



PEACE
CORPS

Dominican Republic 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 team of Dominican researchers conducted this study in the summer of 2008, interviewing 48 respondents in 16 rural 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: Healthy Environment and Healthy Communities Projects in the Dominican Republic

As of 2011, 4,224 Volunteers have served in the Dominican Republic since the Peace Corps opened in 1962. The goal of the Healthy Environment Project (HEP) is to improve water and sanitary services to rural communities. The goal of the Healthy Communities Project (HCP) is to increase reproductive and child health education and prevent HIV/AIDS in rural and marginalized urban communities.

Peace Corps Goal One

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

Findings

Provided clean water and improved sanitation facilities:

- Gravity-based aqueducts and latrines were built by community residents.
- Access to clean water was the most frequently mentioned community-level change.
- Reduction in negative health indicators (e.g., diarrhea and teen pregnancy) was also a significant community-level change.
- Most respondents reported they increased their knowledge and awareness of health and sanitation issues.

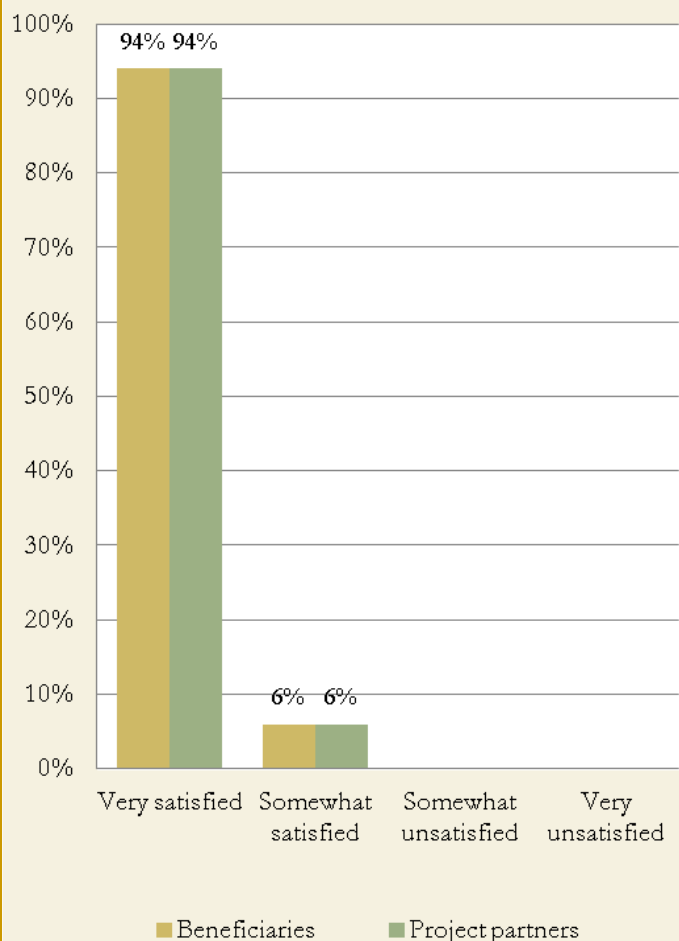
HEP beneficiary: *"Before, we got sick more frequently...we have less complications [now] because we have safer water."*

HCP beneficiary: *"I see fewer young girls pregnant, fewer youth using drugs or consuming alcohol, and more youth making healthy decisions."*

Sustainability:

- 88 percent of respondents said the healthy communities project was sustained after the departure of the Volunteer.
- 97 percent of respondents said water and sanitation projects were sustained.

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:

- 57 percent of project partners had learned about Americans by interacting with them in the Dominican Republic.
- Dominican respondents thought of Americans as strange, aggressive, tourists, racist, difficult, and aloof.
- They also described them as blond and blue-eyed.

Dominican respondent: *“I always thought they were blond, had green eyes, and another thing I believed was that they loved war and I was afraid of them.”*

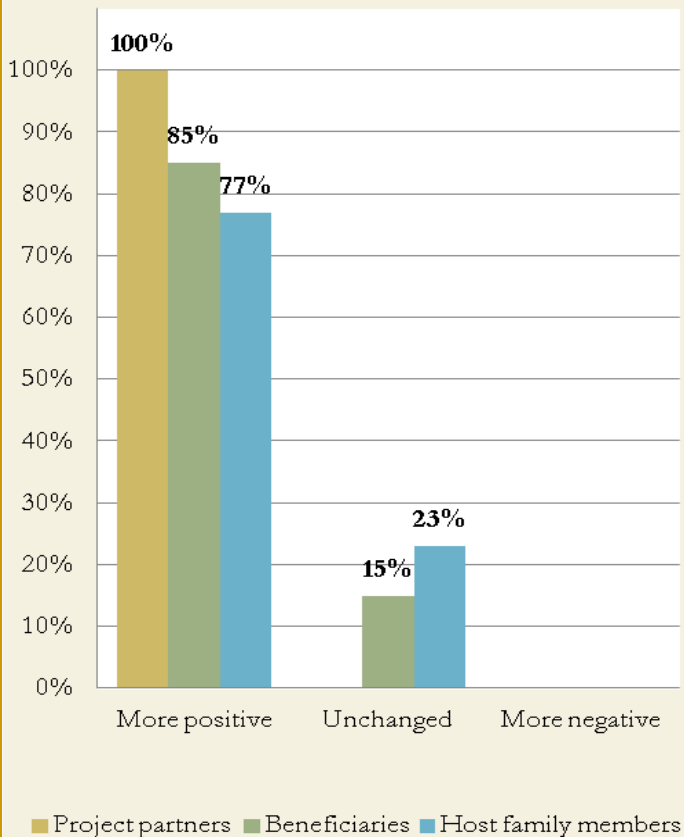
After interacting with Volunteers:

- 88 percent of Dominican respondents had a more positive view of Americans.
- 100 percent of host family members rated their relationships with Volunteers positively.
- Dominican respondents described Americans as hardworking (94%), friendly (88%), motivated (85%) and possessing strong technical skills (83%).

Host family member: *“They are different, but now I know that despite the differences between the two countries, we can share.”*

Beneficiary: *“Now we know that they are people who offer a lot and you can learn a lot from them.”*

Opinion of Americans After Interacting with Volunteers



Overall, communities improved their health and sanitation practices, especially access to clean water and latrines. Working with Volunteers helped to provide more positive opinions of Americans and reduce stereotypes.