



Peace Corps Ukraine



CCC CREATIVE CENTER



REPORT

DOCUMENTING THE RESULTS OF THE SMALL PROJECT ASSISTANCE (SPA) PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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ACRONYMS

CCC	CCC Creative Center
FLEX	Future Leaders Exchange Program
PC	Peace Corps
PCU	Peace Corps Ukraine
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
SOW	Scope of Work
SPA	Small Projects Assistance
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Small Project Assistance Program (SPA) is a joint collaboration between USAID and the Peace Corps to support local community development. The Peace Corps and USAID support community-level development projects in sectors ranging from health to agriculture to small enterprise development. SPA-sponsored projects focus on developing local community groups, including local associations, local government entities, schools, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Volunteers also work with NGOs to improve services to surrounding communities. Participants learn key development skills, including program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, integrated planning and service delivery.

In 2012 the Peace Corps initiated the performance evaluation of the Small Project Assistance (SPA) small grant project activities in Ukraine. The main purpose of the study was to assess the impact of Small Project Assistance Program grant projects in order to improve understanding of the factors that contribute to the success and sustainability of individual SPA projects over time. The study assesses project performance by seeking answers to the following key questions, based on the evaluation's overall goals and project objectives: i) Have SPA projects addressed community-identified priorities? ii) Have the SPA projects been designed and implemented with significant community involvement? iii) Have SPA projects achieved their expected results? and iv) Have SPA projects increased the capacity of local communities to conduct low-cost, grassroots sustainable development?

The study was implemented in Ukraine during April – July of 2012 by the CCC Creative Center, Ukrainian charity foundation.

The study results allow making the following main conclusions and recommendations.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

OBJECTIVE 1. Have SPA projects addressed community-identified priorities?

The evaluation results show that the SPA projects **addressed a variety of needs and tackled problems** in areas such as education, social welfare, tourism and museum development, youth and economic development, English language acquisition, and access to new communication technology and equipment, etc. Importance of the identified needs and problems were mentioned by counterparts/partners as well as beneficiaries/participants.

The SPA projects **were implemented by PCVs together with** non-governmental organizations, entrepreneurial associations, schools, local citizen initiatives, libraries, vocational schools, condominiums, youth centers, social service centers for youth, and universities.

The approved **projects focused on** all citizens and museum workers, community, artists, children and young people with disabilities, foster parents, families with many children, families in crisis, tourists, disabled women, unemployed, single mothers, farmers, teachers, former prisoners on probation, tour operators, pensioners, representatives of mass media, business, NGOs, representatives of public councils.

40% of the SPA **projects ideas generated** jointly through cooperation between a volunteer and his/her community partner; community partners generated 32% of project ideas, and 21% were proposed to community groups by volunteers.

SPA **project funding** supported workshops, trainings, acting lessons, meetings with partners, press conferences, school events, English clubs, photo shoots of events and student projects, information processing, film screenings, newspaper production, debate tournaments, etc.

In addition, SPA project **funding purchased** the following equipment and services: computers and printers, Internet access, office furniture, household appliances and construction materials as well as other materials necessary for the project implementation. Local counterparts were also able to attract financial and in-kind contributions for project implementation from local authorities, community members, charity fundraisers, and entrepreneurs.

The analysis demonstrated that the SPA projects addressed selected community needs that were identified by the local organizations in cooperation with the Peace Corps volunteer.

OBJECTIVE 2. Have the SPA projects been designed and implemented with significant community involvement?

The majority of **local organizations were engaged** in all stages of the proposal development, and in particular in generating project ideas, conducting needs assessments, writing project proposals, and revising proposals after they had been reviewed. PCV involvement peaked at the writing the proposal and proposal review stages, though volunteers were also directly involved in idea generation and needs assessments.

During the **project management** phase, PC volunteers were primarily engaged in monitoring project progress, operational planning and procuring materials, supplies and equipment. The volunteers were less involved in the distribution of human, material, and financial resources. Local organizations were actively engaged in all key stages of the SPA projects' management/implementation.

Nearly 50% of **partners were active and personally involved** in helping with the SPA project when it was being conceived and planned, one in four partners was only moderately involved and one in five partners was not involved at all. A similar trend was observed in terms of respondents' personal engagement in project management. Almost all interviewed partners personally participated in project activities and one in three partners was actively engaged in the SPA project planning and implementation. The majority of respondents who were moderately involved at the planning stage were also moderately or slightly involved in the project activities. The majority of individuals who personally participated in the project were women. Survey results show that women and girls were engaged in all the SPA projects in the sample to a moderate or great degree.

Summing up the results it should be noted that the great majority of local organizations and communities were involved in design and implementation of the SPA projects at all stages. However, the quality of their engagement was difficult to assess.

OBJECTIVE 3. Have SPA projects achieved their expected results?

63% of respondents believe that their **projects' objectives were fully achieved** and 28% of respondents claimed projects' objectives were achieved to an *average extent*, while just 5% of respondents commented that the results were achieved only to a *certain extent*.

Among the **factors that hindered the achievement** of outlined objectives were the following: bad project design and incorrect approaches to project implementation, low participant engagement, scarce resources (time, human and financial), incorrect partner selection and other external factors.

As a result of the SPA projects' implementation counterparts/partners and beneficiaries/participants **gained, mastered, and now use a range of professional skills**. They find it easier to access information, to work with the Internet, to organize coordinated action, to write a business plan, search for employment, build a career, manage their time, employ technology during classes, work with students using interactive methods, generalize and disseminate experience, make traditional folk dolls, identify unique cultural features of Ukraine, understand the basics of entrepreneurship, maintain an environmental awareness, interview, employ their English language skills, seek out and process information, and learn through electronic media. Furthermore, participants and partners cultivated new life skills and habits as well, among them better discipline, an increased ability to cope with problems, optimistic attitude to life, awareness of one's social rights, self-assurance, self-control, acceptance of unconventional ideas, and independence.

Local organizations improved their capacities in project and human resource management, project design and planning, generating ideas and conducting needs assessments, teamwork and activity planning, budgeting and financial management, report writing and monitoring. Moreover, local organizations mastered skills in producing multimedia presentations, gaining access to target audiences, working with marginalized groups like former prisoners as well as with government institutions and Peace Corps volunteers. Organizations also had opportunities to extend other circle of partners and clients, increase the professionalism of their staff and organizations' credibility and visibility in their communities.

The majority of **local organizations acquired new skills** or bolstered their capacity and have since designed and implemented new projects, developed new partnerships and activities, worked to solve community issues, and spread their experience.

98% of counterparts/partners verified that the local organization that served as their local PCV's partner organization **still exists** and that there is a continued need for activities like those provided by SPA projects. 71% of respondents think that their SPA project provided significant help to local organizations in **improving their ability** to plan and organize new projects or activities, 17% of respondents thought local organizations somewhat improved their capacity, while just 3% thought that local organizations' capacity was improved only a little.

Nearly all the organizations polled that were certain that local organizations' capacity had been noticeably strengthened through their experience with Peace Corps, were positive that those same organizations had **applied their new knowledge and skills and begun new initiatives** since the completion of their SPA projects. Two of every three respondents who thought that their organizations had improved their capacity to some extent through cooperation with SPA also answered in the affirmative. 65% of beneficiaries/participants rated the project they were part of as *completely useful*, for 27% called their projects *useful* and 7% assessed their projects as *somewhat useful*.

To demonstrate the usefulness of the SPA projects they were involved in, beneficiaries/participants said: that they learned to develop ideas and identify community needs, to design and plan projects, to work with modern equipment and do things that were important for others, to start their own business and maintain composure in stressful situations, and to communicate with people; many had begun to use skills they honed through participating in projects, and had become trainers, or become more effective at networking, contact setting, rhetoric, involving people in civic activity; participants also mentioned the opportunities they had had to improve their English and learn new pedagogical techniques, and to learn to treat people nicely, be open and socially involved, inspire and help others, continue their education and become more self-confident. 96% of beneficiaries and participants were confident that applying knowledge and skills gained during their participation in the SPA projects had improved their life and/or the community where they live.

Beneficiaries improved their understanding of project design and implementation, their technical and English literacy, their understanding of the importance of civic activism and role of civil society, the importance of democracy and gender equity and many other issues. They **use their new knowledge and skills** at work and in their personal lives, and have continued their education.

The projects **materials, resources, and infrastructure** provided by SPA are occasionally **used** by 35,3% of respondents, frequently used by 37,1% of respondents, and always used by 26,7% of respondents. **Materials and equipment allow respondents to** stage workshops and trainings, acting lessons and meetings with partners, press conferences and school events, English clubs, film screenings, and to produce newspapers, organize debates, write screenplays and making films, clear tourist routes/trails for visitors and travelers, host exercise and aerobics classes, hold on-line conferences on distance learning, and print out and copy materials. The **equipment and materials are used by** partners and clients, parents and members of the local community, local authorities and law enforcement bodies, readers and library patrons, teaching staff and employees, debate club members and students from the self-government council, children and youth, students from schools and universities, senior citizens and teachers of English. Very few items are only used from time to time. Most equipment and materials acquired in conjunction with SPA projects are **still used for the original purpose**, namely: meetings, trainings, exercise classes, on-line conferences, educational initiatives, etc.

The SPA projects also had an **impact on personal lives of beneficiaries** and participants (in particular by allowing for professional development, job training, and by bringing opportunities for people to engage in new activities, and SPA projects reportedly increased the attention paid to local history and culture, peaked interests and awareness of community issues, encouraged youth activism and volunteerism; increased the credibility and image of schools and universities, improved social life and the moral climate in communities, increased local understanding of democracy as well as local traditions, and improved the quality of English language education.

OBJECTIVE 4. Have SPA projects increased the capacity of local communities to conduct low-cost, grassroots sustainable development?

81% of respondents (or 102 people out of 126) affirmed that their organizations used what they had learned through their SPA project to **start a new or similar project** after their SPA project was completed. Only 8% of respondents said that their organizations did not initiate new projects.

Survey results showed that 91% of organizations **continued project activities after their initial cooperation with SPA ended** and their volunteer left. Moreover, several local organizations that continue their activities have managed to **secure financial resources** to support their continuing initiatives. The funding that they have secured

and/or earned supports the publication of a newspaper, the operational expenses of running a visitor information center, the organization of master classes, auctions, and trainings as well as the administration of courses on PC skills, business planning, and accounting.

Other respondents said that their organizations had continued project activities to a limited extent, for example, by continuing to help former prisoners. 98% of respondents are positive that activities launched by the SPA projects in their communities addressed (and in some cases continue to address) important societal needs. On the other hand, SPA projects were not able to address all the needs of each community, or were unable to provide a permanent solution. Education, social support services, and business development are always necessary, and systems aimed at providing them need to operate for long periods in order to become institutionalized.

The majority of counterparts/partners found their **participation in SPA projects to be beneficial**.

Respondents also indicated that in addition to the skills/knowledge they had hope to gain from their participation, their participation and/or the projects themselves resulted in a number of **positive outcomes that they had not originally expected**. In particular, counterparts and partners were surprised at the high activity and engagement of participants and the level of interest generated by project activities. They also mentioned the relationships with new partners and mass media that resulted from their projects, the geographic expansion their activities and influence, the positive interactions they had with public authorities, their improved public image, and the new sources of funding they have found utilizing new fundraising methods as positive unanticipated outcomes. Beneficiaries/participants were simply pleasantly surprised and amazed that projects were carried out in accordance with the schedule/plan that had been laid out ahead of time. They also mentioned that projects helped them to identify new talents in the populations they were working with, to later assist other organizations with the preparation of new projects, that SPA helped them to build friendly relationships with other organizations, and to draw publicity from advertising their projects on the TV and through producing their own newspapers.

At the same time, the projects had some **negative outcomes that were not expected** by the respondents. The counterparts and partners noted that some external factors (such as small employment market; an different interests of tourists that required an individual approach) had an impact on the progress of the project and led to certain changes prevented project organizers from ensuring sustainable results. Participants mentioned short timelines during the project implementation phase as another factor that negatively impacted projects, as well as low levels of partner engagement during project implementation, changes in implementing partnerships, and low levels of community and target group engagement. The beneficiaries/participants did not expect the transitions of responsibility for project management from Peace Corps Volunteers to community members to be as rough as they often were, or for activities to cease to be properly managed after PCV departures. It should be noted that the majority the descriptions counterparts/partners gave of SPA projects' results (both positive and negative, expected and unexpected) were echoed by beneficiaries and participants during group interviews.

Results achieved by the SPA projects were made possible not only by SPA funding, but also by **complimentary financial and in-kind support** provided by various community actors. For example, local authorities provided funding as well as venues, communities supported charity auctions, and entrepreneurs provided financial contributions and volunteered their time and services.

40% of counterparts and partners benefited from participation in **PC training** activities that helped them not only to improve their professional skill sets but also increase their ability to communicate with diverse members of the community and Peace Corps volunteers, to raise funds, improve their time management, and benefit from the experience of getting acquainted with regional representatives of the Peace Corps.

Since their SPA project's completion, one in five beneficiaries/participants has participated in an organization-sponsored activity that had a **similar purpose** to the activities associated with SPA.

3% of counterparts/partners indicated that there were **individuals who wanted to participate** but were excluded from participating in their SPA projects and three respondents experienced the **resistance** displayed by the community. The resistance they met was described in relatively innocuous terms, for example, as "*at first, they did not understand why we were doing this ...*" On the other hand, 92% of counterparts/partners said that they met **no opposition to their SPA project** from anyone in their organization or in the community. The three respondents out of 126 that spoke about community resistance noted that "*it was something new and people was not got used to it,*" that "*people were very distrusting,*" and that people were "*skeptical, saying that we were doing silly things ...*"

It might be concluded that the SPA projects made an impact on the capacity of local organizations and furthered communities' ability to engage in local sustainable development.

IN OVERALL, evaluation results demonstrate that the SPA projects addressed community-identified priorities and were designed and implemented with significant community involvement, majority of the objectives of the SPA projects achieved their expected results and the SPA projects increased the capacity of local communities to conduct low-cost, grassroots sustainable development. The study revealed that there were **several factors** that contributed to the success and sustainability of individual SPA projects in Ukraine. They include:

1. The project's **relevance**: *"The project subject is a priority area for our oblast. That's why the local public authorities actively cooperated with us"*.
2. Importance of project to be **initiated, designed, and implemented** by a local community organization in cooperation with a PC Volunteer.
3. Importance of addressing **community needs**: *The volunteer conducted a needs assessment among the schoolchildren in order to define the most relevant topic of the potential project for the school before the start of the project.*
4. Effective **division of roles** between the project implementers: *"Everyone was engaged in the project including the volunteer, teachers, and children, and it was fun to work together..."*
5. **Competence/professionalism of the PC volunteer**: *"The volunteer had good skills in journalism and she taught us many interesting and useful things"*. It is important that Volunteers work with community partners at every step in the process, from designing the proposal to implementing the project, managing the budget, and monitoring and evaluating the project results.
6. Provision of **knowledge and skills** to be used and/or establishing a **service needed in future**.
7. **Keen interest and professional** approach of the local organization: *"Our organization is rather strong; we manage large amounts of funding that we receive from international donors. It was not difficult for us to implement the project"*.
8. Importance of a clear **capacity-building or hands-on training component**, even when project activities include materials acquisitions, production, or construction efforts.
9. **Trainings from the Peace Corps**: *"The training was very useful for me personally. Since this was the first volunteer who came to see us all the information was new and very useful. For a while I literally took the materials of the training everywhere I went."* Cooperation with the public authorities: *"Since the public authorities were interested in the project they provided additional funds for the project."*
10. Work with **well-established local organizations** with a positive public image: *"The possibility to invite a PC volunteer to work in the organization is an important indicator of the organization's development level and evidence of its willingness to develop further. The volunteer can help improve the public image of the organization and make the organization more prestigious, especially if he/she is diligent in his/her work."*
11. **Community** cash or in-kind **contribution** to the project .
12. The **personality of a PC volunteer** since at times it was only the enthusiasm, temper, willingness, attitude, personal example and good nature of the volunteer that inspired his/her partners to work better, to be creative, to change their attitudes toward some issues etc. As one respondent put it: *"We wanted to work better all the time because the volunteer set an example for us. She was very positive, hardworking and we tried to do things right. Now we have a rather inactive volunteer and the project is implemented the way it is implemented..."*
13. The **eagerness of an organization** to implement the project well: *"We have been working for a long time on a subject of the SPA project. It was therefore important for us to do a good job. This project was one step on our path toward a larger goal..."*
14. Importance of building **local self-reliance and ownership**.
15. The **personal involvement** of counterparts in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of projects also affected results. Interviews revealed that the project partners and participants who were engaged in the projects from the very beginning—from the idea generation stage—through to the end of the project, continue the work the project has started, have expanded and modified activities and used their newly-gained knowledge and skills. Having an opportunity to receive new professional knowledge and skills or to access to the latest technologies also seems to have affected project results. The PC volunteer and his/her partner organization often became a center for new things, especially in small towns and villages because *"The village had no modern methodological center where rural teachers could learn about new teaching techniques, learn how to work with a computer and improve their knowledge of English"* and *"There were huge problems with Internet access and no financial ability to buy a PC and connect to the web."*
16. The **opportunity to build personal contacts** with new people and the volunteer as well as gain new life skills also affected participants: *"We met many people, established contacts and partnerships. We had a chance to present our opinions openly."* *"I was able to communicate with a native speaker, and to meet with likeminded people at English Club."* *"I found a workplace [due to the project], after I had spent a year in the Employment Center. [The job offer] was very timely. I finished the project [courses], and found work—it helped me to see the light of day again (so to speak)."* *"We learned to discuss issues civilly, to be tolerant toward each other, to compare different points of view, to summarize the results of our activities."*

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The information about **opportunity to get the SPA** program should be distributed to the PC Volunteer's counterparts/partners, when meeting local organizations, during information meetings. Then the organizations will be interested in initiating the SPA projects themselves and they will not wait for the volunteer to do so.
- The Peace Corps should continue expansion of **its training program** designed for volunteers and counterparts/partners. More counterparts and partners need to understand clearly what the PC volunteer should do and how he/she can help the organization and the potential of the volunteer.
- Each SPA project should include **publicity** components (like the public awareness campaign, information sessions, etc.) in order to inform the general public about the launch of the project, its completion and achieved results. This can be one of the project's "musts".
- The approved projects should be **monitored on a regular basis**, at least once during the project implementation. In order to save funds the monitoring can be done via the Skype calls between the SPA Coordinator and Volunteer. The PC can also introduce questionnaires/evaluation forms for the PC volunteers and the host organizations, in which they could indicate whether their expectations from the cooperation have been met, what problems they have experienced, how these problems could have been avoided and other recommendations and comments.
- It is important to ensure that the SPA projects **engage the same volunteer from the beginning till the end**. The study has demonstrated that the problems are likely to appear in the projects, in which the volunteer has to leave before his/her time or when one volunteer is replaced with another one. The project should not be supported if the volunteer's stay is shorter than the project duration. If the transfer of responsibility from one grant to another is needed as of the safety/medical/family issues a local counterpart should be notified about this as well.
- Acknowledging a well-developed PC Ukraine **system of inventory**, it might be useful to collect an equipment inventory list from local organizations to whom equipment/devices/hardware were purchased and passed together with the completion project report. According to the Ukrainian law all equipment (bought or gifted) should be included into an organizational inventory. Availability of inventory lists from local partners will provide PC with legal rights to monitor availability and accessibility of equipment as well as noticeably simplify its audit.

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INTRODUCTION

The Peace Corps traces its roots and mission to 1960, when then Senator John F. Kennedy [challenged students at the University of Michigan](#) to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. From that inspiration grew an agency of the federal government devoted to world peace and friendship.

Since that time, nearly 200,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 139 host countries working on issues ranging from AIDS education to information technology and environmental preservation.

With over 300 Volunteers, Peace Corps' Ukraine program is the largest among 75 countries. Over the past 13 years, 1800 Volunteers have served in Ukraine. They have taught Ukrainians English, management skills, economics, ecology, healthy lifestyles and civics. Their principal worksites are schools and nongovernmental organizations. Many Volunteers have also carried out projects in teacher training and to strengthen community participation in civil society by teaching critical thinking, leadership, project planning and implementation, gender education, computers and Internet technology, and other subjects.

Peace Corps Volunteers presently work in all Ukrainian oblasts in over 217 towns and villages. Peace Corps continually seeks to maintain a good balance of Volunteers in all of Ukraine's regions. The program particularly seeks placement for Volunteers in economically disadvantaged areas where the presence of the Volunteer can positively influence the development of the Ukrainian community.

Under an agreement signed by former Presidents George. H.W. Bush and L. M. Kravchuk in 1992, Peace Corps' sponsor organization in the Ukrainian Government has been the Department for Coordination of International Technical Assistance housed in the former Ministry of Economy and European Integration.

Immediately after arrival in Ukraine, Volunteers participate in a 12-week in-depth training program. The training includes an intensive course in the Ukrainian or Russian language, as well as, technical and cross-cultural components. During pre-service training, Volunteers live with a Ukrainian host family. Following successful completion of the three-month training program, they move to a town where they work for the following two years.

Peace Corps Projects in Ukraine

Community Development

The Community Economic Development Project aims to enable businesses to improve their profitability and non-governmental organizations to achieve sustainability and expand their services to local populations. Volunteers transfer free-market business skills and expertise through teaching and consulting to business associations, individual entrepreneurs, nongovernmental organizations, schools and local governments. Volunteers organize trainings on marketing, business infrastructure, sales techniques, advertising and public relations for entrepreneurs and business students in communities throughout Ukraine. Citizens' involvement in local governance has been encouraged through programs on inclusive budgeting processes, citizen information bureaus, cooperative investment strategies, and public-private partnerships.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

The Teaching English as a Foreign Language Project aims to enhance students' and teachers' communication abilities and encouraging independent thinking and problem solving through the creation of an interactive learning environment and use of contemporary methods and materials. Volunteers work in educational institutions as English teachers and teacher trainers. Volunteer English language teachers work in classrooms with more than 20,000 students each year. Many classroom teachers also work as teacher trainers bringing contemporary methodologies to the Ukrainian educational system fostering debate, critical thinking skills, and teacher-to-teacher links.

Youth Development

The Youth Development Project aims to cultivate opportunities for youth in economically disadvantaged areas to stay healthy and gain the knowledge and skills they need to be competitive in today's Ukraine. Volunteers conduct classroom lessons and extracurricular activities on civic responsibility, computer and Internet literacy, drug and HIV prevention, environmental awareness, and basic business. Educational activities are presented in an interactive format to engage and sustain young people's interest and motivation.

Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program

The Small Project Assistance Program (SPA) is a joint collaboration between USAID and the Peace Corps to support local community development. The Peace Corps and USAID support community-level development projects in sectors ranging from health to agriculture to small enterprise development. Through an InterAgency Agreement between USAID and the Peace Corps, SPA allows Peace Corps volunteers to participate with USAID in development efforts, helping communities to implement small, self-help activities such as improving access to clean, potable water while gaining critical training in building latrines, maintaining water systems and reducing the spread of water-borne diseases.

SPA-sponsored projects focus on developing local community groups, including local associations, local government entities, schools, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Volunteers also work with NGOs to improve services to surrounding communities. Participants learn key development skills, including program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, integrated planning and service delivery.

The Local Sustainability Division manages USAID Mission access to SPA and encourages USAID Missions and Offices to participate in the program. Peace Corps Volunteers compete for funds allocated by USAID through a proposal process managed by the local Peace Corps field offices. Volunteers interested in submitting an application should contact the local Peace Corps staff regarding funding availability and application procedures. Generally, any country in which Peace Corps operates that is served by a USAID bilateral or regional Mission is eligible to initiate and participate in the SPA program.

The purpose of this report is to present results and findings of the performance evaluation of Peace Corps Volunteers Small Project Assistance (SPA) small grant project activities in Ukraine. The study documents the work of Peace Corps Volunteers' (PCVs) SPA projects from the perspective of the people of Ukraine with whom the Volunteers live and work. The study assesses the impact of Small Project Assistance Program grant projects in order to improve understanding of the factors that contribute to the success and sustainability of individual SPA projects over time. The study assesses project performance by seeking answers to the following key questions, based on the evaluation's overall goals and project objectives: i) Have SPA projects achieved their expected results? ii) Have SPA projects increased the capacity of local communities to conduct low-cost, grassroots sustainable development? iii) Have SPA projects addressed community-identified priorities? and iv) Have the SPA projects been designed and implemented with significant community involvement?

This study will allow Peace Corps to have a better picture of how its program works and addresses areas where it could be improved. This study is unique because it focuses on learning about the PC's impact directly from host country individuals, in their own words. The study was conducted by the CCC Creative Center in close cooperation with Peace Corps Ukraine and Peace Corps Headquarter in March-July 2012.

The report consists of three chapters and four appendices. The first chapter describes the methodology of the study and presents information on the purpose of the study; site selection and sampling; data collection methods, sources and instruments; the data analysis approach; the study team; and concludes with study limitations.

Chapter two presents study findings and discussion. This chapter summarizes the results and discusses their meaning and includes an overview of the respondents and findings and discussions for goal of the study.

Chapter three presents conclusions and recommendations on the study findings and methodology.

Appendices include the evaluation instrument, case studies, and a list of SPA projects.

CHAPTER ONE. STUDY METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The performance evaluation of Peace Corps Volunteers Small Project Assistance small grant project activities in Ukraine was aimed at documenting the work of Peace Corps Volunteers' (PCVs) SPA projects from the perspective of the people of Ukraine with whom the Volunteers live and work. The study assessed the impact of Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program grant projects in order to improve understanding of the factors that contribute to the success and sustainability of individual SPA projects over time. The study was seeking answers to the following key questions, based on the evaluation's overall goals and project objectives:

- Have SPA projects addressed community-identified priorities?
- Have the SPA projects been designed and implemented with significant community involvement?
- Have SPA projects achieved their expected results?
- Have SPA projects increased the capacity of local communities to conduct low-cost, grassroots sustainable development?

The performance evaluation was conducted by the CCC Creative Center during April – July of 2012.

Overview of the evaluation implementation

The evaluation implementation was divided into four phases.

Initial preparation stage.

During this stage the following tasks were accomplished:

- Initial meeting with responsible for research personnel in Peace Corps Ukraine;
- Review of project objectives and timelines during initial meeting with PC Post staff;
- Collection of PC Ukraine SPA program documents and their review;
- Review and translation of the interview questions and training materials from English to Ukrainian provided by PC Ukraine/PC HQ;
- Preparation of announcement, procedure and criteria for selection of local interviewers to conduct interviews at Peace Corps project sites;
- Selection of 10 interviewers;
- Final identification of 38 SPA sites by PC;
- Using the list of initial points of contact for each site provided by PC Ukraine, individuals at each site were contacted in order to verify individuals are available at site. Also additional interviewees (stakeholders, project partners, or beneficiaries) were identified to determine how they might be contacted to set up group meetings and interviews.
- Development of detailed logistics plan for the field work, including lodging, transportation, and travel to selected sites;
- Conducting of five-day training for interviewers and research team according to program developed in coordination with Peace Corps Ukraine office;
- Conduct 2-4 pilot interviews in two selected sites;
- Conduct debriefing meetings and phone/Skype calls with the Lead Evaluation Consultant, PC Ukraine and PC Washington staff;
- Revision of the interview questionnaire after the pilot interviews;
- Preparation and sending out of final version of the questionnaires with detailed instruction to all interviewers;
- Weekly communication with the Lead Evaluation Consultant in the United States, Director of Programming and Training (DPT), Peace Corps Washington, and USAID to inform them of the status of the project.

Field work

During this stage the following tasks were accomplished:

- Individual and group interviews in the selected sites were conducted by local interviewers with use of prepared questionnaires;
- Completed questionnaires from interviewers were collected;

- Four one-page Case Studies of representative projects, including success stories, beneficiary and project photographs, and excerpts from interviews were developed;
- Debriefing meetings and phone/Skype calls with the Lead Evaluation Consultant, PC Ukraine and PC Washington staff were conducted at the end of the fieldwork;
- Regular communication with the Lead Evaluation Consultant in the United States, Director of Programming and Training, Peace Corps Washington, and USAID was undertaken to inform them of the status of the project.

Data entry and draft report preparation

During this stage the following tasks were accomplished:

- Web-based data entry system was created;
- Codebooks were developed; questionnaires were programmed and tested; approach to data analysis was designed;
- Quality control of received data was conducted;
- All interview data was translated into English;
- All interview data was entered into a web-based data entry system in English;
- A draft project report in English was produced and submitted to PC according to the agreed format for comments;
- Regular communication with to the Lead Evaluation Consultant in the United States, Director of Programming and Training, Peace Corps Washington, and USAID was undertaken to inform them of the status of the project.

Finalization of the evaluation report.

During this stage the following tasks were accomplished:

- Comments of PC on a draft project report were received;
- The draft report was revised based on the received comments from PC and final report was prepared;
- Final version of the performance evaluation in English was submitted to Peace Corps Ukraine.

Site Selection and Sampling

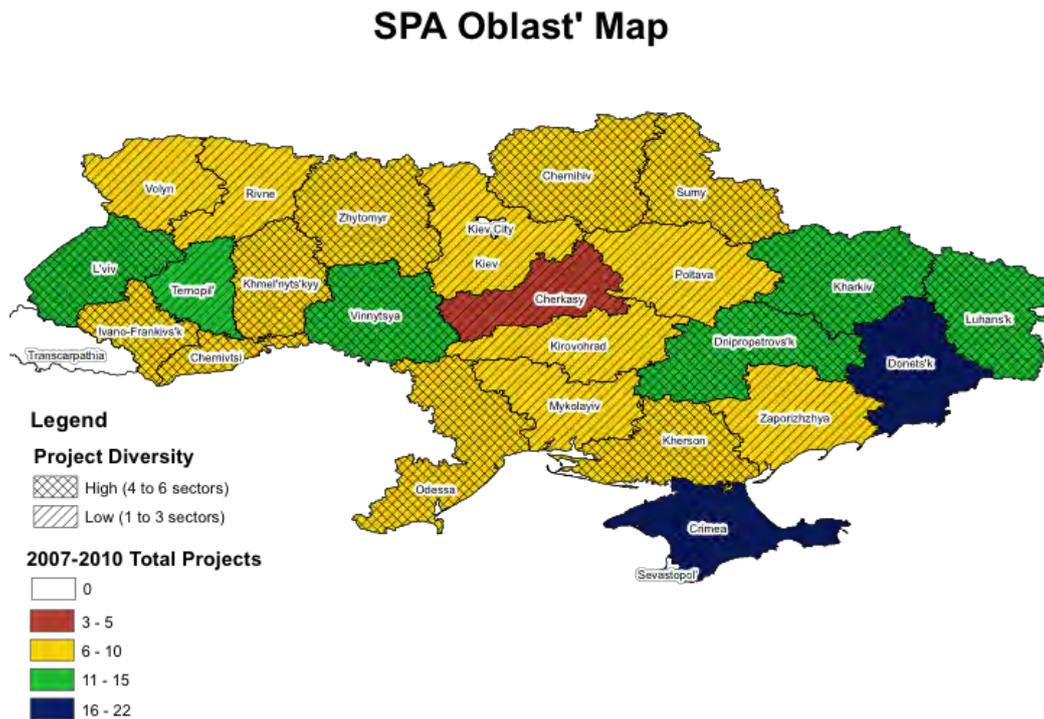
The procedures of the sampling plan described here reflect the Ukraine program. The large (234) number of SPA projects between 2007 and 2010 in Ukraine required a manageable but representative sample of the overall population. The only feasible approach was a purposeful sample consisting of pre-selected categories from which clusters of SPA sites are randomly selected for the sample. In this case, four attributes of SPA projects simulate the range of the SPA universe nationwide:

- 1) Region/Oblast where the SPA project was implemented (representing different cultures)
- 2) When it was implemented (time since implementation – 2010 cutoff),
- 3) Project Concentration
- 4) Project Diversity in (agriculture, health, water, sanitation, education, civic participation, sports, meeting center, etc.).

The sample consists of a total of 36 SPA projects drawn from clusters based on the four attributes and reduced through a series of refinements. First clusters were created based on the following criteria: (1) geography, drawing on administrative units (Oblasts); (2) time since implementation; (3) project concentration, indicated by numbers of projects per cluster; and (4) diversity of development sector, determined by numbers of types. Second, 11 clusters were selected out of a total of 24 clusters that had projects based on the four attributes, and were then randomized and sorted by the number of projects they contained. Third, 5 clusters were selected from the 11, after having been vetted for cultural and socio-economic representativeness. Finally, after considering budget and time feasibility, 3 clusters were selected that include 38 SPA projects, yielding results with a 95% confidence interval and a 15% margin of error.

The following Oblast Map shows a distribution of SPA sites and illustrates the Ukraine sampling frame using the above steps. Given the broad distribution of the four attributes, the North, East, South and West of the country would be accurately represented by the 38 SPA project sites in 3 Oblasts, of which 38 ultimately yielded data for analysis. Also, a group of approximately 6-8 sites was identified in the vicinity of Kyiv, Chernigiv, and Zhytomyr to serve as the pilot sample. A list of the selected 38 sites as well as the pilot samples are available in Appendix 7.

Figure 1. SPA projects Oblast Map



Data Collection Methods, Sources, and Instruments

Data Collection Methods

For the purposes of this study, the evaluation employed two main types of data collection methods to interview respondents: (1) quantitative methods that allowed for valid generalization of the findings, and (2) qualitative methods to enable construction of a comprehensive picture of the community conditions and the context of the sampled SPA projects and their users/participants.

For the first purpose, a set(s) of fixed-choice or categorical survey questions provided the quantifiable data, from which conclusions were drawn and, to the extent possible, attributed to either the SPA activities or other influences. For the second purpose, structured interview questions with prompts and follow-up questions supplied the tailored data needed for clear understanding of SPA projects' effects on participants' quality of life and personal or organizational capacity.

A third method used was brief observation at the SPA activity site. Field interviewers were sometimes able to ascertain whether the SPA grant activity has continued (or ever existed) through a relatively rapid observation process. This only involved verification and not any kind of testing (for example, testing English ability) or situational analysis (NGO records examination or teacher observation).

Data Sources

The evaluation relied primarily on data directly collected from host country nationals in the affected local communities. These included: (1) individuals who have had a close affiliation with the sponsoring Volunteer, such as counterparts, participants/students in the activity; and (2) others who participated less directly in the project's planning and implementation but who use or benefit from its product/service. One small group of individuals—local leaders (e.g. school principal, chief) with a connection to the Volunteer and SPA project—may have been the Peace Corps Volunteer's counterpart but, also, may have a special perspective due to their particular position or influence in the community or an affiliated organization. The overlap between SPA project counterparts/partners and local leaders, however, tended to make their separate categorization unnecessary.

A second major data source was documentation related to the SPA program in Ukraine. These included electronic databases of the original Volunteer proposals for SPA grants and completion reports of sampled SPA projects from

2007 through 2010. Additional documentation included country-specific handbooks for PCVs and SPA partners/participants, reports of previous evaluations of SPA in other countries, documents on the USAID-Peace Corps PAPA, and universal SPA documents for all PC country programs. All of these materials provided extensive documentary data about many aspects of SPA grants.

PC country staff with responsibility over SPA activities provided additional data about SPA III. Important insight was provided by Directors of Programming and Training and Directors of Management and Operations (DMOs) as well as USAID Mission staff responsible for monitoring and approving SPA grant disbursements.

Data collection instruments

The following instruments were used, namely: 1) a questionnaire/interview guide for counterparts and partners of the PCVs; 2) a self-administrative questionnaire/group interview guide for beneficiaries and participants of the SPA project; and 3) a check list to verify existence of equipment and materials provided by the SPA project. All instruments are presented in the Attachments 2 – 5.

Case Studies

The task order required several SPA projects to be highlighted as case studies. Case studies were selected with the goals of featuring examples a) from each major sector, b) of both exemplary and typical projects, and c) that allowed evaluators to present best practices and analyze projects' failures. Case studies were selected from amongst the sample sites. Due to time and cost constraints, case studies were identified at the time of the site visits. Extra data was collected by the study team during an additional visit to each selected SPA project site.

Data Collection

All data was obtained in-person by interviewers employed by CCC. Data collection took place in both individual and group settings in each sampled SPA project community. Generally, the Peace Corps Volunteer's counterparts, partners and close colleagues, as well as local or organizational leaders, were interviewed individually, while beneficiaries, participants and others with less direct connection to the SPA project were interviewed in groups. In the first case, individual interviews allowed sufficient time for counterparts and close colleagues to fully explain their, presumably well-informed views about the SPA project. Likewise, local leaders, even if less actively involved than counterparts, were interviewed individually.

Group interviews, by contrast, were an efficient means of obtaining data from beneficiaries and participants who have a broader community perspective and required less individual time to share their more limited experience with the SPA project.

The number of interviews in each SPA site varied due to differences in the nature of the projects, the size of the communities, and the number of years since the projects' completion. At least three individual interviews and one group interview were conducted for each project in the sample. Group size was limited to no more than 10 individuals in order to reduce inordinate differences in participation. In total, 250 individuals were interviewed. Each group interview session lasted 60-90 minutes, while individual interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 60 minutes in length. The fieldwork was implemented over 10 days and covered all selected SPA sites efficiently. Each interviewer visited between 3 and 5 SPA sites. Before site visits, interviewers contacted all SPA project actors in order to allow for effective use of time and resources.

Field data collection was based on rigorous standards for accuracy, completeness, and reliability in interview sessions. First, field interviewers administered methodological instruments consistently across sessions. Second, interviewer records of responses to structured interview questions captured all details ensure accuracy and faithfulness to respondents' views. Third, respondents' confidentiality was carefully observed to encourage candidness about SPA project performance. Finally, in order to avoid the possible inaccuracies introduced by recording and translating notes between languages accurate translation to English was ensured.

Data Analysis

Data Entry and Translation

Interviewers wrote respondents' answers to interview questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were sent to the CCC office for translation into English and entry into the database. CCC manager conducted quality control of received data and where it was important the questionnaires were returned to an interviewer with request to provide more information. CCC IT specialist prepared web-based data entry system, developed a codebook, programmed

and tested all questionnaires and guides. After entering translated data into online database all information was checked and edited as needed.

Data Analysis Procedures

CCC designed an approach to data analysis. The report's format was discussed and agreed upon by all parties involved in the evaluation's implementation.

Study Team

The study team consisted of the CCC President, Lyubov Palyvoda, who served as a Senior Researcher and CCC Project manager, Sofia Golota, who provided daily management of the research. Background information on both individuals is provided below.

Lyubov Palyvoda is the founder and president of CCC Creative Center, a Ukrainian charity foundation. She has nineteen years of experience working with civil society organizations (CSOs) in the New Independent State countries. She has a background in project identification, design, and implementation, and organizational and project evaluation, as well as in-depth knowledge of and experience in the civil society sector, direct experience working with donor organizations in the planning and implementation of civil society programs/projects; design and implementation of grant projects for US, EU, and UN programs; experience with projects related to governance, elections and democratic development as well as charity, philanthropy and foundations, corporate and community philanthropy; extensive experience in institutional and capacity building, training and research; program and organizational evaluation, strategic and administrative management of the organization, fundraising and proposal writing, project report writing, communication with government officials, businesses, donor organizations, and local and international organizations. Furthermore, she works as an independent researcher/consultant and conducts program and organizational evaluation and provides consultation/training on institutional and capacity building, strategic and administrative management of the organization as well as undertakes different study/research/survey on variety of issues. Lyubov has Master of Science in Mathematics and Mathematical Basis of Cybernetics (Kyiv State University), a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) from the International Management Institute (Kyiv), and PhD in Public Administration from (Rutgers University, USA).

Sofia Golota is a project manager at CCC Creative Center. She has eight years of experience working in civil society organizations in Ukraine in various areas including public relations, and project and grant management. Her responsibilities include planning, implementing, and monitoring various projects, communicating with and supervising grantees, and reviewing their narrative and financial reports. Now Sofia works on implementing the monitoring and evaluation component of the UNITER project including i) Conducting an CSO sectoral survey and an annual CSO survey; ii) Conducting baseline and follow up annual assessments of the UNITER Grantees; iii) Preparing annual comparative reports on the results of CSO surveys and UNITER Grantees assessments; iii) Conducting various surveys on CSOs in order to understand NGO outcomes and their impact on reform; improve their organizational/advocacy capacity as well as strengthen the effectiveness of their performance. Implementation of all objectives is resulted in preparing respective reports either on a result of CSO survey and UNITER Grantees assessment. Moreover, Sofia is involved in other CCC research and evaluation projects such as USAID CSO Sustainability Index, etc. Sofia Golota has a Master of Law. Her theses focused on the impact of new Civil Codex on forming of civil society, law state and economy development.

In addition, 10 individuals were selected to conduct interviews. Those individuals were both experienced and properly trained to conduct interviews. They had also participated in CCC research initiatives in the past, including the impact study of Peace Corps *Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Program* conducted in 2010.

Study Limitations/Challenges

The study had certain limitations and challenges that should be acknowledged and considered in future evaluations.

The Concept of the Study

The study on the SPA program's impact had two important limitations: 1) key participants of the study, namely the Peace Corps volunteers and local Peace Corps' personnel responsible for the program implementation, were missing and therefore not part of the sample; and 2) the study lacked an objective in to assess the SPA program's administration. Generally when assessing factors impacting the sustainability of projects (in this case

those funding by the SPA program) it is important to bear in mind and evaluate both the achievements of the grant recipients as well as assess the program 's overall management. In other words, the study might have benefitted from posing questions like: How clear-cut were the program's terms and criteria? Did the PC staff ensure good program management and administration? How was the entire process organized, beginning with document preparation, and running through technical assistance to volunteers and partners, announcement of funding rounds, proposal assessment and project selection, and monitoring and evaluation? It is arguable that the whole process of management and implementation of the grant program is an integral part of and in fact a prerequisite of for the success of individual projects. Project monitoring and evaluation also play an important role in the process managing effective programs. PC personnel and PC volunteers participation in the study would have also been beneficial in demonstrating the strengths of the SPA program as well as its weaknesses.

Conflict between the Evaluation, Research and Methodology

The evaluation answers the question "Why?" and the study – "What results were achieved?" Therefore different methods are used (qualitative, quantitative or and/or a combination if the two). The goal of the evaluation was to better understand the factors that contributed to the success and/or failure of the projects funded by the SPA program, or in other words, to make evaluative judgments. The research, on the other hand, was conducted using quantitative methods paired with qualitative interactions with a limited range of participants (since both PC volunteers and staff were not included into the study). This "conflict" between the evaluation's goal and available research methods became more obvious once the case studies were prepared, and were viewed as being more informative and germane to the objectives of the evaluation than the quantitative research conducted among SPA projects' counterparts/partners and beneficiaries/participants.

Study Tools

Since the proposed tools of the study were designed for the evaluation, they consisted mainly of open questions. Using open questions in an inquiry, however, requires certain competencies, is best done by a small team of experts (2-3 people), and requires more time and skills/knowledge when it comes time to analyze and interpret interview data. Working within the time and other constraints of the study, the tools were finalized in a very short time and a rather large group of interviewers and other staff was engaged in order to compile and analyze the findings. Unfortunately, the final tools selected for the study failed to address the objectives of the evaluation.

Subjective Perception of the Study Questions

Given the nature of the inquiry, there was ample opportunity for subjectivity to be introduced into the data. For example, respondents' answers may have been influenced by their personal attitude toward the Peace Corps volunteer associated with the project, or by other factors that endanger the impartiality of responses. The respondents who had two or more projects with the Peace Corps found it hard to separate the impact the project in question had on their organization from the larger impact of their cooperation with Peace Corps. In addition, it is possible that some respondents did not fully understand the terminology used in the study.

SPA Projects Time Lag

The respondents found it hard to recall the project outcomes and the impact they had on their organizations due to the SPA projects' time lag.

Place of the Interviews

The facilities used for conducting interviews, particularly group interviews, were very often inappropriate venues. They included areas that connected two or more rooms, and therefore had foot traffic, as well as rooms where third parties were present. These factors could have had an impact on the impartiality and/or completeness of answers provided to interviewers.

Data Processing

The initial lack of clear and circumspect approaches and tools vital for data processing affected the study. The need to develop, test and use the data entering and processing system during the process of conducting the evaluation resulted in the adoption of a number of changes over the course of the study. In addition, because of the large quantity of qualitative information contained in the interview guides—including responses to open-ended questions, as well as comments and explanations associated with quantitative questions—and the lack of an agreed upon approach to its analysis, the data analysis process was complicated and would have benefitted from additional time.

Limited Time to Prepare the Study

The study was prepared under time pressure. Due to the time constraints, the evaluative team was not in position to think through and consider every important detail of the study, “polish” our tools, clearly define the approaches and instruments to process the data and identify the format for reporting.

Timing of the Study

The study’s timeframe coincided with the busiest time of the year, most notably, the end of the academic year in high schools and higher academic institutions. Schoolchildren, students, teachers, and administrators were extremely busy and it was therefore difficult to identify and ensure the participation of the right number of respondents for the study.

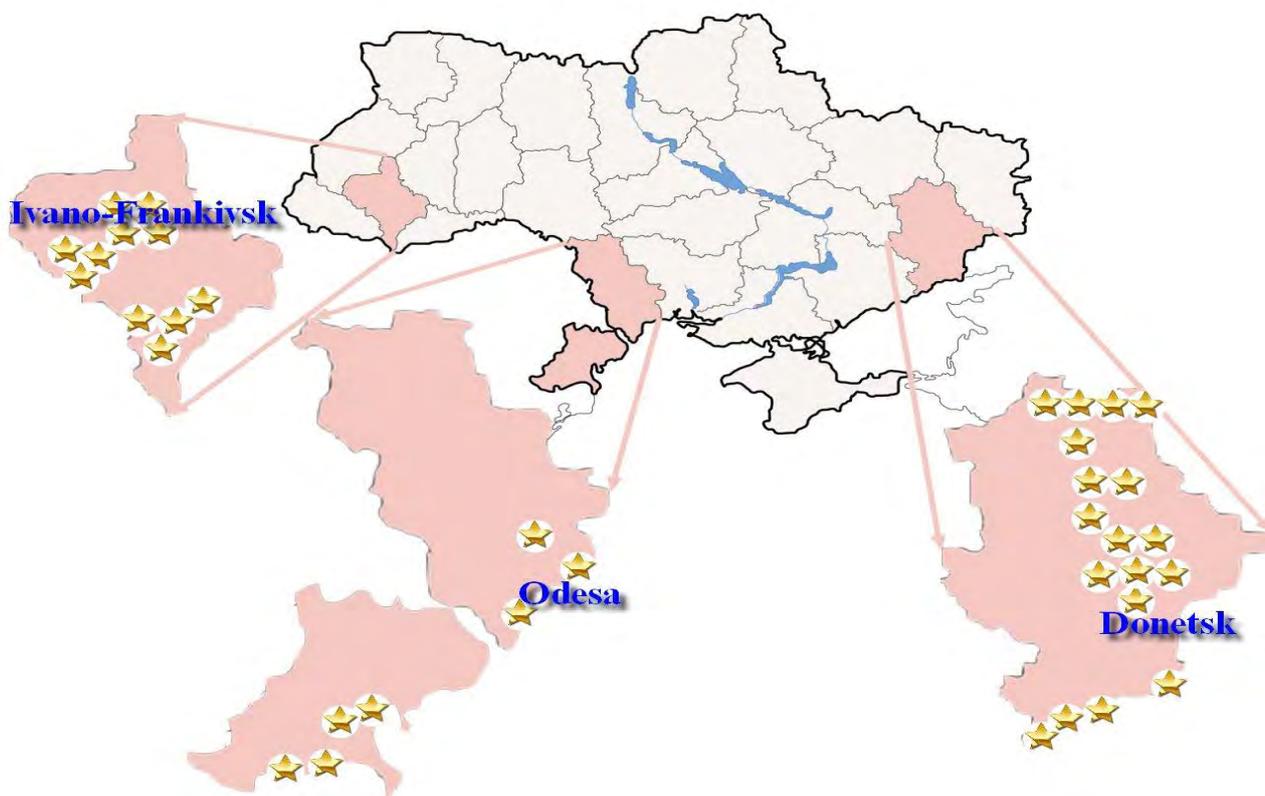
Subordination

Peace Corps contracted both the CCC and the IBTCI , and each organization had its own mandate and role. The interaction between these two organizations revolved around coordination of technical issues pertinent to the study. Since the relationship between these two contractors was not clearly defined, the IBCTI very often acted beyond its mandate, in particular, by asserting control over the progress of the study, meddling in financial issues between the CCC and the PC, and attempting to receive products developed by the CCC directly without PC’s involvement. These actions created unnecessary stress and pressure for all those involved.

Overview of Selected SPA Projects

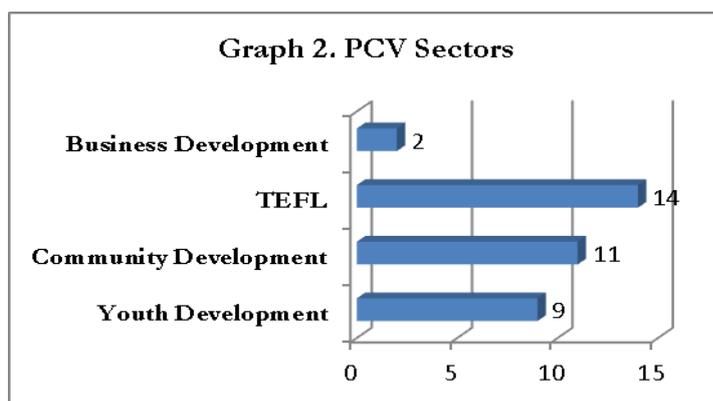
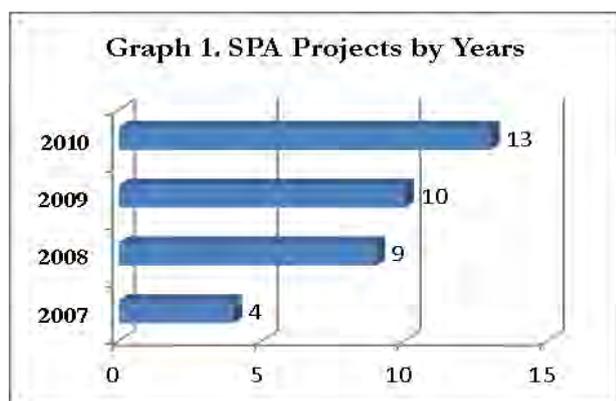
38 SPA projects were selected for evaluation, but in the end, only 36 were evaluated. Two SPA projects were not included into the study due to field teams’ inability to secure a sufficient number of respondents. The 36 projects included in the study were conducted in three Ukrainian oblasts, Donetsk, Ivano-Frankivsk and Odessa. The approximate geographic locations of these projects are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. SPA Projects Distribution Among Three Oblasts.



The 36 projects were distributed amongst the three oblasts as follows: 18 projects were implemented in 11 municipalities of Donetsk oblast, 7 projects were carried out in 7 different towns and cities of Odessa oblast and 11 projects were initiated in 5 different towns in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast.

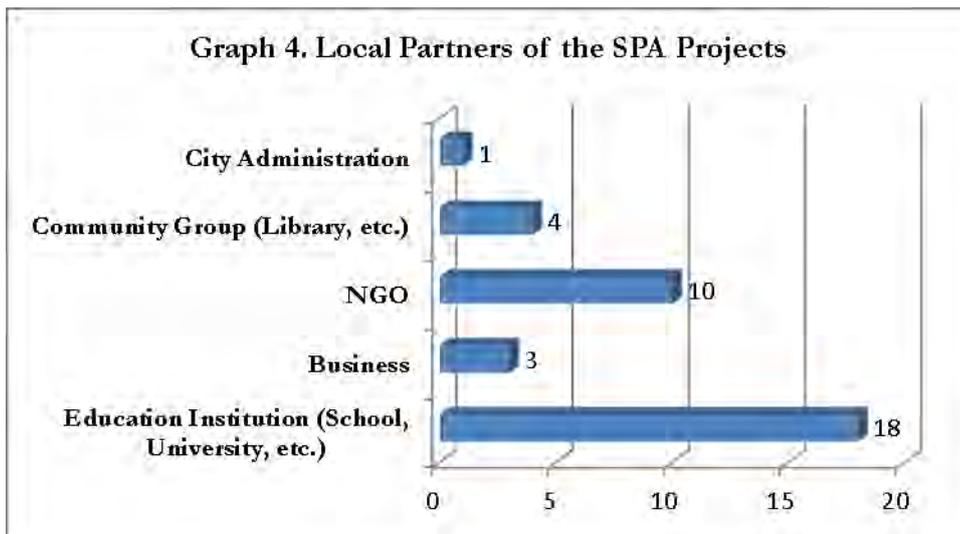
Projects funded between 2007 and 2010 were selected for the survey (See Graph 1). The majority of the selected projects were funded in 2009 and 2010 though the sample included projects funded in 2007 and 2008 as well. The distribution of the associated Peace Corps’ volunteers according to their program affiliation is shown in Graph 2. The TEFL program’s volunteers were the most proactive participants in the SPA program in the period between 2007 and 2010. It should be noted, however, that the small number of volunteers representing the business development program can be explained by the fact that that program closed in 2007.



Projects funded by the SPA program were carried out in various sectors and had different local partners. The breakdown of the projects by fields of activity and types of local institutional partner are shown in Graphs 3 and 4. It is of a particular interest to note that the majority of projects were implemented in the areas of youth development and education, which comes as no surprise since the TEFL volunteers were the most active participants in the SPA program.



Educational institutions were the most common local partners that paired with Peace Corps' volunteers to implement grassroots projects.



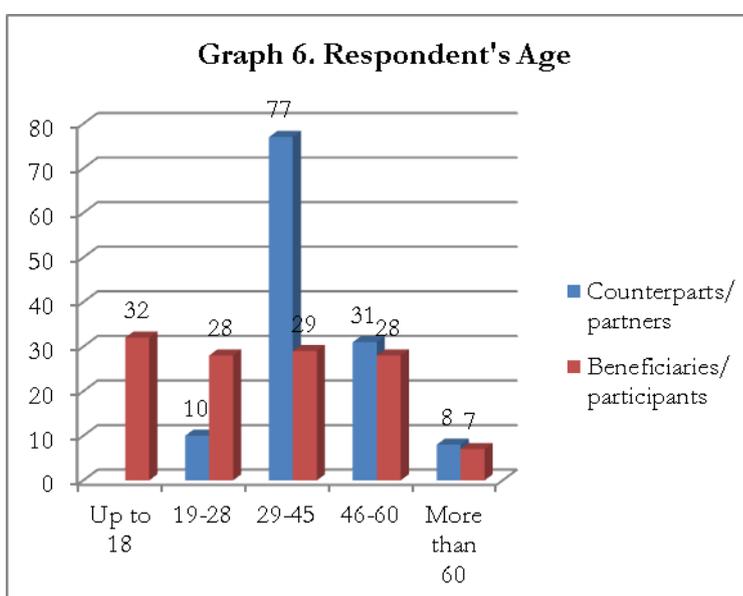
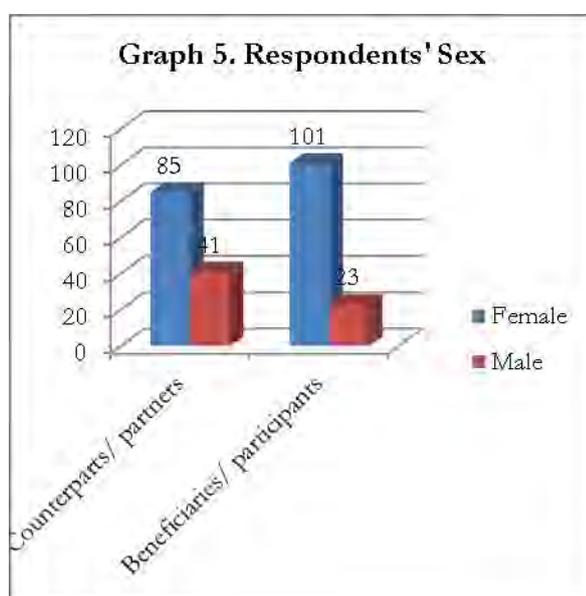
Conclusion

The 36 projects identified for the evaluation were implemented in 23 municipalities in three oblasts; the majority of these municipalities were the district centers. The majority of the projects in the sample were funded and implemented in 2009 and 2010, while the Peace Corps program with the highest number of SPA-participating PCVs was TEFL. Youth development and education were the main sectors targeted by SPA projects, while educational institutions were the most common local partners of PCVs.

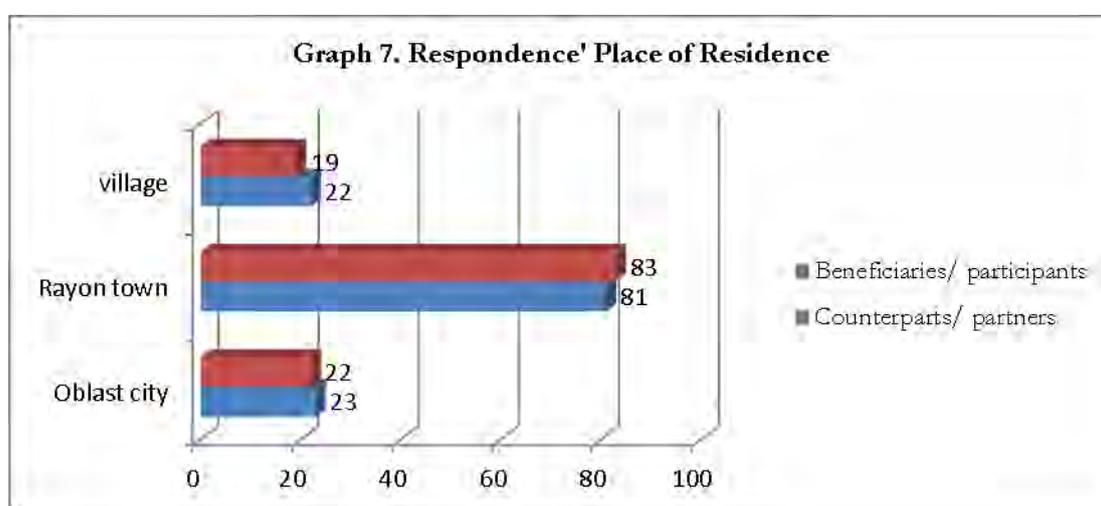
Overview of Respondents

Several groups of respondents were identified for participation in the study. They included Counterparts/partners who were engaged in the development of project ideas and preparation of project proposals, and who took part in project implementation. Since each project was designed to make improve the lives of target groups, project beneficiaries were asked to participate in the survey as well. Beneficiaries were engaged in an attempt to assess the projects' results and overall usefulness. In total, 126 Counterparts/partners and 124 beneficiaries participated in the survey. Details about the breakdown of respondents by oblasts, municipalities, and projects are available in Appendix 8.

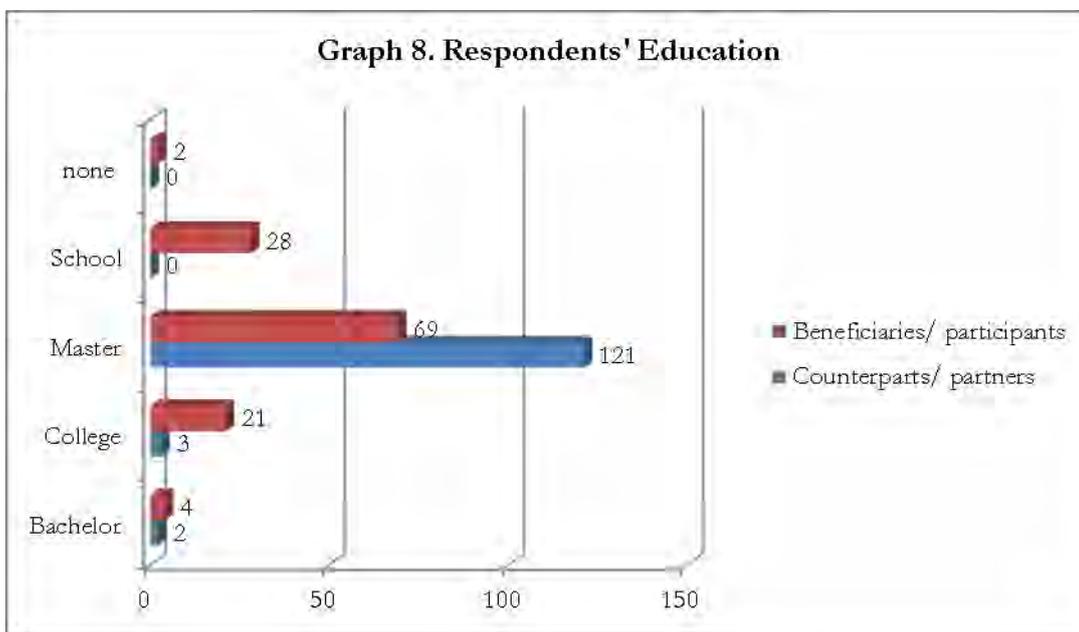
Analysis of respondent groups showed that women represented 67% of the Counterparts/partners' group and 81% of beneficiaries (see Graph 5). The disproportionate number of female respondents is likely explained by several facts. To begin, Ukrainian demographic data indicates that 54% of the population is female—just 46 % male. In addition, a high percentage of the staff of schools and civic organizations is female, and women are generally more active in civic life than men. In terms of age, respondent groups were roughly representative of the population (see Graph 6). The beneficiaries' group was particularly evenly apportioned though it had a smaller number of respondents over age 60. The Counterparts/partners' group contained had a smaller range, with 86% of respondents between the ages of 29 and 60 and only small number of respondents were under 18 years old (8%) or over 60 years old (6%).



The breakdown of respondents from two groups by place of residence is almost identical and shows that the overwhelming majority of both Counterparts/partners and beneficiaries (64% and 67% respectively) were from district centers. Roughly 18% of respondents from each group live in oblast centers, while 18% of Counterparts/partners and 15% of beneficiaries reside in villages (See Graph 7).



The education of the two groups differed to some extent, which is understandable given their varying level of engagement in SPA projects. The vast majority of respondents from the Counterparts/partners group have higher academic education (96%). The remaining 4% graduated from a vocational secondary school or failed to complete academic studies. The respondents from the beneficiaries' group are more diverse in this respect. 23% of them have secondary-level education, 17% have vocational secondary education, 56% have higher education and 3% have not completed their studies (See Graph 8).



Conclusion

The majority of respondents representing Counterparts and partners are women, live in district centers, and are between 29 and 60 years old. Most of them work in educational institutions and have higher academic education. The majority of beneficiaries are also affiliated with educational institutions but their level of education varies greatly. This is unsurprising since the group of beneficiaries has a greater age range, and contains a large share of schoolchildren. Similar to Counterparts/partners, the majority of beneficiaries live in the district centers. The percentage of female beneficiaries is higher than the percentage of female Counterparts/partners.

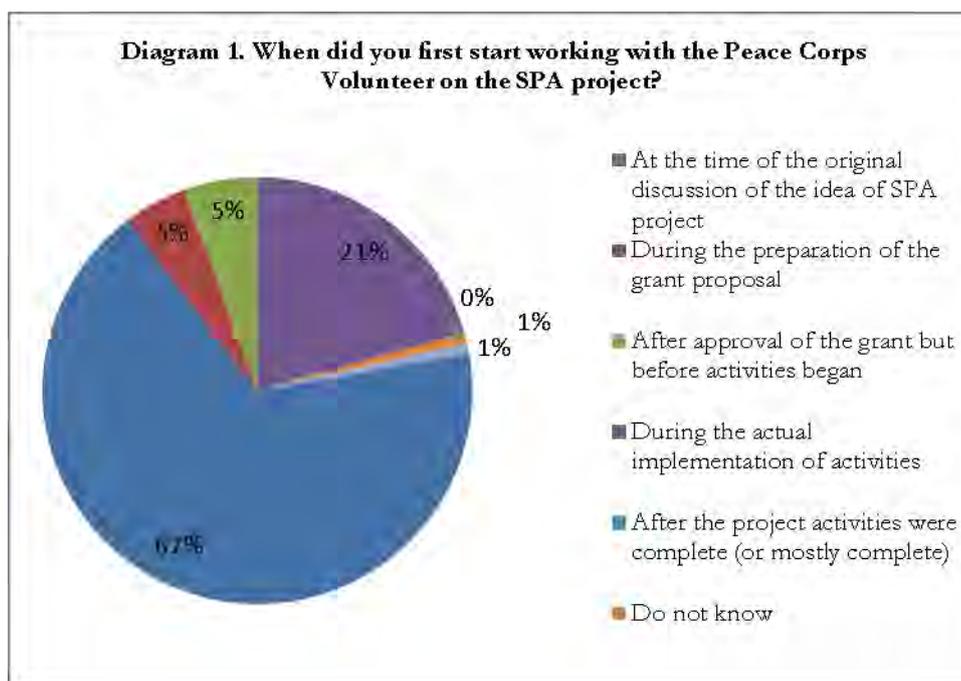
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the survey are presented in this chapter under headings outlining the survey's objectives. First, the capacity of projects to meet community needs by developing and implementing local initiatives were assessed by gauging various target groups' perceptions of selected projects and, secondly, the impact the projects had on these target groups: counterparts, beneficiaries, partners and participants. The third objective aimed at studying the extent to which expected results were achieved by SPA-sponsored projects. Lastly, the impact projects had on the capacity of local communities was evaluated as well. Four projects were selected to study the impact they had on the communities, recipients and beneficiaries. The presentation of findings and their discussion follows by objective and is summarized below.

OBJECTIVE 1. Role of the SPA projects in addressing community-identified priorities

This section studies how PCV collaborated with local organizations, role of each side in identifying an project idea, spheres where the approved projects addressed different needs and problems, who were the project beneficiaries, and how they explain the importance of the problems addressed by the SPA projects.

The majority of the counterpart/partner group (67,5% or 85 organizations out of 126) **started working with the Peace Corps Volunteer** on the SPA project at the time of the project's initial conception. Around 21% of respondents or 26 organizations started working with the PC volunteer on the SPA project during the actual implementation of activities, 5% of respondents - during the preparation of the grant proposal and 6% of respondents - after grant approval but prior to the start of project activities (See Diagram 1).



Almost all local organizations (95%) requested and received the SPA grant. The organizations that took part in the SPA projects included non-governmental institutions, entrepreneurial organizations, schools, local citizen initiatives, a center for children's art, libraries, vocational schools, condominiums, institutes, youth centers, social service centers for youth, and universities. Approximately 96% of these organizations existed before the start of the SPA project and one organization was founded during the SPA project.

About 64% of organizations that existed before the start of the SPA project had high or average capacity, 16% of them had low capacity and 17% did not have any capacity. The majority (89 of 121 that identified level of their capacity out of 126 surveyed) of these organizations, in their own opinion, substantially improved their capacity while completing the project, 22 of 121 organizations improved capacity to some extent (again in their own estimation), while 4 organizations improved their capacity just slightly. The organization that started its activities during the SPA project had an average capacity; however, upon completion of the project the capacity was greatly improved. The results of the analysis are presented in Tables 1-2.

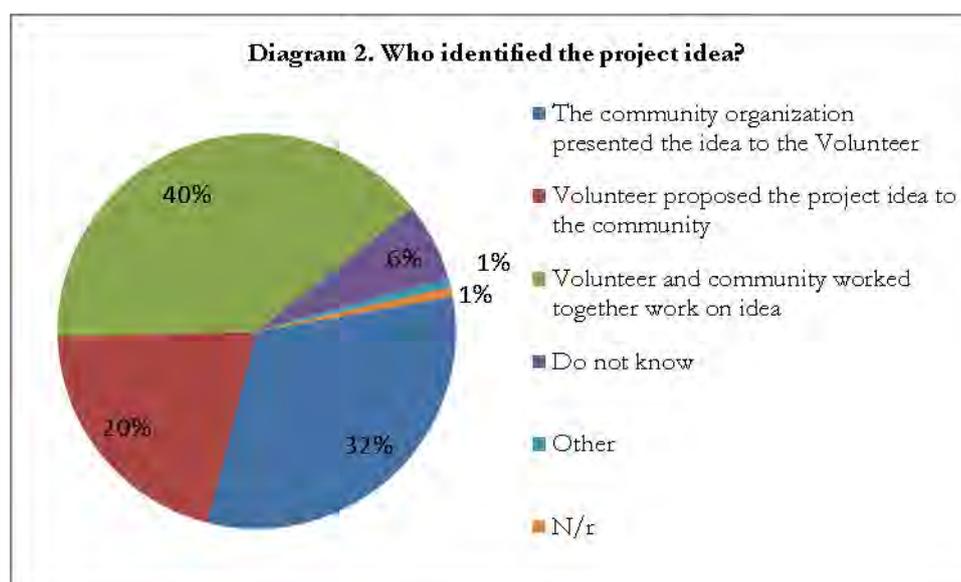
Table 1. Capacity of Organizations Before the Start of the SPA Projects

	Do not know	Average capacity	High capacity	Low capacity	No capacity
Do not know	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Existed before the start of the SPA project	6%	30%	27%	16%	18%
Started during the SPA project	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%

Table 2. Capacity of Organizations Upon Completion of the SPA Projects

	Do not know	Little improved capacity	Much improved capacity	Some improved capacity
Do not know	2%	0%	0%	0%
Existed before the start of the SPA project	4%	3%	71%	18%
Started during the SPA project	0%	0%	1%	0%

According to 40% of respondents the idea for their local project was conceived of by the Volunteer and the community working together, 21% of counterparts noted that the Volunteer proposed the project idea to the community, and 32% of respondents were sure that the community organization presented the idea to the Volunteer (See Diagram 2).



The approved projects addressed **different needs** and **tackled different problems** by attempting, for example, to:

Improve education:

- *New knowledge and skills through creation of the premises for the Training Center. Businessmen also need new information and trainings (legislation is constantly changing). The only problem is the premises – it influences the quality of education.*
- *The class, as well as the whole region is multinational. It was not a critical issue, but it existed nevertheless. We wanted to raise children's awareness on issues of culture and tolerance.*
- *There was no methodological center in the region, where teachers from rural areas could hold meetings, receive knowledge of new educational technologies, get PC user skills. Moreover, both teachers and students had insufficient knowledge on civil society.*
- *Insufficient knowledge on civil society and absence of a modern resource center that would serve both methodological and educational needs.*
- *The village had no modern methodological center where the school teachers could learn about new teaching methods, use the computers, improve their knowledge of English, and develop new methodological materials.*
- *The school is missing equipment to hold extra curriculum activities, additional lessons, groups, panels etc. and school literature was not systemic (in the library), which required extra time to find the book you need.*

- *It is important to create a media library to grant access to information, to participate in educational activities.*
- *To improve school's educational capacity.*
- *We needed to purchase equipment and educational literature for those who wanted to learn English.*
- *Purchasing the equipment and literature for enhanced education of the readers.*
- *People use literature, they need literature in foreign languages*
- *The need for the school to meet the contemporary requirements for the educational and training process.*

Increase access to new means of communication and technical equipment:

- *We needed a center for communication of different groups of population using modern computer equipment. Different groups of population could learn how to use this equipment. The center should facilitate students' involvement in student self-government.*
- *We lacked a room for communication on an equal and democratic basis between students and teachers, between civil servants and civil society organizations. There was no room for a large number of people. The school had no modern computers.*
- *Low level of information provision to the village citizens about the school problems.*
- *Low level of computer skills among middle and senior school students. Low level of involvement of our community (first of all, among the students' parents) in the school life.*
- *Lack of the necessary modern equipment for improving the quality of knowledge. Teachers felt the lack of resources (information, methodological experiences, new methods of work, etc) for their work.*
- *The need for creation of a multimedia classroom. I communicate with my colleagues from Russia, and they say they have it in every school. My goal was to create one in our school.*
- *Absence of video conferences and lack of communication with other universities*

Solve social problems and/or raise social awareness:

- *To solve social problems of the town and financial issues of the university.*
- *The project was aimed at raising social awareness and social consciousness of the town residents.*
- *The project was aimed at solving two problems simultaneously: increasing social involvement of the students and at the same time improving their knowledge of English.*
- *The need for integrating people with disability into social life, the need for their social adaptation. People with disabilities now feel little attention, which they need so much.*
- *People with disabilities are very often isolated from the society and feel an acute need for communication and a lack of such communication. They seldom leave their homes that increase their feeling of inferiority and isolation from the world.*
- *There are families in the town that experience a difficult life situation and need assistance.*
- *The need for social adaptation of families experiencing difficult life situations.*
- *Need for adaptation and rehabilitation of former prisoners so that they could achieve social fulfillment*
- *The problem is that youth graduates being unprepared for searching a job, build a career etc. They do not get this in their diploma. We have problems with employment among our graduates.*
- *Young people after graduation cannot find employment and fulfill their ambition.*
- *To help women in critical life situations*
- *Employment base for unemployed young women, who needed additional skills in order to find job*
- *Project was aimed at teaching young people the basics of office work: documentation requirements, PC skills etc. We also taught them how to apply and search for work (by holding meetings with entrepreneurs).*
- *Project is aimed at solving problems for the least protected social groups (young girls), who have no financial ability to pay for education to receive additional knowledge and skills*
- *Project aimed at solving issues of social adaptation, employment, obtaining new profession, ensuring effective communication between the participants.*
- *Insufficient attention of the town authorities to social problems. First, the organization was not suitable for children. It requires major repairs. Furthermore, there was no sufficient knowledge about the organization in the town.*

Improve English language learning:

- *Lack of books in English in the local library, insufficient access of local youth to computer technologies, absence of environment for promotion of creative, extraordinary methods of learning English by the town youth.*
- *There was no free access to English literature in Kolomyia at the time. there was also a need for creation of space with free access to resources in English (books, audio, video).*
- *The Youth Center's English club was popular with both children and adults. To make the club's activities more diverse we needed additional equipment and literature.*

- *Lack of technical means for teaching. Absence of communication with native speakers and lack of training literature in foreign languages.*
- *Insufficient material and technical resources (we were slightly behind other school in our town).*
 - *Absence of an access of English teachers to English language literature and new methods of teaching.*
- *Lack of equipment and teaching materials (books, etc.). Teachers had no room for methodological meetings of English teachers (at a rayon level).*

Projects also covered the following sectors:

Tourism development:

- *Due to the need for information on potential of the region in sphere of tourism, opportunity to develop tourist routes and produce information materials, such as leaflets and brochures.*
- *Dolyzna region has a significant tourist potential and marking of the tourist routes was crucial for development of tourism and maintenance of historical role of the region.*
- *There was a lag in creating tourist products of proper quality - that sphere was missing in Dolyzna region.*
- *Due to absence of coherent informational campaign for development of tourism.*
- *Tourism industry development is essential for Dolyzna region and it is possible because Dolyzna is a mountainous region.*
 - *The local youth had issues with Graphic design software.*
 - *Computer equipment was not used up to its full capacity.*
 - *Absence of conducive environment for PC classes or other such activities.*
- *Idea on popularization of Kosiv region as a tourist destination.*
- *Popularization of gutsul culture and work of the center, environmentally friendly upbringing, setting new ways of cooperation between government and society.*
- *There are a lot of arts events in the region. Profanity filming is of low quality. There is need for video materials. We need to film technologies and work of local artists and preserve it for future generations. We need to save gutsul uniqueness.*

Youth development:

- *Aimed at development of creative thinking of the students, at an all-round support, overcoming complexes and developing critical thinking.*
- *To improve communication among the students of the college, help in their personal development and teaching them basics of problem-solving.*
- *Development of critical thinking among students, skills in public speaking, ability to work with information.*
- *To foster development of the youth. To teach children to communicate effectively and with proper argumentation, to teach them to think, to get them away from the street influences, to involve local community in solving of the problems of the youth.*
- *To teach the youth basics of graphic design software and PC skills*
- *Low involvement of village youth, low level of knowledge on healthy lifestyle, absence of initiative groups of youth in the village.*
- *Low involvement of youth in social life, no culture of healthy way of life*
- *Physical condition and health improvement among students and youth. Low interest of students in social activities and for extra curriculum activities.*
- *The village youth was never involved in any kind of social work or health improvement programs.*
- *Students and teachers were not doing sports in the after class hours.*

Museum development

- *To increase numbers of museum visitors. To gather funds for museum needs. To involve volunteers in the museum work*
- *This project helps to develop volunteer movement; the community has better knowledge of problems of the museum and does not remain indifferent. This project also helped to develop partnerships between the institutions of our town.*
- *To popularize museum work and involve more youth in museum activities.*
- *Lack of funding. Lack of popularity of museum. Museum building repair, funds allocation*
- *Involvement and motivation of local community to participate in museum activities (planning and holding events)*
- *Low visitor frequency at the museum. Disinterestedness of community and city government to the cultural center of our city.*
- *Underdeveloped tourism infrastructure in the Volyn region, Dolyzna region.*
- *List tourist attractions of the region*
- *There was no information on our region as a tourist destination on the Internet and neither as a published information. There was no statistic data analysis on tourist flows (age, country etc.) and tourist infrastructure.*
- *To support museums of Ivano-Frankivsk, to advertise them, to identify the potential of museums and use it.*

Economic development:

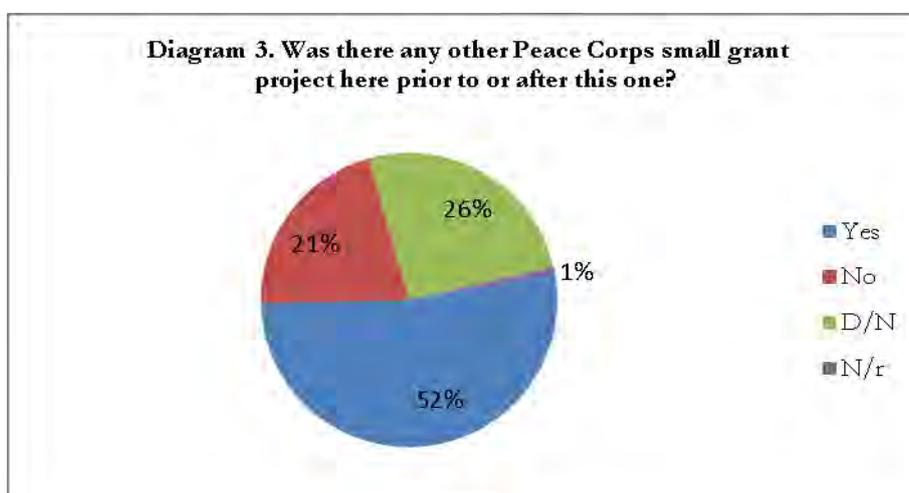
- *Increase in economic data of farmer businesses on raising potatoes with use of new technology of seedlings protection.*
- *In the technological era we live in, the traditions are disappearing - not saved. Traditional crafts are forgotten.*
- *In our town we had producers of souvenirs, but they did not have a permanent market for their products. The local museum on its own could not organize the exhibition of works of local artists so that people could buy products of their interest.*
- *People had no knowledge of traditions and techniques of souvenirs and folk dolls making.*
- *The museum is in need of repair works for 20 years (museum building is a landmark).*

Other:

- *Our organization had to improve its material and technical base, and the premises needed repairs. There was time when we had no furniture at all. Children who came to us had to sit on a window sill. We have no chairs, no tables, etc.*
- *Our students were not able to present their thoughts coherently.*
- *The school offers advanced learning of the Ukrainian language. Children wanted to become journalists in the future, so there was a need for a launching platform.*
- *Absence of career guidance*
- *There was no school newspaper. There was a need for provision of information*
- *Satisfaction of students' need for communication, creation of a journalism club*
- *Creating an active community group and civil society in the town on the whole. Teaching rhetoric, basics of politics of tolerance, individual work and elements of management.*

The beneficiaries of SPA projects were girls and boys, women and men, students, and staff of the local authorities. According to respondents other target groups included all citizens and museum workers, the community at large, artists, children and young people with disabilities, foster parents, families with many children, families in crisis, tourists, disabled women, the unemployed, single mothers, farmers, teachers, former prisoners on probation, tour operators, pensioners, and representatives of mass media, businesses, NGOs, and representatives of public councils.

Around 65 respondents (or 52%) said that there were other Peace Corps small grant projects in the communities prior to or after the project in question. 26 respondents (or 21%) did not have any SPA projects in their communities and 25 respondents did not know anything at all about these projects (Diagram 3).



For 77% of beneficiaries/participants the SPA project was the only project in which they participated while 23% participated in other Peace Corps' affiliated projects.

Beneficiaries/participants provided the following explanations about the **importance of the problems** addressed by the SPA projects:

- *Prior to the SPA project's implementation the district had no modern methodological center where rural teachers could meet to learn about new educational technologies and master computer skills. Teachers and students had little knowledge about civil society.*
- *The village had no modern methodological center where rural teachers could learn about new teaching techniques, learn to work with a computer, and improve their knowledge of English.*

- *It was important to improve and deepen our knowledge of English.*
- *Due to this project we have overcome our fear of being in front of an audience.*
- *The equipment we had prior to the project was outdated and non-usable.*
- *There are massive problems with Internet access in Kramatorsk. Most do not have the financial ability to buy a PC and connect to the web.*
- *There were two children with mental disabilities and their parents among the participants.*
- *I had conflicts with law myself and I felt these problems on my own skin.*
 - *Before the SPA project, there has been nothing like that, there was no information*
 - *We needed knowledge*
 - *We began to learn our land*
- *There were topics I was interested in, and I learned a lot. I had a good time attending meetings and communicating with different participants, who were interesting people.*
- *These needs were really important for use. Project activities facilitated/prompted further development of the museum business, and new ideas. During joint meetings, new ideas were developed. Museum employees became more open with one another and are now closer.*
- *The project was especially for the target group in the context of healthcare.*
- *We use the skills and knowledge we obtained in our current work.*
- *The needs were important. We wanted to tame our fear of speaking publicly. We followed the local news channel and observed the way news anchors conduct themselves.*
- *The rates at which the newspaper was bought indicate that it was needed. People waited for new issues, and asked for them.*

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 1

The majority of counterparts/partners started working with the Peace Corps Volunteer on the SPA project at the time the project idea originated. Only a small group of organizations started working with the Peace Corps volunteer during the actual implementation of activities, while the remainder began cooperating with their PCV during the preparation of the grant proposal or after the grant's approval but before the start of project activities.

Almost all local organizations requested and received the SPA grant. The organizations that took part in the SPA projects were non-governmental institutions, entrepreneurial associations, schools, local initiatives, a Center for Children's Art, libraries, vocational schools, condominiums, youth centers, social services for youth, and universities. The majority of these organizations existed before the start of the SPA project and only one organization was started during the SPA project. According to respondents, the majority of these organizations improved their capacity to a great extent during the completion of their SPA project.

40% of respondents said the idea for their project was identified jointly through cooperation between the Volunteer and the community; 21% of counterparts claimed that the Volunteer proposed the project idea to the community and 32% said that the local partner organization presented the idea to the Volunteer.

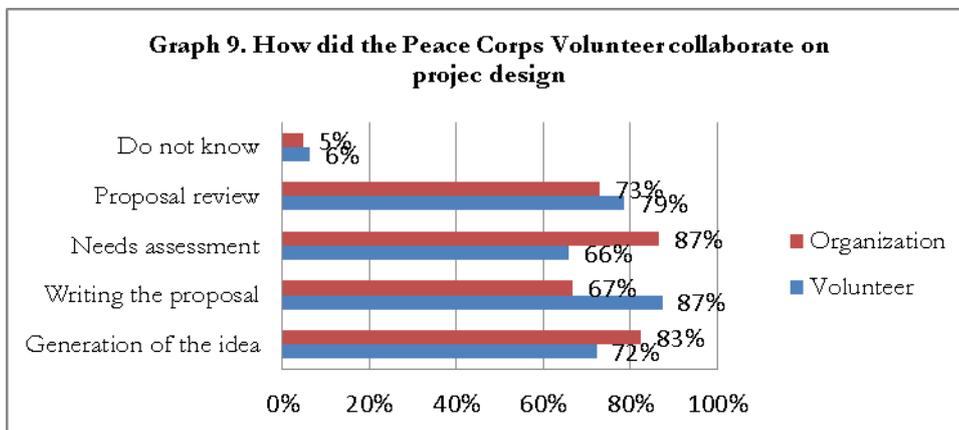
The approved SPA projects aimed at improvement of education, provision access to new means of communication and equipment, solve social problems and raise social awareness and targeted tourism and youth development, learning and improvement of English language knowledge and skills, local museums and economy development. The SPA projects focused on all citizens and museum workers, community, artists, children and young people with disabilities, foster parents, families with many children, families in crisis, tourists, disabled women, the unemployed, single mothers, farmers, teachers, former prisoners on probation, tour operators, pensioners, representatives of mass media, business, NGOs, and representatives of public councils.

50% of communities surveyed have hosted another Peace Corps volunteer and implemented a volunteer-initiated project either prior to or since the SPA project in question. The SPA project was the only project, in which 77% of beneficiaries/participants had participated.

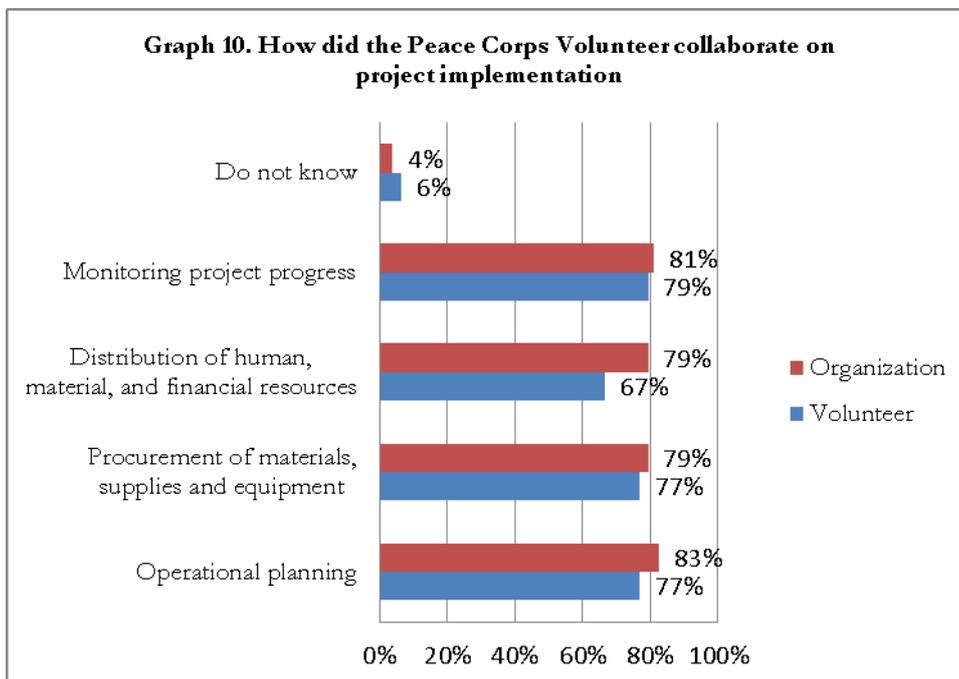
The analysis demonstrated that the SPA projects addressed selected community needs that were identified by the local organizations in cooperation with the Peace Corps volunteer.

OBJECTIVE 2. Community involvement in the design and implementation of SPA projects

Community involvement in the design and implementation of the SPA projects is important for community ownership of the project results, sharing successes and failures as well as for development of the community members' capacity. At the project planning and preparation stages 83% of **local organizations were engaged** in the generation of the project idea, 87% of organizations were involved in the needs assessment, 67% of organizations were involved in writing of the proposal and 73% of organizations participated in the proposal review. The volunteers' contributions peaked at the stages of proposal writing and proposal review according to 87% and 79% of respondents respectively. The participation of volunteers was also crucial at the stages of idea generation and the needs assessment (See Graph 9).

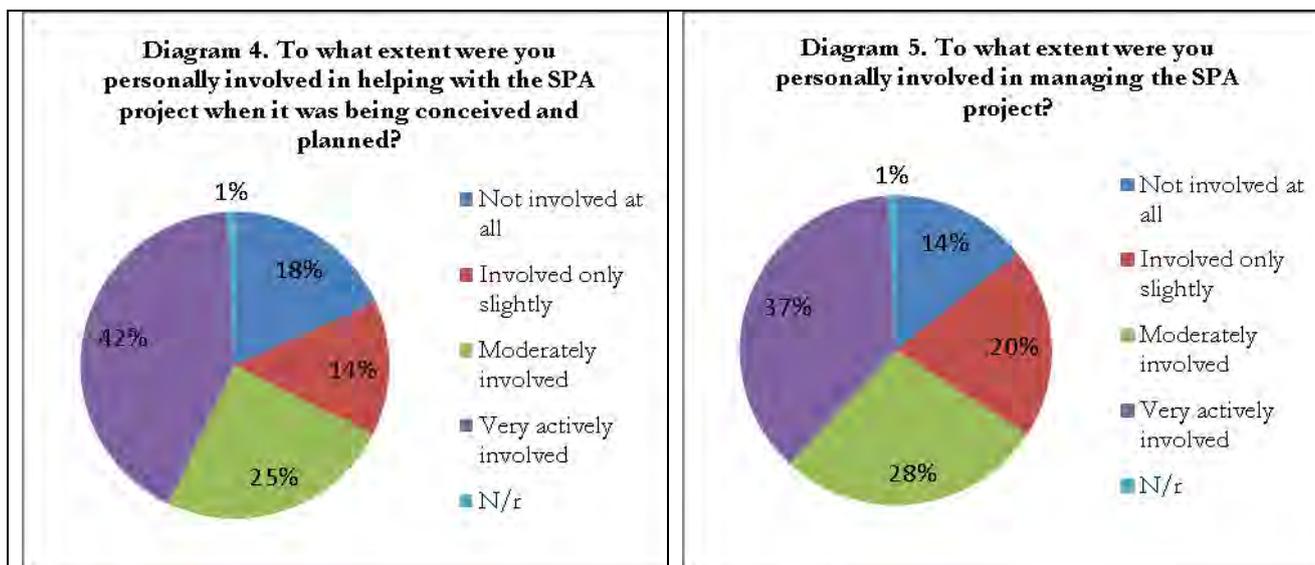


At the **project management/implementation** phase the PC volunteers were primarily involved in monitoring project progress, operational planning and procuring materials, supplies, and equipment. They were least involved in the distribution of human, material, and financial resources. The local organizations were actively engaged in all key stages of the SPA projects' management/implementation (See Graph 10).



Analysis of the survey results indicated that the engagement of local organizations in project planning and preparation as well as in further management/implementation did not depend on the extent to which the projects' objectives were achieved.

Approximately 42% of counterparts/partners were active and personally involved in helping with the SPA project when it was being conceived and planned, 25% of partners were only moderately involved, 14% of organizations were slightly involved, and 18% of partners were not involved at all (See Diagram 4). A similar trend was observed in terms of personal engagement of the respondents in the project management (See Diagram 5).

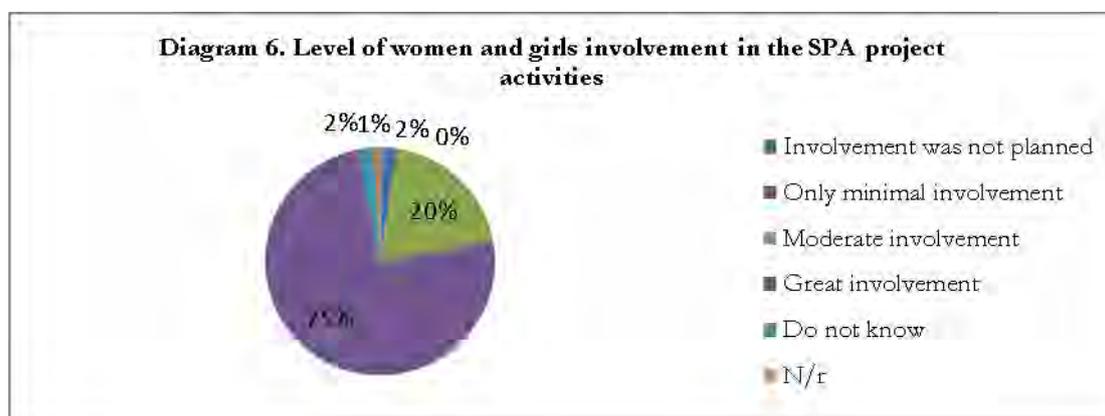


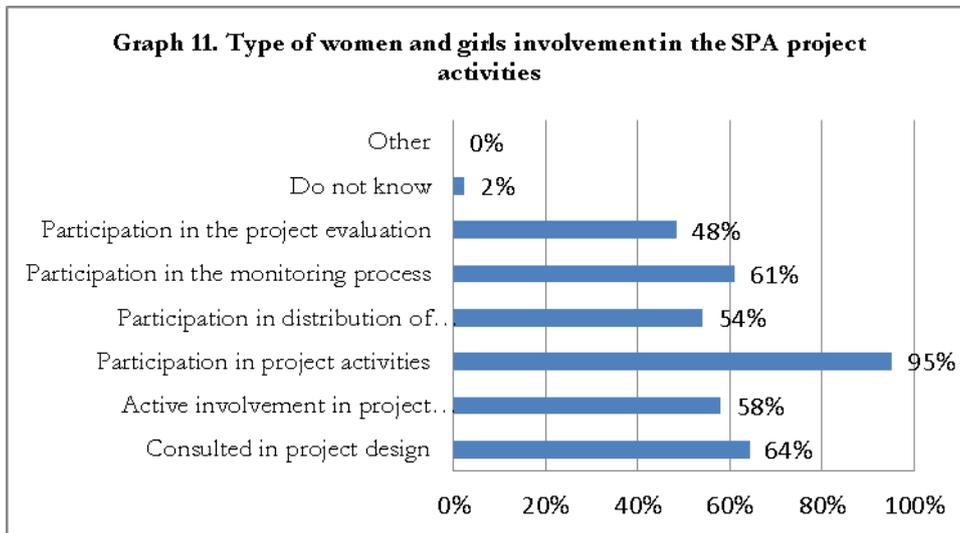
Around 92% of counterparts/partners **personally participated** in the project activities and only 9% of partners were not engaged in the project activities. Table 3 demonstrates the engagement of respondents at various stages of the project planning and implementation. As we can see 39 of 126 partners were *actively engaged* in the SPA projects' planning and management/implementation, the majority of respondents were *moderately* involved at the planning stage and they were *moderately* or *slightly* involved in the project activities.

Table 3. Counterparts/Partners involvement in the SPA projects planning and management

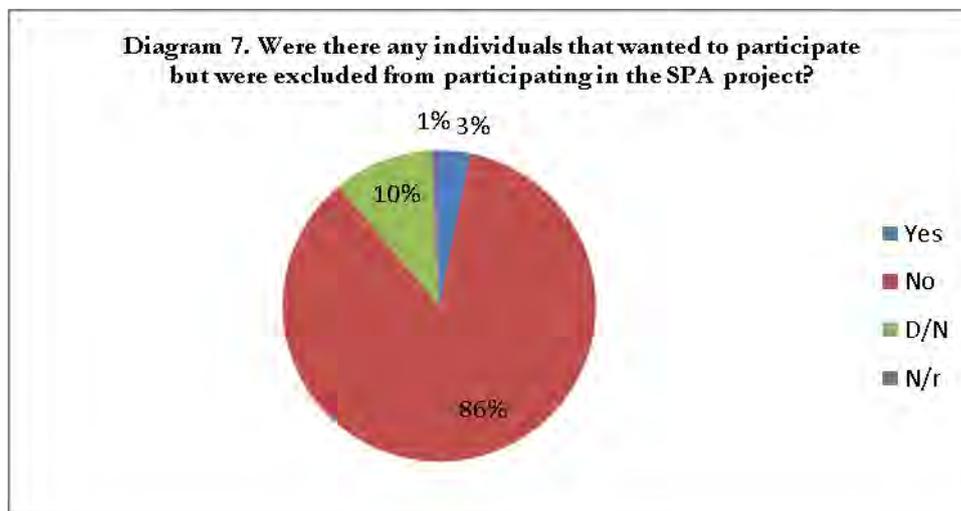
	Management			
	Involved only slightly	Moderately involved	Not involved at all	Very actively involved
Planning				
Involved only slightly (18)	39%	11%	39%	11%
Moderately involved (31)	32%	42%	10%	16%
Not involved at all (23)	26%	39%	30%	4%
Very actively involved (53)	4%	21%	2%	73%

The majority of respondents who personally participated in the project activities were women. That was not a surprise as female respondents dominated in the counterparts/partners group that took part in the evaluation. Survey results indicated that the level of women and girls' engagement in SPA projects was *great* (75% of respondents) or *moderate* (20% of respondents). Women and girls usually participated in project activities, were consulted in project design, participated in the monitoring process, were actively involved in project management and leadership, and participated in the distribution of resources (human, material and financial) as well as in the project's evaluation. The level and types of women and girls' engagement in different activities and stages is presented in Diagram 6 and Graph 11.

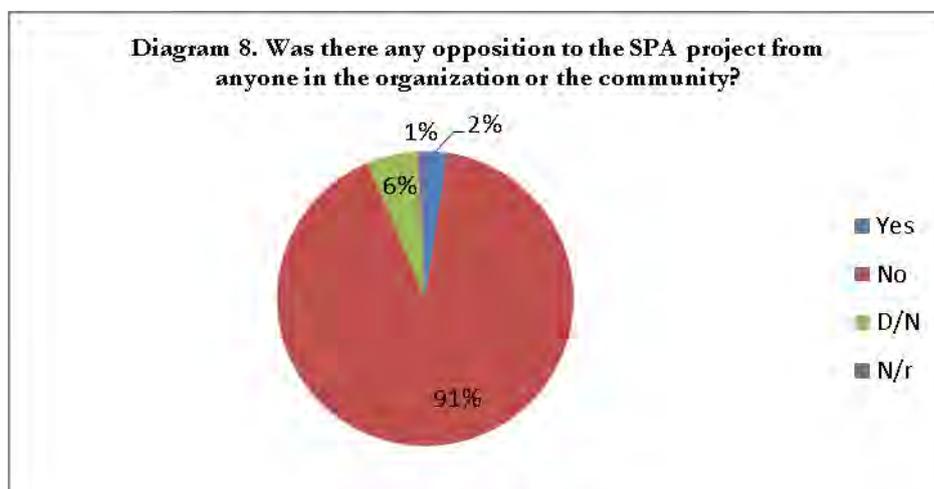




Only 3% of counterparts/partners indicated that there were individuals who **wanted to participate but were excluded** from participating in the SPA project, while 86% of partners claimed that all had been welcomed (See Diagram 7).



Around 92% of counterparts/partners stated that there was **no opposition to the SPA project** from anyone in the organization or the community (Diagram 8). Three respondents attributed resistance displayed by the community to the following factors: “It was something new, people got used to it. At first, they did not understand why we were doing this ...” and “The disabled people were very distrusting; they were very skeptical (especially the elderly) saying that they would prefer some buckwheat and yoghurt (with expired shelf life). They said we were doing silly things ...”



Approximately 60% of partners did not participate in **Peace Corps training**, while 22% of partners took part in the *Instruction to Counterparts*, 8% of partners participated in the *Training in Designing and Managing Projects* and 4% of partners took part in the *Technical (professional) Training*. Some partners participated in other trainings including leadership training, training on fundraising and community work, PEPFAR training, a summer health school, training for coaches, and training on HIV-AIDS prevention in Ukraine (Graph 12). The distribution of training participants by sex is shown in Table 4.

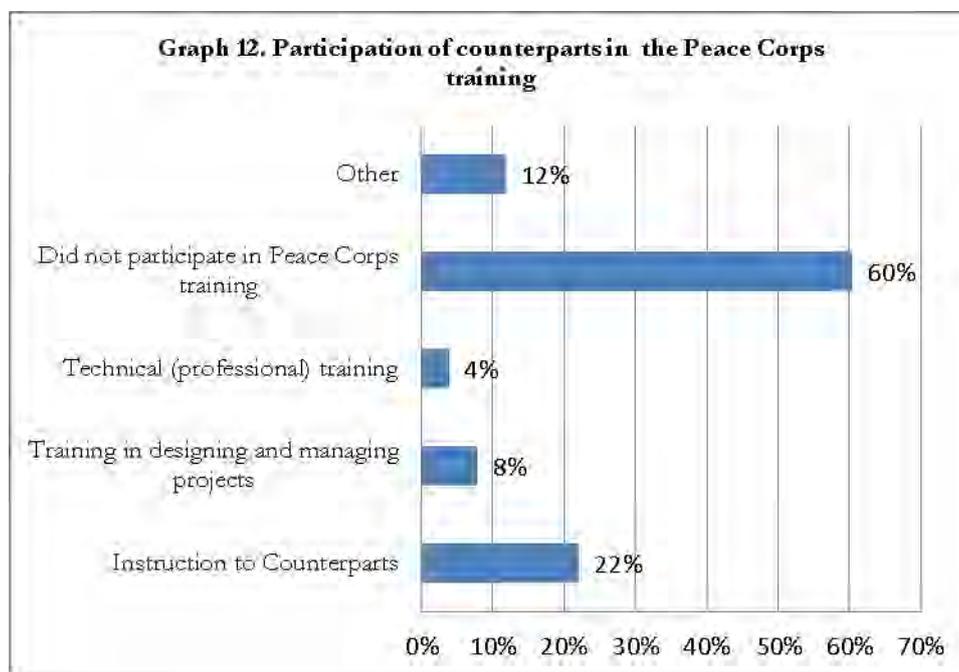


Table 4. The Breakdown of Training Participants by Sex

	Instruction to Counterparts	Training in designing and managing projects	Technical (professional) training	Did not participate in Peace Corps training	Other
Female (85)	26%	11%	3%	55%	14%
Male (41)	15%	2%	5%	71%	7%

Participation in Peace Corps training helped 48 respondents in designing or managing/implementing the SPA project. Respondents claimed that Peace Corps trainings, in particular, helped them to identify project ideas, plan project activities, strengthen teamwork and human resource management, formulate goals/tasks more clearly, plan project activities, monitor the project and its results, analyze project progress and lessons learned, improve their communication and organizational skills, and increase their ability to communicate with members of the community, to fundraise, to render consultations to the school on project management, to work with the community and search for additional financing, to improve their time management, to better communicate with their Peace Corps volunteer partner, and to write budgets and conduct needs assessment. Some respondents *“learned about the very existence of such projects (i.e. SPA) [through PC trainings].* Few counterparts/partners noted that the training they participated *“was not very useful for development of the project because after the training on HIV/AIDS prevention I became the school lecturer on HIV/AIDS problems and I work with students and their parents.”* Such comments were very rare and general impression from the training could be described as follows: *“The training was very useful for me personally, since this was the first volunteer who came to see us and all the information was new and very useful. For a while I literally took the training materials everywhere I went.”* Moreover, besides receiving useful information that aided in the implementation of SPA-projects, counterparts benefited from becoming personally acquainted with regional representatives from Peace Corps.

The **beneficiaries/participants participated in the SPA projects** by attending a single training event, workshop, camp, or conference, or a series of training events or classes; they participated in a construction project; used (or continue to use) publicly available materials, supplies and equipment provided by the project; and conducted trainings, distributed materials, worked directly with families (Table 5).

Table 5. Beneficiaries/participants Participation in the SPA projects

Forms of beneficiaries/participants participation in the SPA projects	# of Respondents	Share
Attended a single training event, workshop, camp, or conference	13	10,5%
Attended a series of training events or classes	67	54,0%
Participated in a construction project	39	31,5%
Used (or continue to use) publicly available materials, supplies, or equipment that were provided by the project	64	51,6%
Directly received resources (including materials, supplies, or equipment) provided by the project	31	25,0%
Other	3	2,4%

Distribution of beneficiaries/participants in the SPA projects by sex is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Distribution of Beneficiaries/participants in the SPA projects by Sex

	Attended a single training event, workshop, camp, or conference	Attended a series of training events or classes	Participated in a construction project	Used (or continue to use) publicly available materials, supplies, or equipment provided by the project	Directly received resources (including materials, supplies, or equipment) provided by the project	Other
Female (85)	14%	65%	36%	58%	27%	3%
Male (41)	2%	29%	19%	37%	19%	0%

During a group interview with beneficiaries/participants, some noted that they were consulted or involved in planning the SPA project. They recalled their involvement in the following ways: “*We brainstormed to find out what we wanted as the participants of marketing research;*” or “*I was constantly involved in communication;*” or “*I was consulted on the name of the Center.*”

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 2

The results of the analysis of community involvement in design and implementation of the SPA projects revealed that the majority of local organizations were engaged in all stages of the proposal development, in particular - generating project ideas, conducting needs assessments, writing proposals and revising proposals after they had been reviewed. The involvement of volunteers peaked at the writing the proposal and proposal review stages. However, PCVs also played extremely important roles generating ideas and conducting needs assessments. During the project management phase, PCVs were primarily engaged in monitoring project progress, operational planning and procuring materials, supplies, and equipment. Volunteers were less involved in the distribution of human, material, and financial resources. Local organizations were actively engaged in all key stages of SPA projects’ management and implementation.

Nearly 50% of partners were active and personally involved in helping with the SPA project when it was being conceived and planned, one in four partners was only moderately involved and one in five partners was not involved at all. A similar trend was observed when it came to personal engagement of respondents in the project’s management. Almost all partners interviewed by field teams personally participated in the project activities and one in three partners was actively engaged in his/her SPA project’s planning and implementation. The majority of respondents who was moderately involved at the planning stage were also moderately or slightly involved in the project activities. The majority of individuals who personally participated in the project were women [2 times as many women participated as men]. Survey results indicated that women and girls were engaged in each SPA project’s activities to a moderate or great extent.

Only 3% of partners indicated that there were individuals who wanted to participate but were excluded

from participating in the SPA project and only three respondents that claimed to have experienced community resistance to their projects. The resistance they encountered was described as follows: “*at first, they did not understand why we were doing this ...*”

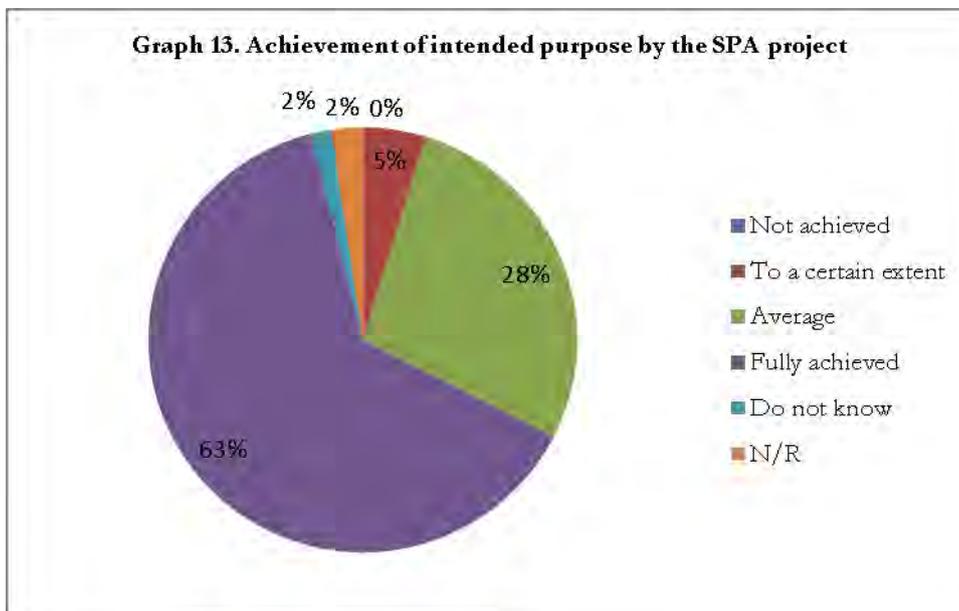
More than a half of the partners interviewed had not participated in Peace Corps training. Partners who had taken part in the training activities offered by the PC—Instruction to Counterparts, Training in Designing and Managing Projects, and Technical (Professional) Training—said that they had learned how to identify project ideas, plan project activities, formulate clear goals and tasks, analyze project progress and lessons learned, work with community members and search for additional financing, improve their time management, and better communicate with their Peace Corps volunteers. Some respondents “*learned about the very existence of projects like SPA by attending PC trainings.*”

Beneficiaries/participants participated in the SPA projects by attending a training, workshop, camp, or conference or by participating in a construction project, or using materials, supplies, or equipment made available through SPA funding.

Summing up the results it should be noted that the great majority of local organizations and communities were involved in design and implementation of the SPA projects at all stages. However, the quality of their engagement was difficult to assess.

OBJECTIVE 3. Achievement of expected results by the SPA projects

A project is designed to introduce positive to people’s lives. It is therefore of the utmost importance that all planned results are achieved. Since both the counterpart and other partners were engaged in the development and implementation of the SPA projects they were asked the following question: *How well did the SPA project achieve its intended purpose?* Around 63% of respondents believe that the projects’ objectives were fully achieved, in the opinion of 28% of respondents the projects’ objectives were achieved to an average extent and only 5% of respondents commented that the results were achieved only to a certain extent (See Graph 13).



65 of 80 respondents that indicated that their projects managed to fully achieve their intended results were positive that the capacity of their organizations noticeably improved, 13 people found the capacity of their organizations to be strengthened and 1 person commented that the capacity of his organization was slightly enhanced. 21 of 35 respondents that indicated that their projects’ results were achieved to an average extent thought that the SPA projects significantly strengthened their organizations, 7 individuals considered the capacity development of their organizations to be average while 3 people rated it as low. Even these 3 people who said that the projects had managed to achieve their objectives only to a certain extent still thought that their organizations had been empowered by the process. The breakdown of responses is provided in Table 7.

Table 7. Breakdown of Counterparts' and Partners' Responses According to the Level of Their Projects' Objective Achievements and Relative Level of Organizational Capacity Improvement

Level of capacity (number of respondents)	Do not know	Little improved capacity	Much improved capacity	Some improved capacity	N/r
Average (35)	8.5%	8.5%	60%	20%	3%
Do not know (2)	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Fully achieved (80)	1.25%	1.25%	81.25%	16.25%	0%
To a certain extent (6)	33%	0%	50%	17%	0%

Survey results indicated that the total number of objectives in the evaluated projects had not exceeded 7, whereas the average number was 4 or 5. Counterparts and partners were asked to evaluate to what extent each of the project objectives was achieved. Table 8 gives a picture of the achievements each project as perceived by the respondents.

Table 8. Summary of Achievements of the SPA Projects

Objective (number of respondents)	Not achieved at all	Achieved to certain extent	Fully achieved	Do not know
Objective 1 (125)	0%	21%	74%	5%
Objective 2 (125)	0%	13%	74%	13%
Objective 3 (115)	1%	17%	76%	6%
Objective 4 (91)	0%	11%	85%	4%
Objective 5 (63)	8%	8%	73%	11%
Objective 6 (20)	0%	10%	85%	5%
Objective 7 (15)	0%	0%	100%	0%

The overall outcomes demonstrated that the majority of respondents (from 74 to 100%) believed that the project objectives were fully achieved, certain percentage of respondents (from 8 to 21%) indicated that the project objectives were achieved to a certain extent. Some partners (from 4 to 13%) were not able to provide any comments about the projects' results. It should be noted that there was a group of respondents (from 1 to 8%) who commented that certain objectives of the SPA projects were not achieved at all. The reasons listed by the respondents were classified as follows:

Improper project implementation methods and/or introduction of changes to them in the course of the project implementation. For instance: i) *Drawing ended up not being appropriate for some tasks, and there really should have been a color printer at hand. Unfortunately, the school didn't have one available;* ii) *Objectives 1 and 2 were modified. The fashion shows were replaced with theater performances based on the needs of the project participants (target group);* iii) *The production of a documentary on the tour routes (Objective 2) was not completed, in the end, only a promo-version was presented as a result.*

Low engagement/activity displayed by the project participants, in particular: i) *Those who came from around the region showed little involvement;* ii) *The last objective was not fulfilled because some participants from rural and small groups were not very active;* iii) *The young people involved at that time were not properly prepared for such work and as a result were not active enough.*

The project participants were expected to have certain skills, which they either did not have or were not able to develop. The following reasons were provided (original language): i) *The youth involved had no skills in self-governance. Certain people were unwilling to work;* ii) *There was no self-governance at the village level (there was at the school) until the creation of the Youth council in 2011;* iii) *Students' mentality did not help them to absorb information on opportunities to study abroad;* iv) *We gathered a large group of children but the tasks at hand were too difficult for some of them and not very interesting;* v) *Objectives 1, 3, 5 were not fully achieved because we did not find enough students interested in journalism;* vi) *As of now, only 6 green estates are fully functional. The reason is that the other estates do not meet the requirements of green tourism.*

The expected results can be achieved over a longer period of time. – *“Improving knowledge of English is a long-term process. There a lot who wish to learn, and not enough equipment.”*

Dependency on a volunteer – *“The Project was planned as a continuous project but needs a native speaker. Without a native speaker there is no interest.”*

At the stage of the project preparation the following important details and external factors were missed, namely (original wording): i) *Concerning Objective 1: at the preparatory stage and while designing project, some specifics were not taken into account, which later caused problems* ii) *Tourist groups are different and cannot be treated in a uniform manner* iii) *The employment market in Kalush is not developed enough, so it was hard for them to find a job.*

Limited project resources (as explained by counterparts/partners):

- *Not enough time to fulfill the objectives because students graduated from college.*
- *There was insufficient financial support for holding a large-scale event that would include all schools, all educational centers in Kalush in one debate.*
- *We needed to use additional resources in order to achieve a more professional level of debate, such as a camcorder to film debates and present them for further discussion, a projector, a USD card, a flash drive to save information on the debates.*
- *We had some problems with physical, financial, and human resources.*
- *Time was limited from October to December. That was the period of academic competitions, and students were overloaded.*
- *Objective 2. Training was conducted only for students. Teachers had no time.*

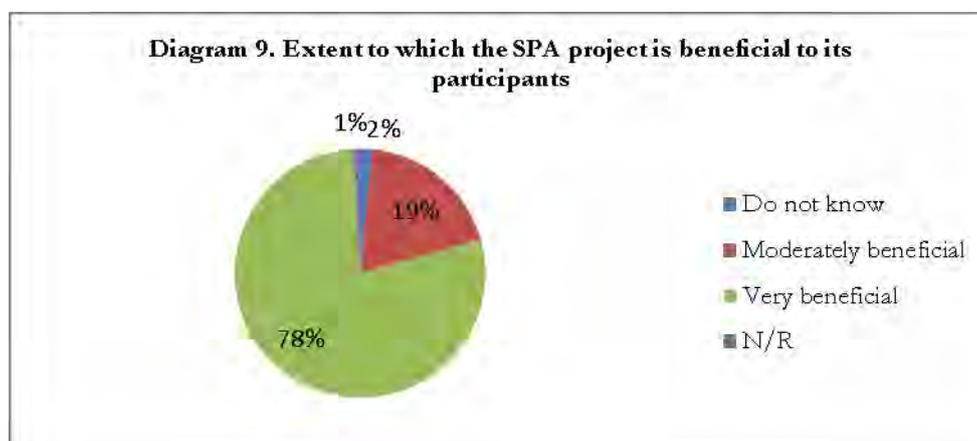
Poor planning and preparation/organization:

- *No debates were organized but they are planned for this year. The respondent did not know that debates were planned, and could not explain why this objective was not achieved.*
- *The film was not edited and the idea was presented in a different way (as a flash presentation).*
- *The film was produced but it was not widely available and the key audience was not able to watch it.*
- *Objective 2 was not fully realized because some staff members did not participate in the training and thus were not qualified for the project.*
- *Resources of the Center were not fully utilized, meetings were not held as frequently as we would have liked.*
- *Objectives 2 and 3: The repairs were completed later than planned.*
- *The level of organization was not very good.*
- *It takes a long time to prepare a publication. There was a lack of information about events because not that many events were held. The newspaper had 4 pages instead of 8.*

Other:

- *The project continues...*
- *The filmmaking was affected by a contracting firm: they failed to edit the film and the flash presentation was produced instead.*

The review demonstrated that 78% of the SPA projects' participants found their participation beneficial, 19% of respondents thought of it as moderately beneficial and only 2% of respondents were not able to assess the importance of the projects they had taken part in (See Diagram 19. In terms of gender, 25 of 41 male respondents and 74 of 85 female respondents thought of the project they were involved in as being moderately beneficial. The majority of respondents (70 of 80) indicated that the projects were achieved to full extent and were very beneficial for the participants. Although 24 of 35 people commented that the projects achieved their objectives to a certain extent they still qualified the projects as very beneficial for the participants.



When evaluating projects it is important to comment not only on the achievement of the intended results, but also to indicate whether there were any unintended consequences of projects' implementation. If so, it's important to investigate whether implementers and participants can identify the unexpected outcomes and account for them in project results. In order to determine whether or not there were unexpected results stemming from the selected projects, and if so, what they were, the following question was posed to each group of respondents.

68 of 126 **counterparts/partners** that were interviewed indicated that there were **unexpected positive results** that arose from their projects. The impact the SPA projects eventually had on the target groups was bigger than originally planned. Below are the comments of respondents:

- *Many people were interested! An HR-center (club) was created for managers and has been used for training 60 corporate club members (despite requiring fees)!*
- *Better collective work and improved teamwork skills*
- *Higher attendance than expected. The center worked 6 days per week, and then we did not close it at all.*
- *We have used project work during the practical lessons for students (internship), which led to increase in students' interest*
- *We trained three groups instead of one. We learnt other applications together, building on our computer literacy skills*
- *Students of the nearby school became interested in the project and expressed their desire to participate*
- *No one expected such a high level of involvement of young people with disabilities, but in reality they were very excited in this work. We also did not expect such a frank reaction from the viewers – they accepted the performances very well; the halls were full. Active interest and involvement from local youth*
- *Parents with smaller children were interested in the courses as well*
- *It was expected that the skills of using technical equipment will be taught only to English teachers, but in reality all schoolteachers improved their skills.*
- *Parents were more involved in the project than we expected. They participated in hiking tours, told their friends about the organization, and they brought their children to the organization, too.*
- *Better understanding of an active social viewpoint on the part of students and teachers*
- *Teachers and students developed an active social position.*

Partner organizations of counterparts/partners also registered certain **unexpected positive results** that they mentioned during the interview grouped as follows:

Additional resources, for example:

- *The town authorities gave us a new location, it needs repairing, but it is ten times larger than the space we currently have.*
- *Entrepreneurs have expressed a desire to work on the project on a voluntary basis.*

Additional financial resources that the respondents identified as:

- *The town authorities helped financially support us when we had not expected it from them*
- *Increased credibility of the school amongst local community members. The school received additional funds from the community for creation of a multimedia classroom. The sponsors' money was used to buy an interactive board.*
- *The Quiet Auction proved to be success: we had 100 % of expected audience and gathered more funds than we'd expected (approx. 4000 UAH).*
- *Additional funding was raised through city auctions*
- *Funding from the city government was twice as generous as expected. The interest of schools has persisted beyond what was originally planned.*

New partnerships:

- *Members of the organization have developed friendly relations with some participants of the project*
- *We improved contacts with the Donetsk debate club. Joint debates were planned, though they were postponed due to lack of funding.*
- *The university signed bilateral agreements establishing exchange visits with institutions in Lithuania and Latvia*
- *Joint projects have been run with local TV*

New clients/project participants, for example:

- *The client base extended out of our town. People from other towns came to receive consultations.*
- *The number of participants in the Video studio club has grown, and students imagine their future selves as editors and directors. We won first place at the oblast contest «Children's photo and video showcase» in 2009.*

Improved image, new activity, new achievements that were noticed by the respondents including:

- *Our school has improved its image. The rayon department of education always asks us to share our experience. The school is now used to put on rayon workshops for teachers.*
- *We organized work in the photo-studio “Slavia,” and won a rayon competition in 2009–2010*
- *There were new, unplanned subsections in the newspaper.*
- *Increased activity of the PC volunteers, and their level of professionalism.*
- *We received positive feedback from people who used the informational materials that were created as part of our SPA project.*
- *After setting up a library at the Youth center, the volunteers have proposed a new movement—book crossing.*

The beneficiaries/participants also identified some **positive unexpected results** during the group interviews. They pointed out the following results:

- *Everything worked as expected (in our unpredictable country).*
- *The positive result was seen in the keen desire of students from a neighboring school to take part in the project.*
- *Children began to sing, when they had never sung before. Now they feel they are performers;*
- *Boys worked with sewing machines together with girls; it was very interesting for them.*
- *It was a surprise that a volunteer came at all. And children were so excited. It was unusual and unexpected. [here in Yasinavataya] where there are no foreigners on the streets.*
- *We doubted whether this project would be understood. Both the consumers and the participants turned out to be more active than we had expected.*
- *We have developed close friendships with project participants, we stay in touch and that is good.*
- *The project initiated development of other projects. Dolya became a region attractive for tourists*
- *There were many people willing to participate (more than expected).*
- *We made informal acquaintances and increased communication.*
- *The participants saw opportunities for participation and involvement in the advertising business.*
- *Yes, during the auction local entrepreneurs were very active while fundraising.*
- *We have received positive reactions from people, who have used the tourist information in hand-out materials, that were prepared within the framework of SPA-project.*
- *An idea to hold English courses for children was developed.*
- *We have had a large number of users and visitors, as a result of organizing courses for different levels.*
- *Children are very interested in taking photographs and filming.*
- *We did not expect such excitement over our newspaper. When we went out to sell it for the first time we were afraid. To our surprise it sold out instantly.*
- *We ended up signing bilateral agreements with institutions in Lithuania, Kazakhstan, and China on mutual academic exchange programs. We did not expect these kind of results.*
- *We did not expect that our video material would be broadcast on local TV.*
- *There were instances when all copies of the newspaper were sold out, and there were still people hoping to buy it.*

Counterparts and partners identified additional positive outcomes involving acquisition of additional resources, funding, and partnerships as well as increased organizational prestige. Beneficiaries and project participants, however, seemed to mostly appreciate the projects’ activities themselves, and the attention paid to their needs.

Respondents also identified unintended **negative outcomes**. 24 counterparts and partners mentioned unexpected negative results of SPA-sponsored activities. Their comments were as follows:

- Respondents had not expected to have to share resources or shoulder additional responsibility: *“We did not expect the Center to become a classroom. There was a question of combining it with the Euroclub (it has had a separate room since 2007). Our Math teacher is responsible for it, but he did not want to be responsible for our equipment.”*
- Low activity levels amongst project beneficiaries: *“Local teachers were not very active. We invited them with children ... Teacher from school #1 came, but others were not very active. They are overloaded and lazy. They wish we came to them [laughing].”*
- Inappropriate time management: *“We were well overdue on many of our timelines, for example, the brochures and handouts required more time than we had expected in order to be produced. The end of school year, holidays etcetera, slowed the work down.”*
- Unexpected outcomes/obstacles during and after projects, such as: *“The gym is available for training only in warm seasons because of the absence of heating.” “Our status as a specialized school with intensive learning of English in*

10th-11th grades was lost after the project was over, and class time in English dropped to 2 hrs/week;” “One of 20 families that participated in the project has received social assistance for four years. During the project, social assistance was stopped since it proved ineffective and futile;” “One of the participants, despite all the efforts of the project supervisors, was imprisoned again. It happened due to insufficient influence of the project on participants.”

- Lack of funds and resources: *“The Kolomyia Youth Center volunteers worked as class instructors, and that determined their professional level (beginners’). Pro-level classes by experts were not available due to lack of funds;” “Insufficient funding - we need a camera and lightning equipment.”*
- Little or no information on the SPA project illustrated by: *“Little information on project was available in the community;” “Many were not aware of this project till the day of monitoring (18.05.2012).”*
- Low engagement to the project activity noted as *“After receiving funds the volunteer did not engage me or any other representative of the organization in the project activities.”*
- Failure to implement a project: *“The Dolyna Entrepreneurs Association failed to implement the project and it was completed by the Dolyna Charity Fund.”*

It should be mentioned that listed above ‘negative outcomes’ of the projects are not actually unintended negative outcomes of the projects, but instead could be seen as either i) failures to meet stated objects, ii) lack of professionalism etc. during implementation, or iii) unanticipated events (outside of the control/jurisdiction of project organizers) that complicated project implementation. Most of them are not properly represented as unintended negative outcomes of the project but describe rather failure to make the desired impact.

Beneficiaries/participants mentioned only a few negative outcomes that had not been anticipated. One respondent said: *“We took our product to an exhibition in Romania, and were surprised when foreign tourists were not very interested in our products.”* Another respondent was surprised that after the project was over; its management was not adequately transferred from the Peace Corps volunteer to someone else in the community. The respondent claimed that the transfer did not occur because no one had the experience necessary to guarantee the continuation of that activity.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR OBJECTIVE 3

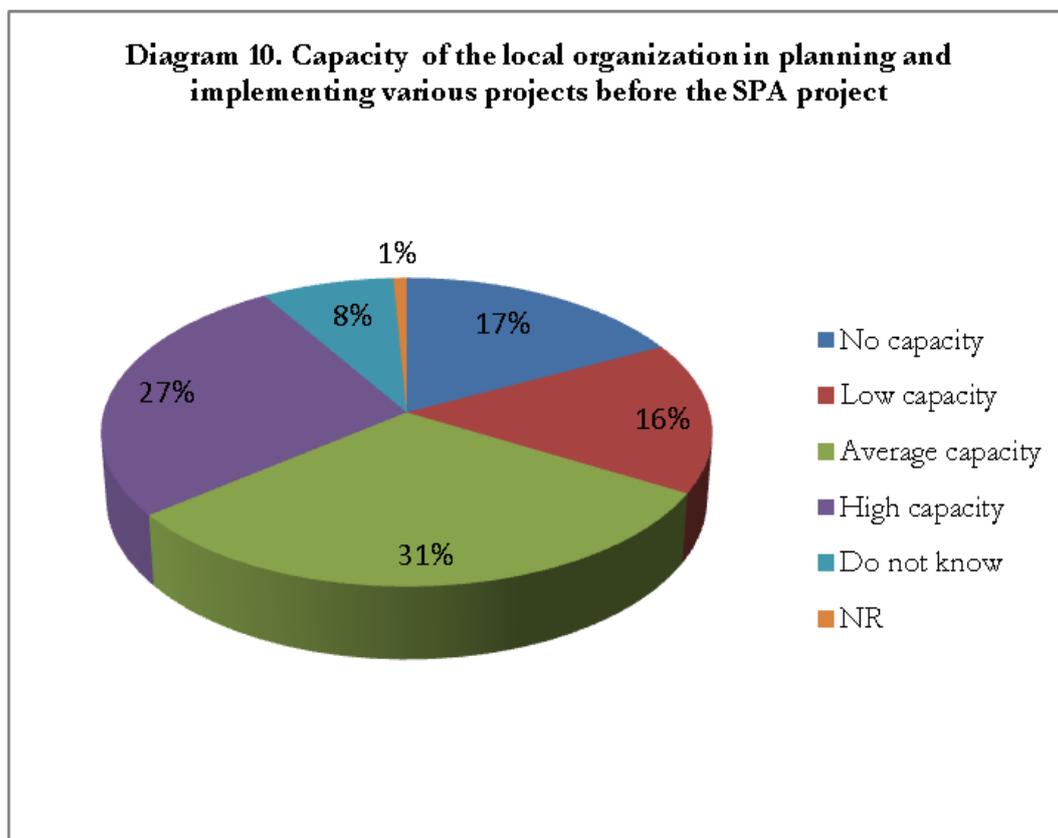
The survey revealed that a great number of respondents felt that the objectives of their SPA projects were fully achieved, and that the capacity of their organizations was strengthened. According to the survey results, the vast majority of project objectives were fully realized and only a small number of expected results were not achieved. Among factors that hindered the achievement of outlined objectives were the following: bad project design and/or incorrect approaches to project implementation, low engagement of participants and scarce resources (time, human and financial), inappropriate selection of partners and other external factors.

The majority of partners found the participation in the SPA projects to be beneficial. The respondents indicated many positive results that were not originally expected by the projects. In particular, the counterparts and partners commented on high activity and engagement of participants and their interest in the project activities, relationships with new partners and mass media that emerged during or after project implementation, expansion of the geographical span of activities of some organizations, better relations with the local public authorities including increased public sector financing to organizations, improved public image, and potential new sources of funding made available thanks to the new fundraising methods. The beneficiaries/participants found it amazing that projects were carried out in accordance with their schedules/plans. Additionally, some projects helped identify new talents among members of target groups, assisted outside organizations with the preparation of new projects, helped partners build friendly relationships with other organizations, generated good publicity for partners when projects were featured on TV and in self-produced newspapers. Some projects also had negative outcomes that had not been anticipated by the respondents.

Counterparts and partners noted that some external factors (like a small employment market or different interests amongst tourist groups) impacted the progress of their projects and led to changes that prevented project implementers from ensuring sustainable results. A lack of sufficient time for project implementation was mentioned as another problem with negative effects, along with low levels of engagement in project implementation on the part of counterparts and partners, changes in partner organizations, and low levels of awareness in the community and the target groups about the SPA projects. In several cases, the beneficiaries/participants were also dismayed at the lack of an efficient transfer of responsibility from PCVs to community members. It should be noted that throughout the study, many responses given by counterparts and partners during interviews (both positive and negative) were later echoed by beneficiaries and participants.

OBJECTIVE 4. Impact of the SPA projects on the capacity of local communities to conduct low-cost, grassroots sustainable development

A number of questions were posed to the respondents in order to assess whether the capacity of communities to spur local development changed as a result of SPA-sponsored projects. The counterpart/partner group was asked about the capacity their organizations had before the start of the SPA projects. The answers of 126 people were divided in the following way: 34 organizations (or 27%) had high capacity, 39 organizations (or 31%) had average capacity, 20 organizations (or 16%) had low capacity and 22 organizations (or 17%) had no capacity (See Diagram 10).



The review of survey data demonstrated that organizations with high and average capacity were engaged in all project preparation and submission stages twice as often as organizations with the low or no capacity. The role of strong organizations was very important at the initial stages of project conception and needs assessment. Organizations with low capacity were involved in the project preparation at all stages. Organizations with no capacity were primarily engaged at the project writing stage. All organizations claimed that PC volunteer's most crucial role was at the stage of project writing and review, which makes sense since all project proposals were prepared in English and received feedback from Peace Corps' Kyiv office in English.

At the implementation stage the trend for organizations' engagement remained unchanged, i.e. the organizations with high and average capacity were engaged in all implementation stages of the SPA projects twice as often as the organizations with low or no capacity. All organizations displayed the highest engagement in the operational planning and project monitoring stages similar to the highest engagement of the PC volunteers at those stages.

It is of interest that nearly all interviewed individuals (88%) representing the organizations with high capacity were positive that their projects fully met the objectives. As for the organizations with average, low and no capacity only two of three polled representatives were certain that their projects fully met the objectives. The rest of the organizations believed that their projects met the objectives to an average extent. Only 15% of polled organizations of low capacity said that their projects met the objectives to a certain extent. The breakdown of responses concerning the organizational capacity and the degree of project objectives attainment is provided in Table 9.

Table 9. The Breakdown of Responses Concerning Organizational Capacity and the Degree to Which Project Objectives Were Attained

Capacity level (number of respondents)	Average	Fully achieved	To a certain extent	Do not know	N/r
Average capacity (39)	36%	59%	2.5%	0%	2.5%
High capacity (34)	12%	88%	0%	0%	0%
Low capacity (20)	30%	55%	15%	0%	0%
No capacity (22)	36%	55%	4.5%	0%	4.5%

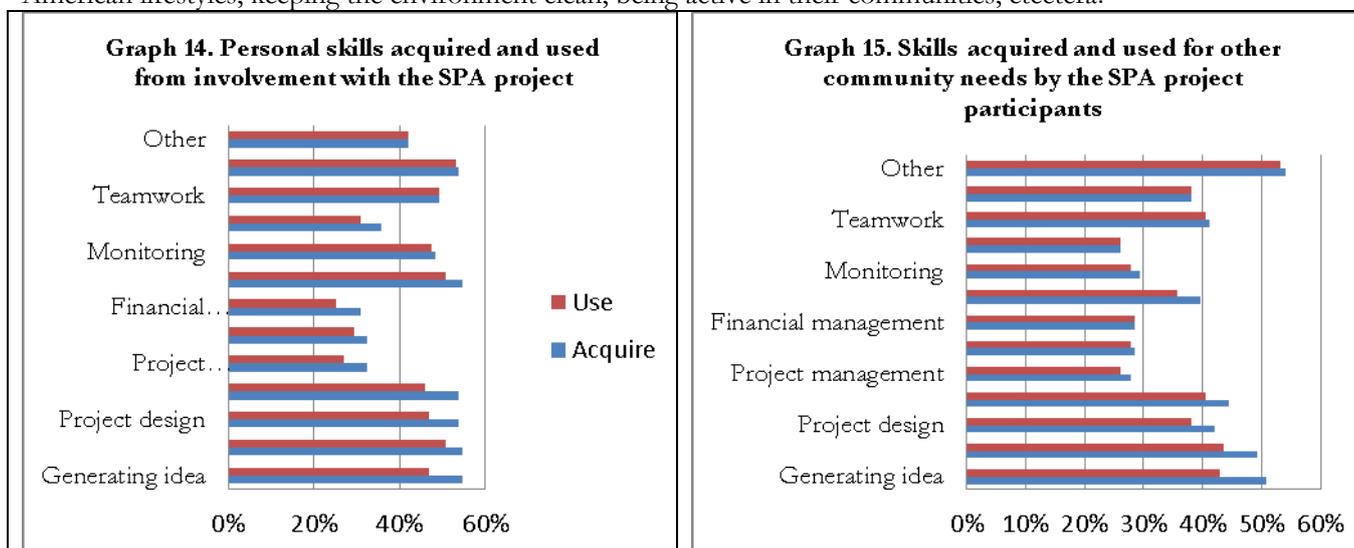
The study revealed that 72% out of 39 organizations with average capacity polled were confident that the projects were very beneficial for the participants, whereas the majority of 76 other interviewed organizations were certain about that (See Table 10).

Table 10. The Breakdown of Responses Concerning Organizational Capacity and the Usefulness of Projects for Participants

Capacity level (number of respondents)	Moderately beneficial	Very beneficial
Average capacity (39)	28%	72%
High capacity (34)	6%	94%
Low capacity (20)	10%	90%
No capacity (22)	23%	77%

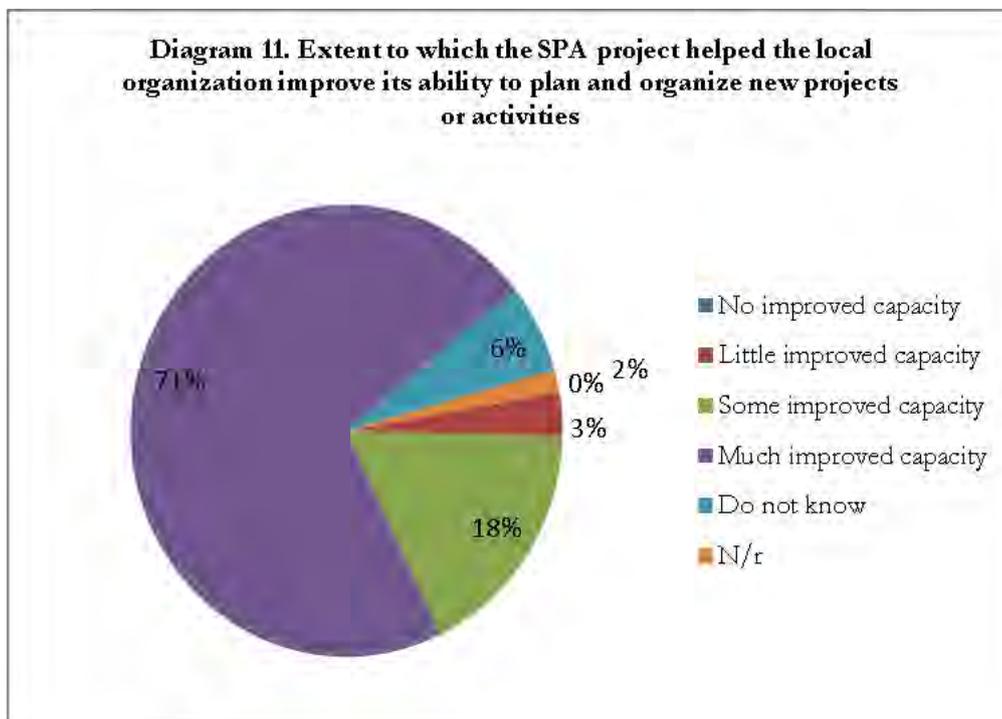
The capacity of an organization depends on a combination of skills of its personnel. Therefore the respondents were asked about the skills they had acquired and the skills they use. The answers provided in Graph 14 demonstrate that the majority of skills gained during SPA-sponsored projects are being used.

A list of different skills was presented to the respondents, however, they also listed other skills they had acquired and used, including leadership, goal achievement, skills necessary to incorporate people with disabilities, communication with target audiences (young people with disabilities), acting skills, craftsman skills, sewing skills, construction and repair skills, internet literacy, training skills, experience working with new audiences (former prisoners, for example), working with multiple clients, film-making and video editing, accuracy and effectiveness evaluation, tourism management, graphic design and image editing software skills, decision making, technical literacy, methods of teaching English (games with students, video lessons, etc.), cooperation with an NGO and in project design, working with Peace Corps volunteers, interacting with the local community, creating publicity, cooperating with state authorities, planning activities, fundraising, newspaper design (Indesign), ethical norms (different perception), photography and journalist skills. At the same time respondents acquired life skills as well. These included things like self-confidence (i.e. always smile and believe in yourself), cross-cultural communication skills, speaking skills, and composure. Respondents also commented on the information they gained—about American lifestyles, keeping the environment clean, being active in their communities, etcetera.

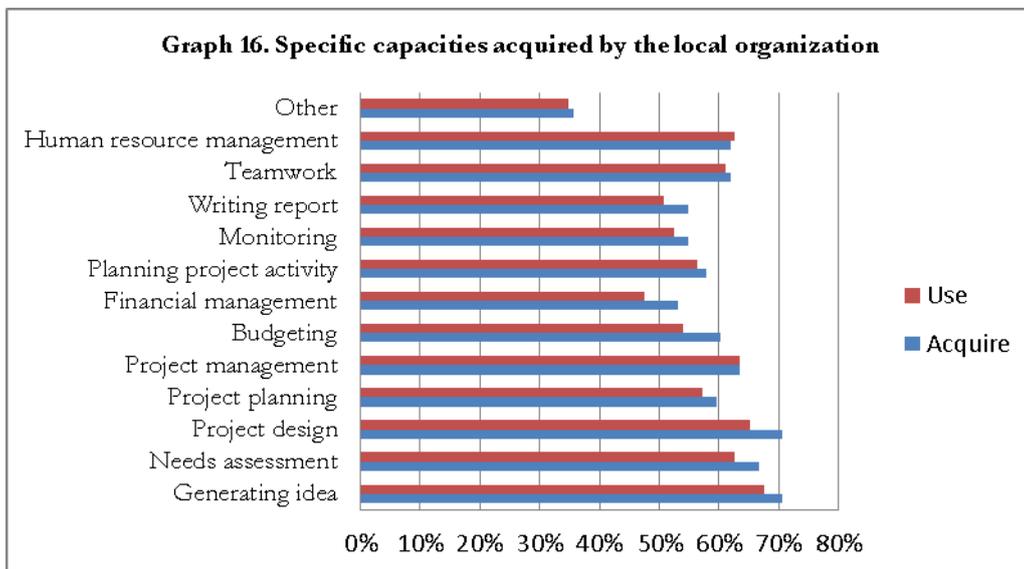


The respondents were also asked to evaluate the skills of the SPA projects' participants, and the skills that they acquired and use. Graph 15 demonstrates the same trend with the majority of skills being used. The types of skills acquired by the respondents and the project participants were similar. In addition to the skills that were already listed, the SPA project participants mastered and use the following professional skills, in the opinion of respondents: accessing information, working with the Internet, organizing and coordinating activities, writing a business plan, searching for employment, planning for and building a career, interviewing skills (asking questions), managing time effectively, using equipment during classes, working with students using interactive methods, generalizing and disseminating experience, skills necessary for making traditional folk dolls. They also gained knowledge about the unique cultural features of our Ukraine, the basics of entrepreneurship, environmental awareness, knowledge of English, search and processing of information, e-learning skills. In terms of beneficial knowledge and life skills, the respondents mentioned discipline, an increased ability to cope with problems, an optimistic attitude to life, awareness of one's social rights (benefits, etc.), self-assurance, strategies for searching for employment, techniques for HIV prevention, self-control, acceptance of unconventional ideas, and independence.

98% or 123 respondents out of 126 commented that the local organization that worked with a Peace Corps Volunteer on a SPA project are still in existence, and that there are continued needs for the same activity provided by the SPA projects. 90 (or 71%) of respondents think that their SPA project helped the local organizations to improve its ability to plan and organize new projects and activities, 17% of respondents were sure that local organizations somewhat improved their capacity, and only 3% thought that organizations' capacity was improved only a little (Diagram 11).



Nearly all organizations polled that were certain that the capacity of local organizations was noticeably strengthened answered positively when asked if local organizations have applied what they learned through the SPA project and/or have completed new or similar projects since their cooperation with SPA. Two of every three respondents who thought that their organizations improved their capacity to some extent answered the same question positively. Only 10% and 4% of respondents who thought that the capacity of their organizations was improved to a large extent participated in trainings on project design and project management or in other technical trainings respectively. Only 5% and 10% of respondents certain that the capacity of their organizations was improved only a little had relevant trainings. The particular skills acquired by the local organizations are shown in Graph 16.



Other skills mastered by the local organizations included: communication skills, multimedia presentation production, accessing target audiences and building an awareness of their needs, skills of working with marginalized populations (like former prisoners), methods of working with government institutions and Peace Corps volunteers, how to extend circle of partners and clients, to increase the professional level of staff, to increase organizational credibility and recognition in community, to edit videos, to reach out the outer world, to establish new contacts, to use new methods and approaches to English teaching, to conduct overall planning of activities, to publish a newspaper, to implement international programs, and to combat littering.

119 of 126 polled counterparts and partners described how the skills they gained cooperating with PCVs on SPA-sponsored projects were later used to plan and implement activities. The organizations use the new skills for:

Project identification and needs assessments for example:

“We organized a pedagogical council for vetting project proposals; We conducted a questionnaire survey for identification of the following projects; We held a pool on determining and idea for the next project.”

New project design:

- *After you have done it once with the assistance of a professional from Peace Corps, you can write better projects*
- *The skills and knowledge gained while designing and implementing the project were further used by teachers and students of the school to develop and implement another project - Leadership via Student Government*
- *Our organization is beginning a new SPA-project implemented by the community organization “Sprianya” with a new volunteer.*
- *22 project applications were prepared in 2011, 6 out of these have received financing*
- *The college has prepared a project, aimed at creating a multimedia classroom for learners of English.*
- *Organization regularly prepares projects, receives funding from international donors to solve community issues.*
- *We are implementing a joint Ukrainian-Romanian Project “Harmonization of Tourism Development in Rural Areas of the Carpathian Region” (2010-2012), and other projects where we utilized the skills we gained while cooperating with Peace Corps*
- *The Carpathian Vernissage project was prepared and successfully implemented*
- *Other projects were designed and carried out, such as «Youth against corruption», «Youth for Environmental protection».*
- *Organization designs and implements new successful projects. We have a new volunteer working with us.*

New project implementation

- *Our school participates in the regional experimental program “School of the future” and Microsoft program “Innovations school” (via city council)*
- *Participation in implementation of other projects, such as “Greenwich” project, which proved to be very helpful.*
- *Improvement of school equipment (now we have to determine what is required for the lessons)*
- *Annual elections of the president of the school. Extra curriculum activities, debates, contest on the art of rhetoric*

- *These skills help us to implement projects effectively and to strive to make it more up-scale and extensive.*
- *Project on children's playground, on classroom adjustment*
- *Project on extended class, project "I am citizen"*
- *We created new projects such as «Self-government of population - a first step towards solving local community issues» and creating a union of owners of houses with multiple flats*
- *Formation of "Healthy and Socially Adapted Person" on AIDS prevention; training sessions were conducted on AIDS prevention within the framework of the project, and trainers-lecturers were trained for work in rural schools of the district*

Development of new partnerships:

- *Our organization now works with partners from Donetsk, and our cooperation with the government has become more effective. Clients of the organization have provided advice for people who need help and have referred them to the organization, thus the client base is growing.*
- *The organization uses the knowledge and skills when working with its new Peace Corps volunteer. Now there is a new volunteer with the organization - Stewart. Along with volunteer we are working on a new SPA project.*
- *Having had a positive experience with the previous volunteer, our current cooperation is even more constructive.*
- *We have established more contacts with leading scientists worldwide*
- *We established contacts with Israel, USA, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, and China.*
- *We have run joint projects with local TV channel, "MIG".*

Conducting new after-project activity

- *A counseling center was set up, which provides legal advice to community members (a professional lawyer continues to work there)*
- *Project on promotion of European standards in education*
- *Crisis center (club) for women*
- *SPA-project was the first tourist project for the organization and they have continued related activities in the time since.*
- *Our organization applied these skills while preparing celebrations of anniversary of Dolyzna foundation.*
- *The Kolomyia Youth Center went on to open new types of activity:*
- *Project participants share their newly acquired knowledge with other volunteers of the Kolomyia Youth Center*
- *We have put together a calendar (schedule) of events (we didn't have a habit of planning in this way before)*
- *We have been holding events, working with the community and other institutions of our town, fundraising, designing other projects etc.*
- *All of the master classes, organized by the museum, are held with the use of aforementioned skills, as well as during preparation of such museum events as Health day, Science day, Quiet auction, Crafts day etc.*
- *The museum uses these skills to implement new projects and hold events*
- *As a result of the project, more representatives of the youth were involved in the museum work, interest groups and clubs were created (photoclub, travelers club, museum friends, youth club etc)*
- *The museum holds a wide spectrum of master classes, implements other international projects, every museum worker has shown significant professional growth*
- *The Charity Fund of Dolyzna has designed and implemented projects for approx. 2 million UAH since the completion of the SPA-project.*
- *The community fund continues its work on projects and implements them successfully with community participation*
- *School of Leadership. Summer camp for Youth Center volunteers and English learners*
- *Representatives of the Center organize training for families experiencing difficult life situations, and provide support and consultations for them.*

Development of new type of activity:

- *The organization has started new types of activities- library and English club.*
- *Held events to attract new members to the Youth Center. Participants of the project became volunteers at the Youth Center and were involved in implementation of other projects.*
- *A joint project with the Center for Art and Crafts was undertaken to rehabilitate a playground for elementary school students. Also implemented the joint project «Clean Wells» with USAID, and the youth ecological festival «Mountain rainbow».*
- *We organize online conferences and have positive experience of research and teaching work*

- Now we are thinking about holding a number of folk festivals in partnership with the organization.
- Now we are thinking about construction of a new school since we are working in a kindergarten building
- We are preparing a project with the aim of constructing a new sports complex. We advocated for this project at the oblast level (Odessa Oblast State Administration), and the construction is set to begin on June 15, 2012.

Community problem solving/spread of experience:

- Our organization uses these skills to solve social and economic problems in the town by implementing new projects
- The organization has increased the number of children with whom it works. Parents, having learnt about the organization's activities, now more readily let their children go there.
- The equipment and new approaches acquired through cooperation with SPA are used during Ukrainian Language classes
- Our experience publishing a newspaper was followed by other schools. We hand out our newspapers during workshops.
- Skills gained through writing articles are used in campaigns, for example, they were used in the writing and publishing of leaflets advertising healthy lifestyles that were distributed amongst youth throughout the district.

Improvement of school image, higher rating of universities:

SPA projects also helped local organizations to strengthen their capacity, for example:

- From all of the aforementioned skills, the human resource management was the most useful. We learnt to share roles and responsibilities in our team.
- Teamwork was the most beneficial skill we gained from the project. We often have to provide service to a large group of readers and now that we have learnt how to organize our working day, it is much more productive.
- I find the skills on budgeting very useful, I use them while preparing financial papers for buying stationery and other necessities.
- Skills, achieved through SPA-project, are used to improve strategic project planning
- The organization uses these skills for other projects such as: SPA-Project aimed at working with families in difficult life situations – another project that Megan implemented; and a new SPA-project aimed at working with orphaned children.
- The department continues to use the multimedia classroom. Among other things, this requires understanding of the audience needs, planning and management skills.
- New skills are used for implementation of the following projects of the organization: the creation of a classroom for pre-school work with 6-year-old children; a project on the introduction of inclusive education.
- Currently I don't work at the college, but I know they use these skills to design projects as well as to hold events, programs etc.
- We also learnt to plan our activities – and we actively use these skills. We now plan six months ahead.
- The skills necessary for financial report writing have been very useful.
- Our Euroclub became much more active. After the project, it was seen that something was really achieved. The efficiency was proven by implementation; people understood that they could accomplish things together.
- Participation in other projects.

81% of respondents (or 102 people) claimed that their organizations used what they had learned during the SPA project to start new or similar projects after the SPA projects were completed. Only 8% of respondents did not initiate new or similar projects (See Diagram 12).



At the same time 98% of respondents indicated that there is still a need for activities like those launched by the SPA projects in their communities. They explain that as follows:

- *Children had the need for this. There was a lag before another volunteer was sent to us, but the children wanted to continue. So local teachers had to carry on with the project.*
- *There is a pressing need for adding new resources to the e-library, and so this activity goes on. The equipment is in use as well. There is demand for the library resources.*
- *Elections to student government take place regularly.*
- *This project is closely connected to the pressing issues of modern youth.*
- *There are a constantly growing number of topics that need to be included in the social awareness program.*
- *Students graduate and are being accepted to the program, but the need to make the student body more socially active remains.*
- *The project participants liked being theater actors very much, and they asked to continue our work.*
- *People with disabilities require a large number of friends and communication; they communicate with each other and create families.*
- *The creative potential of young people with disabilities requires further fulfillment and development.*
- *Education is an ongoing process. When new methods are introduced (in this case – the use of multimedia equipment for teaching foreign languages), they need to be constantly used if they are to be institutionalized.*
- *Students have to continue to study foreign languages.*
- *The educational process has to keep pace with time. Children should not see that teachers are still living in the previous century whiles they live in the today's world.*
- *The town has no other multimedia center accessible for the school community except for ours. There is still the need for such a room as a communication center for teachers and students.*
- *Families experiencing difficulties still require support and assistance; the adaptation process is not completed. New families have also appeared in the community who require social assistance.*
- *New tourist routes have to be developed.*
- *Tourism is a dynamic sphere that needs constant improvement.*
- *Newcomers require the same type of knowledge (graphic design and image editing software skills).*
- *The club continues its activities, and the need for these projects remains high. The idea of debate clubs has spread far beyond this college to other educational centers, both in Kalush and elsewhere. Children expressed a desire to continue debating. Debate club is demanded, and thus continues functioning. In addition to the college debate club, we have registered a debate club for the town of Kalush.*
- *Activities continue up to this day. Master classes, exhibitions, educational and entertainment activities for youth are still offered.*
- *Yes, because 95% of results can be achieved only in 5 years of systemic work, that is why we have to continue our work.*
- *Information gathered within SPA-project, is incomplete and our activities need to be prolonged.*
- *IT knowledge is always in high demand.*
- *The very idea of the project suggests that it is a long-term project.*
- *The library continues to work. Students started to bring in their own books for public use. The library hall has served as a venue for trainings on several occasions.*
- *The distance between the village community and the school has not quite been eradicated, there are still several cases of antisocial behavior of youth and involvement of village community needs to be improved.*
- *There is need to continue education initiatives for socially marginalized women, and to help them acquire knowledge they can use to find a job, or to increase their educational level.*
- *Students have to hear live English all the time since speaking skills are most difficult for them. Our students understand English texts well, and they understand spoken language.*
- *A person and the world do not remain unchanged. There is always a need to improve, to learn something new. Especially it regards the newest technical means.*
- *Life demands that we continually learn something new. New technical means appear, and we have to learn how to use them and try to integrate them in our everyday lives. For instance, our school would benefit from a language lab.*
- *Activities, held in the framework of the project, are in high demand. It is of interest to the residents.*
- *Our organization is interested in continuing the production of souvenirs. We use dolls as a thank you to our partners. If we cannot thank them for their help financially - we give them dolls.*
- *Environmental problems are not easy to eliminate. Despite constant cleaning of garbage in the town street, people do not drop less litter. It is not so easy to change the culture of local inhabitants. It is not a quick process. It requires work to continue over long periods of time.*

- *Junior grade students are growing. They would surely be interested to have trainings like those that were associated with SPA.*
- *It offers an opportunity to unite children, to teach them communication skills, to make interested. It is a kind of career guidance.*

Analysis of the counterparts' answers show that the SPA projects have not addressed all needs as some of them will be needed always (like education, social support, business development, etc.) and/or needed longer time for their satisfaction (such as English, technical literacy, environmental protection, etc.).

The study showed that that 91% of organizations **continued project activities after the project ended** and the Volunteer left. For instance, the respondents commented that:

- *Children and parents expressed their wish to continue since the importance of knowledge of English continues to increase. The local community needs this type of activity.*
- *Continuing this activity does not require additional financing but is essential for our town, because it is very hard to find original literature (in English).*
- *Creating a Youth Council and keeping the health improvement issue in the public eye is important.*
- *It is beneficial and popularizes the Center, it makes children interested and they want to become participants to the Center.*
- *Library and clubs of English, German and Polish languages are thriving up to this day.*
- *Our club continues its work and we conduct classes; watch and discuss films about the environment, conduct educational games, and organize nature treks, including bike tours*
- *Our environmental classes are attended by even more people than before. We founded a new environmental puppet theater, "Kozjivochka."*
- *The school organizes district-wide workshops and trainings for teachers where we share methodology and ways of incorporating technology into classes. We also organize open lessons, which leave everyone enthralled.*
- *The debate club continues to function and there are new students and new debates.*
- *The e-library allows us to save a lot of time for lessons. That is why we will continue to improve it.*
- *The exhibition in the museum continues to operate. It is constantly updated with new works. Master classes are now open for everyone who's interested.*
- *The organization continues to conduct training sessions and master classes for interested members of the community.*
- *The organization continues to provide services to people recently released from prison by holding trainings and consultations at the employment center.*
- *The organization continues to provide support to families (psychological, legal consultations, other assistance) that need it.*
- *The training center we created within the framework of the project, but many of the activities were developed after Zack left.*
- *There is a need for preserving of culture, methodologies, and promotion. We need to pass on these skills to children to save the cycle of generations.*
- *This is an effective medium for transferring information on social issues of our town, raising social awareness and therefore attempting to solve these issues.*
- *Training for children continues. The equipment bought during the project is used for this purpose.*
- *Updating the library helps to save a lot of time and provides children with useful technical skills. Moreover, when adding new information to the library of foreign languages, they improve their knowledge of English, which is beneficial as well.*
- *Our volunteer is still at the organization. Along with cutting trails in the Carpathians, the organization works on creating tourist materials, as well as on clearing and marking the tourist routes and rebuilding tourist shelters.*
- *We continue our activities by providing Internet access, English books etc. We plan to create a group for English learners.*
- *We continue our work with families in a difficult situation, families with many children and foster families, and families with disabled parents, etc. They receive consultations, legal assistance, and guidance on seeking out additional financial support.*
- *We continue to inspire our students to work to solve problems in our society*
- *We use the methodology on development of leadership potential in teenagers, of which we became aware in the course of the project, in the extra curriculum activities.*
- *When Zack left, things were only getting started. If he came back, he would be very pleased.*

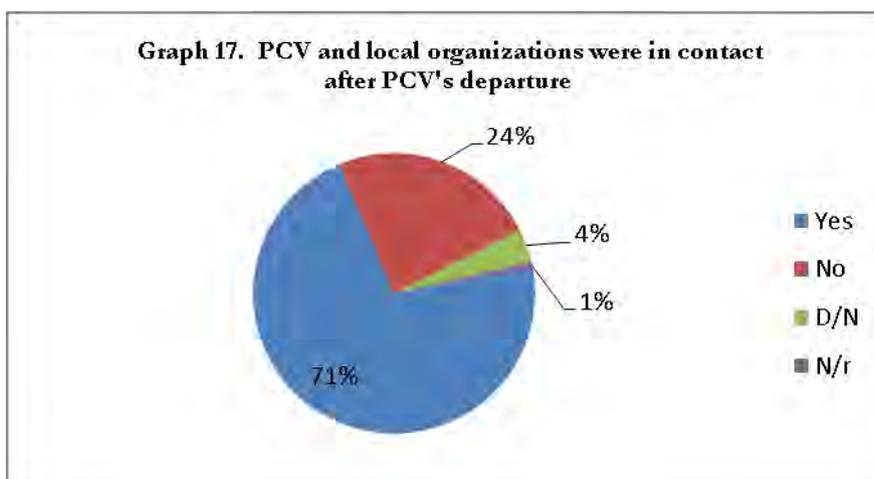
Many organizations continue the activities and managed to find needed financial resources. For instance:

- *A newspaper is published with stable funding.*
- *The Visitor Information Center is now self-financed and cooperates with local authorities which provide partial funding.*
- *Continuous master classes, auctions, round tables, interest groups and panels etc.*
- *Cooperation with regional tourist information centers on gathering and constant update of information about the work of museums, museums inclusion in new tourist routes.*

- Organization receives funding from other sources to implement this activity
- School administration helped us, and we now make a profit from selling the newspaper.
- The newspaper is published with sponsor money.
- There are different paid courses at organization such as “the basics of business accounting,” PC skills, preparation of business-plan.
- We publish the newspaper with support from the “Presidential Republic” (donations). Funds received from the newspaper sales also help support our activities.

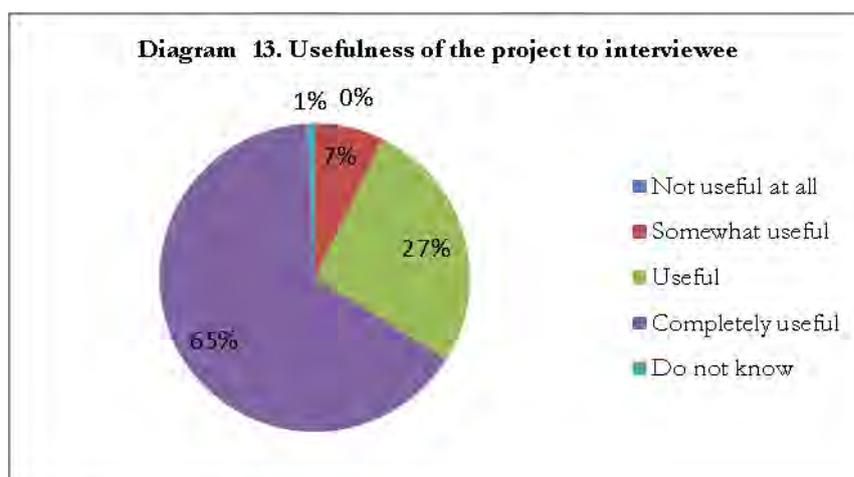
Some respondents commented that they continue the activities but to a limited extent: “Our organization continues to help former prisoners. But despite requests, there were no on-site events. There was insufficient funding available for the desired activities.”

71% of respondents (or 90 people) said that local organizations **maintain contact with the PC volunteer** after (s)he left, while 24% do not (Graph 17).



Beneficiaries/participants self-completed guide

The **usefulness of the projects** was also evaluated by the beneficiaries/participants. Around 65% of respondents (or 81 individuals) said the project was *completely useful*, 27% rated it as *useful* and 7% assessed the project *somewhat useful* (See Diagram 13).



The beneficiaries/participants found the **SPA projects useful** for the following reasons:

They have used the skills they acquired through the project, for example:

- *As a trainer, I use the technical skills and information I acquired. Students have learnt to use the leadership qualities they acquired in life (thanks to work in school self-government bodies). We learnt to discuss, to be tolerant toward each other, to*

compare different points of view, to summarize the results of our activities, and to express ourselves in a new way.

- I use the new methodologies that I learnt, new textbooks and literature, and new ways of presenting information. I also used what I learned at the “multimedia technologies” training, where we were taught to use our new equipment. Once we received an assignment to find a newspaper article and make a resume. Without Room 307, the use of this teaching technique would have been impossible. Thanks to this equipment, teachers could find news in the English media and discuss it with us during classes. Sometimes we have been able to use the computer or the projector for our personal purposes, or for self-government needs.
- I gained skills in rhetoric, met interesting people, and made friends.
- I have obtained skills necessary for project work, including networking and contact-setting with the project partners (Visitor Information Center in Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk), as well as communication skills that have led to effective cooperation with the local authorities.
- The skills I learned have been very useful in the preparation of a project proposal for the NGO Ivano-Frankivsk Regional Foundation Carpathian paths.

They learnt:

- How to develop ideas for the new projects, identify the needs they are trying to address, and write project documentation. “I planned project activities: questionnaire surveys, meetings, repairs, events.”
- How to work with new modern equipment
- To create something important not only for oneself, but for others as well.
- About Ukraine’s history.
- How to establish relations with the authorities and foreign organizations.
- How to plan and write projects, and how to organize work with youth. The skills we obtained helped us to find work.
- How to start your own business and how to look for the markets for selling your products.
- How to behave in emergency situations.
- The art of rhetoric, communicating with people, and the basics of journalism—i.e. how to write articles, how to produce a news program, and how to prepare videos.

Beneficiaries learnt how to work with others and involve other people.”

At first, we worked within our school, and then our work involved other schools in the district, NGOs, executive bodies, and the militia.”

They received an opportunity to improve their English and teaching methods, for example:

- “For us and for children – better language. Live communication and stronger mobilization. Thesauruses [we received and used them; not only bilingual dictionaries]. Children asked questions ... they used cartoons, movies – when necessary ...
- I was able to communicate with a native speaker, and with likeminded people in the English Club. I have improved my level of English, and begun to use literature for educational purposes.
- English teachers had an opportunity for professional development and to improve their English teaching skills. As a result, they conduct better classes.
- Everything was useful - from communicating with the students from their countries to getting to know different approaches and methods of teaching. Clearly, the biggest asset was the opportunity to improve language skills. In a short time we became more fluent in English.

Their lives were changed, for example:

“I found a job [because of the project]. It spent a year in the Employment Center taking courses. The job opportunity was very timely. I finished the project [courses], and then found work – it helped me see the light of day again (so to speak).”

Beneficiaries had new experiences:

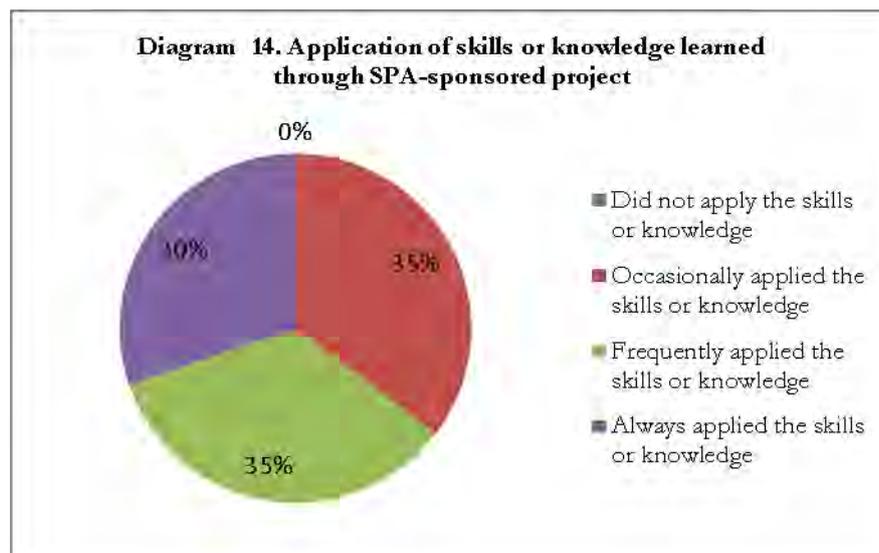
“We were so accustomed to people treating us with hostility that at first we couldn't believe that someone would want to do something nice for us. When we first heard of the camp, we thought it would be another punishment, another coercive way to point out our failings. The reality couldn't have been farther from the truth. We were given an opportunity to learn useful things and to communicate with people. We didn't feel like there were any barriers between those who had been incarcerated and those that had not. People like me really needed this communication and the experience was amazing...we constantly found topics of interest and new ideas...”

The SPA projects:

- Influenced the understanding of problems that existed in communities, in Ukraine, and among the youth.
- Made students became more active and socially involved in their schools and communities.

- Helped young people explore their talents, be better disciplined, elimination psychological barriers, meet many people, establish contacts and partnerships, and present their opinions openly.
- Inspired us, gave us an impetus for further work on other objectives relevant for our school
- Increased motivation to continue with education.
- Gave new experience in managing educational programs for youth.
- Increased self-confidence.

Nearly all respondents (96%) among the beneficiaries/partners commented that they **acquired skills or knowledge from their participation in the SPA project that improved their life and/or the community** where they live. Around 30% of polled people always applied the skills or knowledge. About 35% of respondents frequently applied the skills or knowledge and the same number of respondents (35) occasionally applied skills or knowledge that they had learned through the project (See Diagram 14).



Beneficiaries/participants underlined the following **new knowledge or skills acquired as a result of their participation** in the SPA project and claimed that the knowledge/skills improved their life and/or the community where they live. Examples of new knowledge and skills obtained by the respondents include:

- Technical knowledge and skills such as: *“Working with Internet (that was new [to us]), if previously not written, we did not know how to approach the keyboard. I did not know how to approach a PC. Some students had had no access to a computer before and they started to use MS Word and other applications “from zero”. Skills of booklet preparation. Learning how to ride a bike. Improvement of photography skills. Knowledge of proper trail marking. Learning how to work with tourists. Working with equipment: computer, overhead projector, screen, etc; creating PowerPoint presentations; searching for information on the Internet. New doll making techniques. Technological maps development (a stage-by-stage description of work on making each souvenir). Price setting (in the past, it was all approximate, and now we know what should be included – all additional expenses related to the materials, light, transport, human labor, etc.). We learned to build and install houses for bats. The fundamental principles of web-page creation. How to search for grants in the Internet.”*
- Professionalism and methodologies for teaching English: *“My methodology improved, its level was enhanced as a result of the project. International relations were established. Teachers’ professionalism increased. New components are present in lessons, and teaching is more nuanced. We began to use new methods of teaching, including more modern methods that utilize computer equipment.”*
- Project design and implementation: *“Knowledge of how to develop and write project proposals in new areas of cultural and educational work. We acquired skills in project design and proposal writing, and use them in our public activities. Within the SPA-project I have cultivated the following skills: idea-setting, conducting needs assessment, project management, planning project activities, monitoring, teamwork, human resource management, experience in creation of informational and tourist products. The project was useful for me because through it I gained skills in writing, project design and project management. We learned how to develop a project idea, plan project activities, and so on.”*
- English language: *“When you study and work, you are not ... It was awkward at first, we were not sure about our language proficiency. Then it was gone. We talked to Amber without problems, baked something together -- our intercultural communication led to huge improvements in language. It was interesting. We exchanged letters with Amber. Amber is a friendly person. We made a Ukrainian of her [when she left, she wore high-heeled shoes and make-up, and dressed like us]; We also improved our English, and learned a lot about life in the US from the volunteer. And we learned something new*

about the Peace Corps as well. Language skills - better knowledge of English, we have also received communicational skills - learned the basics of networking and effective communication by conversing with other students from other universities around the world. We have also gained experience in public speaking.”

- Life skills such as: *“To compare and communicate, to listen to others, to tolerate and compromise, to solve problems and convince others of our positions without using physical strength; [we learned to] draw, make posters, create effective advertising; we learned to plan our time better. We improved our writing skills. We overcame fear of public speaking. We learned to use a camera, to work cooperatively in a group, to take and give advice, to listen to other people's opinions on our project. Parents came to understand that their children are capable of a lot. They understood that they should not get in the way of people doing what they can do. I walked the wrong path and had issues with law. During the project's implementation I learned how to start my own business, how to work on self-improvement and self-development, and how to live my life to the fullest.”*
- New knowledge on: *“civil society; ways of improving democracy due to the introduction of school self-government.”* Also, *“We learned about topics of social debate, such as gender equality or whether children payments should be increased, or whether soft drugs should be legalized. These and other subjects were interesting for us. We better understood the essence of the work of museum workers and museums.”*
- Other skills such as: *“Skills in organizing large events for youth. We have mastered skills in business documentation, to deal with clients, to provide them with relevant information. Learned to plan our time better. Skills necessary for good cooperation with the state authorities. We learned a lot about the nature of our land, and the need to preserve it. During summer camp, we learned to cook a meal in conditions different from home. We gained skills in photography, camera work, video editing, PP presentations, interviewer skills, writer's skills, and how to gather information. We learned to compile materials for a newspaper, and how to do a layout, subsection by subsection.”*

When asked about how they **used the acquired skills** in life the beneficiaries/participants provided the following answers that were grouped as follows:

At work:

- *In my work I record (audio) books.*
- *Now we use the camera to shoot different scenes, and create screenplays with the help of interested parties.*
- *I work as a schoolteacher and use multimedia equipment during my classes.*
- *Now I own a business, I grow and sell seedlings and make my money through this. I am now more responsible in my approach to my children's upbringing because I want them to find a decent place in life of their own.*
- *I do not use technical skills now because of the specific nature of my work, but I used them successfully at my last workplace (especially work with the Internet).*
- *In cooperation and partnership with others, we will be able to solve many problems and implement our ideas with limited financial resources.*
- *In my work (Kindergarten Teacher of English).*
- *In our current everyday working activities.*
- *Now we teach little children to love nature. We also share what we now know about the nature and environment of our region with our parents and friends.*
- *We use English skills in classes and when we have a chance to talk to foreigners.*
- *We now use these skills when writing essays, in our public speeches, we participate in the studio work, we issue a newspaper*

In life:

- *Now I ... can talk on Skype with my son ...*
- *The skills we received will be of use for every student in their future life, because the ability to be eloquent and not to be afraid to speak up is very important.*
- *The topics discussed during debates influenced my life position. For instance, my attitude to drugs changed, and I now understand that they are unhealthy.*
- *I freely communicate with foreigners (in the region).*
- *To effectively communicate with other people*

Starting new habits:

- *I started listening to audiobooks in the car ...*

Study:

- *I used a lot of information that I learned during debates in my studies, and I continue to use it in my everyday life.*

About 94% of respondents (or 114 people) confirmed that **the SPA project provided materials, resources, or infrastructure**. The participants mentioned that following among materials and equipment:

Office Equipment: Computer, printer, copy machine, keyboard, stereo speakers, scanner, modem, headphones, microphone, laptop computer, overhead projector, TV and a DVD-player, UPS, hard drive, video camcorder, voice recorders, digital cameras.

Office Furniture: Tables, chairs, desks, bookcases, venetian blinds, white board, stand, computer desk, shelves, closets.

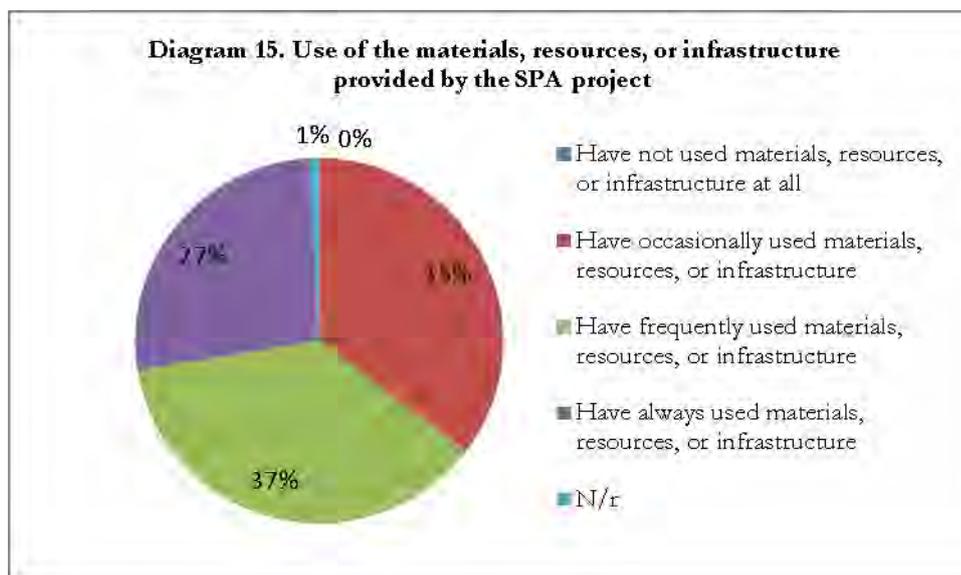
Household Appliances: Microwave oven, air conditioner, cooler, roller blinds on windows, screen, lamps, sewing machines, heater, mixer.

Construction materials: Floor cloth, glue, wallpaper, paint, materials, doors, furniture, sacks and gloves to clean garbage;

Other Materials: Flipcharts, literature, newspapers, magazines, exercise bike, mechanical exerciser, masseur, ping pong table, rackets, books (with CD / DVD), teaching software, books for conducting training on civil society, handouts for training, discs with films, paint for children's master-classes, fictional films in English, gym, tennis table, mats, fabric (pieces), threads, carcasses for dolls, foam, sackcloth, printed technological maps, copybooks, pens, paper.

These **materials, resources and infrastructure are occasionally used** by 41 (or 35,3%) respondents; frequently used by 43 (or 37,1%) of respondents and are always used by 31 (or 26,7%) by respondents (See Diagram 15). Since the projects ended materials and equipment have been used for workshops, trainings, acting lessons, meetings with partners, press conferences, school events, English clubs, shooting different events as well as student projects, to process information, show videos in large screen, aid in organization-sponsored activities, produce a newspaper, organize debates, in hosting meetings of student self-government council, planning activities, writing scenarios and making their films, clearing tourist routes for visitors and travelers, to advertise a museum and charity fund for cutting videos filmed by students of the arts and crafts center, exercise and aerobics, holding on-line conferences on distance learning, printing out and copying materials. Literature and dictionaries are used in classrooms.

The equipment and materials provided by the SPA projects **are used by** partners, clients, parents (during meetings), members of the local community (meetings, lectures, workshops), the offices of the executive bodies (district state administration), law enforcement/police (free of charge), readers and library patrons, teaching staff, employees who need them, debate club members, students from the self-government council, workers, volunteers, activists from the community, photo club members, journalists, workers of the charity fund for development, children, youth, students from schools and universities, senior citizens, worker at the Arts and Crafts Center, teachers, teachers of English, all inhabitants of our town and guests can visit the museum and see the folk dolls exhibition, children who pay membership fees and come to the organization, professors, students, PhD students, the participants in our journalism group, and those who prepare the newspaper. In the case of the sewing machines, however, few people use them. Respondents said that a local women's organization uses the sewing machines from time to time to make costumes for local amateur theater groups, but that otherwise they sit idle.



Analysis of beneficiaries/participants group interview showed that most of equipment and materials provided by the SPA projects **are still used** for the original purpose. The respondents noted:

- *Special software was installed for working with graphics. Courses are held. Students and youth continue to spend their time at the gym.*
- *Internet access is used to go to social networks. How can training be conducted without a camera!*
- *Everything is used for the organization of various activities – meetings, lectures, workshops, lessons, for informal communication, and trainings.*
- *Everything is used as planned for training and education on working with a computer.*
- *The resources are used for the purpose during the lessons in the English Club, and methodological meetings of the district’s teachers.*
- *Yes, with these items we can create more and more interesting new projects at our university.*
- *Yes, it is used in accordance with original purpose. Today, for example, we had an on-line conference with Kazakhstan.*
- *Yes, of course for the original purpose. Everything is available for children.*
- *Yes, printed materials are used for their purposes; they are disseminated among potential clients/visitors.*
- *Yes, to hold the events. Tribune, desks, chairs etc. - for conferences. Flipchart - for trainings. The PC is currently being used by the museum’s scientific fellow.*
- *Yes. After the project completed, more than 40 films were shot and edited by the staff of Kosiv Arts and crafts center*
- *Yes. The equipment and materials are used only for the original purpose – for education.*

Completed observation guides covering all SPA projects indicated that nearly all equipment was relevant to the projects’ needs, was where it was supposed to be, was operational, and had been made available to all potential users (See Table 11).

Table 11. Results of the Observation of Equipment Availability and Accessibility.

	Count	Specific Items/products /infra-structure observed	Does it Appear to Be Functioning?	Accessible to intended users?	(No)
Equipment 1	34	97%	97%	94%	3%
Equipment 2	30	97%	96%	93%	3%
Equipment 3	27	85%	81%	74%	7%
Equipment 4	22	86%	86%	82%	6%
Equipment 5	18	89%	89%	83%	5%
Equipment 6	14	93%	93%	86%	7%
Equipment 7	11	91%	91%	91%	0%
Equipment 8	10	80%	80%	80%	0%
Equipment 9	5	100%	100%	100%	0%
Equipment 10	5	80%	80%	80%	0%
Equipment 11	4	75%	75%	75%	0%
Equipment 12	3	100%	100%	100%	0%
Equipment 13	2	100%	100%	100%	0%
Equipment 14	1	100%	100%	100%	0%
Equipment 15	1	100%	100%	100%	0%

Materials purchased by PCVs and their counterparts during SPA projects had often either already been used up or were otherwise not evident. The general information about the materials is presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Results of Observation of Materials Availability.

	Count	Specific Items/products/ infrastructure observed	Does it Appear to Be Functioning?	Accessible to intended users?
Material 1	18	61%	61%	55%
Material 2	17	71%	71%	65%

Material 3	16	62%	62%	50%
Material 4	10	60%	60%	60%
Material 5	5	40%	40%	40%
Material 6	5	40%	40%	40%
Material 7	4	50%	50%	50%
Material 8	2	50%	50%	50%
Material 9	1	100%	100%	100%
Material 10	1	100%	100%	100%

Only every fifth beneficiary/participant participated in any activity sponsored by other organizations that was of a similar type or had the same purpose as the SPA project since the project's completion. The majority of respondents confirmed that the SPA projects also had an impact on their personal life, in particular they mentioned:

- *I always come to various trainings (educational). My attendance resulted in new contacts and professional development.*
- *I gained experience, of course. After going to the Euro training courses, we will not be shocked by talking to a foreigner. Just having the opportunity for communication was very valuable.*
- *Yes, it changed – we became more communicative, more creative, and obtained more knowledge –... [We learned about] diversity and different races.*
- *We have friends with different religions, and we continue to communicate.*
- *We learned how to make new computer programs.*
- *We gained a better knowledge of English.*
- *Knowledge of how to use new modern computers.*
- *Better time management skills.*
- *Presentation of public position, organization of public campaigns*
- *Development of ideas, planning and implementation of other projects on an unpaid basis*
- *My parents use it [Resource Library] ... [I am also using audio books] ...*
- *This week I recorded 20 CDs for my friends in the village ...*
- *After this project I received a job offer.*
- *It is more a lifestyle now, than a hobby. We search for interesting information on the Internet on journalistic topics.*
- *I am planning to become a journalist.*

At the same time the SPA projects also had an **impact on community life**. Below are the comments from the respondents:

- *This project continues to influence our lives because we are constantly improving our knowledge of English.*
- *Now we have better equipment at school that enables us to make school events more colorful. For instance, with the help of speakers we now hear what teachers say in their speeches at events.*
- *The level of knowledge of English has increased in the local community. The number of library patrons has increased.*
- *The SPA-project improved the social life and moral climate in our society. After the project was over, we started giving more consideration to improving the economic state of our city and bettering the system of education.*
- *As a result of the project the community became more interested in the museum and, subsequently, more involved. Community activists use the project equipment and show deep interest in the cause of museum.*
- *The number of volunteers increased, as well as the range of opportunities.*
- *The project attracted the community's attention to the cultural sphere.*
- *Local youth became more demanding of constructive ways to spend their free time.*
- *Young people want to participate in similar projects and others such as camps and training.*
- *They gained understanding of culture and customs of other nations.*

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON OBJECTIVE 4

Analysis showed that project partners felt that in the majority of cases, the capacity of partner organizations significantly improved as a result of their engagement in SPA projects. Organizations that began their partnerships with PCVS with high and/or average capacity were involved in all stages of project preparation and submission twice as often as organizations that began with low or no capacity. The strong organizations played a crucial role generating ideas and conducting needs assessments.

Organizations with low capacity were engaged in the project preparation at all stages. The organizations with no capacity were least engaged in the project writing stage. The role of the PC volunteers peaked at the project writing stage and the SPA project review stage for all organizations. This is logical since the projects were prepared, as well as reviewed and commented on by PC staff in English.

At the project management/implementation stage the trend of organizations' engagement remained the same, i.e. the organizations with high and average capacity were involved in all stages of the SPA project implementation twice as often as the organizations with low or no capacity. The engagement of all organizations in the operational planning and project monitoring peaked as well as the engagement of the PC volunteers at these stages.

It is of interest that nearly all respondents (88%) representing organizations with high capacity responded positively when asked if their projects fully met their objectives. As for the organizations with average, low or no capacity, two out of three respondents were confident that their projects fully met the objectives. The rest of organizations polled believed that their projects' objectives were fulfilled to some extent. Only 15% of respondents claiming low organizational capacity assessed their project's achievements as low. The analysis has demonstrated that 72% of 39 organizations that have average capacity are certain that the projects have been very beneficial for the participants, whereas the majority representing other 76 organizations have been positive about that.

The study showed that partners mastered many professional and life skills and that they use most of them in everyday life. These skills included project preparation and implementation, leadership, goal setting and achievement, communication with target audiences, construction and repairs skills, Internet literacy, training/pedagogical skills, film-making and video editing, tourism management, decision making, activity planning, fundraising, cooperative skills beneficial for interacting with authorities, Peace Corps Volunteers, and other diverse actors. Partners also claimed that their project involvement helped them to develop a more positive attitude, belief in themselves, and to learn to maintain their composure.

In the opinion of respondents, participants in SPA projects gained many important skills and they use most of them. These professional skills include knowing how to access information, how to organize coordinated action, how to write a business plan, search for employment, and build a career, how to manage their time effectively, and use interactive methods when working with students. Participants also reportedly learned about the basics of entrepreneurship, bolstered their environmental awareness, and honed interviewing skills. Respondents also mentioned the following life skills: discipline, the ability to cope with problems and to maintain an optimistic attitude toward life, awareness of one's social rights (benefits, etc), self-assurance, job search skills, techniques for HIV prevention, self-control, acceptance of unconventional ideas, and independence.

Nearly all respondents stated that the local organizations that worked with the Peace Corps Volunteer on the SPA project still exists and that there are continued needs for activities similar to those initiated by the SPA projects. Almost every respondent answered positively when asked if the capacity of local organizations had been noticeably improved as a result of cooperation with SPA. Respondents also indicated that they were convinced that local organizations used what they learned through their SPA project to start new or similar projects after the SPA projects were completed. Two out of every three respondents who believed that the capacity of their organizations had improved slightly through SPA cooperation shared the same opinion. Only 10% and 14% of respondents who thought that the capacity of the local organizations was significantly improved participated in trainings on project design and management and technical training respectively. Only 5% and 10% of respondents who said their organization's capacity had increased slightly were party to relevant trainings.

The vast majority of respondents indicated that local organizations developed capacity in several important areas and that they continue to use their new knowledge and skills. Respondents indicated that organizations were more effective in identifying appropriate project ideas, conducting needs assessments, and designing and implementing projects, as well as expanding existing and developing new activities, community problem solving, and improving their organizations' image in the community. The overwhelming majority of respondents stated that their organizations used what they learned through the SPA project to start new or similar projects after the SPA projects were completed (only 8% of respondents did not initiate new or similar projects). All respondents believed that the problems addressed by their SPA projects were relevant for their communities and therefore continued the projects' activities

after cooperation with Peace Corps ended and their volunteers left. Three in four respondents claimed that their local organizations maintained contact with PC volunteer after (s)he left.

The majority of beneficiaries/participants found their participation in SPA projects to be very useful or useful. Nearly all respondents (96% of beneficiaries/partners) said that they acquired new skills or knowledge from their participation in the SPA project that improved their lives and/or the community where they live. Around 30% of respondents always applied the skills or knowledge, 35% of respondents frequently applied the skills or knowledge, and 35% sometimes applied skills or knowledge that they learned through the project. Beneficiaries/participants indicated the following new knowledge or skills acquired as a result of their participation in the SPA project that improved their life and/or the community where they live. They gained new knowledge about civil society, new methods of teaching, how to use a computer and other equipment, how to write a project, how to work with Internet, etc.

Nearly all respondents confirmed that the SPA project provided office equipment, office furniture, household appliances, construction materials, or other materials necessary for their project's implementation. The respondents continue to have access to equipment and use it often or from time to time to conduct workshops, trainings, acting lessons, meetings with partners, press conferences, school events, English clubs, photo shoots of different events and student projects, processing information, showing videos, producing a newspaper, organizing debates, etc. The equipment and materials provided by the SPA projects are used by the partners, clients, parents, members of the local community, public authorities, law enforcement bodies, students from schools and universities, senior citizens, and teachers of English. Most of equipment and materials provided by the SPA projects are still used for the original purpose. Interviewers' observations of all of SPA projects indicated that with few exceptions, all equipment listed in project documentation was available, operational, and made accessible for all potential users. As for the materials purchased by the SPA projects, the situation is different in that sense since some materials purchased by the SPA projects either have been used up or it was impossible to see them.

Only one in five beneficiary/participants had taken part in any activity sponsored by an organization that was of a similar type or served a similar purpose as their local SPA project since the project's completion. The majority of respondents confirmed that their SPA project affected their personal lives and the community life as well.

It might be concluded that the SPA projects made an impact on the capacity of local organizations and furthered communities' ability to engage in local sustainable development.

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

The case studies are more detailed descriptions of selected SPA projects and are intended to provide a kind of “snapshot” of the entire program by answering the “how, why, who, what, when, and where” of particular projects’ successes and failures. Case studies associated with the evaluation of the SPA program paint a picture of the common challenges faced by local partner organizations and how challenges can be overcome. The findings from case studies will inform the design and implementation of future Peace Corps Volunteer trainings on the SPA program.

Choice of Case Studies

A combination of criteria went into the selection of SPA case studies. Each possible project was assessed to see if it:

- was a typical example of SPA projects across the country;
- was exemplary in some way;
- had unique individuals or events that are associated with the project; and
- could be analyzed based on available data.

In combination, the selected case studies provide a broad picture of the SPA program that is largely congruent with the evaluation’s outcomes. They reflect the different SPA project types, which in Ukraine include teaching English as a second language (TEFL), youth development, and community development.

Data Collection

The data needed for the selected case studies went beyond the typical data collected from SPA project sites. All interviewees were briefed on the case study selection criteria and asked to present 2 or 3 SPA projects that could undergo a deeper investigation. After an analysis of the list of the SPA projects nominated to become case studies, CCC selected five potential projects. After communication with the five SPA sites the final four projects were selected. Time for site visits was set up for each of the four SPA projects and CCC’s manager visited each of them. During meetings with a variety of stakeholders, interviewees were asked to answer the question: What difference did the SPA project make in the community? In addition to collecting personal views and reflections on the four project interventions, CCC’s manager collected quantitative information for analysis.

Photos

If it was possible field teams took a few photos showing the SPA project’s setting, site, infrastructure, or the people involved in the project. These photos serve to illustrate the case studies.

Reporting of Case Studies

The case studies were prepared as a readable essay presentation that is coherent, self-contained, and follows the suggested outline. The presentation can be found in Appendix 6.

SUGGESTED OUTLINE

1. **Summary/introduction:** – short summary of the case
2. **Context:** – neighborhood or community – farming, industrial, commuters, artisan, class, what had been its basis prior to the collapse of the economy.
3. **Need/priority:** What was the community need/priority that was identified? For whom was this a priority? History of the problem or need; what did the community, NGO or local organization do before?
4. **Volunteer:** Beyond the SPA project, what was the PC Volunteer’s job in the community (e.g., teacher, health worker) and what organization was he or she primarily assigned to? Was he or she the first Volunteer, or were there other Volunteers before or since? What was the Volunteer’s connection to the organization that received the grant?
5. **Project identification and design:** How was the project idea developed, and by whom? What type of needs assessment was done (if any)? Who was involved in drafting the proposal?
6. **Project objectives:** What were the project objectives and activities identified in the project proposal?
7. **Project implementation:** Describe the project implementation. What was the role of the Volunteer vs. the role of the community organization in carrying out the project? What challenges were faced during implementation, and how were they addressed (if at all)? Who all was involved (mayor, NGO, committee, local agency, school)? Get facts, how many people were involved or what period of time (# students; # teachers trained; houses that now have the utility, or other benefit, that did not exist before)
8. **Project outcome/benefit:** Were all project objectives achieved? What was impact on life of the community or individuals involved?
9. **Sustainability:** Since the PCV left, how, if at all, have the activities continued?
10. **Lessons learned:** What do the results say about other projects of this type or in this place?

CHAPTER THREE. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

OBJECTIVE 1. Have SPA projects addressed community-identified priorities?

The evaluation results show that the SPA projects **addressed a variety of needs and tackled problems** in areas such as education, social welfare, tourism and museum development, youth and economic development, English language acquisition, and access to new communication technology and equipment, etc. Importance of the identified needs and problems were mentioned by counterparts/partners as well as beneficiaries/participants.

The SPA projects **were implemented by PCVs together with** non-governmental organizations, entrepreneurial associations, schools, local citizen initiatives, libraries, vocational schools, condominiums, youth centers, social service centers for youth, and universities.

The approved **projects focused on** all citizens and museum workers, community, artists, children and young people with disabilities, foster parents, families with many children, families in crisis, tourists, disabled women, unemployed, single mothers, farmers, teachers, former prisoners on probation, tour operators, pensioners, representatives of mass media, business, NGOs, representatives of public councils.

40% of the SPA **projects ideas generated** jointly through cooperation between a volunteer and his/her community partner; community partners generated 32% of project ideas, and 21% were proposed to community groups by volunteers.

SPA **project funding** supported workshops, trainings, acting lessons, meetings with partners, press conferences, school events, English clubs, photo shoots of events and student projects, information processing, film screenings, newspaper production, debate tournaments, etc.

In addition, SPA project **funding purchased** the following equipment and services: computers and printers, Internet access, office furniture, household appliances and construction materials as well as other materials necessary for the project implementation. Local counterparts were also able to attract financial and in-kind contributions for project implementation from local authorities, community members, charity fundraisers, and entrepreneurs.

OBJECTIVE 2. Have the SPA projects been designed and implemented with significant community involvement?

The majority of **local organizations were engaged** in all stages of the proposal development, and in particular in generating project ideas, conducting needs assessments, writing project proposals, and revising proposals after they had been reviewed. PCV involvement peaked at the writing the proposal and proposal review stages, though volunteers were also directly involved in idea generation and needs assessments.

During the **project management** phase, PC volunteers were primarily engaged in monitoring project progress, operational planning and procuring materials, supplies and equipment. The volunteers were less involved in the distribution of human, material, and financial resources. Local organizations were actively engaged in all key stages of the SPA projects' management/implementation.

Nearly 50% of **partners were active and personally involved** in helping with the SPA project when it was being conceived and planned, one in four partners was only moderately involved and one in five partners was not involved at all. A similar trend was observed in terms of respondents' personal engagement in project management. Almost all interviewed partners personally participated in project activities and one in three partners was actively engaged in the SPA project planning and implementation. The majority of respondents who were moderately involved at the planning stage were also moderately or slightly involved in the project activities. The majority of individuals who personally participated in the project were women. Survey results show that women and girls were engaged in all the SPA projects in the sample to a moderate or great degree.

OBJECTIVE 3. Have SPA projects achieved their expected results?

63% of respondents believe that their **projects' objectives were fully achieved** and 28% of respondents claimed projects' objectives were achieved to an *average extent*, while just 5% of respondents commented that the results were achieved only to a *certain extent*.

Among the **factors that hindered the achievement** of outlined objectives were the following: bad project design and incorrect approaches to project implementation, low participant engagement, scarce resources (time, human and financial), incorrect partner selection and other external factors.

As a result of the SPA projects' implementation counterparts/partners and beneficiaries/participants **gained, mastered, and now use a range of professional skills**. They find it easier to access information, to work with the Internet, to organize coordinated action, to write a business plan, search for employment, build a career, manage their time, employ technology during classes, work with students using interactive methods, generalize and disseminate experience, make traditional folk dolls, identify unique cultural features of Ukraine, understand the basics of entrepreneurship, maintain an environmental awareness, interview, employ their English language skills, seek out and process information, and learn through electronic media. Furthermore, participants and partners cultivated new life skills and habits as well, among them better discipline, an increased ability to cope with problems, optimistic attitude to life, awareness of one's social rights, self-assurance, self-control, acceptance of unconventional ideas, and independence.

Local organizations improved their capacities in project and human resource management, project design and planning, generating ideas and conducting needs assessments, teamwork and activity planning, budgeting and financial management, report writing and monitoring. Moreover, local organizations mastered skills in producing multimedia presentations, gaining access to target audiences, working with marginalized groups like former prisoners as well as with government institutions and Peace Corps volunteers. Organizations also had opportunities to extend other circle of partners and clients, increase the professionalism of their staff and organizations' credibility and visibility in their communities.

The majority of **local organizations acquired new skills** or bolstered their capacity and have since designed and implemented new projects, developed new partnerships and activities, worked to solve community issues, and spread their experience.

98% of counterparts/partners verified that the local organization that served as their local PCV's partner organization **still exists** and that there is a continued need for activities like those provided by SPA projects. 71% of respondents think that their SPA project provided significant help to local organizations in **improving their ability** to plan and organize new projects or activities, 17% of respondents thought local organizations somewhat improved their capacity, while just 3% thought that local organizations' capacity was improved only a little.

Nearly all the organizations polled that were certain that local organizations' capacity had been noticeably strengthened through their experience with Peace Corps, were positive that those same organizations had **applied their new knowledge and skills and begun new initiatives** since the completion of their SPA projects. Two of every three respondents who thought that their organizations had improved their capacity to some extent through cooperation with SPA also answered in the affirmative. 65% of beneficiaries/participants rated the project they were part of as *completely useful*, for 27% called their projects *useful* and 7% assessed their projects as *somewhat useful*.

To demonstrate the usefulness of the SPA projects they were involved in, beneficiaries/participants said: that they learned to develop ideas and identify community needs, to design and plan projects, to work with modern equipment and do things that were important for others, to start their own business and maintain composure in stressful situations, and to communicate with people; many had begun to use skills they honed through participating in projects, and had become trainers, or become more effective at networking, contact setting, rhetoric, involving people in civic activity; participants also mentioned the opportunities they had had to improve their English and learn new pedagogical techniques, and to learn to treat people nicely, be open and socially involved, inspire and help others, continue their education and become more self-confident. 96% of beneficiaries and participants were confident that applying knowledge and skills gained during their participation in the SPA projects had improved their life and/or the community where they live.

Beneficiaries improved their understanding of project design and implementation, their technical and English

literacy, their understanding of the importance of civic activism and role of civil society, the importance of democracy and gender equity and many other issues. They **use their new knowledge and skills** at work and in their personal lives, and have continued their education.

The projects **materials, resources, and infrastructure** provided by SPA are occasionally **used** by 35,3% of respondents, frequently used by 37,1% of respondents, and always used by 26,7% of respondents. **Materials and equipment allow respondents to** stage workshops and trainings, acting lessons and meetings with partners, press conferences and school events, English clubs, film screenings, and to produce newspapers, organize debates, write screenplays and making films, clear tourist routes/trails for visitors and travelers, host exercise and aerobics classes, hold on-line conferences on distance learning, and print out and copy materials. The **equipment and materials are used by** partners and clients, parents and members of the local community, local authorities and law enforcement bodies, readers and library patrons, teaching staff and employees, debate club members and students from the self-government council, children and youth, students from schools and universities, senior citizens and teachers of English. Very few items are only used from time to time. Most equipment and materials acquired in conjunction with SPA projects are **still used for the original purpose**, namely: meetings, trainings, exercise classes, on-line conferences, educational initiatives, etc.

The SPA projects also had an **impact on personal lives of beneficiaries** and participants (in particular by allowing for professional development, job training, and by bringing opportunities for people to engage in new activities, and SPA projects reportedly increased the attention paid to local history and culture, peaked interests and awareness of community issues, encouraged youth activism and volunteerism; increased the credibility and image of schools and universities, improved social life and the moral climate in communities, increased local understanding of democracy as well as local traditions, and improved the quality of English language education.

OBJECTIVE 4. Have SPA projects increased the capacity of local communities to conduct low-cost, grassroots sustainable development?

81% of respondents (or 102 people out of 126) affirmed that their organizations used what they had learned through their SPA project to **start a new or similar project** after their SPA project was completed. Only 8% of respondents said that their organizations did not initiate new projects.

Survey results showed that 91% of organizations **continued project activities after their initial cooperation with SPA ended** and their volunteer left. Moreover, several local organizations that continue their activities have managed to **secure financial resources** to support their continuing initiatives. The funding that they have secured and/or earned supports the publication of a newspaper, the operational expenses of running a visitor information center, the organization of master classes, auctions, and trainings as well as the administration of courses on PC skills, business planning, and accounting.

Other respondents said that their organizations had continued project activities to a limited extent, for example, by continuing to help former prisoners. 98% of respondents are positive that activities launched by the SPA projects in their communities addressed (and in some cases continue to address) important societal needs. On the other hand, SPA projects were not able to address all the needs of each community, or were unable to provide a permanent solution. Education, social support services, and business development are always necessary, and systems aimed at providing them need to operate for long periods in order to become institutionalized.

The majority of counterparts/partners found their **participation in SPA projects to be beneficial**.

Respondents also indicated that in addition to the skills/knowledge they had hope to gain from their participation, their participation and/or the projects themselves resulted in a number of **positive outcomes that they had not originally expected**. In particular, counterparts and partners were surprised at the high activity and engagement of participants and the level of interest generated by project activities. They also mentioned the relationships with new partners and mass media that resulted from their projects, the geographic expansion their activities and influence, the positive interactions they had with public authorities, their improved public image, and the new sources of funding they have found utilizing new fundraising methods as positive unanticipated outcomes. Beneficiaries/participants were simply pleasantly surprised and amazed that projects were carried out in accordance with the schedule/plan that had been laid out ahead of time. They also mentioned that projects helped them to identify new talents in the populations they were working with, to later assist other organizations with the preparation of new projects, that SPA helped them to build friendly relationships with other organizations, and to

draw publicity from advertising their projects on the TV and through producing their own newspapers.

At the same time, the projects had some **negative outcomes that were not expected** by the respondents. The counterparts and partners noted that some external factors (such as small employment market; an different interests of tourists that required an individual approach) had an impact on the progress of the project and led to certain changes prevented project organizers from ensuring sustainable results. Participants mentioned short timelines during the project implementation phase as another factor that negatively impacted projects, as well as low levels of partner engagement during project implementation, changes in implementing partnerships, and low levels of community and target group engagement. The beneficiaries/participants did not expect the transitions of responsibility for project management from Peace Corps Volunteers to community members to be as rough as they often were, or for activities to cease to be properly managed after PCV departures. It should be noted that the majority the descriptions counterparts/partners gave of SPA projects' results (both positive and negative, expected and unexpected) were echoed by beneficiaries and participants during group interviews.

Results achieved by the SPA projects were made possible not only by SPA funding, but also by **complimentary financial and in-kind support** provided by various community actors. For example, local authorities provided funding as well as venues, communities supported charity auctions, and entrepreneurs provided financial contributions and volunteered their time and services.

40% of counterparts and partners benefited from participation in **PC training** activities that helped them not only to improve their professional skill sets but also increase their ability to communicate with diverse members of the community and Peace Corps volunteers, to raise funds, improve their time management, and benefit from the experience of getting acquainted with regional representatives of the Peace Corps.

Since their SPA project's completion, one in five beneficiaries/participants has participated in an organization-sponsored activity that had a **similar purpose** to the activities associated with SPA.

3% of counterparts/partners indicated that there were **individuals who wanted to participate** but were excluded from participating in their SPA projects and three respondents experienced the **resistance** displayed by the community. The resistance they met was described in relatively innocuous terms, for example, as *"at first, they did not understand why we were doing this ..."* On the other hand, 92% of counterparts/partners said that they met **no opposition to their SPA project** from anyone in their organization or in the community. The three respondents out of 126 that spoke about community resistance noted that *"it was something new and people was not got used to it,"* that *"people were very distrusting,"* and that people were *"skeptical, saying that we were doing silly things ..."*

IN OVERALL, evaluation results demonstrate that the SPA projects addressed community-identified priorities and were designed and implemented with significant community involvement, majority of the objectives of the SPA projects achieved their expected results and the SPA projects increased the capacity of local communities to conduct low-cost, grassroots sustainable development. The study revealed that there were **several factors** that contributed to the success and sustainability of individual SPA projects in Ukraine. They include:

1. The project's **relevance**: *"The project subject is a priority area for our oblast. That's why the local public authorities actively cooperated with us"*.
2. Importance of project to be **initiated, designed, and implemented** by a local community organization in cooperation with a PC Volunteer.
3. Importance of addressing **community needs**: *The volunteer conducted a needs assessment among the schoolchildren in order to define the most relevant topic of the potential project for the school before the start of the project.*
4. Effective **division of roles** between the project implementers: *"Everyone was engaged in the project including the volunteer, teachers, and children, and it was fun to work together..."*
5. **Competence/professionalism of the PC volunteer**: *"The volunteer had good skills in journalism and she taught us many interesting and useful things"*. It is important that Volunteers work with community partners at every step in the process, from designing the proposal to implementing the project, managing the budget, and monitoring and evaluating the project results.
6. Provision of **knowledge and skills** to be used and/or establishing a **service needed in future**.
7. **Keen interest and professional** approach of the local organization: *"Our organization is rather strong; we manage large amounts of funding that we receive from international donors. It was not difficult for us to implement the project"*.
8. Importance of a clear **capacity-building or hands-on training component**, even when project activities include materials acquisitions, production, or construction efforts.

9. **Trainings from the Peace Corps:** *“The training was very useful for me personally. Since this was the first volunteer who came to see us all the information was new and very useful. For a while I literally took the materials of the training everywhere I went.”* Cooperation with the public authorities: *“Since the public authorities were interested in the project they provided additional funds for the project.”*
10. Work with **well-established local organizations** with a positive public image: *“The possibility to invite a PC volunteer to work in the organization is an important indicator of the organization’s development level and evidence of its willingness to develop further. The volunteer can help improve the public image of the organization and make the organization more prestigious, especially if he/she is diligent in his/her work.”*
11. **Community** cash or in-kind **contribution** to the project .
12. The **personality of a PC volunteer** since at times it was only the enthusiasm, temper, willingness, attitude, personal example and good nature of the volunteer that inspired his/her partners to work better, to be creative, to change their attitudes toward some issues etc. As one respondent put it: *“We wanted to work better all the time because the volunteer set an example for us. She was very positive, hardworking and we tried to do things right. Now we have a rather inactive volunteer and the project is implemented the way it is implemented...”*
13. The **eagerness of an organization** to implement the project well: *“We have been working for a long time on a subject of the SPA project. It was therefore important for us to do a good job. This project was one step on our path toward a larger goal...”*
14. Importance of building **local self-reliance and ownership**.
15. The **personal involvement** of counterparts in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of projects also affected results. Interviews revealed that the project partners and participants who were engaged in the projects from the very beginning—from the idea generation stage—through to the end of the project, continue the work the project has started, have expanded and modified activities and used their newly-gained knowledge and skills. Having an opportunity to receive new professional knowledge and skills or to access to the latest technologies also seems to have affected project results. The PC volunteer and his/her partner organization often became a center for new things, especially in small towns and villages because *“The village had no modern methodological center where rural teachers could learn about new teaching techniques, learn how to work with a computer and improve their knowledge of English”* and *“There were huge problems with Internet access and no financial ability to buy a PC and connect to the web.”*
16. The **opportunity to build personal contacts** with new people and the volunteer as well as gain new life skills also affected participants: *“We met many people, established contacts and partnerships. We had a chance to present our opinions openly.”* *“I was able to communicate with a native speaker, and to meet with likeminded people at English Club.”* *“I found a workplace [due to the project], after I had spent a year in the Employment Center. [The job offer] was very timely. I finished the project [courses], and found work—it helped me to see the light of day again (so to speak).”* *“We learned to discuss issues civilly, to be tolerant toward each other, to compare different points of view, to summarize the results of our activities.”*

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ **The information about opportunity to get the SPA program** should be distributed to the PC Volunteer’s counterparts/partners, when meeting local organizations, during information meetings. Then the organizations will be interested in initiating the SPA projects themselves and they will not wait for the volunteer to do so.
- ✓ The Peace Corps should continue expansion of **its training program** designed for volunteers and counterparts/partners. More counterparts and partners need to understand clearly what the PC volunteer should do and how he/she can help the organization and the potential of the volunteer.
- ✓ Each SPA project should include **publicity** components (like the public awareness campaign, information sessions, etc.) in order to inform the general public about the launch of the project, its completion and achieved results. This can be one of the project’s “musts”.
- ✓ The approved projects should be **monitored on a regular basis**, at least once during the project implementation. In order to save funds the monitoring can be done via the Skype calls between the SPA Coordinator and Volunteer. The PC can also introduce questionnaires/evaluation forms for the PC volunteers and the host organizations, in which they could indicate whether their expectations from the cooperation have been met, what problems they have experienced, how these problems could have been avoided and other recommendations and comments.

- ✓ It is important to ensure that the SPA projects **engage the same volunteer from the beginning till the end**. The study has demonstrated that the problems are likely to appear in the projects, in which the volunteer has to leave before his/her time or when one volunteer is replaced with another one. The project should not be supported if the volunteer's stay is shorter than the project duration. If the transfer of responsibility from one grant to another is needed as of the safety/medical/family issues a local counterpart should be notified about this as well.
- ✓ Acknowledging a well-developed PC Ukraine **system of inventory**, it might be useful to collect an equipment inventory list from local organizations to whom equipment/devices/hardware were purchased and passed together with the completion project report. According to the Ukrainian law all equipment (bought or gifted) should be included into an organizational inventory. Availability of inventory lists from local partners will provide PC with legal rights to monitor availability and accessibility of equipment as well as noticeably simplify its audit.

Recommendations for future replication of the study model/design in the other countries

The SPA projects impact evaluation on the sustainable development of local organizations is indispensable in order to identify the accomplishments and challenges they have experienced. However its importance is crucial as the impact assessment demonstrates the accountability in action - how the local organization and the volunteer exercise the funds and the trust of the Peace Corps.

The following practices applied in this study **should be preserved**, possibly slightly altered. They are:

- An overall approach to study implementation procedures, approaches and the pace of implementation.
- Conducting the study/evaluation by a local independent organization selected on a competition basis. This organization should be experienced in conducting studies and evaluations, grant program administration and it should have a wide network of partner organizations out in the regions.
- An opportunity for a local organization to provide comments about the methodology of the study but before conducting the training for the interviewers.

When replicating the study in other countries **attention should be paid** to the following issues:

The **concept of the study should be finalized** – grant program administration process carried out by the PC should be included to the study and the circle of study's participants should be expanded at the account of the SPA program staff and the PC volunteers.

To **finalize the methodology of the study** and to connect the goal and objectives of the study with the methodology in order to receive answers to all posed questions. Special attention should be given to questions – the study instruments should have direct and indirect questions. To find a balance between the qualitative and quantitative study methods - to conduct a quantitative study to receive base results and then finalize and clarify them with the help of the focus groups and case studies.

Sample Selection. When several SPA projects implemented by one organization or in one community it is recommended to select only one project for evaluation as some counterparts/partners work on more than one project and often mix up them. Focusing on one project will prevent possible misunderstandings and ensure better quality of evaluation.

Timing of the Study. The Peace Corps should consider the timing of the study. The study should not coincide with the official holidays of the country, in which the study is conducted, with tests in schools and admission campaigns to the higher academic institutions. In order to prevent misunderstanding the PC should seek advice about the best timing to conduct the study from the local organization, which will deliver the study.

Interview guides/Questionnaires. The CCC has the following recommendations on how the Interview guides/Questionnaires can be improved:

- To keep only 2-3 open questions in the evaluation forms. It has to do with the further processing of the data. Open questions are hard to analyze if there is no clear-cut approach used.

- All questions related to the SPA project summary descriptions, project goal, objectives and needs should be removed from the tools. These things are hard to analyze (except maybe when comparing narrations by the respondents to the real projects – but what good does it do to improve an understanding of the SPA program impact and what does it tell us?) and they do not give answers to the main questions of the evaluation.
- It is better to ask project partners and participants about their general understanding of the grant program, the role of the volunteer and the PC, ways to receive information about the SPA program and opportunities to take part in it.

To **formalize the approach and data processing** procedure to enable its comparison and consolidation.

The work with the raw data might be revised, in other words, the raw data can be entered in a local language without it being translated into English to save time and translation costs in order to reduce the number of mistakes when entering the information. There was no need to translate many comments in English and the SPA project summary description, project goal, objectives and needs. Instead develop clear guidelines for analyzing

To develop a unified **format for reporting** that would clearly state what questions should be analyzed to answer the questions from the evaluation.

To use the **unified terminology**. For instance, evaluation and not survey, research, poll, assessment; questionnaire not guide, interview guide.

To **administer the evaluation** by the PC directly from the Peace Corps headquarter (PC HQ) in Washington DC as it was done for the impact evaluation of TEFL program. As PC HQ has a complete picture of the SPA program this approach will help PC: i) design better evaluation approach that takes into account all details and nuances known only by PC staff; ii) change evaluation design as needed; iii) develop/update unified methodology, tools and data entry system. Moreover, it will simplify the evaluation administration. When several contractors are involved their relations and subordination to each other should be clear and regulated in their respective contracts with the Peace Corps.