literacy, basic education and workforce readiness classes and 86 occupational training courses.

SATISFACTION SURVEY METHODOLOGY

To assure that surveyed participants were randomly chosen, we used a statistically valid selection process, selecting equally from participants by those enrolled, those who completed their Individual Training Plan, and those employed at the time of the survey. We solicited their opinions on a standard questionnaire distributed by mail, e-mail, and telephone. The vast majority of responses came by phone. A total of 65 participant customers completed the survey, 11% of the total population. The behavioral change portion of the survey used the “Roots of Success” teaching objectives for consistent context as every participant customer took the fundamentals module of that course.

The survey’s results are in two categories: **Program Satisfaction** and **Environmental Stewardship Behavioral Changes**. Each category shows the participants responses regarding their satisfaction and behavioral changes before and after completing the program. For this survey the following definitions are used:

- **Green:** A generic term used to describe something that is beneficial for the environment. Alternative words can be sustainable, eco-friendly, and environmentally friendly.
- **Green Life Style:** A generic term used when people intentionally adjust their behaviors and choices towards practices that support environmentally sustainable choices.

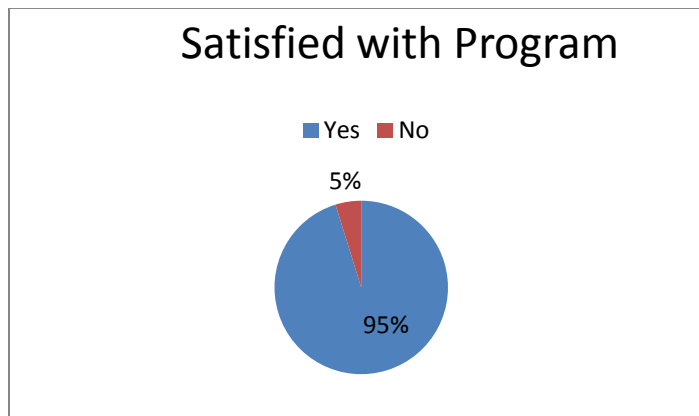
SURVEY RESULTS

Results from the survey revealed a very high level of program services satisfaction and also showed a number of ancillary benefits, i.e. greatly increased levels of environmental consciousness and stewardship. Additionally, we found that the respondents were inspired to further share the knowledge provided by the course while encouraging others to pursue a healthier and greener life style.

“Before the program, I never thought about us using natural resources and how it will affect the future generations. It made me feel like we could make a change for the future. We can make a difference, even just a little bit. Even being knowledgeable goes a long way. We should educate people. Everybody can do their part.” – POP Participant

General Program Satisfaction:

95.2% of those surveyed were satisfied with the program.

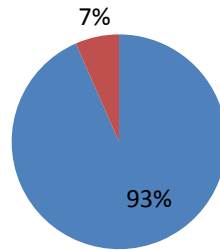


95.3% said they would recommend it to others. That jumped to 100% for those who took classes at AEA.

93.4% of the respondents found the training they received beneficial to the skills they needed for employment.

Found training beneficial to skills needed for work

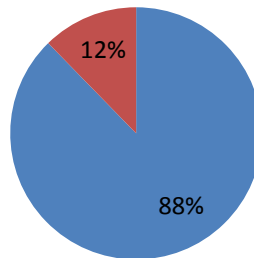
■ Yes ■ No



87.7% of the respondents felt the program positively affected their life.

Felt Program Positively Affected Life

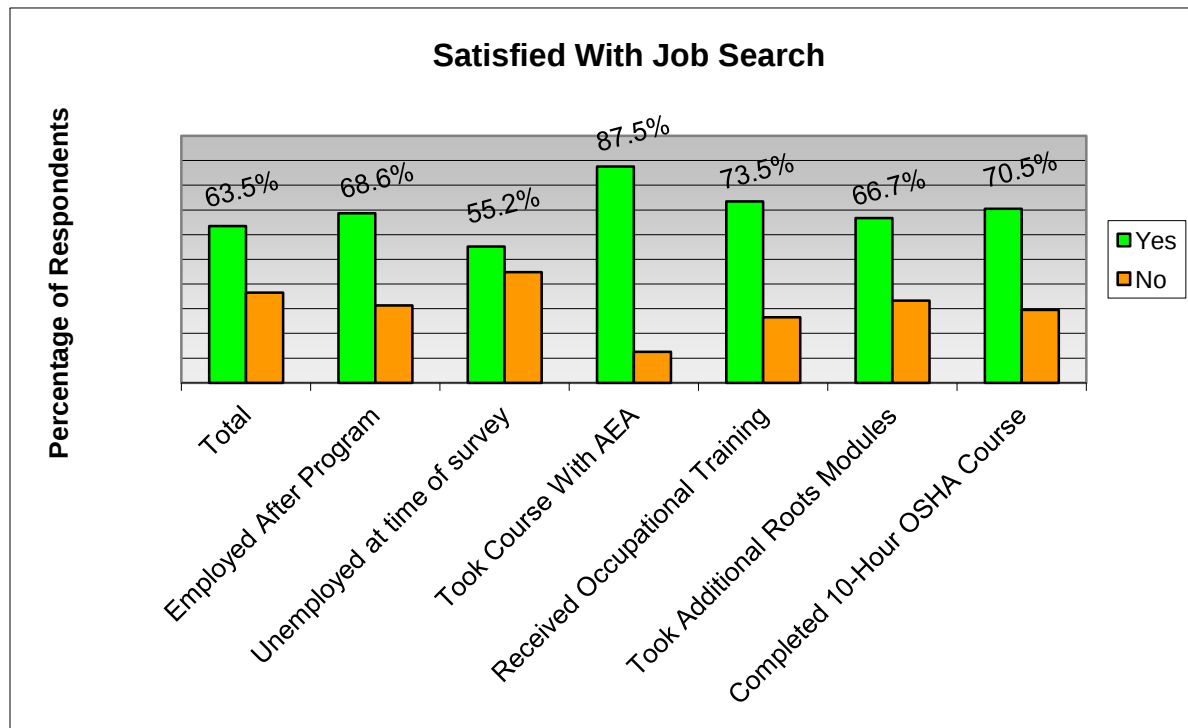
■ Yes ■ No



63.5% of the respondents were satisfied with the job search process.

It is noteworthy that the percentage rises when there is more occupational training. It rises significantly, to 87.5% for those who had training at AEA. It should be recognized that AEA, besides being a trainer, is a business that hired 18 students from the program and is also a business association that convenes businesses and industry workers for training.

Attending classes at AEA put participants in direct contact with industry stakeholders, thereby serving to support industry connections, a verifiable means for job searching. It is not surprising that those who were unemployed at the time of the survey were least satisfied with the job search aspects of the program at only 55.2%.



Environmental Stewardship Behavioral Changes:

Based on the results of the survey, we can confirm that the program provided many additional benefits beyond workforce development outcomes. There were major changes in environmental stewardship as well as environmental awareness and most of the respondents became more proactive in a green lifestyle.

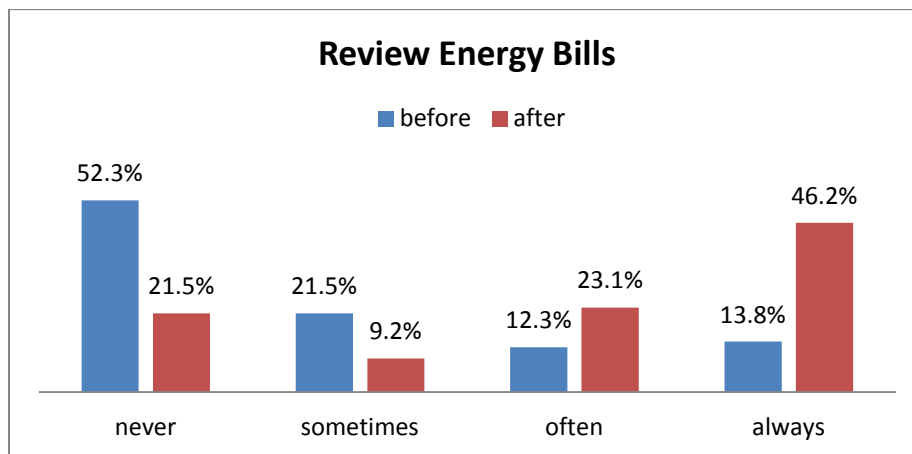
70.8% said they now conserve water

73% said they now conserve energy

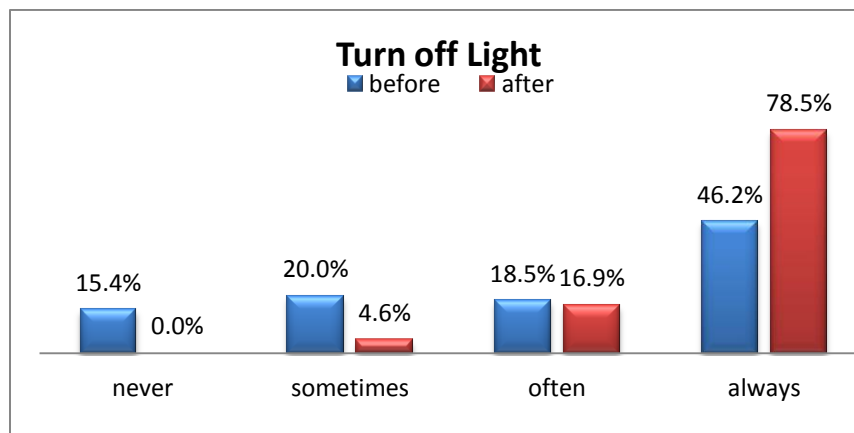
Significant increases were noted in water and energy conservation, two goals of PlaNYC which seeks to reduce carbon emissions and water consumption significantly by 2030. In the category of water conservation 70.8% said they conserved water after compared to 37% said they conserved before the program. Regarding energy conservation, respondents more than doubled their efforts after the program, with 72.3% saying they now often conserved energy after the program as compared to 30.8% who said they conserved energy before the program.

78.5% report they sometimes, often or always now check their energy bill.

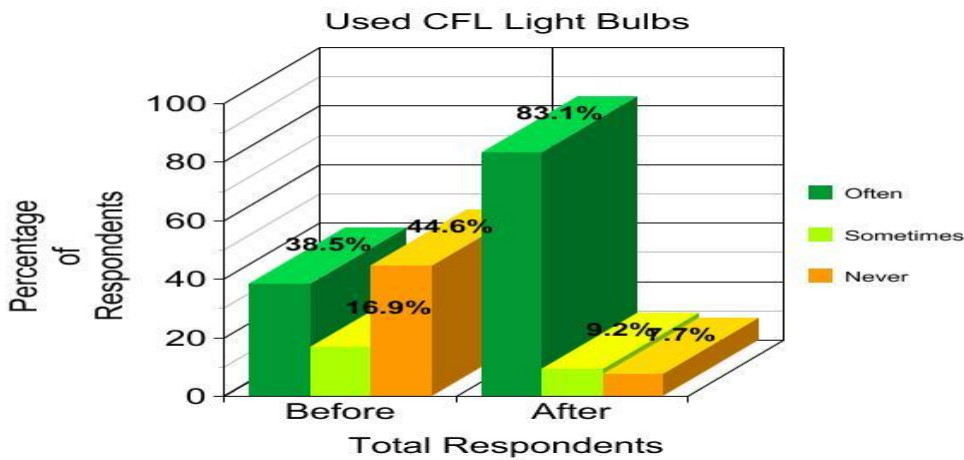
52.3% said they never checked their bills for before the program.



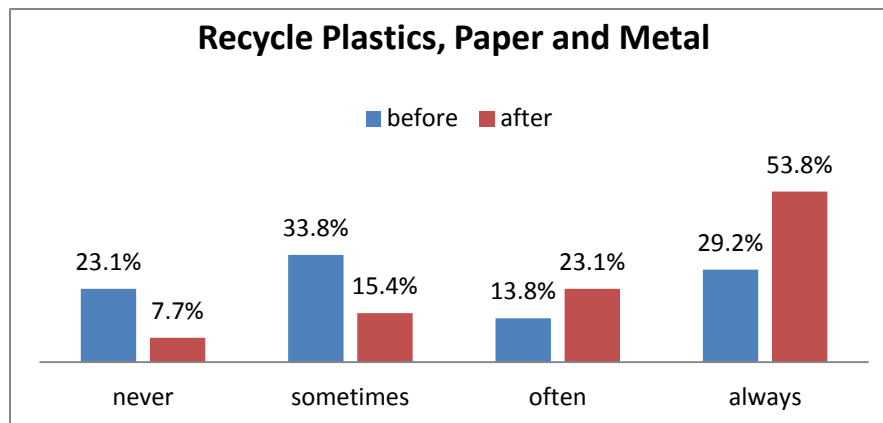
100% said they now sometime, often or always turn off lights as they leave rooms.



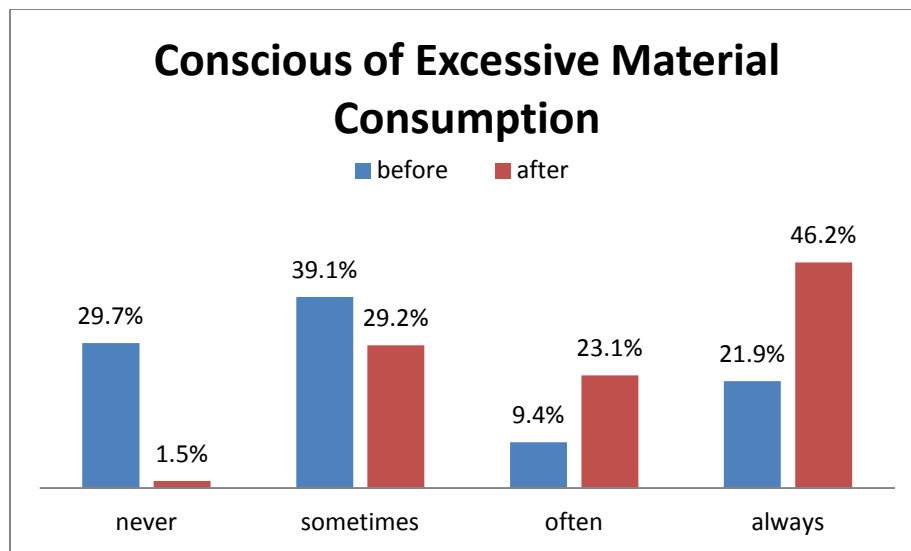
92.3% report they now use CFL bulbs sometimes or often compared to 44.6% report never having done so before the program.



76.9% of respondents say that since the program they often or always recycle plastics, paper and metal compared to 43% report doing so often or always before the program.



69.3% of respondents say that since the program they often or always are conscious of excessive material consumption while 31.3% report doing so before the program.



33.8% said they now shop at local farmer markets.

20% say they now never eat fast food.

The survey exposed changes in the eating habits of the respondents. In the South Bronx area alone, four in ten elementary school children are obese and one in five children have asthma, (according to the Bronx District Public Health Office). With health and well-being as large concerns, our customer participants were encouraged to act in ways that would benefit both their personal and family health as well as the health of their community. Our available and provided collection of training courses did not place as significant an emphasis on food as there was on energy, water, and waste reduction as foci for employment. Many students participated in volunteer activities in community gardens and so were able to see first-hand some of the impact of small-scale community efforts for healthy food. The percentage of respondents who said they often buy from local farmers markets just about doubled, increasing to 33.8% from 17%. Of the total respondents, only 4.6% said they never ate junk food or fast food before the program. After their participation in the program, it increased to 20% as never eating junk food or fast food.

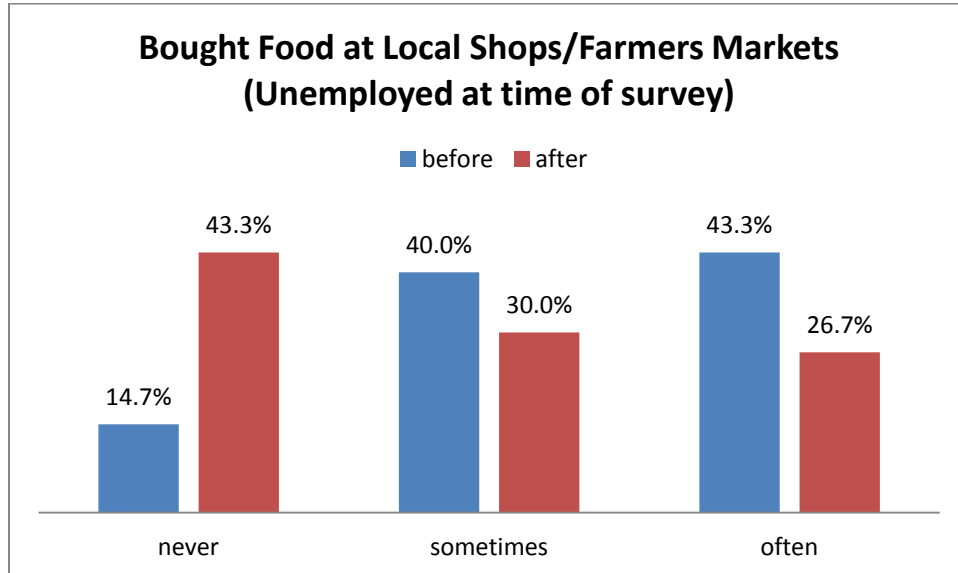
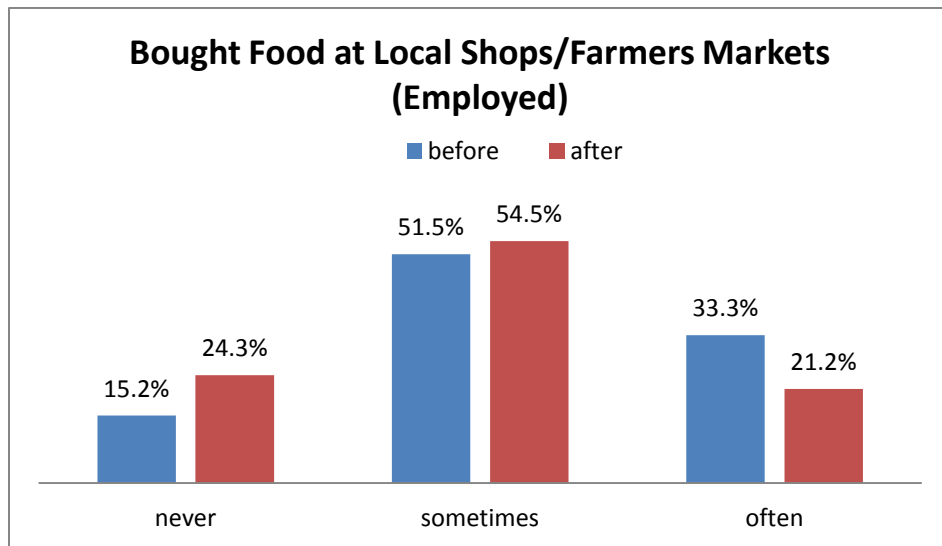


St. Luke's Community Garden, 138th St. and Cypress Ave, Bronx, NY 10454



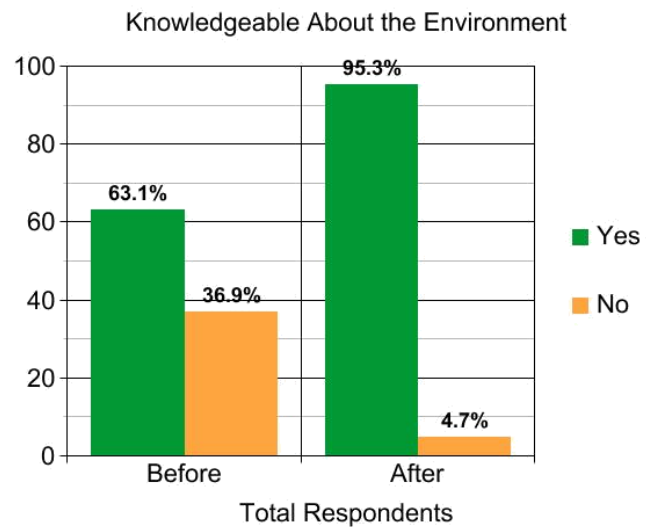
Little Green Garden, 160th St. and Elton Ave, Bronx, NY 10451

The results showed differences between respondents who were unemployed at the time of the survey and respondents who were currently employed. For instance, there was a larger increase in percentage of respondents who shopped at local/farmers market in the unemployed subgroup.



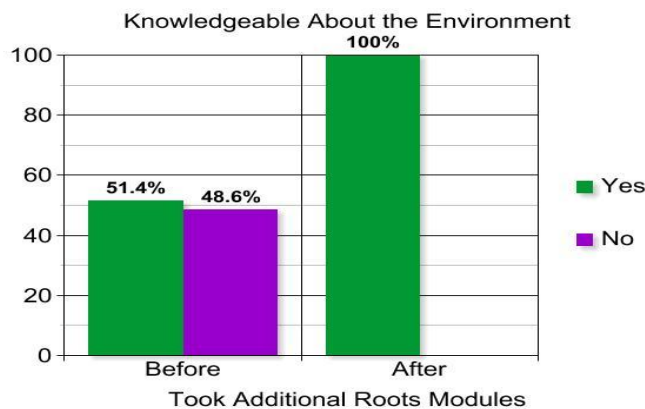
95.3% said that they now consider themselves knowledgeable about the environment.

A vast majority of the respondents gained knowledge from the program and became more conscious about their impact on their environment as a whole. 95.3% said that they now consider themselves knowledgeable about the environment while 63.1% considered themselves knowledgeable before.



“[The program] has been an empowering experience. It changed my perspective of the environment and me. I realized the impact my actions had on the community, both local and worldwide.” -POP Participant

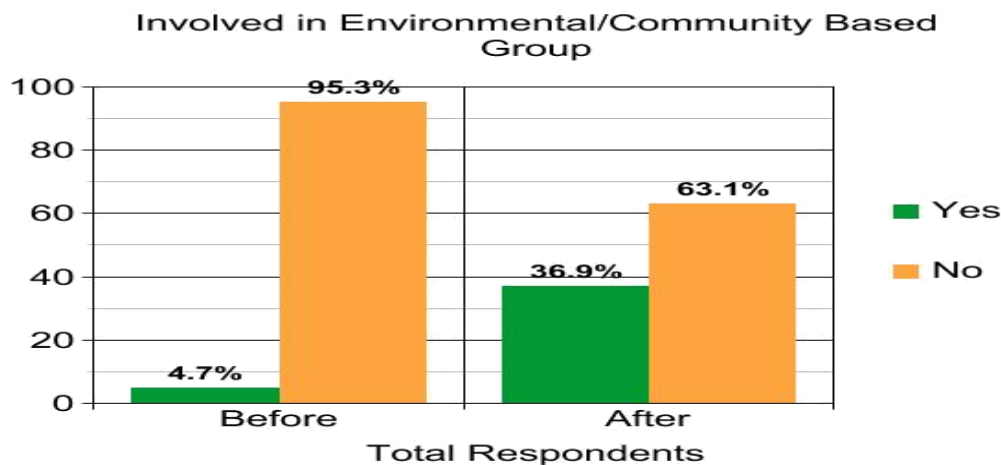
Of those who took additional modules of Roots of Success, there was an increase from 51.4% to 100% of respondents who felt knowledgeable about the environment.



Some of the respondents were so encouraged by the program that they started their own environmental groups and organizations in their neighborhood. For example, when questioned about her participation in the environment, one respondent told us:

“I do meetings and speak about how important and serious pollution is. . . We’re trying to start a group where we clean the park and educate the people in the neighborhood.” – POP participant

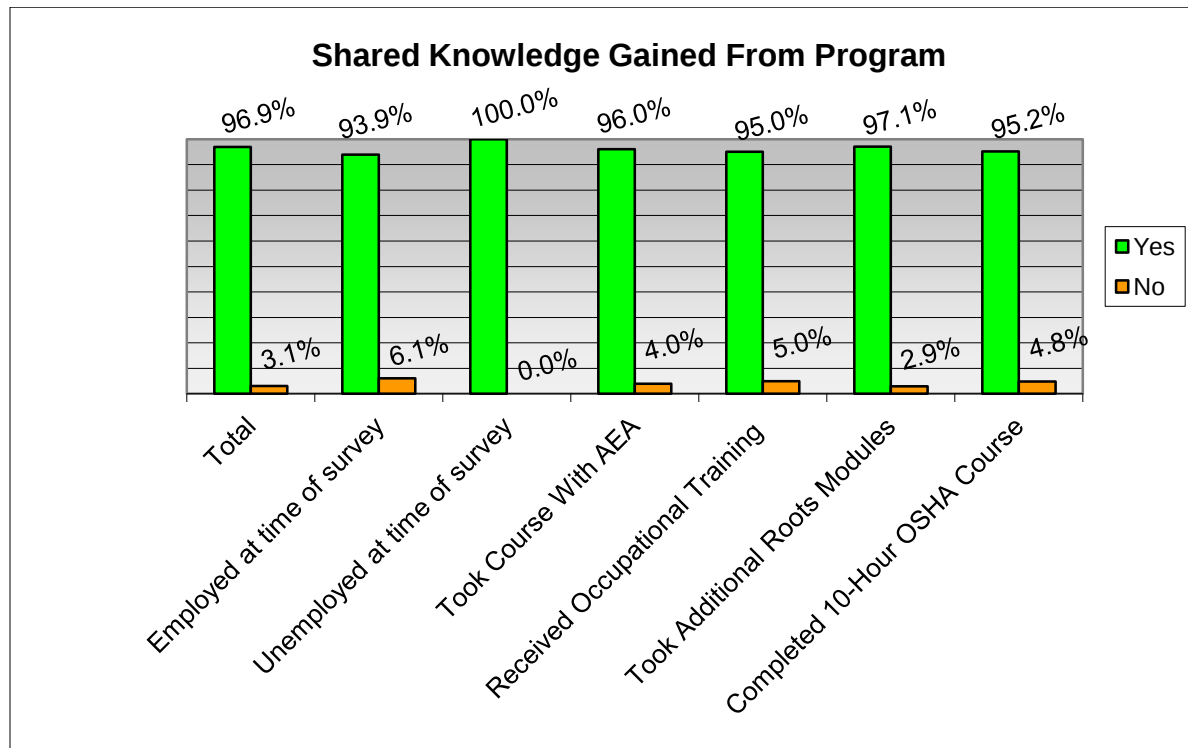
There are also others who began organizations in their communities to get their neighbors to participate in environmental stewardship, such as Alternative Community Solutions USA, Inc. and the Green Evaluation Company. Even though there was still a large amount of people who weren’t associated with any environmental groups, it was found that there were a lot of participants who wanted to become involved but because of other obstacles, they were unable to.



96.9% of the respondents shared the knowledge they gained.

Every grouping of participant reports sharing knowledge gained, regardless of employment status. This illustrates the possibility of exponential impact in the communities

where these participant customers reside. It can be presumed that there is added value of environmental education in these neighborhoods as a result of this green job workforce development program.



CONCLUSION

We found that the program provided a very high level of customer satisfaction from the delivered services and also provided many additional benefits beyond workforce development outcomes. There were major increases in environmental stewardship and environmental awareness and most of the respondents found the training to be inspirational. Environmental education motivate for conservation and action in energy and water conservation, waste recycling, conscious material consumption, healthy eating and sharing knowledge gained.

The courses provided by the program proved to be effective educational tools with respondents who completed occupational training at AEA and the OSHA 10 course provided by NYCOSH showing a slightly higher impact on behavioral changes and program satisfaction. The Roots curriculum built a baseline of environmental awareness and engagement at the beginning of each student's program experience and sparked interest and enthusiasm for environmental issues that was palpable in the classroom. When we review the survey, student comments in Roots Workbooks and interviews, we believe that Roots for Success was key in reaching these high scores in respondents feeling knowledgeable about the environment and living a green lifestyle. This knowledge transfers to their performance as workers in green industries too.

"Through Roots and CWE's Training, job seekers are better prepared for Energy Efficiency Technician and related technical courses they take from AEA, and for success in energy efficiency jobs." - David Hepinstall, President, Association for Energy Affordability

US Department of Labor Disclaimer

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