



Teaching English as a Foreign Language Project Impact Study

Summary Report

US Peace Corps in Ukraine



Measuring the Impact of Peace Corps in Ukraine

The Peace Corps (PC) traces its roots 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, founded in 1961, devoted to world peace and friendship.

Peace Corps was established in Ukraine in 1992 when Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk and American President George Bush signed a bilateral agreement establishing a Peace Corps program in Ukraine. Peace Corps Ukraine has over 350 Volunteers serving throughout Ukraine. Volunteers work and live side by side with Ukrainian colleagues in villages and towns for two years, sharing experiences and developing relationships that often last a lifetime. Volunteers serve in one of three projects: Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Youth Development (YD), and Community Development (CD).

In an effort to capture and learn from the work of Volunteers and Ukrainians over the last 19 years, Peace Corps Ukraine and Peace Corps' Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) in Washington initiated an Impact Study of the TEFL Project

in 2010. In order to do this, Peace Corps selected the Counterpart Creative Center (CCC), a Ukrainian Non-Governmental Organization through an open tender. A few key findings include:

- The **majority of respondents from all respondent groups feel that they will be able to sustain positive outcomes from the Volunteers' work** in their institutions and communities.
- 94% of counterparts (i.e. teachers) and 96% of beneficiaries (students, teachers, community members) said they **definitely wanted to have another Volunteer**.
- 96% of counterparts and beneficiaries were **very satisfied (78%) or somewhat satisfied (18%) with the overall results** and changes of the Peace Corps work.

The following summary report presents the findings and key information highlighting the great work being done by current and past Volunteers and illustrates in a moving way the impact and meaning of the work of Volunteers and their community colleagues in making Ukraine a more open, informed, and capable country willing and able to confront the challenges of the future.



Purpose and Importance of the Impact Study

The Impact Study was designed to assess the effects of the work of Volunteers in 20 sites throughout Ukraine. Detailed questionnaires were used to gather data from over 160 respondents, including host families, students Volunteers taught (beneficiaries), teachers Volunteers worked with (counterparts), and national level stakeholders at Ministries and NGOs. The study focused on the first two of the three goals of Peace Corps worldwide:

Goal 1: Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women

Goal 2: Helping promote Ukrainians' better understanding of Americans.

Goal 3: Helping promote Americans' better understanding of Ukrainians.

Peace Corps Ukraine is very excited to have been able to undertake this study and feels that it provides a great deal

of important information that will allow us to improve and deepen the impact of the work of Volunteers and their Ukrainian counterparts in the years to come. The study is unique because it focuses on learning about the Volunteers' impact directly from host country individuals, in their own words.

The overall findings of the report illustrate that PC Volunteers are able to meet the stated needs of the host country and increase understanding of Americans among host country nationals. In the words of the researchers from the Counterpart Creative Center: *“The study shows that the effects made by Volunteers are felt by respondents for a long time after Volunteers leave communities. Respondents could not remember many details of the Volunteers' work, but they still remember and use English, approaches to problem solving, positive behavior, activism, and lifestyles taught by Peace Corps Volunteers.”*

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

The work of TEFL Volunteers was chosen as the focus of the Impact Study. The TEFL Project aims to enhance students' and teachers' communication abilities and encourage independent thinking and problem solving through the creation of an interactive learning environment and through the use of contemporary methods and materials. Volunteer English teachers work with more than 20,000 students each year in villages, small towns, and cities. Many Volunteers also work as teacher trainers bringing contemporary methodologies to the Ukrainian educational system fostering debate, critical thinking skills, and teacher-to-teacher links.

Volunteers spent most of their time in educational institutions with Counterparts dedicated to teaching English, conducting English clubs and weeks, preparing students for Olympiads, among other activities. Beneficiaries acknowledge that Volunteers' activities included such issues as an English summer camp,

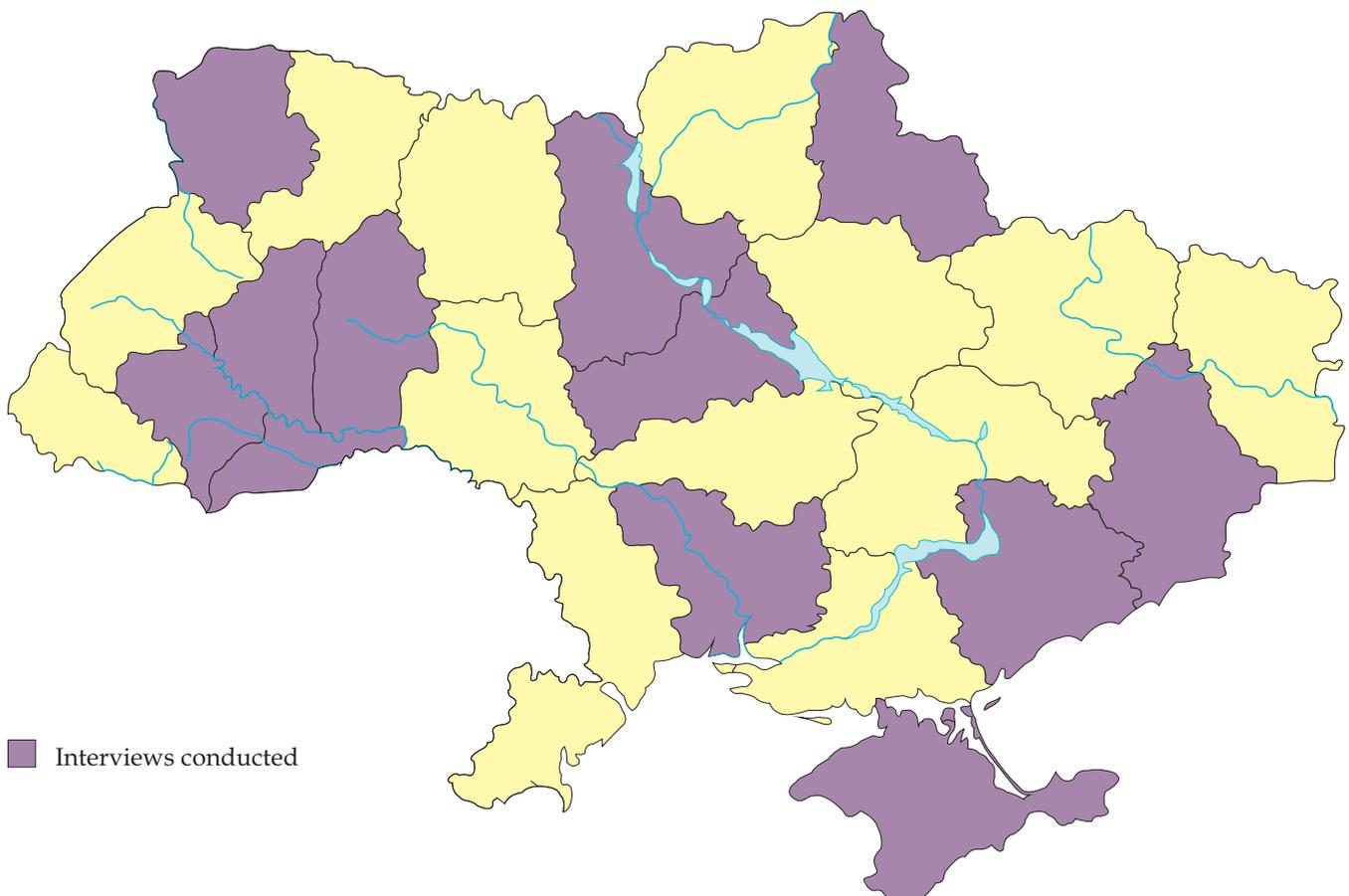
implementation of various projects, an English club, preparation for the FLEX program, an environmental campaign in the gymnasium, a newspaper in the school, a movie club, English weeks, language summer schools, communication lessons, outdoor lessons, celebration of American holidays, debate clubs, small academy of sciences, a European club, preparation of students for the Olympiad, extracurricular activities, trainings on leadership and civic education, and exploring the world. Family members most frequently engaged with Volunteers by cooking, doing household chores together, talking about the Volunteer's friends and family, discussing the host family's friends and family, talking about the Volunteer's life in the United States, talking about life in Ukraine, going to the market or doing other errands together, socializing together, and celebrating holidays together.

Overview of Study Methodology and Respondents

Twenty sites were randomly selected by Peace Corps Headquarters in Washington in the following oblasts: Donetsk, Zaporizka, Volynska, Mykolaivska, Ternopil'ska, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Sumska, Kyiv'ska, Ivano-Frankiv'ska, Khmelnytska, Chernivetska and Cherkaska. Approximately, five to eleven people were interviewed per site for a total of 161 respondents. Interviews took an average of 30 to 60 minutes, and included a mix of question types.

The groups interviewed were as follows:

- **Counterparts: 65 individuals interviewed.** Counterparts work with Peace Corps Volunteers and hold positions such as English teachers, directors, deputy directors, English methodologists, heads of educational departments, etc. from secondary schools, or universities, or training institutions.
- **Beneficiaries: 76 individuals interviewed.** Beneficiaries are individuals who receive assistance and help from the TEFL project, including students, teachers, deputy directors, and directors, methodologists from secondary schools, universities, or training institutions.
- **Host Family Members: 16 individual family members interviewed.** Host Family Members are individuals with whom a Volunteer lived during all or part of his/her training and/or service, as well as, those who hosted a Volunteer during Pre-Service Training.
- **Stakeholders: 4 individual representatives interviewed.** Stakeholders were representatives and/or individuals with significant involvement in the design, implementation or results of the Peace Corps project, such as officials from the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Economy, and the Newspaper 'English'.



Select Findings on Peace Corps First Goal – Bringing Technical Skills to Ukraine

Results from the Peace Corps First Goal (*Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women*) relate to the impact of the Volunteers in developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of students, teachers, and others to improve English language education. The study establishes that **positive improvements in the general skills, knowledge, and attitudes can be attributed to the work of the Volunteer** (select data, researcher findings, or quotes have been provided to provide support to assertions). An interviewee observed: *“The PCV did so much for our school, students and citizens of the town – one interview is not enough to tell you everything.”*

For both the Counterpart and Beneficiary groups of respondents the enthusiasm and the professional approach of the Volunteer were very important to bringing about and supporting changes in Ukrainians. The majority of respondents acknowledged that the organization's needs were met mostly in areas such as the improvement of English skills of teachers and students, demonstration of confidence and public speaking skills, and use of creative and student-oriented teaching methods.

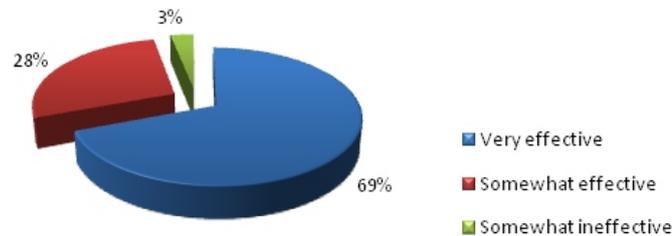
The information in the following pages presents key findings on Volunteer's impacts on Ukrainian communities.



IMPACT

Improved level of English skills of teachers. And, English skills of students.

Overall, how effective do you think the Peace Corps work has been in helping people improve their English skills?



- 95% of counterparts believe that the English skills of teachers were much better or somewhat better as a result of working with Peace Corps, while 97% of the same group believes the skills of students were much better or somewhat better.
- 91% of counterparts believe that their teaching skills were much better or somewhat better as a result for working with Peace Corps Volunteers.

Language knowledge, especially oral skills, improved both for the teachers and for students. Communication with the Volunteers helped us to overcome the language barrier. –Counterpart

I have different attitude now to everything: family, myself, pupils, and friends. My general outlook on life has changed. I began to smile more often and am more positive about problems in my life. –Counterpart

IMPACT

Improved teaching methods to increase fluency.

PC Volunteers did a very good job introducing creative and student-oriented methods of teaching. –Researcher Conclusion

In order to advance one's knowledge of English one needs to have a constant opportunity to practice one's skills and to communicate. One also needs modern textbooks and information materials. The Peace Corps program gives it all. –Counterpart

It was very, very efficient. First, the students began to speak English more freely and confidently. Many of our school graduates are now students of Foreign Languages Departments. –Counterpart

IMPACT

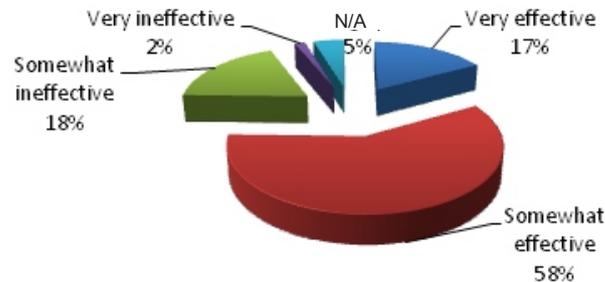
Students attained advanced career goals.

The Volunteers helped to develop competencies and skills and enrich the respondents' knowledge, which improved their overall professional performance, thereby helping them attain advanced career goals. –Researcher Conclusion

IMPACT

Improved initiation of civic activities.

Overall, how effective do you think the Peace Corps work has been in helping people become more active citizens in their communities?



Groups rated the work of Volunteers very high, with regard to their initiation of civic activities among students; shows that the approaches used in the TEFL project were effective. **-Researcher Conclusion**

IMPACT

Increase in confidence and problem-solving skills among students.

Personally, I was impressed by the responsibility and internal strength of Peace Corps Volunteer. The Volunteer was very meticulous in her preparations for the events (workshops, especially for the teachers' workshop). The Volunteer would always come in advance in order to clarify the needs. **-Counterpart**

The change in my perception of life, civic work and work of the public authorities (from other Volunteers). I was impressed by Peace Corps Volunteer's attitude towards their work; the Peace Corps Volunteer was very hard working and diligent. **-Counterpart**

IMPACT

Community members enhanced professional development roles.

Although I am not an English teacher, my knowledge of English improved significantly. **-Community Member**

Communication with the Peace Corps Volunteer was like a second university for me! I learned many things that we were not taught when we were students. **-Counterpart**

The Peace Corps Volunteer was a very "warm" type of person, very positive. The Peace Corps Volunteer would always help when she could. The Peace Corps Volunteer's advice was always good. Now, I try to act in the same way with my colleagues. **-Counterpart**

Select Findings on Peace Corps Second Goal – Helping Ukrainians to Better Know Americans

Results on the **Peace Corps Second Goal** (*Helping promote Ukrainians' better understanding of Americans*) relate to the impact of the Volunteers in integrating into their community, building relationships, and sharing information about life in the United States. The study demonstrates

that the Ukrainians interviewed have gained a better understanding of Americans. More Ukrainians think that Americans are good people compared with their perception before working with Peace Corps.

IMPACT

Improved understanding and knowledge of Americans and the United States

- Counterparts said the following characteristics that may be attributed to Americans: *readiness to help; attitudes to life and problem-solving solutions; hard work; communication; cooperation; responsibility; loyalty; tolerant behavior; openness; willingness to share experience and knowledge; kindness; sincerity; frankness; interest in helping; honesty; and sociability.*
- Changes in opinions about Americans came about because working with Volunteers made Counterparts understand that people from the USA are *“well-meaning; sensitive; energetic; restless; law-abiding; disciplined; responsible; open; positive; nice; friendly; tolerant; ordinary people with ordinary needs; etc.”*
- Beneficiaries also noticed healthy lifestyles, politeness, competence, professionalism, and a combination of different features of Americans that made them [respondents] change their attitudes towards people from the U.S.
- Beneficiaries expressed that Americans have: *drive; commitment; sensitivity; patriotism; frankness in relations; a sense of humor; honesty; pride in being American; straightforwardness; life planning; the protection offered by their government; sweetness; and their ability to be surprising* which resulted in a change of Ukrainians' attitudes toward them.
- As for Host Family members, they appreciated having, *“deeper and more detailed information received first-hand.”* But the most important aspect to the Host Family, overall, was receiving specific and detailed information, *“from a native speaker.”* Hosting Volunteers helped them to better understand that Americans (are): *positive; very well meaning; well-bred and polite people; very responsible and hard working.*



In general, Ukrainians appreciated receiving specific and detailed information “from a native speaker” about the United States and its people's culture. Working with Volunteers resulted in changes in opinions about Americans with respondents expressing that people from the USA are: “law-abiding; disciplined; responsible; open;

positive; nice; friendly; tolerant; ordinary people with ordinary needs; very responsible and hard-working; do not have as easy a life as many of us think they have; simple and undemanding in their living conditions; love their country; and like to spend their time on something useful.”



Peace Corps Third Goal

While **Peace Corps Third Goal** (*Helping promote Americans' better understanding of Ukrainians*) was not a focus of the study, a number of the Ukrainians interviewed spoke powerfully on the extent to which the Peace Corps Volunteers came to know Ukraine and integrated in their communities. Two of these quotes are as follows:

- *When he came. . . I told him that I would become his eyes, ears and tongue. He smiled, and when he left he told me that I had become not only his eyes, ears and tongue, but also his heart and soul.-Counterpart*
- *First, we took time to study the Volunteer and then she became one of us.-Counterpart*

A successful Volunteer must work concurrently on all three goals. They must have the technical knowledge and skill to be an asset to the community; they must seek to know and understand their community and the cultural context in which they work; and they must give openly of themselves and their own culture to make sure they are understood and trusted in their community. When Volunteers are able to successfully strive for these goals and communities are open to learning positive impacts are seen in the Volunteer and community professionally, culturally, and personally.



Sustainability of Results

The sustainability of the TEFL project must be observed as part of the changes brought about by Volunteers on behalf of the institutions and communities where they lived and worked. One Counterpart responded:

“Both teachers and students are ready to and are already sustaining the changes. Support for events of the school’s English club has continued after the Volunteer’s departure; students organize the work of the club themselves. Furthermore, new methods of teaching are being used. The changes have already become a part of our culture.”

A Beneficiary echoed this by saying, *“The community has the capacity to maintain the changes. There is a Resource Center where information materials and books are available, as well as, equipment. We have since been able to maintain the professional level we previously attained.”*

The sustainability of the Volunteer and their colleagues’ work stems from the fact that Volunteers live and work in the community and jointly identify and seek to resolve issues. Thus, it is not surprising when Ukrainians are convinced that they can continue the work after the Volunteer leaves, *“the work is not solely conducted by the Volunteer. It is done together with other teachers; therefore, I think that the initiatives of the Volunteer will be continued after he/she leaves.”*

In short Ukrainians conveyed their readiness for the departure of the Volunteer, although some counterparts, *“constantly ask the representatives of the Peace Corps to send new Volunteers so they can continue the work.”* Said one counterpart, *“I hope that our teachers will be able to maintain the work initiated by the Volunteers.”*

Volunteers also had a profound influence on students and how they saw their role in their community. An

environmental group organized by a school Volunteer impressed one respondent. *“It went beyond the school, which is a sign of effective public work and one which I think was very effective. We saw how active American Volunteers worked, their performance and enthusiasm, and we learned many things from them.”* Another responded stated, *“It was rather effective since the students began to organize their own work and conduct various events, campaigns, and celebrations including an AIDS/HIV prevention project which was implemented throughout the rayon (more than 20 villages).”*

In these two anecdotes, we see the attitudes of the Volunteer were partially transferred to student’s changing perception of what is possible and how one person can make positive change. Counterparts, as well as students, appreciated Volunteers’ assistance as, in one case was noted, *“The pupils were active before the Volunteer’s visit. But, they became even more creative in addressing various issues after communicating with the Volunteer.”*

The researchers in their summary stated one of the most powerful findings. The majority of respondents from the Counterpart and Beneficiary groups both felt they will be able *completely or largely sustain* the positive outcomes of the Volunteers’ work in their respective institutions and communities (100% of Stakeholders, 73.9% of Counterparts, and 63.2% of Beneficiaries).

This clearly shows that the Peace Corps Volunteers work with their communities and at their schools is making a deep impact that will be sustained in the years to come. This coupled with the fact that Volunteers often work in rural and underserved areas illustrate the appropriateness and need of the work that Volunteers bring to Ukraine.

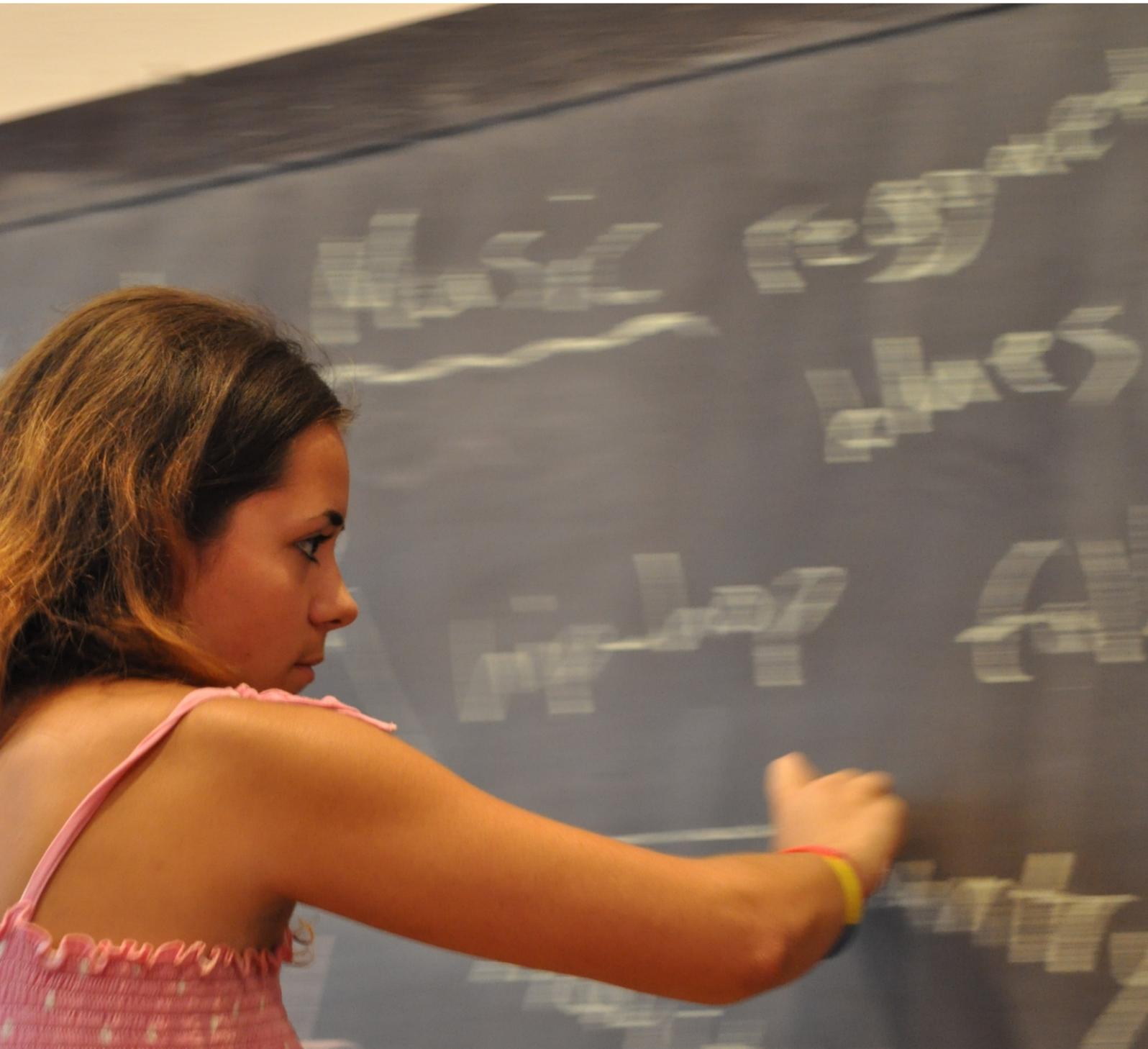
Conclusion

Peace Corps Ukraine and Peace Corps Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning successfully conducted an Impact Study in 2010 that provided valuable insight into the positive impact of our Volunteers. The sites throughout the country that were visited within the Impact Study were TEFL Volunteer sites, but many of these sites also had Youth Development and Community Development Volunteers that contributed to the measured positive impact.

In the Overall Conclusion to the Impact Study, the researchers stated: *“The study shows that the effects made*

by Volunteers are felt by respondents for a long time after Volunteers leave communities. Respondents could not remember many details of the Volunteers' work, but they still remember and use English, approaches to problem solving, positive behavior, activism, and lifestyles taught by Peace Corps Volunteers.” Thus, the Impact Study provides a clear statement of the importance of Volunteers in Ukraine as an opportunity to change the approach of people to solving their own problems and taking an active role in community life.





Peace Corps would like to thank all the teachers, students, and community members throughout Ukraine who have supported Volunteers over the last 20 years.

Without your patience, support, and guidance Peace Corps' work in Ukraine would not be possible

