



PEACE  
CORPS

# Romania 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 Peace Corps Volunteers. A Romanian research team conducted the study in the summer of 2009, interviewing 86 respondents in 19 Romanian 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: Community Economic, Institutional Development, and Environmental Education Projects

As of 2011, 1,133 Volunteers have served in Romania since the Peace Corps opened in 1991. The goal of the three projects was to strengthen the organizational capacity of Romanian communities and institutions that foster local economic development, serve marginalized populations, address environmental issues, and engage youth in environmental education. In 2013, Romania’s program will come to a close after 23 years of building successful community partnerships.

### Peace Corps Goal One

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

## Findings

Project outcomes achieved:

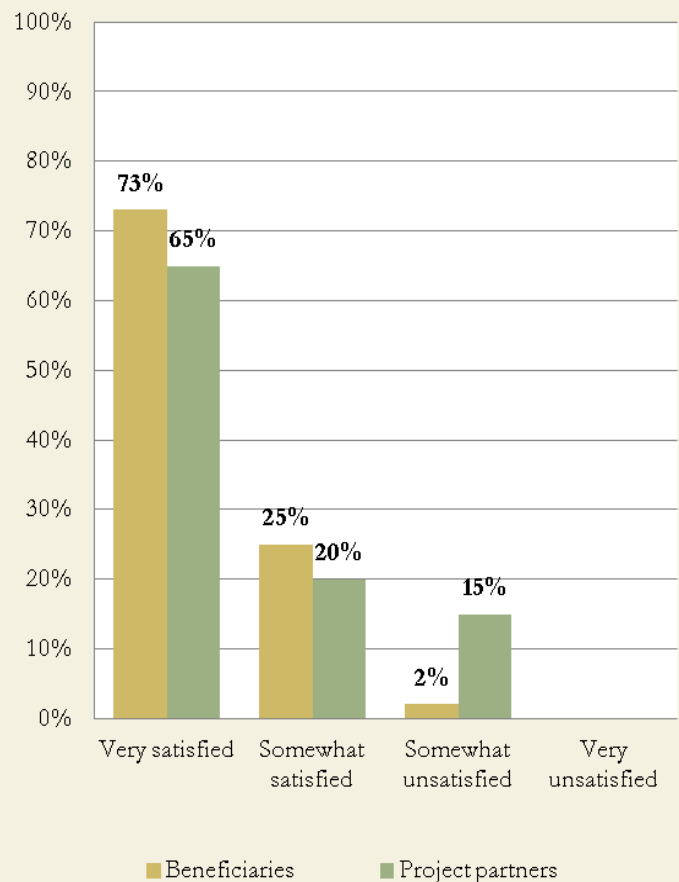
- Across the three projects, 52 percent of outcome areas were improved.
- 82 percent of Community Economic Development Project respondents improved their communication and capacity to meet community needs resulting in community action.
- 72 percent of Institutional Development Project respondents increased their use of information exchange.
- Over 70 percent of Environmental Education Project respondents improved their environmental services, education, and awareness.

Sustainability:

- 63 percent of community projects were largely sustained.
- 74 percent of partners said they used the skills gained either daily or weekly in their professional lives.
- 35 percent said a lack of skilled people was a barrier to project sustainability and 31 percent cited a lack of funding.

Beneficiary: *“The Volunteer influenced my mentality, and this has had implications in my daily life.”*

### 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:

- 81 percent of all respondents had learned about Americans from television and movies.
- Romanians respondents described Americans as interested only in their own problems and ignorant about the rest of the world.
- They also described them as honest, tolerant, hardworking, eager to learn, and friendly.

Romanian respondent: *“I knew very little [about Americans]. I thought that Americans are somewhat arrogant, they consider themselves superior, and that they are cold [and] distant.”*

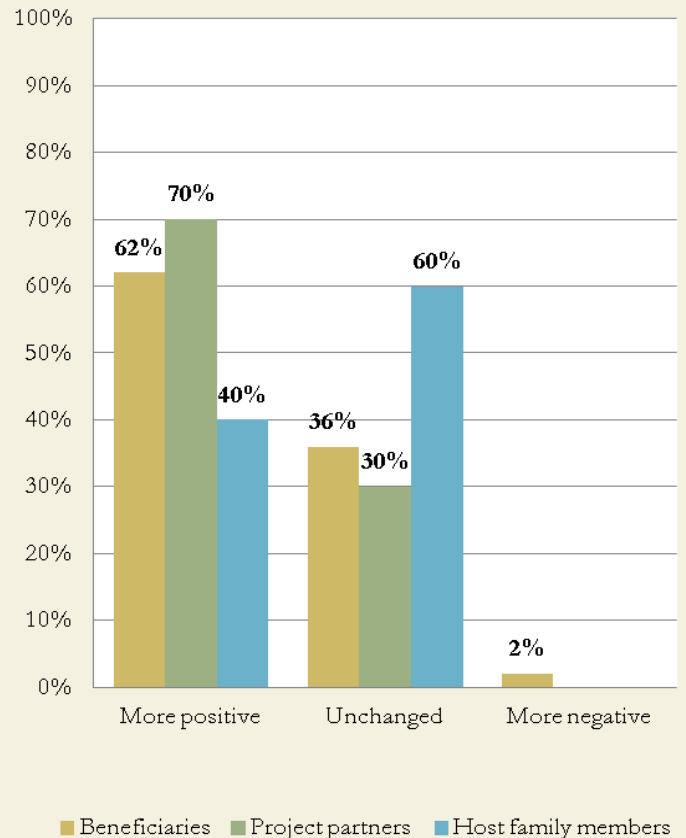
*After* interacting with Volunteers:

- Respondents described Americans as pragmatic, open, good organizers, and helpful.
- Host families felt the Volunteer was a member of their family.

Counterpart: *“[I learned] it is very important to be generous. It is important to understand different points of view. It's important to have a work discipline based on principles and values based on the culture in which you live.”*

Beneficiary: *“[The Volunteer] taught me the meaning of the three R's: self-Respect, Respect for others, and Responsibility for what you do.”*

Opinion of Americans After Interacting with Volunteers



Overall, participants improved their business practices and expanded their programs, productivity, or product lines. Participants continue to use the skills they learned from the Volunteer in their professional lives. Participants also had a more positive opinion of Americans.