



PEACE
CORPS

Cameroon HOST COUNTRY IMPACT STUDY

Purpose

In 2008, the Peace Corps launched a series of studies to determine the impact of Volunteers in meeting two of the agency’s three goals: building local capacity and promoting a better understanding of Americans among local people in host countries. These Host Country Impact Studies are unique in providing feedback from the people who lived and worked with Volunteers. Cameroonian researchers conducted the study in 2009, interviewing 113 respondents in 37 communities. The Peace Corps Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning developed the methods and protocols, trained the local researchers, and produced a series of reports from this and other Host Country Impact Studies.

Study Focus: Education and Community Health Projects in Cameroon

As of 2011, 3,282 Volunteers have served in Cameroon since the Peace Corps opened in 1962. The goal of the Education Project is to increase Cameroonian teachers’ and students’ competence in English, science, and information technology in a gender-balanced, learner-centered environment. The Community Health Project promotes community participation to solve health issues.

Peace Corps Goal One

“To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.”

Findings

Students’ education improved:

- 93 percent of education partners reported students increased their knowledge of English, math, science, and information technology.

Health status improved:

- 92 percent of Community Health project members reported improved overall community health.

Organizational management capacity increased:

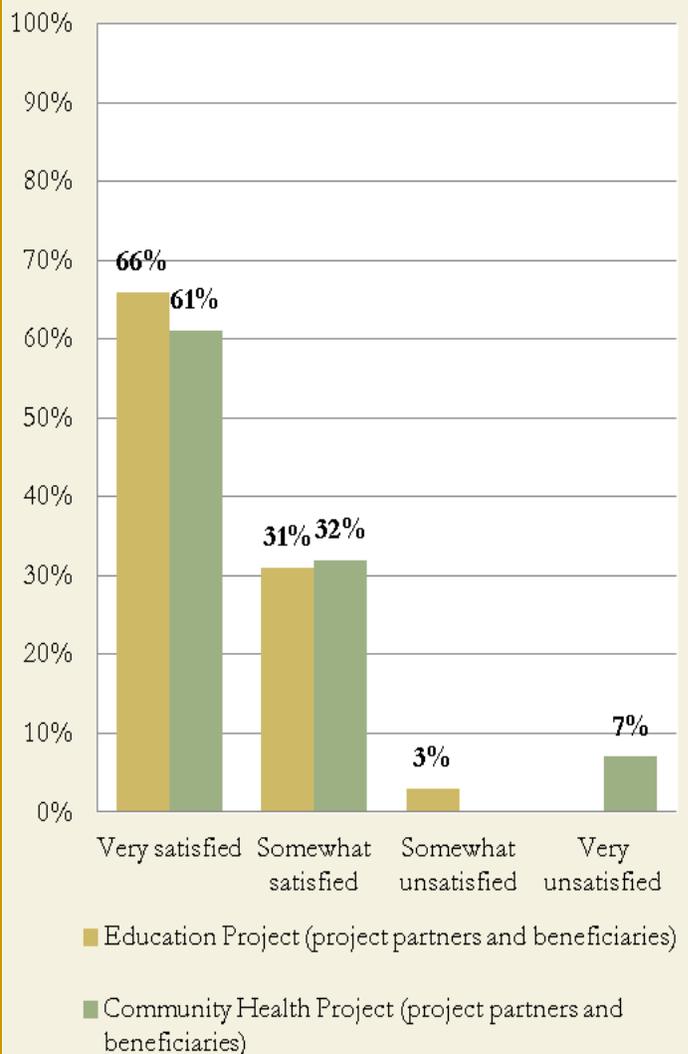
- 84 percent of respondents reported they improved their organizational and planning skills.
- Over 60 percent of Community Health project respondents said the project effectively transferred healthy living skills and built local capacity in providing quality community health services.

Sustainability:

- Over half of the respondents from both projects are using the skills developed through the projects on a daily basis.
- 57 percent of Education respondents and 62 percent of Community Health respondents said the projects were completely or largely maintained after the Volunteer left.

Senior researcher: *“The use of HIV/AIDS-related materials in teaching English was cited at the government level as being one of the areas in which changes in government policy are attributed solely to the influence of Volunteers’ activities and Peace Corps’ development approach.”*

Satisfaction with Changes Resulting from Peace Corps Projects





Peace Corps Goal Two

“To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the people served.”

Findings

Before interacting with Volunteers:

- 92 percent of project partners and beneficiaries, and 68 percent of host families had learned about Americans from television.
- Cameroonian respondents described Americans as sociable, hardworking, trustworthy, and open-minded.
- They also described them as powerful, rich, difficult, inflexible, and racist.

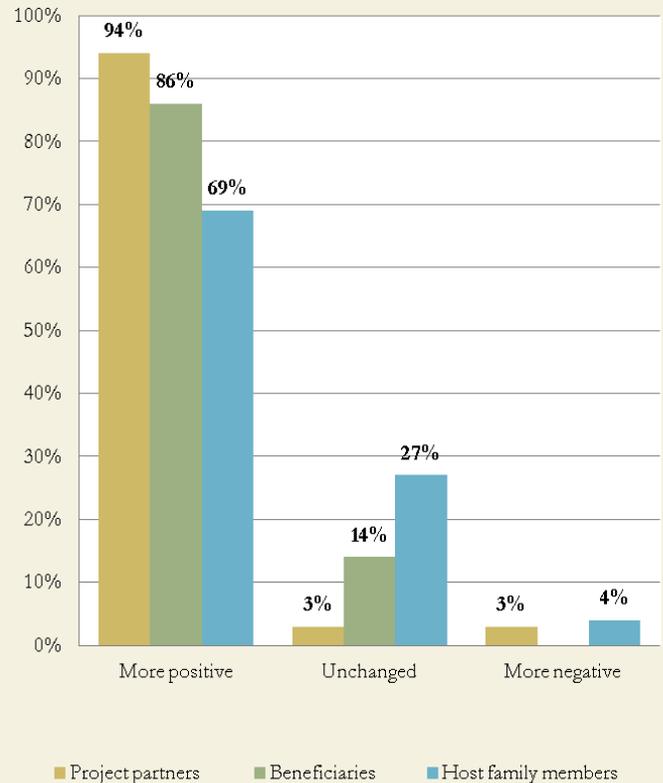
After interacting with Volunteers:

- 85 percent of project partners and beneficiaries, and 81 percent of host family members reported either a thorough or moderate understanding of Americans.
- Cameroonian respondents described Americans as hardworking, open-minded, generous, honest, sociable, and able to integrate into different cultures.

Project partner: *“Working with the Peace Corps has given me a more positive attitude towards Americans. I appreciate them. They are honest people.”*

Beneficiary: *“I discovered that Americans are very understanding and people who easily integrate into society.”*

Change in Opinion of Americans After Interacting with Volunteers



Overall, Volunteers built the capacity of teachers and students in English, math, science, and information technology, and encouraged more girls to remain in school. Teaching about HIV/AIDS in English courses helped to inform the Cameroonian government’s decision to change its educational policies.