



PEACE
CORPS

Jamaica 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. Jamaican researchers conducted this impact study in the summer and fall of 2009, interviewing 73 respondents in 22 diverse 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 Environmental Health Project in Jamaica

As of 2011, 3,724 Volunteers have served in Jamaica since the Peace Corps opened in 1962. The goal of the Community Environmental Health Project is to reduce the prevalence of water, environmental, and sanitation-related diseases and improve community health standards.

Peace Corps Goal One

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

Findings

Improved environmental health awareness and practices:

- 73 percent of respondents reported improved water and sanitation practices.
- 68 percent of respondents reported their ability to access health-related information had improved.
- 64 percent of project partners improved their ability to motivate others in making better health-related choices.

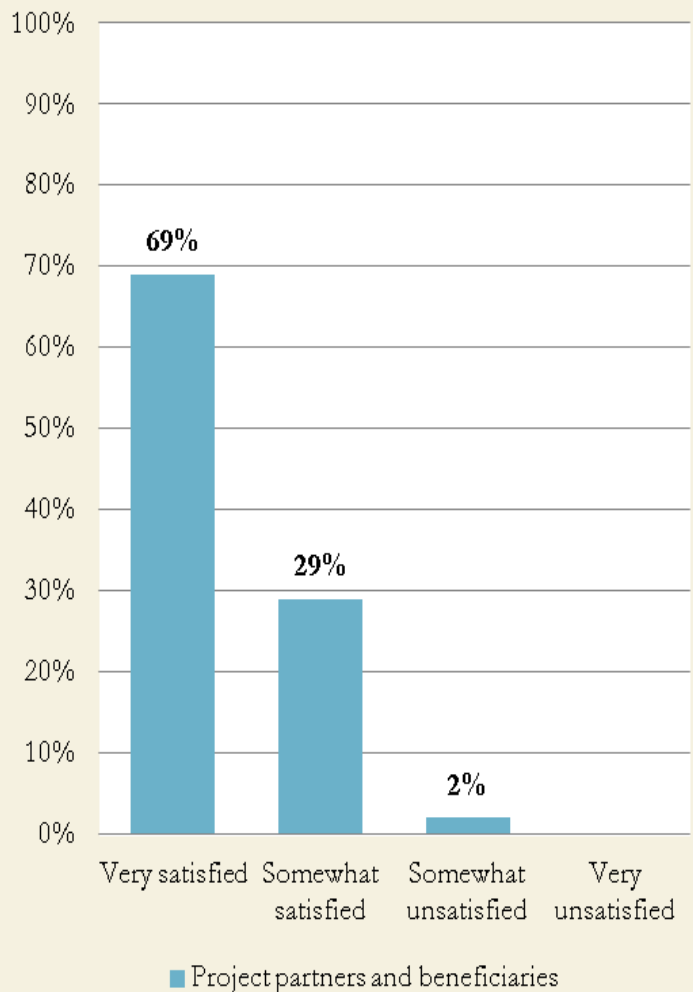
Project partner: *“I instill in my family, especially the children, the importance of good sanitation practices for preventing illnesses. This has become a part of my everyday life.”*

Beneficiary: *“I think they assist in capacity building. The Volunteers transferred knowledge and skills, and created a different perspective on how to do things.”*

Sustainability:

- 92 percent of project partners reported using the professional skills they learned from the Volunteer weekly.
- All project partners and beneficiaries reported the changes in their communities were sustained to some extent after the departure of the Volunteer.

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:

- 86 percent of project partners and beneficiaries had learned about Americans from television or movies.
- Jamaican respondents described Americans as proud, rude, racist, self-absorbed, and arrogant.
- They also described them as friendly, kind, and “like everyone else.”

Respondent: “I thought the majority of Americans were prejudiced and did not engage in anything unless it was for their own benefit. I thought that they had a limited knowledge of the rest of the world, tended to be self-absorbed, and [they] stuck together.”

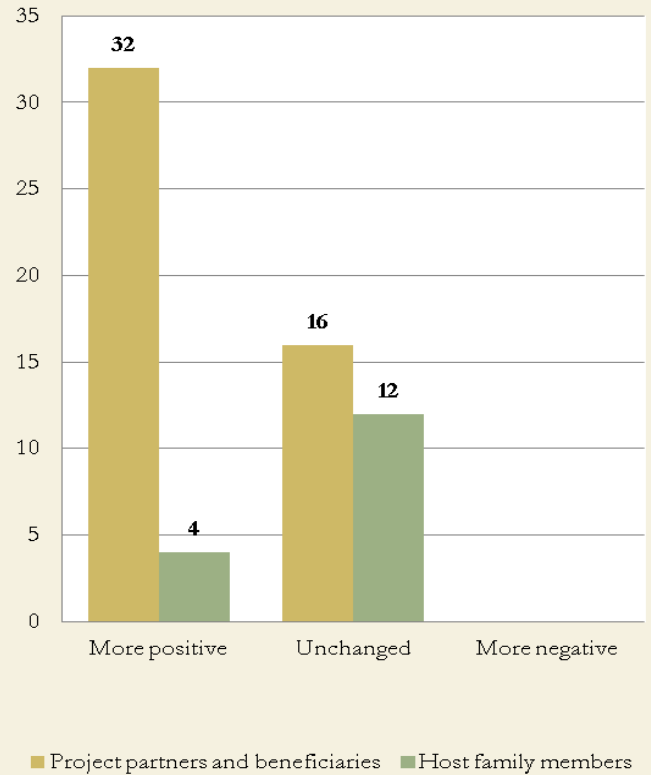
After interacting with Volunteers:

- 65 percent of project partners had a more positive view of Americans.
- Jamaican respondents described Americans as hardworking, friendly, helpful, “down-to-earth,” humble, and not racist.

Beneficiary: “I think Americans want to help us. They see the community as able to do better.”

Beneficiary: “I interacted with the Volunteers on a daily basis and learned from them. The Volunteers’ influence became a part of me.”

Opinion of Americans After Interacting with Volunteers



Overall, communities improved their quality of life through better sanitation and health services. Participants continue to use the skills they learned from the Volunteer in their daily lives, leading to sustained change.