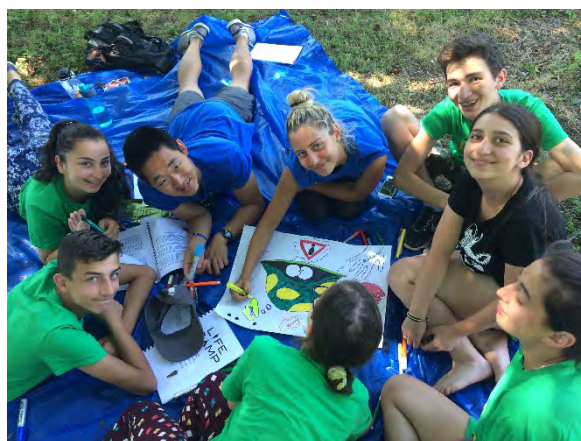




EVALUATION

Retrospective Impact Evaluation of Peace Corps' Small Projects Assistance (SPA) Program in Georgia



by

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Photo on the cover: Peace Corps Volunteer with Leadership, Integration, and Fitness through Education (LIFE) Camp participants, 2017.

Photo credits: Peace Corps Georgia

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ACRONYMS

CDP	Cooperative Development Program
COS	Close of Service (for Peace Corps Volunteer)
CSO	Community Service Organization
EE-PCV	English Education Peace Corps Volunteer
ESL	English as a Second Language
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GEL	Georgian Lari
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
IOD-PCV	Individual & Organization Development Peace Corps Volunteer
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PACA	Participatory Analysis and Community Action
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
PCCP	Peace Corp Partnership Program
PDM	Project Design and Management
PT	Process Tracing
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
R-PCV	Response Peace Corps Volunteer
SGP	Small Grants Program
SPA	Small Project Assistance
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Math
ToC	Theory of Change
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

1. Executive Summary

This evaluation represents the first comprehensive assessment of Peace Corps' Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program in Georgia. The evaluation reviewed and assessed 273 SPA projects implemented from 2010 to 2019 in Georgia. A selection of the main findings and recommendations are the following:

1. SPA projects are implemented collaboratively between a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) along with a local community counterpart, and community individual(s) and/or organization(s). From 2010-2019, a total of \$622,911 (\$539,404 in 2010 constant dollars) in SPA grant funds supported these 273 projects. In addition to SPA grants, SPA project budgets were comprised of cash and in-kind contributions from the community and, occasionally, third parties. Over these 10 years, in 2010 constant US dollars, total SPA project budgets (including community and third-party contributions) ranged from \$418 to \$13,502, for an average of \$3,331, and were implemented anywhere from 2 to 92 weeks (23 months) or, on average, 27 weeks.
2. On average, over the 10 years, the proportion of the total SPA project budget from community contributions, based on constant dollars, ranged from a low of 33% in 2018 to a high of 40% in 2015 in EE-PCV SPA projects and from a low of 29% in 2013 to a high of 45% in 2015 in IOD-PCV SPA projects. These proportions of community contribution to the total SPA budget are in line with global SPA projects of 37%.
3. From 2010 to 2019, 45% (122 of 273) of SPA projects were implemented in two of the eleven regions in Georgia: Kakheti and Imereti. Two reasons why these regions have the largest number of SPA projects is primarily due to them having the largest number of people living in rural areas (villages and small towns), which is the geographic focus of the SPA Program, and a disproportionate number of PCVs being posted in these two regions.
4. The majority, 71% (195 of 273) of SPA projects addressed issues related to education (128 projects) or youth development (67 projects). Education related issues included rehabilitation of libraries, English language school cabinets, computer technology training for teachers and students, developing English clubs, school gardens, and science labs. Youth development related issues included summer camps emphasizing various themes such as leadership, empowerment, diversity and tolerance, fitness training & sports, disability inclusion, STEM training, and entrepreneurship.
5. A total of 29,305 direct beneficiaries were reached in the 273 SPA projects, of which 57.7% were female. The number of direct beneficiaries ranged from 1 in one project to 1,863 in one project, for an average of 107 direct beneficiaries per SPA project.
6. A total of 110,491 indirect beneficiaries were reached in the 273 SPA projects, of which 52.9% were female. The number of indirect beneficiaries ranged from 0 in 25 9.2% of all projects to 22,000 in one project, for an average of 405 indirect beneficiaries per SPA project.
7. Capacity-building is a major focus of the SPA Program. Among the 273 SPA projects, 88% of capacity-building activities targeted organizations (i.e., civil society, government departments, schools), 86% targeted professionals and service providers (i.e., teachers, counselors, IT staff), and 73% targeted individuals (youth activists, leaders, local change agents). Most SPA projects (82%) delivered technical (i.e., service delivery, business development, systems management), organizational (i.e., financial management, resource mobilization) and influencing trainings (advocacy, lobbying, negotiation, research).
8. One measure of program efficiency is "cost per beneficiary" although this measure is not related necessarily to project performance. To calculate cost per direct beneficiary in these 273 SPA projects, the total amount of SPA grant funds was divided by the total number of direct beneficiaries. Over the 10 years, the average cost per direct beneficiary in SPA projects was \$21 in nominal dollars and \$18 in constant dollars. The overall average cost per beneficiary, which includes both direct and indirect beneficiaries, was calculated by dividing the total SPA grant amount by the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries. Over the 10 years, the average cost per beneficiary (direct and indirect) was \$6 in nominal dollars and \$5 in

constant dollars.

9. Community contributions totaled the equivalent of \$396,847 in nominal dollars and \$343,849 in constant dollars over the 10 years. In the SPA Program over the last 10 years, the ratio of the dollar value of community contributions to SPA grant funds was \$1 to \$1.6.
10. A rubric was developed to assess SPA project performance based on a set of criteria drawn from SPA documents and PC/Georgia SPA program staff. Using this rubric, the 273 SPA projects were placed in one of four performance categories: poor, adequate, good, excellent. Slightly more than one of ten (11.4%) were classified as poor, 57.9% were classified as adequate, 22.3% as good, and 8.4% as excellent.
11. To understand factors that influenced SPA projects' performance over the 10 years, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) was used, which allowed for cross-case analysis of both necessary and sufficient factors or conditions for successful performance. The QCA showed that the most comprehensive combination of factors or conditions deemed sufficient for project success were, though not in order of importance: 1) a quality or at least adequate needs assessment being conducted, 2) capacity-building was core project objective, 3) having a competent local counterpart (individual or organization) involved in the capacity-building, 4) having a well-connected, influential community member supporting the project, and 5) administrative and logistical support from community members for project activities.
12. The importance of these five factors for project success means that PC SPA Program, SPA Review Committee, PCVs, and PCV Counterparts, need to focus on this combination and their relationships during the design, planning and implementation phases. Again, it must be emphasized that these five factors are interrelated to a large extent since they are causally-linked; a quality needs assessment by itself is not enough to increase the likelihood of project success, but the needs assessment should identify relevant types of capacity-building training as well as appropriate capacity-building trainers.
13. Many of the recommendations fall primarily into two stages of the SPA Program's Theory of Change: a) Project Design & Planning and b) Inputs. Since nearly one-half of the surveyed PCVs were not experienced in the community-led approach to development prior to joining Peace Corps and had little previous experience of implementing small projects, more training needs to be provided early on to PCVs who are interested in the SPA Program using The Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA) Field Guide handbook. The PACA guide provides methods and tools for conducting needs assessments and project implementation. In addition, the SPA Program should have a virtual library of "successful" projects that PCVs can review as well as contact information of PCVs who have completed a SPA project who can mentor them during the design and implementation stages.
14. The Participating Agency Program Agreement between USAID and US Peace Corps aims to achieve USAID's Objective of "To build the capacity of host country individuals, organizations, and communities to meet their own development needs and priorities." The findings of this evaluation show that capacity-building of local communities is dependent upon conducting a quality needs assessment and having a competent local counterpart deliver the training. However, few SPA projects over the years had monitoring and evaluation systems in place to measure changes in capacities and skills of training participants. Nonetheless, many PCVs described in their Completion Reports how capacity-building training participants went on, after completing the trainings, to use the skills they had learned, such as teachers using new teaching methods and technology, youth conducting additional community needs assessments, young women who attended camps going on to use leadership and advocacy skills in their schools and communities. In addition, many beneficiaries of these capacity-building trainings reported during interviews for this evaluation how they used the knowledge and skills they learned in other aspects of their life after the project. Thus, there is evidence from PCVs observations and SPA beneficiaries' testimonies that some capacity-building trainings did build capacities and skills of the community, though the evaluation cannot specifically state how many trainings or how many community members. In the future, the SPA Program will need to include a capacity-building monitoring and evaluation plan to SPA projects to be more certain of capacity-building outcomes.

15. As for the component of the Objective of *building the capacity of host country individuals, organizations, and communities to meet their own development needs and priorities*, SPA projects have performed inconsistency over the 10-years in achieving this component, primarily due to inexperience of PCVs and few resources on how to conduct a systematic needs assessment. However, the SPA Program has begun using *The Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA) Field Guide* (2018) in the Project Design & Management trainings, which provides PCVs, their counterparts, and communities with a more systematic approach to conducting community needs assessments as well as easy-to-use tools for data collection and prioritization of issues. The introduction and use of the PACA field guide should greatly improve the SPA Program achieving low-cost, grassroots sustainable development activities in the future.

2. Introduction

This evaluation report is an ex-post, summative evaluation to assess the performance and lessons learned from Peace Corps Georgia's (hereafter referred to as PC/Georgia) Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program, a joint initiative of Peace Corps and USAID, that funded 273 projects country-wide in Georgia from 2010 – 2019. The goal of the SPA Program is to promote small, short-term projects that are community-initiated and directed, meet a community identified need, and promote sustainability and capacity-building. This evaluation used a mixed-methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative data as well as reviewing secondary data and collecting primary data.



Photo: 1: IOD Project, Healthy Lifestyles, Guria, 2016.

The majority of secondary data used in this evaluation came from hard copies of SPA Project Completion Reports. Data from these completion reports were entered, by the evaluation team, into a Excel spreadsheet, which was then imported into Version 20 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software for statistical analysis. Consequently, the quantitative descriptions of SPA projects in this report are based on digitized data from the 273 SPA Project Completion Reports.

The collection of primary data confronted meant overcoming several challenges. The first challenge was that two-thirds (66%) of these 273 SPA projects ended 4 or more years ago and, thus, making primary data collection, such as locating and interviewing Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs), PCV's local counterparts, and beneficiaries time consuming. In the majority of cases the evaluation team was able to identify and interview relevant individuals for a select sample of projects; however, recall of project events remained a challenge which was addressed through tailored interview recall techniques and data triangulation. The next major challenge was that the evaluation began, early March 2020, as the Covid-19 pandemic began. From early March to late May of 2020, Georgian authorities imposed social distancing and travel restrictions and PCVs were evacuated to the United States which meant interviewing and focus group discussions had to be conducted by phone, or internet. Despite these challenges, this evaluation was able to interview 2 senior SPA Program staff, 5 SPA Review Committee Members, 1 USAID donor representative, 56 PCVs, 35 PCV SPA Project Counterparts, 7 SPA stakeholders, and 57 SPA project beneficiaries.

This evaluation findings are reported in two parts. The first part presents statistical description of characteristics and trends over the 10-years of SPA projects disaggregated by the two program frameworks, English Education and Individual and Organizational Development. This statistical description partially addresses one of the two evaluation objectives, that is *"to understand whether and how SPA grant activities supported broader local ownership of development in the communities served."*

The second part presents a qualitative analysis of a sub-set of 30 SPA projects to examine what factors or combination of factors were more likely to be associated with a successful project. To determine SPA project performance a rubric was developed, based on SPA Program standards, and used to classify all projects into four performance categories: poor, adequate, good, and excellent. From interviews with SPA program staff, PCVs, and PCV Counterparts, a set of 10 influential factors were identifies as being crucial to project success. Using Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), these 10 influential factors were examined across these four performance categories (cross-



Photo: 2: EE Project, English & Technology Resource Hub, Imereti, 2018.

case analysis) as well as in each performance category (within case analysis). The QCA presented several combinations of factors that were associated with successful project performance. These analyses were used to answer the evaluation objective, “to identify lessons learned and good practices for locally owned, community-driven development.”

The set of recommendations listed in this report apply principally to SPA Program in Georgia, since the QCA findings are very much related to the SPA Program structure, processes, frameworks, and context. That said, since Peace Corps’ SPA Program world-wide uses a common approach to community development and Theory of Change some findings and recommendations may be applicable to other SPA Programs in other countries.

3. Background

USAID/Peace Corps – Georgia

A key strategy and policy of the United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) is *The Journey to Self-Reliance*, which focuses on prioritizing and supporting, through capacity-building initiatives, locally-identified, led, and financed problem-solving.¹ In 1983, the Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program was established through a Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States Peace Corps to achieve USAID’s Special Objective of, “To increase the capabilities of local communities to conduct low-cost, grassroots sustainable development activities.”² To support this objective, the SPA Program was designed to have PCVs collaborate with local communities in a process of identifying community needs and leadership, analyzing and mobilizing resources, both internal and external, to address community priorities in order to foster economic growth, nurture democratic practices, promote education and health, and increase civic participation.

In 2001, Peace Corps/Georgia and USAID/Georgia began partnering under this agreement. Since 2001, PC/Georgia has had five SPA Program Agreements with USAID, of which the Agreement IV was for fiscal year 2013-2018 and Agreement V is for 2019 and ongoing. This evaluation assesses projects conducted under SPA Programs IV (2010-2018) and SPA Program V (2019). Under these Agreements, PCVs serving in Georgia are encouraged to collaborate with host country partners on relatively short-term, small grant projects that support primary programmatic work or secondary projects.³ Within the SPA Program, PCVs assist communities to identify common concerns, develop strategies to address these concerns, and design and implement these small-scale community-level projects; this is, local capacity is built on locally-identified, led, and financed problem-solving.

Peace Corps-Georgia’s Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program

The goal of the SPA Program is “to enhance communities’ capabilities to conduct low-cost, grass-roots, sustainable development activities.”⁴ According to the Small Grants Handbook (2019, US Peace Corps, pg.7), there are two key characteristics of the SPA Program approach to development: 1) capacity building and 2) sustainability⁵ which are defined as follows:

Capacity Building: The focus of development work is on the development of the capacity of people, not things. PCVs help people learn how to identify and prioritize what they would like to change, and to use their own strengths and learn new skills to achieve that change. With this approach, development is not just planting a garden to produce food for the community but organizing and

¹ USAID Policy Framework: Ending the Need for Foreign Assistance. (2019). U.S. Agency for International Development. Washington, DC.

² Pg. 7 in Peace Corps Georgia Small Grants Program: Guide for Peace Corps Georgia Volunteers and their Counterparts, Tbilisi, Auguste 2015.

³ PC/Georgia Volunteer Handbook, 2018, pg. 2: Every PCV has a primary posting assignment, however, Peace Corps encourages PCVs to do secondary projects, where they spend up to 20 percent of their time on projects other than their primary assignment.

⁴ Small Project Assistance Program: supporting sustainable community development, 2003. Idea Book M0082, US Peace Corps, Washington, DC.

⁵ Small Grants Handbook, 2019, pg.7, US Peace Corps.

working with people to establish and maintain their own gardens. PCVs direct their capacity-building efforts to several different, but integrated levels: individuals, service providers/trainers/multipliers, organizations, and communities. Pg.7

Sustainability: Sustainability refers to the ability of a project to continue to meet the needs of a community once the initial funding has ended. PCVs use gender-sensitive, participatory approaches to analyze, design, implement, and evaluate projects to ensure that they have considered different contextual factors, and to support the sustainability of the changes they promote. In addition, PCVs work to facilitate systems improvements and organizational change that not only increase the potential for sustainability, but often improve the amount or quality of service provided. Pg.7

In summary, the SPA Program involves short-term projects that receive a USAID grant fund, that is combined with community contributions, and implemented by the collaborative efforts of a PCV, local counterpart, and local communities. These grants are intended to build the capacity of local actors to identify, prioritize, plan, and implement what they would like to change as well as sustain aspects of the project to continue to meet the needs of the community once funding ends.

Types of PCVs Implementing SPA Projects

PC/Georgia has three frameworks for the primary assignment of PCVs: 1) *English Education PCVs* who help youth, teachers, and other community members gain access to personal, professional, and academic opportunities through English language learning and critical skills development. They are placed in public schools in towns and villages across the country with a focus on reaching geographically remote areas and socially or economically vulnerable populations, including internally displaced persons or ethnic minorities; 2) *Individual & Organizational Development PCVs* who help individuals and organizations strengthen their capacity to develop sustainable projects, manage their resources, and collaborate with others to achieve their mission and benefit the community. Volunteers serve in governmental, non-profit, and civil society development organizations, exchanging skills with their counterparts and developing projects based on the local need. A special effort is made to place Volunteers in underserved communities and organizations that serve Internally Displaced People, women, youth, and other vulnerable groups.; and 3) *Response Volunteers who are PCVs* with significant experience and technical skills to serve in short-term assignments ranging from six to twelve months. The program adds specialized technical skills to support the English Education (EE) and Individual and Organizational Development (IOD) projects and Cross Sector Programming Priorities of Peace Corps. Response Volunteers and their Georgian partners work on a variety of activities that support the specific development needs of individuals and organizations across the country to build human and organizational capacity. Since, conventionally Response Volunteers are not eligible for a SPA grant and, over the past 10 years there have been only 3 Response Volunteer SPA projects (2016, 2017, 2019), the main focus of this evaluation will be on the other two programs: EE and IOD. In the rest of this report, English Education PCVs will be referred to as EE-PCVs, Individual & Organizational Development PCVs will be referred to as IOD-PCVs, and Response Volunteers will be referred to as R-PCVs.



Photo: 3: IOD Project, YMCA Youth Basketball Association, Kakheti, 2013.

SPA Project Guidelines

For all PCVs, a SPA project represents an optional “secondary” activity, which is meant to complement PCVs’ primary assignment in a community. Although volunteers are not precluded from implementing a project that goes beyond the scope of their primary assignment, PC/Georgia generally seeks to fund projects that contribute to the achievement of its broader objectives embodied in the two main program frameworks – EE and IOD. All SPA projects are implemented by PCVs, as a secondary community project, along with one

or more local counterparts in collaboration with a school, a community group, or community organization. According to PC/Georgia's Small Grants Program Handbook (2015), SPA projects must adhere to the following basic requirements:

- Community initiated, designed, and directed to serve the needs of the community where the PCV is posted.
- Demonstrates sustainability in that some aspect of the project can continue to meet the needs of the community after the initial project is completed.
- Involves capacity-building through developing or strengthening the skills, competencies, and abilities of individuals, organizations, or institutions in the community.
- Should involve activities the local community or organization can continue (or expand) on its own, following the PCV's close of service.
- Includes monitoring and evaluation to measure and document results.
- Ensures the community contributes, at least, 25% of the total grant budget, which can be in cash or in-kind contributions.
- SPA grants are no more than \$2,500, however, a few broad-based community projects can obtain a maximum of \$5,000.
- PCVs, who serve for two-years, may apply only after six months or more at site and after attending Project Design and Management (PDM) training and must complete a SPA project at least three months prior to their close of service date.
- Must be submitted and approved by the SPA Review Committee comprised of PC/Georgia staff and PCVs.⁶

4. Evaluation's Purpose, Approach & Methods

Purpose – In 2018, Peace Corps commissioned, with funding from USAID, a formal global SPA evaluation of projects implemented in fiscal years 2013 to 2017.⁷ However, the findings and recommendations from this global evaluation were general in nature prompting PC/Georgia to commission a more focused evaluation that could provide findings and recommendations that could be operationalized to improve performance of SPA projects and assure they are in line with the mission of PC/Georgia.



Photo: 4: IOD Project, Communicable Diseases Community Awareness Outreach, Samtskhe-Javakheti, 2019.

In 2019, PC/Georgia expressed a desire to commission a summative evaluation small grants, issued from 2010 to 2019, to examine the extent to which the SPA Program in Georgia met its goal of local capacity-building and generate knowledge on how the program can be improved in future programming. PC/Georgia and USAID/Georgia identified two objectives for the SPA evaluation:

- To understand whether and how SPA grant activities, as currently designed and implemented, support broader local ownership of development in the communities served, and
- To identify lessons learned and good practices for locally owned, community-driven development which have applicability for the SPA Program and other programs with similar goals.

PC/Georgia decided on the following key evaluation questions:

1. To what extent did SPA projects address community-identified priorities?
2. To what extent were the SPA projects designed and implemented with community involvement?

⁶ Prior to 2014, SPA projects were submitted either in paper or digital format, however, beginning in 2014 all SPA project proposals were required to be submitted online using Peace Corps Grants Online (PCGO) platform.

⁷ Muca, Marta et. al. (2018). Performance Evaluation of the Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program, FY13 – FY17. Report to the United States Agency for International Development, Washington, DC.

3. To what extent have SPA projects achieved their expected results?
4. How has the work of the Volunteer and SPA project-partners increased the capacity of local communities and/or organizations to carry out low-cost, grassroots sustainable development?

Approach and Methods - This evaluation used a mixed methods approach, which combined quantitative and qualitative methods to answer the key evaluation questions.

The quantitative approach relied on analyzing the SPA project administrative data from Application and Completion reports, to better understand the characteristics of SPA projects, grant activities, and methods to local community-driven development in communities over the 10 years. The characteristics examined included the number of SPA projects implemented, budgets in nominal and constant dollars, budget sources, average dollar amount of SPA projects, expenditures, geographic location, programming, length in weeks, roles of PCVs,⁸ capacity building efforts, number of beneficiaries, cost per beneficiary, and ratio of SPA grant funds to community contribution.

The qualitative approach relied on the use of an **Evaluation Rubric** to assess and rate SPA projects into four performance categories (poor, adequate, good, excellent), followed by **Qualitative Comparative Analysis** to examine similarities within and differences across the four performance categories to understand necessary factors and sufficient configurations that were associated with good and excellent performance. Finally, **Process Tracing** was applied to describe the mechanisms through which the causal factors led to better performance. Detailed analysis of process tracing helped to better understand what distinguished “good” and “poor” practices for locally owned and community-driven development and identify lessons learned for future SPA Program projects.



Photo: 5: EE Project, Life Camp, Kvemo Kartli, 2019.

Data Sources and Collection - For the quantitative analysis of the 273 SPA projects, the main source of information was the SPA Project administrative data managed by PC/Georgia. All available documents of each SPA project implemented in the period between 2010 and 2019 was reviewed by the evaluation team to extract quantitative as well as qualitative data. Where possible, qualitative data was quantified (ex. levels of capacity building targeted in a project) in order to see a bigger picture of the SPA program, in other cases, qualitative data was examined and aggregated to support knowledge-building and development of recommendations for the improvement of the SPA program. A comprehensive SPA project database was constructed, using MS Excel, based on quantitative and qualitative information gathered during desk review.

To complement the quantitative data with more in-depth, contextual analysis of projects and better understand sustainment of project outcomes years after project completion, rich primary data was collected from PCVs and project stakeholders from March to July 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, most of the primary data collection was online via real-time virtual meetings using various platforms to best accommodate the needs of individual respondents - Viber, WhatsApp, Messenger, Zoom, Skype, and Microsoft Teams.

Primary data collection among stakeholders included online in-depth interviews with the following groups: 1) four current senior PC/Georgia and SPA program staff, 2) one online focus group discussion with five PCVs who were members of the 2019 SPA Review Committee, 3) one online in-depth interview with a USAID representative, 4) an online survey, using Google Forms, of 56 PCVs who were involved in SPA projects

⁸ The 2002 PC publication, “*Roles of the Volunteer in Development*” provides clear framework, definitions, and examples of six roles PCVs can fill in development work; however, no clear framework, definitions, or examples are documented for PCV’s counterparts or the community, which limits standardized, comparable analysis.

during these 10 years, 5) online in-depth interviews with 25 PCVs, 6) online in-depth interviews with 35 PCV' Counterparts involved in SPA projects, and 7) online/phone interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with 57 direct beneficiaries.⁹ When possible, interviews were recorded and transcribed; however, when respondents refused to have interviews recorded, detailed interview notes were prepared by researchers. All transcripts and interview notes were translated into English for further data analysis. These interviews and FGDs followed a semi-structured format in which interviewers followed a previously prepared guide but extensively used follow-up questions to gather comparable data across different cases and simultaneously capture case-specific richness of individual projects. Prior to conducting interviews and FGDs, questions were agreed with the PC/Georgia team and covered the following issues: motivations to apply for a SPA grant, community identification and needs assessment, PCV and counterpart relationship, project design and implementation, challenges and successes, capacity building and sustainability issues. Transcripts and interview notes were analyzed using MAXQDA software following a systematic, conventional thematic content analysis approach. Codes were grouped into themes, and thematic networks were created as visual depictions of these codes and themes.

Performance Evaluation Rubric - The criteria and indicators, used to develop the Performance Evaluation Rubric, were drawn from the PC/Georgia's SPA Handbook as well as discussions with the PC/Georgia's SPA Management staff. PMCG researchers reviewed the 273 SPA projects administrative data and project documents, and using the Evaluation Rubric criteria, placed the projects in one of the four performance categories. The evaluation team kept in mind that the criteria needed to be specific enough to guide objective and meaningful judgements about performance but not overly specific that it was not applicable to all projects or unusable due to absence of the necessary data. Although SPA projects varied based on their scope, community settings, and other characteristics, nonetheless, PC/Georgia expected all projects to meet these performance criteria. The final performance evaluation rubric was discussed and agreed with the Peace Corps Georgia team before being applied to SPA projects under review.



Photo: 6: IOD Project, Increasing the Awareness and Engagement of Youth, Imereti, 2019.

The evaluation team analyzed project documents for each of the SPA projects and placed all projects into one of four performance categories: *Poor*, *Adequate*, *Good*, and *Excellent*. The project team strictly followed rubric criteria during the classification process, primarily relying on project application forms and completion reports. In the case of projects that were sampled for in-depth review, if additional information was obtained that meant fewer or more rubric criteria were met, the project was reclassified.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis - For the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), which requires more detailed analysis of individual projects, 30 SPA projects, or approximately 8 projects were selected from each of the four performance categories for an in-depth study. Using the SPA project database constructed within this evaluation, project application and completion documents, interviews, and FGDs with PCVs, counterparts and beneficiaries, the evaluation team identified factors that appeared relevant for project's success. The SPA Program Theory of Change developed by the evaluators based on SPA Program documents was used as a guide in the identification of relevant factors, to determine the combination of factors that are relevant for the fulfilment of the theory of change. Particular attention was paid to factors that were similar within, and different across, the four performance groups. To obtain a set of factors that are decisive for a SPA project's success, the evaluation team constructed a Boolean matrix of SPA projects and used fsQCA software (Ragin, 2018) for necessity and sufficiency analysis (i.e., factors that are necessary and

⁹ For details on sources of information and data, see Annex "Data Sources".

sufficient for a project's success). More detailed description of the QCA approach and the steps taken throughout the evaluation process will be discussed below.

Process Tracing – For the production of case studies, the third and final step of data analysis, a Process Tracing (PT) method was applied to two SPA projects, one from each of the extremes: one Poor and one Excellent, to better understand the configuration of factors identified in the QCA as influencing project success.

Benefits & Limitations of the Evaluation

Almost 60% (163) of the 273 SPA projects in this evaluation ended five or more years ago, which presents both benefits and challenges to evaluating these projects. Three major benefits to evaluating projects that ended many years ago include:

- the ability to look at longer-term intended impacts, that is, beyond projects' intended outcomes that were expected upon the completion of the project.
- sustainment of outcomes and/or processes associated with older projects rather than sustainability associated with more recent projects, that is, observe whether and how expectations of sustainability translated into actual sustainment of skills and practices; and
- longer-term unintended positive and negative outcomes that may have not come to fruition during the project or soon after it was completed.

Conversely, there are challenges associated with a retrospective approach, which include:

- accuracy and reliability of stakeholders' recall of events that occurred numerous years ago that will be mitigated by prompts of project events and activities, showing of visual materials, triangulation of data, and using chain-referral of participants and stakeholders who may recall the project;
- difficulty of locating project beneficiaries from many years ago as many had left the community (or the country altogether) and counterpart organizations had not continued interaction with them
- the potential for numerous, unmonitored, confounding effects that could have affected project outcome(s) in the period between the project was completed and the evaluation study that will be mitigated by use of different causal inference methods, such as qualitative comparative analysis, process tracing, and general elimination method; and
- no baseline data for projects and the evaluation having no resources (budget or time) to reconstruct baselines from many years ago, which will not be mitigated.

Due to travel and social distancing restrictions in Georgia due to Covid-19 pandemic, the evaluation team faced numerous challenges in conducting in-person interviews and FGDs. Thus, most interviews and FGDs were conducted using online platforms, such as Zoom, Skype, Teams, etc.

Ethical Considerations – According to USAID's publication, *Protection of Human Subjects in Research Supported by USAID* (2006, pg.4-6), program evaluation does not require submission to an independent ethics review board because it relates to improvement of a public service or benefit and, thus, this evaluation was not submitted to an ethic review board or committee for an ethics review prior to being conducted. Nonetheless, this evaluation did follow standard best practices human subject protection by obtaining verbal informed consent from all participants prior to data collection, as well as ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of all opinions and views provided by participants.

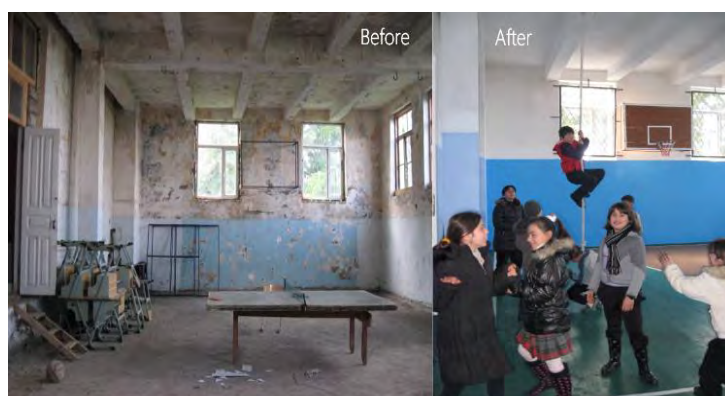


Photo: 7: EE Project, Gym Renovation Project, Adjara, 2010.

5. SPA Project Characteristics & Trends

This section presents a description of the 273 SPA projects implemented from 2010 to 2019. PMCG evaluators reviewed all 273 SPA project documents and extracted specific quantitative data on each project. These data were entered into an MS Excel spreadsheet and then imported into SPSS Version 20 for analysis.

Characteristics of PCVs Involved in SPA Projects from 2010-2019 – To better understand the characteristics of the PCVs involved in the SPA Program over this time period, the evaluation team developed an online survey. Due to privacy issues, PC/Georgia, not the evaluators, obtained the email addresses of all 273 PCVs from the Peace Corps' Washington Office and sent emails to PCVs requesting permission to share their email addresses with the evaluation team. By 29 June 2020, only 58 PCVs had given a permission to share their contact information with the evaluation team. In addition, the evaluation team reached-out to PCVs through personal contacts who complete the online survey. Thus, out of 243 PCVs,¹⁰ 56 (23%) responded to the online survey: 32 EE-PCVs, 22 IOD-PCVs, and 2 R-PCVs. The characteristics of these 56 PCVs presented below represent only 23% of the PCVs who implemented SPA projects during these years, but do provide a general, though limited, profile.

- **Age During PC assignment** – The 32 EE-PCVs ranged from 21 to 63 years of age and were, on average, 26 years of age when they began their PC service in Georgia. The 22 IOD-PCVs ranged from 23 to 64 years of age and were, on average, 38 years of age when they began their PC service in Georgia. The two R-PCVs were 52 and 73 years of age. The EE-PCVs were the youngest group of PCVs.
- **Prior Community Development Experience** – Of the 32 EE-PCVs, 21 (65%) had “some” and none of them had “a lot” of experience with organizing community development activities compared to 82% (18 of the 22) IOD-PCVs and both R-PCVs who reported having “a lot” of experience.
- **Prior Project Implementation Experience** – Of the 32 EE-PCVs, 1 (3%) had “a lot” of experience in implementing small projects prior to their PC service in Georgia compared to 17 of the 22 (77%) IOD-PCVs and both R-PCVs who reported “a lot” of experience.
- **Start-up Workers¹¹** – PCVs have been described as having the following seven traits: 1) self-starter who is self-managed, 2) creative problem solver, 3) can deal with limited resources, 4) embraces ambiguity, 5) amazing communicator, 6) thrives on risk and adventure, and 7) not afraid of failure. When asked whether each trait was “*Mostly Like Me*” or “*Mostly Not Like Me*”, 38% (12 of the 32) EE-PCVs represented a “Start-up Worker”, that is, had 6 or more of these traits, compared to 55% (12 of the 22) of the IOD-PCVs and 1 of the 2 R-PCVs.
- **Summary** – All PCVs have at the time they are posted in a country, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree with some having a masters' degree. The EE-PCVs are, generally, recent college graduates whereas IOD-PCVs either have more work experience and/or advanced or technical degree. Although the data for PCV characteristics is limited, these data show that, on average, EE-PCVs are younger, less experienced in community organizing and project management, and less likely to have most of the “start-up worker” traits when compared to IOD-PCVs.

Characteristics	EE-PCVs (N=32)	IOD-PCVs (N=22)
Age during PC posting assignment (mean)	26	38
Prior community development experience	65% “some experience”	82% “a lot of experience”
Prior project implementation experience	3% “a lot of experience”	77% “a lot of experience”
Report having all 6 Start-Up Worker traits	38%	55%

Number of SPA Projects – SPA projects have been implemented by PC/Georgia since 2002, however, this evaluation focuses on those implemented from 2010 to 2019. During these ten years, a total of 273¹² projects

¹⁰ Some PCVs implemented more than one SPA project: 216 PCVs implemented 1 project, 24 PCVs implemented 2 projects, and 3 PCVs implemented 3 projects, that a total of 243 PCVs who implemented 273 projects from 2010 to 2019.

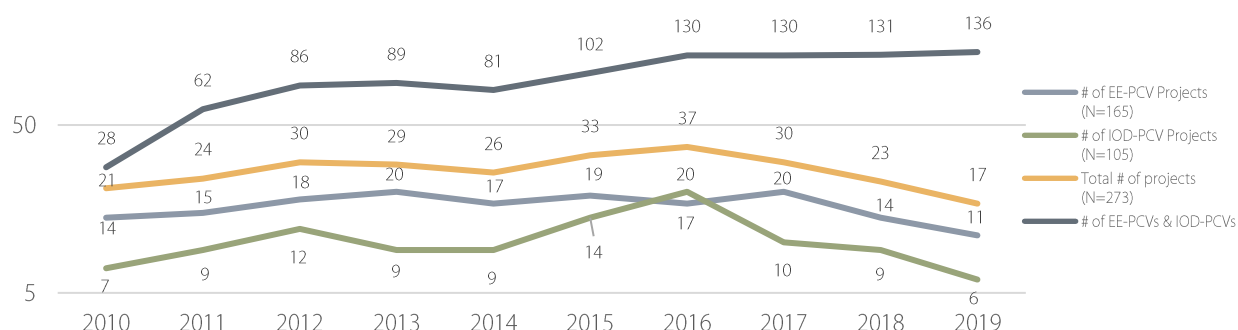
¹¹ <https://www.peacecorps.gov/stories/7-reasons-peace-corps-volunteers-make-the-best-startup-workers/> last accessed on 24 May 2020.

¹² Two SPA projects, #21 and #89 in the SPA database, were cancelled before beginning and are not included in this analysis.

were implemented, with the fewest SPA projects (18) implemented in 2019 and the most (38) implemented in 2016, or approximately 27 projects implemented per year, as shown in Figure 2 below.

Since 2016, the trend has been for about 130 PCVs¹³ starting their service, which means that each year a smaller proportion of PCVs are involved in implementing a SPA project; that is, 1 of every 3 PCVs in 2016 declining to 1 of every 8 PCVs in 2019. Some of the decline in the proportion of PCVs to get involved in the SPA Program as a secondary project is that beginning in 2014/2015 additional programs became available for PCVs to conduct community-related interventions, such as the Peace Corp Partnership Program (PCPP) that connects PCVs and their community with a different funding sources from the US.

*Figure 1: Number of SPA Projects and # of PCVs from 2010 to 2019**



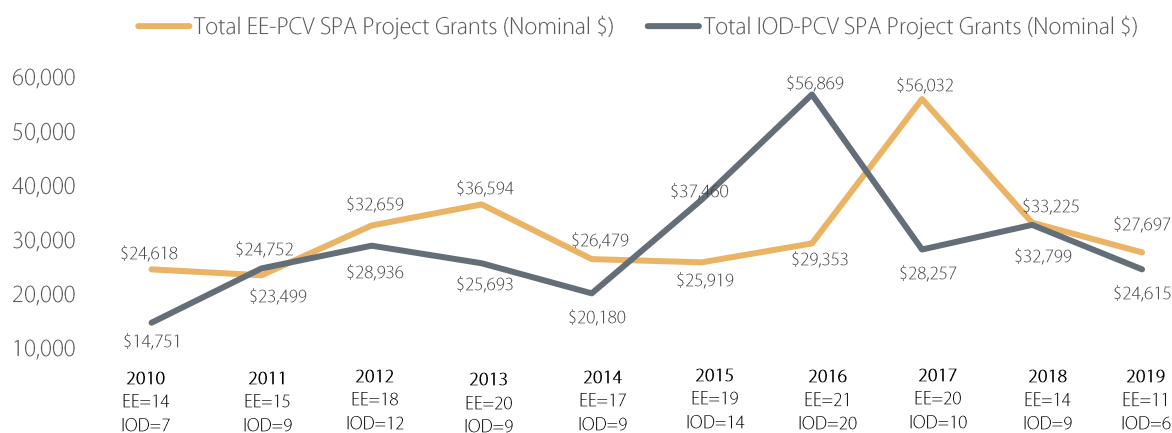
* As of 2015, R-PCVs became eligible to implement SPA projects. Only three R-PCV projects were implemented in 2016, 2017 and 2019.

Most prominent of these was the Let Girls Learn Program promoted by former First Lady, Michele Obama. The PCPP has a less stringent application procedures, which may have made it more appealing to PCVs. On the other hand, PCVs interviewed in this evaluation mentioned they preferred the SPA Program was due to a higher budget ceiling, PCPP involved fund-raising which they felt uncomfortable doing, and Let Girls Learn required a gender focus.

SPA Project Budget - The figure below shows the total SPA Program budget, in nominal dollars (i.e., not accounting for inflation), for each year from 2010 to 2019 by EE- and IOD-PCVs. Annual SPA grants for EE-PCVs totaled from a low of \$24,618 in 2010 to a high of \$56,032 in 2017. Annual SPA grants for IOD-PCVs totaled from a low of \$14,751 in 2010 to a high of \$56,869 in 2016.

Over these years, EE-PCVs' projects totaled \$316,074, IOD-PCVs' projects totaled \$294,313 in SPA grant funds and the three R-PCV projects totaled \$12,524. Together, projects of EE-, IOD- and R-PCVs combined totaled \$622,911.

Figure 2: Total Annual SPA Grants by EE and IOD-PCV Projects from 2010 to 2019.



¹³ Only 3 R-PCVs were involved in the SPA Program from 2015 (when they became eligible for the SPA Program) to 2019.

To examine funding trends, the figures 3 and 4 presents both nominal (actual) and constant (adjusted for inflation) total dollar amounts of SPA grants awarded each year to EE- an IOD- PCVs.¹⁴ A “nominal dollar” is the value of the dollar in the prices of the current year and a “constant dollar” is the value of the dollar adjusted to remove the effects of inflation. To adjust for inflation the base year for constant dollars is 2010. Showing the amounts in constant dollars over the years presents the increase or decline in the purchasing power of SPA projects. In nominal dollars, the total amount of SPA grants awarded to the 273 projects over the 10 years was \$622,911 and in constant dollars, \$539,404. The largest SPA annual budgets, in constant dollars, occurred in 2016 (\$76,991) and 2017 (\$71,134).

PC/Georgia’s Small Grants Handbook (2015, pg. 14) states that a SPA grant should not exceed \$2,500, except for broad based community projects that can be up to \$5000 upon approval. From 2010 to 2019, 71.1% (194 of 273) of SPA projects received grants of \$2,500 or less and only 1.1% (3 projects) received the maximum grant of \$5000, for an average of \$1,976 per grant. Over the 10 years, SPA grants, as a proportion of total project budget, ranged from a low of 17% to a high of 84%, averaging 62% of total SPA project budgets.

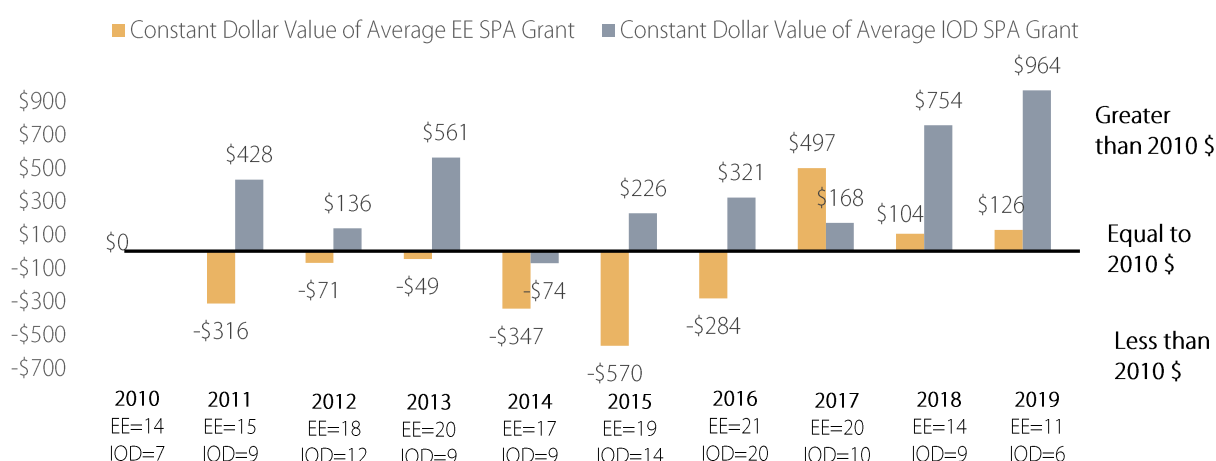
The figure below shows the constant dollar value of SPA grant funds over the years by EE- and IOD-PCV projects. In 2011, the average SPA grant of an EE-PCV project was \$1,567, which was \$316 lower in constant dollars than the average SPA grant of an EE-PCV project in 2010 (\$1,759). In 2015, in which the largest gap in the average SPA grant occurred in constant dollars, the SPA grant of an EE-PCV project declined, on average, by \$570. From 2017 to 2019, in constant dollars, the average SPA grant for an EE-PCV project was slightly larger than the average SPA grant in 2010.



Photo: 8: IOD Project, Development of Softball in Georgia Project, Kvemo Kartli, 2011.

In contrast, in 2010 constant dollars, the average SPA grant for IOD-PCV project was greater for all subsequent years, except in 2014 (\$74 less on average than in 2010). In 2018 and 2019, the average SPA grant was substantially larger in constant dollars than the average IOD-PCV SPA grant in 2010, \$754 and \$964, respectively. In summary, on average, IOD-PCV SPA grants increased most years since 2010 whereas the average SPA grant for EE-PCV projects, in constant dollars, was lower or only slightly more than it was in 2010.

Figure 3: Average SPA Grant in Constant Dollar Value for EE-PCV and IOD-PCV Projects from 2010 to 2019 (2010 base year)

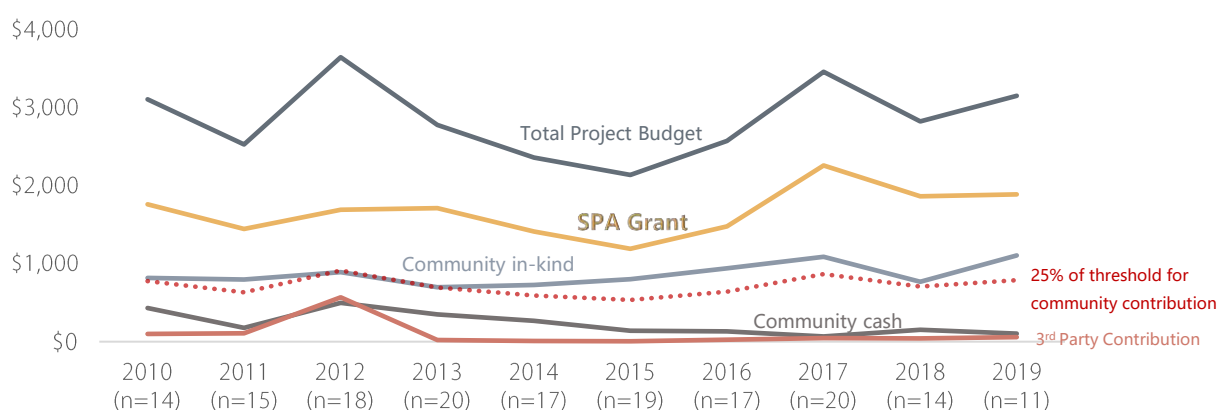


¹⁴ Constant dollar values calculated using this formula: (SPA grant amount)*100/(CPI of the project year). Consumer Price Index, GeoStat: 108.5 (2011), 107.5 (2012), 107.0 (2013), 110.3 (2014), 114.7 (2015), 117.1 (2016), 124.2 (2017), 127.4 (2018), 133.6 (2019).

SPA Project Budget and Sources - There are two sources of additional funds for SPA projects: local community contributions and third-party contributions, such as from local and international individuals and organizations. Local communities' contribution can be in two forms, cash (in GEL) or in-kind (labor and/or materials). According to the SPA Grant Handbook, the community must contribute at least 25% of the total project budget.

Based on the SPA Project database, on average, over the 10 years, the proportion of the total SPA project budget from community contributions, based on constant dollars, ranged from a low of 33% in 2018 to a high of 40% in 2015 in EE-PCV SPA projects and from a low of 29% in 2013 to a high of 45% in 2015 in IOD-PCV SPA projects. These proportions of community contribution to the total SPA budget are in line with global SPA projects of 37%.¹⁵

Figure 4: Average SPA Budget for EE-PCV Project in 2010 Constant Dollars by Sources \$ (N=165)

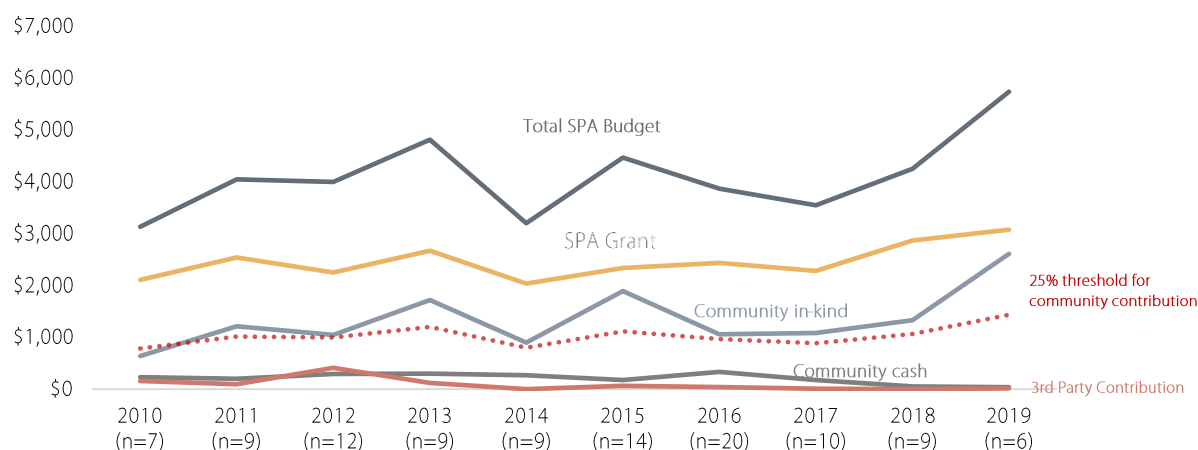


The graph above presents the average amounts, in 2010 constant dollars, from all sources and the total budget for EE-PCV SPA projects. SPA grants comprised the largest portion of EE-PCV projects' total budgets over the 10 years followed by community in-kind contributions, with relatively small amounts from community cash or donations from third parties. The precipitous decline in average total SPA budgets from 2013 to 2016 is due to a decline in SPA grant amounts, both in nominal and constant dollars during these years. As mentioned above, only in 2017 did the average EE-PCV SPA grant increase in 2010 constant dollars as well as in nominal dollars. For all 10 years, community contributions were always 25% or more of the total SPA project budget.

The graph below presents the average amounts, in 2010 constant dollars from all sources and the total budget for IOD-PCV SPA projects. Like EE-PCV SPA projects, SPA grants comprised the largest portion of IOD-PCV SPA project total budgets over the 10 years followed by community in-kind contributions, with relatively small amounts from community cash or donations from third parties. As mentioned earlier, for all years, except 2014, the average IOD-PCV SPA grant slightly outpaced inflation as shown by the constant dollar amounts. For all 10 years, community contributions were always 25% or more of the total SPA project budget.

¹⁵ Global administrative data for 2,560 SPA IV grant activities reported in Performance Evaluation of the Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program, FY13-FY17, USAID, October 2018, pg.3.

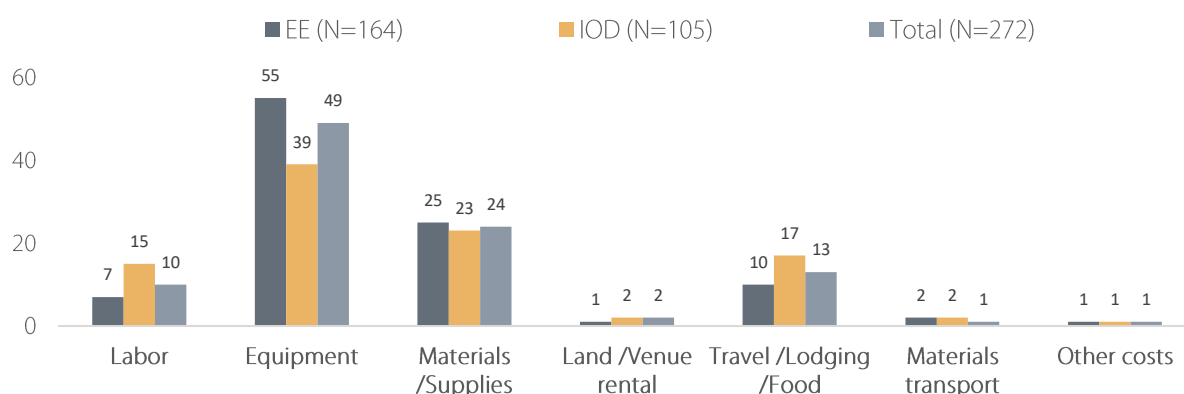
Figure 5: Average SPA Budget for IOD-PCV Project in 2010 Constant Dollars by Sources (N=105)



SPA Project Budget Expenditures - PCVs tracked the following expenditures of SPA grant funds,¹⁶ hiring of labor (e.g., fee of trainer, hiring a carpenter, presenter honorarium), purchase of equipment (e.g., LCD project, computers), purchase of materials and supplies (e.g., paper, pens, wood, cement, sports equipment), cost of transporting materials and/or supplies, rent of land or venues (e.g., conference room,), travel, lodging (e.g., bus expense, lunch for campers), and food, and other (e.g., bank fee) costs.

As shown in the figure below, over the 10 years, the 273 projects spent, on average, the largest proportion of SPA grant funds on equipment (49%). During this time, purchasing of equipment represented 55% of SPA grant expenditures in EE-PCV projects and 39% of SPA grant expenditures in IOD-PCV projects. The next largest proportion of expenditures of SPA grant funds, on average, was spent on the purchase of materials and supplies (24%), with the purchase of materials and supplies representing almost the same proportion of SPA grant expenditures for EE- and IOD-PCV projects (25% and 23% respectively).

Figure 6: Average Percentage of Expenditures in Nominal Dollars from SPA Grant Funds from 2010 to 2019*

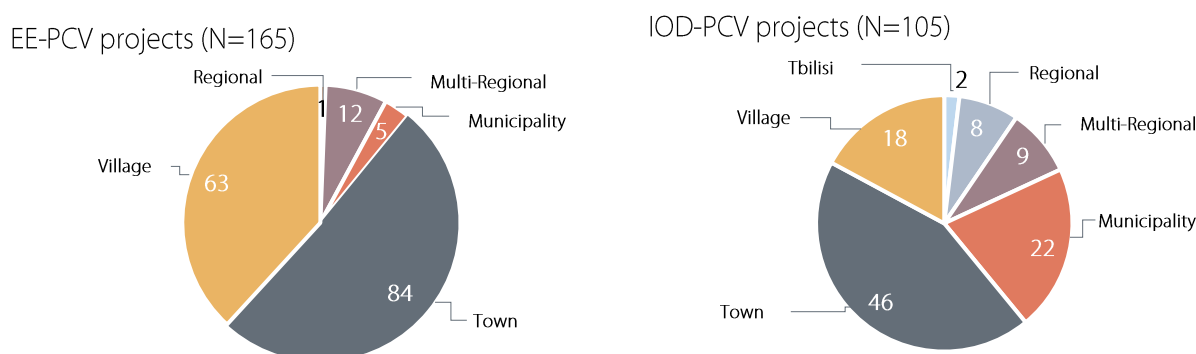


* One EE SPA project did not document expenditures.

The last two major expenditures of SPA grant funds in the 273 projects, on average, were for travel, lodging, and food (13%) as well as labor (10%). Among the EE- and IOD-PCV projects, a greater proportion of EE-PCV than IOD-PCV SPA grant funds were used, on average, for travel, lodging and food (17% vs. 10%) and labor (15% vs. 7%).

¹⁶ Not all project completion reports used the same approach to classifying community and third-party contributions, thus, these are not exact but basically representative of actual expenditures.

Figure 7: Number of EE-PCV and IOD-PCV Projects by Geographic Coverage



SPA Project Locations - A significant difference was found in the geographic location (Chi-square 43.50, df=5, $p < 0.000$) of EE- and IOD-PCV projects. The vast majority (89%) of EE-PCV projects were implemented in small towns and villages whereas almost two-thirds (65%) of IOD-PCV projects were implemented in small towns and larger municipalities. This difference is primarily due to EE-PCVs being posted in public schools in villages and towns whereas IOD-PCVs being posted, primarily, in towns and larger cities (municipalities) where non-profit and civil society organization offices are located. IOD-PCV projects also tend to have a wider coverage, illustrated by a larger share of municipality-wide and regional projects among them. Whereas among EE-PCV projects village- and town-focused projects predominate. Of the three R-PCV SPA projects, two were implemented in Tbilisi and one in a municipality in Imereti region.

The map of Georgia below, presents the distribution of SPA projects by region from 2010 to 2019. Forty-five percent (122 of 273) of SPA projects were implemented in two, Kakheti and Imereti, of eleven regions. The regions with the fewest SPA projects being implemented over the nine years were Tbilisi (3 projects), the capital, and Mtskheta-Mtianeti (4 projects). One reason that Imereti and Kakheti have the largest number of SPA projects is most likely due to these two regions having the largest number of people living in rural areas (villages and small towns) in Georgia and a larger number of PCVs being placed in these regions.

Figure 8: Number of SPA Projects Implemented in Regions of Georgia from 2010 to 2019 (N=273)



SPA Project Programming and Sectors¹⁷ - The majority of these 273 SPA projects, 71% (or 195) addressed issues related to education (128 projects) or youth development (67 projects). The remaining 78 SPA projects addressed issues such as community economic development (35), health (16), environment (10), ICT (5), NGO development (5), gender (3), volunteerism (2), municipal development (1), and water and sanitation (1). No significant difference was found in the proportion of sector programs by year or region. However, a statistically significant (Chi-square 85.76, df=3, p<0.00) greater proportion of EE-PCV projects focused on education whereas IOD-PCVs projects focused on youth development and community economic development. This finding is not surprising since EE-PCVs' primary assignment is in schools whereas as IOD-PCVs' primary assignment is in a community organization.

SPA Project Sectors

Education – rehabilitation of libraries, English language school cabinets, computer technology training for teachers and students, developing English clubs, school gardens, and science labs.

Youth Development – summer camps emphasizing various themes such as leadership, empowerment, diversity and tolerance, fitness training & sports, disability inclusion, STEM training, and entrepreneurship.

Community Economic Development – training in small business and financial management, marketing and accounting skills, agro-econ tourism development, cottage industry such as craft production, local agriculture production (honey), technology use (computers, digital camera), and English language.

Table 1: EE- and IOD-PCV SPA Projects by Sector from 2010 to 2019.

Sectors	EE-PCVs (N=165)	IOD-PCVs (N=105)	R-PCVs (N=3)	Total (N=273)
Education	67.3% (111)	15.2% (16)	33.3% (1)	46.9% (128)
Youth Development	18.2% (30)	35.2% (37)	0	24.5% (67)
Community Economic Development	2.0% (3)	29.5% (31)	33.3% (1)	12.8% (35)
Health	7.3% (12)	3.8% (4)	0	5.9% (16)
Environment	3.0% (5)	4.8% (5)	0	3.7% (10)
ICT	2.4% (4)	1.0% (1)	0	1.8% (5)
NGO Development	0	4.8% (5)	0	1.8% (5)
Gender	0	1.9% (2)	33.3% (1)	1.1% (3)
Volunteerism	0	1.9% (2)	0	1.0% (2)
Municipal Development	0	1.0% (1)	0	0.5% (1)
Water and Sanitation	0	1.0% (1)	0	0.5% (1)

¹⁷ During the review SPA application, the evaluation team noticed that, occasionally, similar projects were identified in different sectors and that there is some overlap between some sectors within a project. Thus, project sector data are not exact though relatively accurate.

Length of SPA Projects – The 273 SPA projects, from grant award to completion, ranged from a minimum of 2 weeks to a maximum of 94 weeks (23 months), for an average (median) of 26 weeks. There was no statistically significant difference between the median number of weeks for EE-PCV projects (26 weeks) and IOD-PCV projects (25 weeks). A statistically significant correlation was found between the length of project and total project budget (SPA grant + community contribution) for EE-PCV projects (Pearson correlation 0.27, $p < 0.00$) but not for IOD-PCV projects (Pearson correlation 0.15, $p < 0.14$). That is, for EE-PCV projects almost all lengthier projects had larger constant and real dollar budgets, however, for IOD-PCV projects some shorter length projects had large budgets whereas some lengthier projects had small budgets.

SPA Project Sectors (cont.)

Health – Fitness training, healthy lifestyles training, health information, and hygiene.

Environment – Eco-education programs, Green camps, and nature conservancy.

ICT – computer skills, social media, technology camp, and use of new technology in classrooms.

NGO Development – organizational capacity building, enhancing visibility, fund-raising, development of resource & training room.

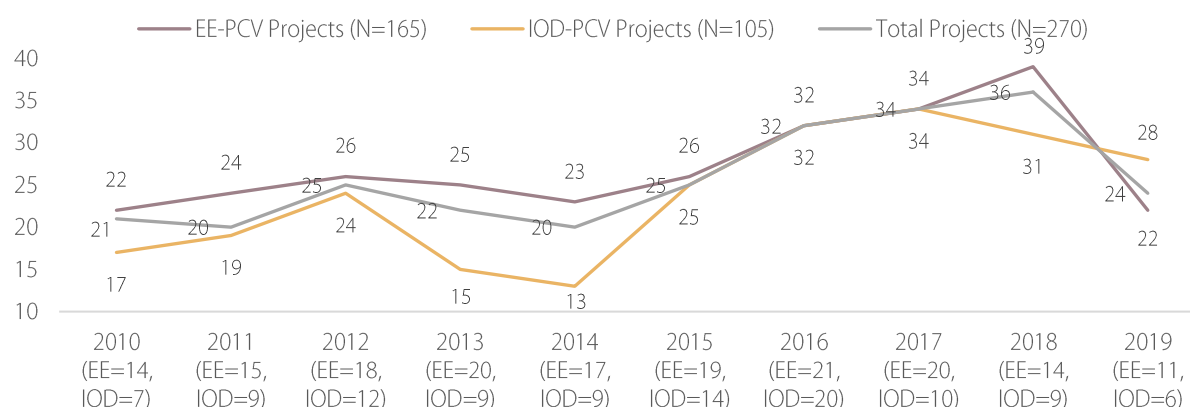
Gender – training for new mothers, self-esteem & leadership, and health awareness.

Volunteerism – connecting and coordinating volunteers and capacity building for volunteers.

Municipal Development – skills training for youth house staff.

Water & Sanitation – construction of school toilets and hygiene awareness.

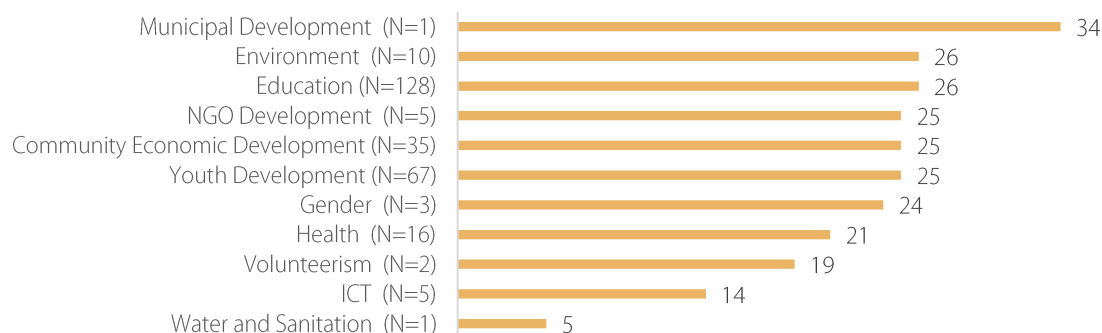
Figure 9: Median # of Weeks for EE-PCV and IOD-PCV SPA Projects by Year (N=270).*



* The 3 Response Volunteer projects, implemented in 2016, 2018, and 2019, are not included in the total.

The graph below presents the median number of weeks by project sector. No statistically significant difference was found between the median number of weeks for the three main sectoral programming areas of education (26 weeks or 6.5 months), community economic development (26 weeks), and youth development (25 weeks).

Figure 10: Length of SPA Projects (median # of weeks) by Sector (N=273).



Number of Beneficiaries in SPA Projects – SPA projects document the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries reached. USAID defines a direct beneficiary as, “those who come into direct contact with the set of interventions (goods or services) provided by the program...” and an indirect beneficiary as, “those who benefit indirectly from the goods and services provided to the direct beneficiaries...such as household members of a direct beneficiary.”¹⁸ The tables below present the absolute and average number of direct and indirect beneficiaries reached over the 10 years by EE-PCV, IOD-PCV, and Response-PCV programs.



Photo: 9: EE Project, School Technology Corner and Trainings, Shida Kartli, 2015.

Direct Beneficiaries – From 2010-2019, a total of 29,305 direct beneficiaries were reached in the 273 SPA projects, of which 57.7% were female. The number of direct beneficiaries ranged from 1 in one project¹⁹ to 1,863 in one project, for an average of 107 direct beneficiaries per SPA project.²⁰ On average, in both EE-PCV and IOD-PCV projects, most direct beneficiaries were 14 to 24 years of age. By program sector, education sector-related projects averaged the most (117) direct beneficiaries per project followed by youth development (104) and community economic development (37).

Indirect Beneficiaries – From 2010-2019, a total of 110,491 indirect beneficiaries were reached in the 273 SPA projects, of which 52.9% were female. The number of indirect beneficiaries ranged from 0 in 25 9.2% of all projects to 22,000 in one project, for an average of 405 indirect beneficiaries per SPA project.²¹

Most indirect beneficiaries in EE-PCV projects were, on average, 14-24 years of age whereas in IOD-PCV projects most indirect beneficiaries were 25 years of age or older. By program sector, it is the reverse of direct beneficiaries, in that community economic development projects reached the most indirect beneficiaries per project (853), on average, followed by youth development (369) and education (230) projects.

Table 2. Number of Beneficiaries of EE-PCV Projects (N=165).

	Age Groups		Total	Average per Project
	25 yrs. and older	14 yrs. to 24 yrs.		
Direct Beneficiaries				
Females	2,033 (85.1%)	9,235 (52.4%)	11,268 (56.3%)	68
Males	357 (14.9%)	8,400 (47.6%)	8,757 (43.7%)	53
Total	2,390 (100%)	17,635 (100%)	20,025 (100%)	121
Average per project	15	107	121	
Indirect Beneficiaries				
Females	6,885 (59.1%)	20,742 (51.8%)	27,627 (53.4%)	167
Males	4,772 (40.9%)	19,304 (48.2%)	24,076 (46.6%)	146
Total	11,657 (100%)	40,046 (100%)	51,703 (100%)	313
Average per project	71	243	313	

¹⁸ Session #5: Defining Beneficiaries, Baseline, & Targets in Performance Monitoring: Facilitator's Guide, USAID, 2016.

¹⁹ An EE project implemented in 2010 in which only the counterpart, an English teacher, was trained.

²⁰ Global administrative data for 2,560 SPA IV grant activities, reported in Performance Evaluation of the Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program, FY13-FY17, USAID, October 2018, pg.40, states the number of direct beneficiaries, on average, of 150 per project.

²¹ Global administrative data for 2,560 SPA IV grant activities, reported in Performance Evaluation of the Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program, FY13-FY17, USAID, October 2018, pg.40, states the number of indirect beneficiaries, on average, of 2,375 per project

Table 3: Number of Beneficiaries of IOD-PCV Projects (N=105)

	Age Groups		Total	Average per Project
	25 yrs. and older	14 yrs. to 24 yrs.		
Direct Beneficiaries				
Females	1,856 (52.5%)	3,066 (55.9%)	4,922 (56.5%)	47
Males	1,678 (47.5%)	2,420 (44.1%)	4,098 (43.5%)	39
Total	3,534 (100%)	5,486 (100%)	9,020 (100%)	86
Average per project	34	52	86	
Indirect Beneficiaries				
Females	17,168 (50.2%)	12,906 (54.8%)	30,074 (52.1%)	286
Males	17,015 (49.8%)	10,626 (45.2%)	27,641 (47.9%)	263
Total	34,183 (100%)	23,532 (100%)	57,715 (100%)	550
Average per project	326	224	550	

Table 4: Number of Beneficiaries of R-PCV Projects (N=3)

	Age Groups		Total	Average per Project
	25 yrs. and older	14 yrs. to 24 yrs.		
Direct Beneficiaries				
Females	133 (86.9%)	47 (43.9%)	180 (69.2%)	60
Males	20 (13.1%)	60 (56.1%)	80 (30.8%)	27
Total	153 (100%)	107 (100%)	260 (100%)	87
Average per project	51	36	87	
Indirect Beneficiaries				
Females	565 (70.7%)	148 (69.2%)	713 (70.4%)	238
Males	234 (29.3%)	66 (30.8%)	300 (29.6%)	100
Total	799 (100%)	214 (100%)	1,013 (100%)	338
Average per project	266	71	338	

Cost Per Beneficiary - One measure of program efficiency is “cost per beneficiary” although this measure is not related necessarily to project performance. To calculate cost per direct beneficiary in these 273 SPA projects, the total amount of SPA grant funds was divided by the total number of direct beneficiaries. **Over the 10 years, the average cost per direct beneficiary in SPA projects was \$21 in nominal dollars and \$18 in constant dollars.**

The overall average cost per beneficiary, which includes both direct and indirect beneficiaries, was calculated by dividing the total SPA grant amount by the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries. **Over the 10 years, the average cost per beneficiary (direct and indirect) was \$6 in nominal dollars and \$5 in constant dollars.**

Table 5: Cost Per Beneficiary by Program in Nominal and Constant Dollars.

	Total SPA Grant (2010 – 2019)		Number of Beneficiaries (2010 – 2019)	Cost per Beneficiary	
	Nominal \$	Constant \$		Nominal \$	Constant \$
Direct Beneficiaries					
EE-PCV projects (N=165)	\$316,074	\$274,450	20,025	\$16	\$14
IOD-PCV projects (N=105)	\$294,313	\$254,934	9,020	\$33	\$28
RV-PCV projects(N=3)	\$12,524	\$10,019	260	\$48	\$39
Total	\$622,911	\$539,403	29,305	\$21	\$18
Overall (Direct & Indirect) Beneficiaries					
EE-PCV projects (N=165)	\$316,074	\$274,450	51,703	\$6	\$5
IOD-PCV projects (N=105)	\$294,313	\$254,934	57,715	\$5	\$4
RV-PCV projects(N=3)	\$12,524	\$10,019	1,013	\$12	\$10
Total	\$622,911	\$539,403	110,491	\$6	\$5

Ratio of SPA Grant to Community Contribution by SPA Program - The SPA Program requires the community to contribute, both cash and in-kind, to the project. As mentioned, and shown earlier, communities are required to contribute at a minimum 25% of the total project budget and the vast majority of SPA project met or exceed this requirement. Just how much did communities contribute in cash (GEL) and the cash equivalent of in-kind contributions over the 10 years? **Based on project records, community contributions totaled the equivalent of \$396,847 in nominal dollars and \$343,849 in constant dollars over the 10 years.** In the SPA Program over the last 10 years, the ratio of the dollar value of community contributions to SPA grant funds was \$1 to \$1.6.

Table 6. Ratio of Total SPA Grant Funds to Community Contribution.

	Total of SPA Grants (2010 – 2019)		Community Contribution (cash & in-kind) Equivalent in USD* (2010 – 2019)		Ratio of SPA Grant to Community Contribution
	Nominal \$	Constant \$	Nominal \$	Constant \$	
EE-PCV projects (N=165)	\$316,074	\$274,450	\$205,757	\$179,146	\$1.5 : \$1
IOD-PCV projects (N=105)	\$294,313	\$254,934	\$186,257	\$160,868	\$1.6 : \$1
RV-PCV projects (N=3)	\$12,524	\$10,019	\$4,833	\$3,835	\$2.6 : \$1
Total	\$622,911	\$539,403	\$396,847	\$343,849	\$1.6 : \$1

* Third-party donations were not included in this analysis because it was not possible to determine if they were local or not and if the amount of third-party donations were included the analysis the results would not change much.

6. Qualitative Assessment of Performance

The following section presents the qualitative assessment of the 273 SPA projects using an Evaluative Rubric to designate the projects into four performance categories, then use Qualitative Comparative Analysis to examine similarities within and differences across the performance categories on a set of crucial factors, and then Process Tracing to identify the causal chain of activities and events that led to better performance.

Rating SPA Project Performance by an Evaluative Rubric - As mentioned in the methodology section, an evaluation rubric, based on SPA guiding documents and in cooperation with PC/Georgia, was used to assess different levels of performance by SPA projects over the 10 years. For example, SPA projects that clearly showed unsatisfactory functioning or performance, as indicated by terminating early or not being completed (excluding non-foreseeable causes), less than one-half of objectives achieved, having none or substantially less than the number of intended beneficiaries, and not achieving either managerial or economic sustainability, two of PC's four types of sustainability, were classified as exemplifying Poor performance. The table below presents the four categories of performance as well as the definition and indicators for each category.

Figure 11: Evaluation Rubric to Assess and Rate SPA Project Performance.

Poor Clearly show unsatisfactory functioning or performance	P1. Terminated early or not completed (Excluding non-foreseeable causes) (necessary) P2. Less than half of the objectives achieved (necessary) P3. No actual beneficiaries or substantially* less than the # of intended beneficiaries. P4. Sustainability** – Neither economic nor managerial sustainability achieved P1 & P2, P1 & P3, P2 & P3 - Sufficient
Adequate Clearly show fair performance overall with some troublesome weaknesses	A1. Completed with some delay (Excluding non-foreseeable causes) A2. Most or all objectives were achieved A3. # of actual beneficiaries was not substantially less than # of intended beneficiaries A4. Sustainability – Either economic or managerial sustainability considered (Necessary)
Good Clearly show good performance overall; might have a few slight weaknesses on PC criteria but nothing of real consequence	G1. Completed on time (or approximately on time) G2. All objectives were achieved (unachievable objectives were modified/adapted) G3. # of actual beneficiaries same or similar to # of intended beneficiaries G4. All four dimensions of sustainability were considered (Necessary) G5. Partial transition of ownership to the community (Necessary)
Excellent Clearly show exemplary performance or very good practices according to PC criteria	E1. Completed on time (approximately) E2. All objectives were achieved, and the project went beyond them towards the goal E3. # of actual beneficiaries exceeds the # of intended beneficiaries E4. All four dimensions of sustainability are considered (Necessary) E5. Project was scaled up and there is a clear and strong indication that further activities were (older projects) or will be (newer projects) implemented beyond the timeframe of the project (Necessary in the case of partial ownership) E6. Partial or full transition of ownership to the community (Necessary)
* Substantially- 20% or more. ** Sustainability – 1) Culturally sustainable (does the basic approach or concept fit within and build on local beliefs and traditions, or will it be seen as an “outsider’s idea” and not be acceptable or continued when the PCV leaves?), 2) Politically sustainable (when there is no longer an outsider, such as a PCV in the project, will it be sustainable within the sociopolitical context?), 3) Economically sustainable (will there be sufficient local resources or the capacity to generate them when supportive outsiders, such as PCV leaves?), and 4) Managerially sustainable (will there be the local management capacity to carry on the work when the PCV leaves?).	

After reviewing project applications and completion reports for all 273 projects and assessing them based on the evaluation rubric, most of the 273 SPA projects (57.9%) were classified as Adequate (clearly showed fair performance overall on rubric criteria but with some troublesome weaknesses), followed by 22.3% being rated as Good (clearly showed good performance overall on rubric criteria; might have a few slight weaknesses but nothing of real consequence), 11.4% being rated as Poor (clearly showed unsatisfactory functioning or performance on rubric criteria.), and 8.4% being rated as Excellent (clearly showed exemplary performance or exceptionally good practices on rubric criteria), as shown in the figure below.

Slightly more than two-thirds (67.3%) of EE-PCV SPA projects, compared to slightly less than one-half of IOD-PCV projects (46.7%), were rated as Adequate. On the other hand, 39.1% of IOD-PCV projects, compared to 23.0% of EE-PCV projects, were rated Good or Excellent. The difference between EE- and IOD-PCV project ratings were statistically significant (Chi-square=9.10, df=1, $p<0.00$). With only three SPA projects completed over the 10 years, it is difficult to generalize about Response-PCV projects, but two of these three (66.7%) projects were rated Excellent.

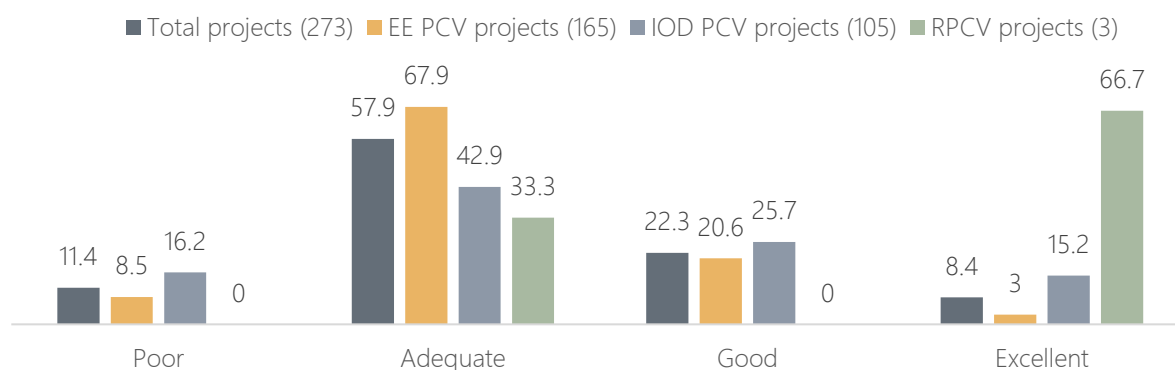
Due to the small number of SPA projects rated Poor or Excellent over the 10 years, the two lower ratings of Poor and Adequate and the two higher ratings of Good and Excellent were combined to



Photo: 10: EE Project, Preschool, Samegrelo, 2017.

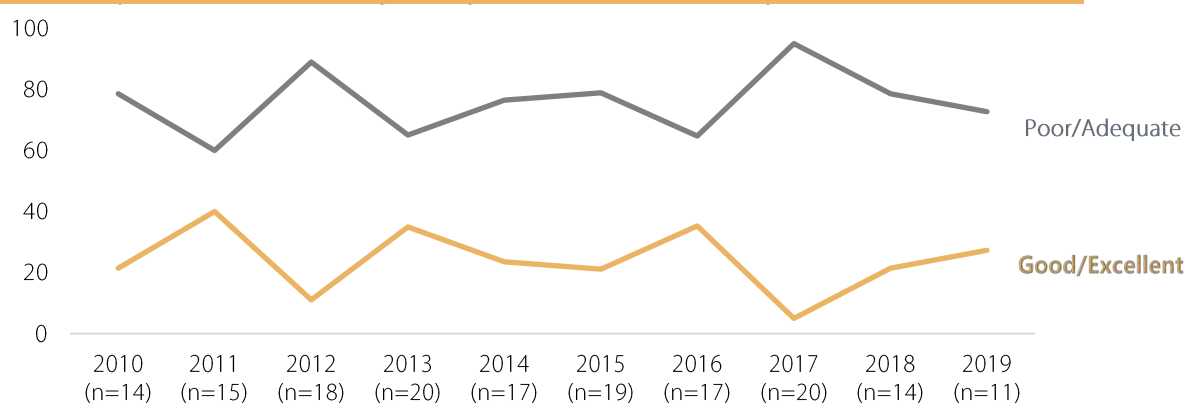
have sufficient number of projects per year to examine trends. These categories are meaningful for the purposes of comparison; that is, relative difference in project performance, but less so in absolute terms. It is important to keep in mind that adequate projects were characterized by fair performance overall and therefore, many poor/adequate projects should not be viewed as having no accomplishments.

Figure 12: Percentage of SPA Projects by Evaluation Rubric Categories (N=273)



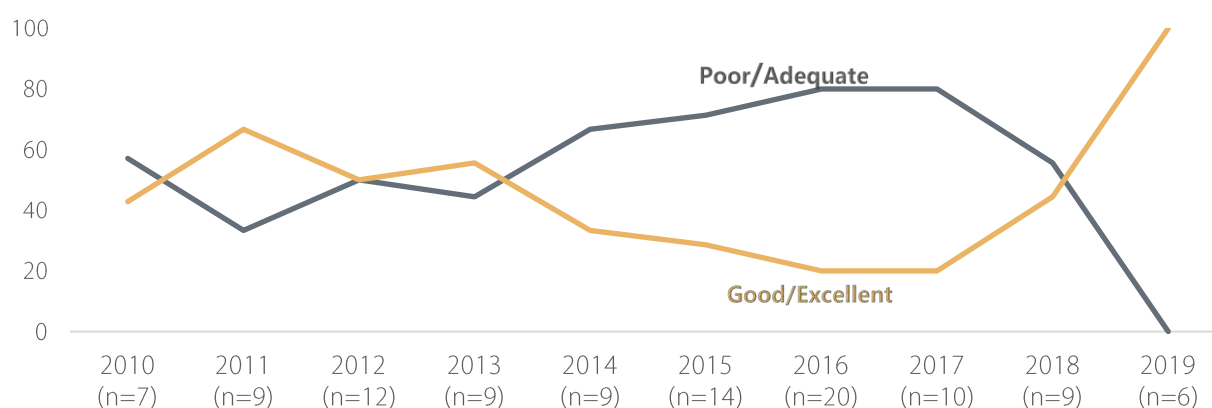
As shown in the figure below, over the 10 years, most of EE-PCV projects fell into the Adequate/Poor (Adequate being the predominate rating) rather than the Good/Excellent rating (Good being the predominate rating). The two peaks in the proportion of EE-PCV projects meeting Adequate/Poor criteria were early on (2012) and later (2017), however, since 2018 the trend is an increasingly larger proportion of EE-PCV projects meeting the Good/Excellent criteria.

Figure 13: Proportion of EE-PCV Projects by Evaluation Rubric Rating from 2010 to 2019 (N=165)



As for IOD-PCV projects, from 2014 to 2017 there was slow increase in the proportion of projects meeting the Adequate/Poor criteria after which there was a sharp increase in the proportion of projects meeting the Good/Excellent criteria. One common feature between the IOD-PCV and EE-PCV projects, is that for both the peak proportion of projects meeting the Adequate/Poor criteria occurred in 2017.

Figure 14: Proportion of IOD-PCV Projects by Evaluation Rubric Rating from 2010 to 2019 (N=105)



As shown in the two Figures above, based on the assessment rubric, there was a distinct trend of improvement in SPA project performance after 2017 as exemplified by the increasing number of good/excellent projects and a falling portion of poor/adequate projects. Although it is difficult to make definitive causal claims about the reasons underlying this positive trend with such few cases, qualitative interviews conducted with PCVs point to several factors:

a) improved project review and selection process

The most recent SPA committee members interviewed during this evaluation spoke very positively about the evaluation rubric that was introduced in 2016 as a basis for SPA project review and selection. PCVs reported that the clear criteria outlined in the rubric helped the committee make educated and relatively unbiased judgements about the quality of projects.

b) strong support from the PC/Georgia staff

When asked about challenges encountered throughout the project planning and implementation processes, PCVs stressed the strong support they received from the PC/Georgia staff, which helped them overcome difficulties during implementation so they could accomplish the project activities.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis - To understand factors that influenced SPA projects' performance over the 10 years, qualitative comparative analysis, or QCA, (Ragin, 1987) was used. QCA offered a very well-suited framework for this evaluation as it allowed the research team to understand what distinguishes more successful SPA projects from the less successful ones. QCA approach considers every case (in the case of this evaluation, a SPA project) as a combination, or a package, of characteristics that are presumed to be relevant for a project's success. Subsequently, the method allows systematic cross-case comparison to generate knowledge on what are the decisive characteristics of successful projects. QCA has several key advantages that made its application in this evaluation justified: 1) combines the depth of qualitative methods and the rigor of quantitative methods 2) is adaptable to complexity associated with SPA Programming, 3) can be used with a relatively small number of cases and still produce generalizable results, 4) helps to identify specific factors influencing project performance for institutional learning and improved performance (Befani, 2016).

Necessity and sufficiency are two critical concepts in QCA. "Necessary" factors refer to conditions that are completely or mostly necessary for the outcome to occur, so, there are virtually unsuccessful projects in the sample that didn't have this condition. "Sufficiency" refers to the combinations of conditions that are sufficient for the outcome, so, when these conditions are present in a project, success is close to being guaranteed. This QCA approach applied within this evaluation is informed by the good practices outlined in Ragin (2008) and Befani (2016) and follows the recommended steps: 1) model specification, 2) data availability, 3) calibration, 4) sufficiency analysis, and 5) identification of solution.

1. Model Specification - Model specification involves identifying an "outcome" to explain and selecting plausible explanatory factors that are suspected to be associated with that outcome. For the purposes of this evaluation, the outcome to be explained was a SPA project's success and that was defined based on the rubric rating of project performance in which "poor" and "adequate" ratings were coded "0" for an absent outcome and "good" and "excellent" ratings were coded "1" for a present outcome.

Necessity & Sufficiency Example

An example of a forest fire will be used to illustrate the concepts of "necessity" and "sufficiency."

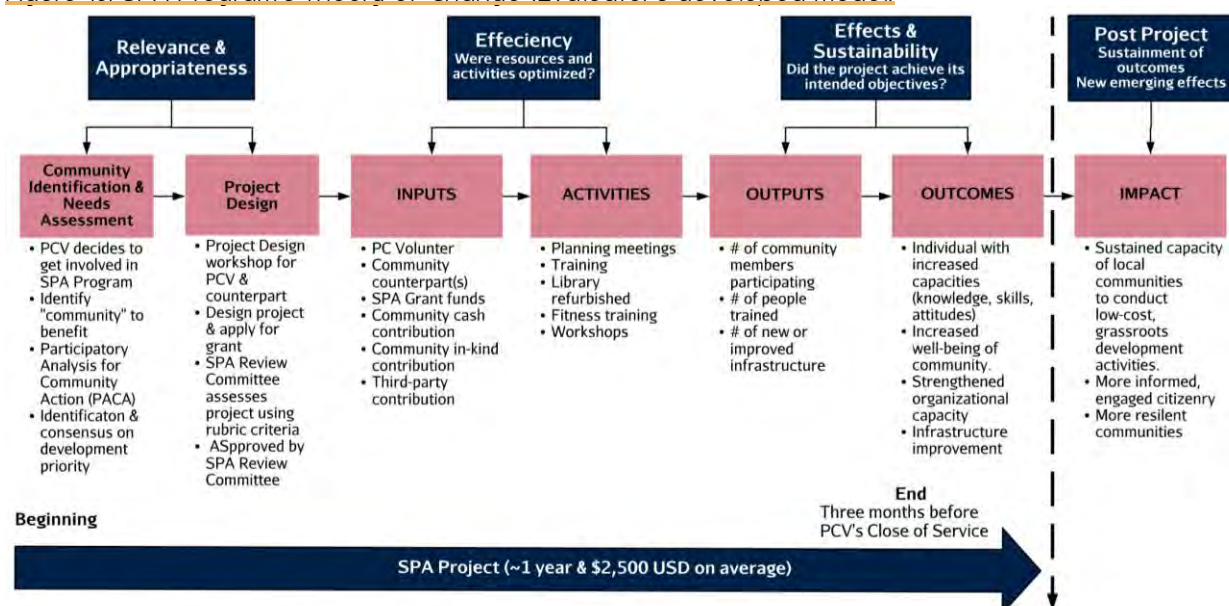
For a forest fire to start and continue, there must be an ignition source (e.g., lit cigarette, lit match, lightning strike), thus, an ignition source is necessary. However, an ignition source is not sufficient to start and maintain a forest fire which needs uninterrupted fuel (e.g., dry grass, dry wood, etc.) to continue burning. Likewise, an ignition source and dry fuel, although necessary, are not sufficient to start and maintain a forest fire. Another necessary factor is wind that helps to spread and increase it. Each of these three factors are necessary but not sufficient, by themselves, to start and maintain a forest fire. However, the combination of ignition source, continuous dry fuel, and wind are a sufficient configuration of conditions to start and maintain a forest fire.

The plausible explanatory factors tested in the QCA model were drawn by researchers from the review of 273 SPA Project Completion Reports and in-depth case-based knowledge generated through interviews and focus group discussions with SPA Program stakeholders (i.e., PCVs, PCV Counterparts, PC/Georgia's SPA

staff, SPA Committee, and SPA project beneficiaries). When analyzing the sampled SPA projects with positive and negative outcomes, researchers spoke with respondents about what they considered to be crucial factors for a project that successfully achieved SPA Program goals (capacity-building & sustainability) as well as project-specific results.

In the identification of relevant factors, researchers were guided by SPA Program's Theory of Change (shown below) which was developed by the evaluators. A ToC illustrates and explains the typical sequence of activities and resources (causal chain) that lead to a desired outcome. Analyzing the explanatory factors according to the ToC, as part of the QCA model, assists with identifying both strengths and weaknesses in the ToC allowing for maintenance of strong components and strengthening of weak components.

Figure 15: SPA Program's Theory of Change (Evaluator's developed model)



Explanatory factors selected for the QCA model met the following criteria: 1) **repetition**, most if not all stakeholders mentioned a factor as critical to SPA project performance, 2) **operationalizability**, the factor could be justifiably determined as present or absent in a case (project), and 3) **variance**, presence and absence of the factor varied sufficiently across different projects. Based on these criteria, as well as attempting to work with a reasonable number of factors (Befani, 2016), below are the ten (10) plausible explanatory factors identified for the QCA model:

Table 7: Factors Identified by Stakeholders as Influential to Project Success

Theory of Change		Influential Factors
Relevance & Appropriateness	Community Identification Needs Assessment	1. Quality needs assessment 2. Beneficiary age group (youth <25 yrs / non-youth 25+)
	Project Design	3. Length of project 4. PCV in 1st or 2nd year of assignment 5. Capacity-building core objective
Efficiency	Inputs	6. Who conducted capacity-building training, PCV or someone else
	Activities	7. PCV received administrative and logistical support 8. PCV received support from an influential community member 9. Project components designed to increase beneficiary interest and engagement
Effects & Sustainability	Outputs	10. Post capacity-building hands-on activities
	Outcomes	

2. Data Availability - A crucial prerequisite for QCA analysis is availability of quality data on the cases to be analyzed. Within this evaluation, the researchers conducted extensive fieldwork to gather in-depth

information on each of the sampled projects from a variety of stakeholders. For each project, the researchers strived to interview 1) the PCV who implemented the project, 2) Counterpart/counterparts who were involved in project planning and implementation, 3) any other partners/individuals/organizations involved in project planning or implementation, and 4) Project beneficiaries who directly or indirectly benefitted from the project. Based on these rich data, each project could be analyzed based on whether it had achieved desired outcomes and whether it had featured the particular characteristics included in the model. Missing data can severely limit QCA, so, in certain cases, researchers conducted additional data gathering through phone calls with counterparts and beneficiaries to ascertain specific aspects of a project.

3. Calibration - During calibration, projects are classified based on presence and absence of each condition included in the analysis. In this evaluation, crisp-set calibration was used in which a project was given “0” for absence and “1” for presence of a factor. The crisp-set coding used for the 10 explanatory factors are presented in the table below:

Table 8. Crisp Data Set Used for Necessity and Sufficiency Analysis

Explanatory Factor (factor name)	Absent (0)	Present (1)
1. Quality needs assessment (NEED)	None or little F2F discussion with beneficiaries	Formal and informal discussions with beneficiaries
2. Beneficiary age group (YOUTH)	Youth are not the primary recipients	Youth (<25 yrs) are the primary recipients
3. Project components designed to increase beneficiary interest and engagement (INCENT)	No outreach or incentive mechanism to interest or engage beneficiaries	Outreach strategies and incentive mechanism to engage beneficiaries
4. Length of the project (LENGTH)	Less than 6 months	6 months or more
5. PCV in 1st or 2nd year of assignment (START)	Project start date before PCV's 1 st year of service	Project start date after PCV's 1 st year of service
6. Capacity-building core objective (CBCORE)	Project centered on infrastructure/material supplies	Identified need is related to some capacity-building
7. Who conducted capacity-building training (TRAINER)	PCV conducts capacity-building	Local counterpart activity involved in capacity-building
8. PCV received administrative and logistical support (ADM)	Little to no support	Substantial support
9. PCV received support from an influential community member (SUPP)	None or little support	Substantial support
10. Post capacity-building hands-on activities (FOLLACT)	No follow-up activities after completion of capacity-building component	Follow-up activities after completion of capacity-building component

The crisp-set coding for each factor, as well as outcome, was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet (presented below) and imported into fsQCA software (Ragin, 2018) for analysis of necessity and sufficiency.

Figure 16: QCA Crisp-Set Raw Data Matrix

Case	START	LENGTH	ADM	SUPP	NEED	TRAINER	CBCORE	INCENT	YOUTH	FOLLACT	OUTCOME
Project 1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Project 2	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
Project 3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Project 4	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Project 5	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
Project 6	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Project 7	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
Project 8	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
Project 9	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Project 10	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Project 11	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Project 12	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
Project 13	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Project 14	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
Project 15	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Project 16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Project 17	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
Project 18	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Project 19	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
Project 20	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
Project 21	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
Project 22	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
Project 23	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
Project 24	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Project 25	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
Project 26	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Project 27	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Project 28	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Project 29	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Project 30	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1

3. **Necessity analysis** - The goal of necessity analysis was to identify which factors were consistently associated with a project's success. This is analyzed through a necessity-consistency score, which ranges from 0 to 1, and "0" indicates no consistent association with outcome and "1" indicates complete association (necessity) with the outcome. Necessity consistency is based on the number of cases that have a specific factor AND a positive outcome divided by the total number of cases that have a positive outcome. So, the necessity consistency score shows what percentage of successful cases had this particular factor present.

Table 9: Analysis of Necessary Conditions

Outcome variable: OUTCOME (Good/Excellent rubric rating)			
Conditions tested:			
	Consistency	Coverage	Accuracy
START	0.500000	0.315789	0.37
LENGTH	0.500000	0.352941	0.43
ADM	1.000000	0.571429	0.70
SUPP	1.000000	0.500000	0.60
NEED	0.750000	0.818182	0.83
TRAINER	0.666667	0.500000	0.60
CBCORE	1.000000	0.521739	0.57
INCENT	0.333333	0.666667	0.67
YOUTH	0.333333	0.363636	0.50
FOLLACT	0.500000	0.461538	0.57

As shown in the Analysis of Necessity Conditions table above, 3 of the 10 factors yielded perfectly consistent scores, that is all successful projects had these three factors present: 1) **ADM** - active support to PCVs in administrative and logistic duties, 2) **SUPP** - support from a well-connected counterpart, and 3) **CBCORE** - capacity building was the core objective of the project.

In development theory, a quality needs assessment is critical to a project's success. However, a needs assessment (**NEED**) was present only in three-quarters of successful cases. In our sample there were three successful SPA projects that did not conduct a needs assessment. Of these, 2 were implemented by IOD-PCVs and 1 by an EE-PCV. In these two IOD-PCV SPA projects, the PCVs relied on the contextual knowledge of local counterparts who were well informed on the local context, priorities, and needs of the community. Nonetheless, however, in most cases when PCVs uncritically relied on counterparts' knowledge of the local context without trying to explore needs on their own, projects failed to achieve desired outcomes. For the one EE-PCV project that was successful though no formal needs assessment was conducted (which is the case for the majority of English Cabinets) the project purchased equipment for the school, which sparked

an interest in many teachers who then regularly used the equipment to improve their teaching skills and practices, which represents a case of fortunate outcome more than an intentional one.

Also notable is that needs assessment (**NEED**) in the Analysis of Necessary Conditions table above had the highest coverage score of all factors (0.818182), which indicates that out of all sampled projects that conducted a needs assessment, 82% were successful. Thus, 18% of these SPA projects that did conduct a needs assessment were still unsuccessful. In interpreting this outcome, it is important to keep in mind the definition of needs assessment used in this QCA analysis. For the purposes of this evaluation, the research team used a lower standard of needs assessment than found in the PACA guidebook since the PACA approach to a needs assessment was almost never used by PCVs in the SPA projects from 2010 to 2019. Results indicate that most likely, when such lenient interpretation of a needs assessment is used in a SPA project, it is not entirely consistently associated with a successful project. It is only in combination with other factors that it can contribute to successful outcomes of a project.



Photo: 11: IOD Project, Women Farmer Leaders Grow in Kakheti, Kakheti, 2018.

The Analysis of Necessary Conditions also shows that among successful SPA projects one-half (0.50000) started (**START**) in the first year and the other one-half in the second year of the PCV's service. This finding is consistent with what PCVs expressed during interviews about what they felt was the best time to implement a SPA project; some PCVs expressed that when a SPA project is implemented in the first year of service, they have more time after project completion and before their service ends to conduct follow-up activities, especially related to capacity-building while other PCVs expressed the advantage of implementing a SPA project in the second year so that they have time during the first year to learn about their community, make better connections, and follow more formal needs assessment processes. In summary, both scenarios were associated with respective advantages and was consistently associated with project success.

Even though many PCVs and Counterparts mentioned during interviews and FGDs the importance of SPA projects to focus on young beneficiaries (**YOUTH**), among these cases this factor was not consistently associated with project success. In addition, the use of incentives (**INCENT**) and follow-up activities (**FOLLACT**) were not consistently necessary for a project's success. That said, when incentives were used, to attract project participants, 67% of these projects were successful, which indicates that **INCENT** is not an essential factor by itself for success but when used is more likely to lead to a successful SPA project.

Step 4: Sufficiency Analysis - Recognizing that no single factor is sufficient to explain all or most SPA projects that were successful, sufficiency analysis attempts to answer the question, "*what combination of causal factors are effective/sufficient for the outcome?*" In short, this analysis provides what are "sufficient pathways to a successful SPA project."

With 10 causal factors, there are a total of 1,024 possible causal combinations among them.²² Using fsQCA software (Ragin, 2018), all possible combinations that occurred in the 30 SPA project cases were examined using the crisp data set (presented above). The objective of this analysis was to identify the combinations of factors, or "recipes," that led to a successful project every time they were present.

The table below presents the combination of factors that, collectively, were pathways to success in the projects included in our sample which are termed as solutions for the purposes of QCA analysis. The table shows a range of solutions varying from the most parsimonious to the most complex. The simplest solution includes only two factors (**TRAINER*NEED**) and features a perfectly consistent Sufficiency (1.0) and relatively

²² Based on the formula, 2^K (Kent, 2008), or in this evaluation, 2^{10} equals 1,024 combinations.

good Accuracy (0.80) score.²³ This means that all (100%) of projects that conducted a needs assessment AND included a local counterpart in the delivery of capacity building activities achieved a successful outcome (Sufficiency 1.0), which accounted for 6 of the 12 successful projects (0.5 coverage). Just as important too, none of the 18 unsuccessful projects had both NEED and TRAINER combination. Thus, 6 successful projects with this combination + 18 unsuccessful projects WITHOUT this set of conditions / 30 total projects = 80% accuracy. While this may create an impression that only these two factors are sufficient for achieving success, it is important to keep in mind that factors included in the analysis are often interrelated, presence of one often increases the chances of others being present as well. Hence the research team gave preference to the complex solution which presents the most comprehensive combination of factors that were deemed sufficient (1.0) and relatively accurate (0.77) for a project's success: CBCORE*TRAINER*NEED*SUPP*ADM.

Table 10: Complex to Simple (Sufficient) Pathways to Success

Type	Sufficient Pathways	Consistency	Coverage	Accuracy
Complex	CBCORE*TRAINER*NEED*SUPP*ADM	1.0	0.5	0.77
	CBCORE*TRAINER*NEED*SUPP	1.0	0.5	0.77
	CBCORE*TRAINER*NEED*ADM	1.0	0.5	0.77
	TRAINER*NEED*SUPP*ADM	1.0	0.5	0.80
	CBCORE*TRAINER*NEED	1.0	0.5	0.77
	TRAINER*NEED*SUPP	1.0	0.5	0.80
	TRAINER*NEED*ADM	1.0	0.5	0.80
Simple	TRAINER*NEED	1.0	0.5	0.80

Translating this solution into the SPA ToC, the sufficient pathway to success involves factors associated primarily with **Relevance & Appropriateness** (relevance of capacity-building, needs assessment) and **Efficiency** (inputs of quality trainer, having influential community member involved, and administrative and logistical support). It is especially during these phases of project planning and implementation that PCVs, PC/Georgia staff, and SPA committee need to focus their efforts.

1. **CBCORE** – One of the key objectives of the SPA Program is capacity-building of community members. SPA projects that had capacity-building as a core project objective, as opposed to infrastructural needs, were consistently more likely to achieve success. During interviews, PCVs reported being strongly affected by the lack, or poor, state of infrastructure and resources in their communities, which appeared to them as the greatest need and priority the project should address. However, these findings indicate that PCVs whose SPA project focused on capacity-building, rather bringing in immediate, tangible resources, were more likely to have projects with successful outcomes.

2. **TRAINER** – Capacity-building as the core project objective yielded successful outcomes only in combination with quality capacity building activities. Having a competent and active local counterpart in the capacity-building activities was a necessary factor and this contrasts with SPA projects in which PCVs singlehandedly led the capacity building component as the primary trainer. The importance of this factor was related to several key issues: a) the active involvement of the local counterpart eliminated or minimized language barrier issues between the trainer and audience in capacity-building trainings, b) they delivered training information in a more culturally sensitive manner, and c) were able to make contextually relevant and appropriate examples that better managed to illustrate the need and relevance of the skills taught. Beneficiaries who were trained by local counterparts, in contrast to PCV-led training, reported more engagement in the capacity-building trainings and better acquisition and application of skills.

3. **NEED** – A quality or at least adequate needs assessment is a basic component of community development. PCVs highlighted needs assessment as by far the most important factor related to project success. Although grant application forms require each project to have at least some kind of needs assessment conducted, the approach, methods used, and the number of stakeholders involved significantly varied from project to project. As mentioned earlier, the PACA process and steps have been rarely used in

²³ Accuracy refers to “balanced accuracy” because it takes into account the prevalence of the outcome (present in True Positive or successful cases) and the prevalence of the absence of the outcome (not present in True Negative or unsuccessful cases).

the SPA projects reviewed for this evaluation. However, as noted above, less rigorous needs assessment is not always conducive to a good project on its own since occasionally PCVs and their local counterparts may casually and informally observe and absence of skills and practices without directly engaging with the community in a formal needs assessment. That is, engaging directly with beneficiaries to assess capacity-building needs helps the trainer gauge which skills and skill levels for various community members, which was important for project success.

"Currently, within the pool of projects that you are looking at [in this evaluation] that's something [needs assessment] that is missing. Plus, we were not really taking scores off [during the review process] because basically we did not really request it a lot. That's something [needs assessment] that I think we need to work on, and that's kind of something that I had in mind as we train them to do that. I think that's a weakness from our side that we were not really looking at it deeply."
(PC/Georgia SPA staff, 2020).

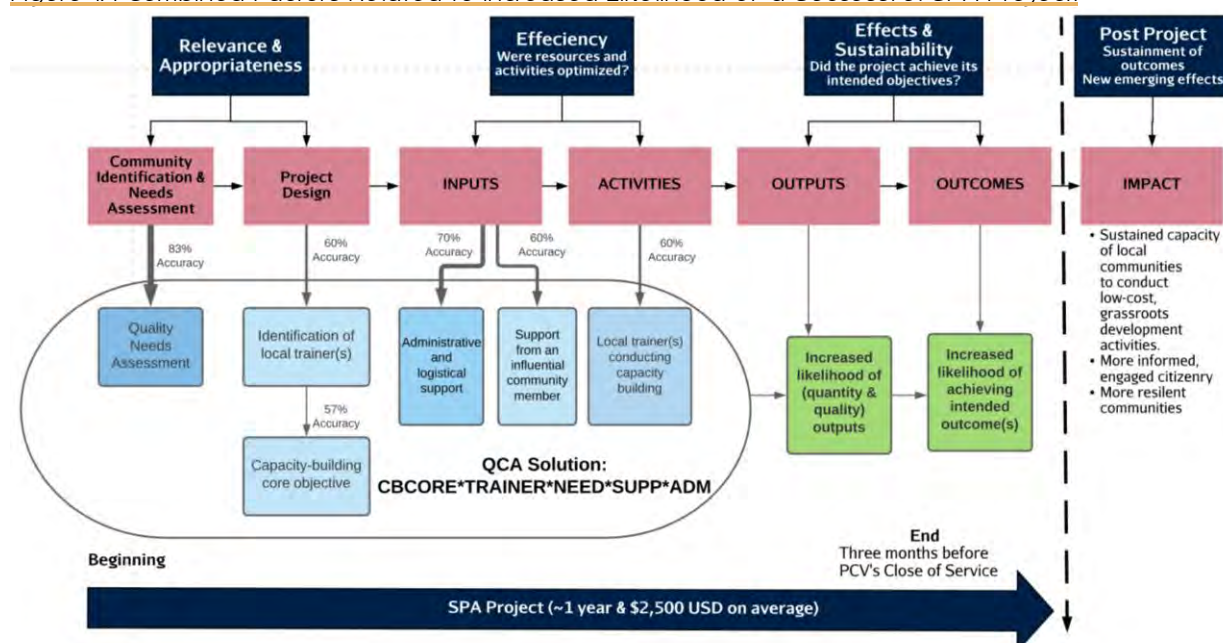
4. SUPP – Although the meaningful engagement of a local counterpart lies at the core of SPA's approach to community development, analysis of factors revealed the importance of engaging a particular type of project counterpart. An often-overlooked critical factor for project success is the support from a well-connected and influential community member during project implementation. In the case of EE school-based projects, school directors were identified as such individuals, while in the case of IODs, these individuals varied from project to project. These local supporters provided encouragement and recruitment of potential beneficiaries and assisted in mobilizing human and material resources in the community for project activities. These influential local community members are not always heavily involved in the SPA project, however, their verbal and tangible support to the project is sufficient to get the community and beneficiaries involved which is conducive to more successful projects. It is important to highlight that IOD-PCVs seemed more likely to have this type of support from Directors of their organizations. NGO Directors were more invested in the success of the project, whereas EE-PCVs often struggled to get enough engagement from school directors, be it due to lack of time or enthusiasm.

5. ADM – Administrative and logistical support in all project activities is another crucial factor that improves the likelihood of a project's success. Administrative and logistical support can come from one or several community individuals: the PCV's official Counterpart, an informal local counterpart, or various community members. Such support includes handling procurement (often requiring good knowledge of the local language, prices, and negotiating skills), overseeing renovation or rehabilitation work (interacting with construction workers), and negotiating responsibilities and tasks with local partners, all of which are difficult tasks for PCVs to learn and handle and achieve during a two-year assignment. These tasks can be accomplished more efficiently by a local counterpart/community member than a PCV. In addition, this form of assistance allows the PCV to focus on broader management issues and greater community involvement.

Among the sampled SPA projects, only one project was unsuccessful despite having this combination of sufficient factors. This was due to the departure of the PCV's Counterpart from the organization. Consistency of the combination of the factors mentioned above to lead to success depends heavily on Counterpart's continued engagement; however, when she/he leaves the organization it is difficult to continue all the activities in a timely and quality manner. In this case, the PCV's Counterpart played a crucial role in the implementation process, was a program manager of the organization, and had been engaged throughout the entire SPA project design and planning process, starting from needs assessment all the way to evaluation of the project. When she left the organization, her plans of scaling-up project's activities never materialized. With the departure of the PCV's Counterpart, the salience of the project to the organization decline and eventually the project ended-up being cancelled.

The illustration below presents each factor, and its level of accuracy (present in successful / absent in unsuccessful) from Table 9 above, by its location within SPA's Theory of Change. These factors show critical junctions in the life of a project that, if done well, can increase the likelihood of project success.

Figure 17: Combined Factors Related to Increased Likelihood of a Successful SPA Project



Summary of findings on project success - Based on the QCA of the sampled SPA projects, the combination CBCORE*TRAINER*NEED*SUPP*ADM factors was sufficient for project success. When these five factors were present together, they led to a successful outcome on every occasion except for the one project mentioned above. This pathway to success applies to all SPA projects implemented over the 10-years throughout Georgia as the sample projects used for QCA analysis included projects from years 2010 through 2019 and from various regions of Georgia.

Process Tracing of the Necessary & Sufficient Factors – Case Studies

Process tracing is within-case analysis that tracks and explains the actual stages and events (causal mechanisms) that led to the intended outcome. The following three cases track and explain the key factors in the QCA solution (above) in successful and unsuccessful projects, which are: [NEED] - having a quality needs assessment, [SUPP] - support from a well-connected, influential community member or organization, [ADM] - support with administrative and logistical tasks, [CBCORE] - capacity-building being the core objective of the project, and [TRAINER] - capacity-building trainings being delivered in collaboration with a local trainer.

Case 1: Rubric Rating “Excellent” – SPA Project, SELF CAMP, West Georgia – SELF Camp (Self Esteem and Leadership Through Fitness)

The project aimed to promote civic engagement, gender equality, and healthy lifestyle among young Georgian women. SELF Camp 2017, which continued previous Self Camps, was implemented in partnership with the local organization Association Hera XXI, founded in 1998. It is important to point out that the mission of Association HERA XXI is well-aligned with SELF camp as it focuses on youth empowerment, youth leadership and raising awareness about sexual and reproductive health & rights (SRHR). Furthermore, prior to starting the SELF camp, the organization had experience of implementing camps in collaboration with PCVs.

“Our organization had previously helped in organizing GLOW camp, which was very successful and as far as I know, PCV themselves contacted our organization and asked about possibilities of parentship.” Counterpart, Interview, 2020

[NEED] Needs assessment – Needs assessment for this project differs from other projects’ community needs assessments due to the different definition of a community – in this project community referred to several regions of west Georgia as opposed to a single village or a town. Association Hera XXI used its annual needs assessment research of young women to determine what were the common needs in different communities. This helped the PCVs to tailor the camp curriculum to the needs of the youth in the target

regions. The needs assessment was conducted by the Association using focus group discussions with young girls, their parents, and teachers to see what the most acute needs were among young girls that could have been addressed by the Association. During the discussions, health and reproductive rights emerged as an area in which girls aged 13-17 lacked knowledge and awareness on the most critical issues. Thus, the camp organizers decided to put more emphasis on SRHR in the camp curriculum.

[SUPP] Support from a well-connected counterpart – SELF Camp 2017 was a multi-regional camp which targeted several regions in the Western Georgia while Association HERA XXI was based in Tbilisi. This fact did not entail a lack of local connections in the target regions, however. Even though Association HERA XXI did not have an office in the target regions, over the course of two decades it had implemented numerous regional projects and cultivated strong reputation, influence, and connections in the regions of Georgia which became fundamental to the project's success. PCVs enjoyed full support from the organization's longtime director which translated into readily available human and material resources that helped in the smooth implementation of project activities. Moreover, Association HERA XXI's previous experience of working with young women in the regions of Georgia helped the project team to devise the most effective strategies for reaching out to a wide audience and disadvantaged groups²⁴ and gaining the trust of parents which improved participation rates.

[ADM] Assistance with administrative and logistical tasks – Despite the fact that staff members of HERA XXI were not physically present during the camp days, PCVs received ample help in administrative tasks during planning. This included selecting a venue and purchasing supplies, making arrangements for the necessary material resources and recruiting campers and counselors. These are some of the most common logistical and administrative issues with which PCV camp committees tend to struggle during project planning and implementation. Association HERA XXI's project coordinators served as focal points for PCVs; they kept in constant communication with PCVs during camp days to ensure that everything went as planned.

[CBCORE] Local counterpart is actively involved in capacity-building trainings – The project engaged local young women as camp counselors and junior camp counselors. In addition to helping PCVs with everyday tasks, some of the most critical responsibilities of camp counselors and junior counselors was delivering sessions, facilitating discussions, and serving as mentors for campers. These counselors went through a short Training of Trainers (TOT) session which prepared them for being a good support to main trainers. The main trainers in SRHR sessions were Association HERA XXI's peer educators, all of whom had completed specialized courses facilitated by HERA XXI and had prior experience of teaching SRHR. Due to cultural norms prevalent in the regions of Georgia, teaching women, and particularly young women, about sexual and reproductive health can be a very challenging task for a foreigner without the help of local counterparts who can deliver this type of information in a culturally sensitive manner.

[TRAINER] Capacity building as the core of the project – SELF Camp 2107 activities centered around capacity building of young girls exclusively and included two primary capacity building components. Firstly, camp activities and counseling focused on teaching leadership, civic initiative, mental and physical health, nutrition, exercise, sexual and reproductive health. Secondly, counselors and junior counselors, as peer educators, helped in mentoring campers and served as role models to young campers. As one camper reported:

"[...] the camp inspired me to stay physically active and exercise. Even today my exercise routine includes exercises that we learned in the SELF camp." Young female, FGD, 2020

SELF camp is a distinguished case among SPA projects due to its strong sustainability. In 2019-20 HERA XXI secured the necessary funding and designed and implemented a SELF Camp independently. The organization also established a partnership with the local government to cover transportation costs of campers. In addition to regular camp activities, HERA XXI introduced a volunteering component as a follow-up activity. The Association recruited volunteers from campers and involved them in various civic engagement activities.

²⁴ A partnership was established with SOS Children's Village which enabled the involvement of girls who lived in foster homes.

Case 2; Rubric Rating “Excellent” – SPA Project, Increasing the Awareness and Engagement of Kutaisi’s Youth, Imereti, 2019

The goals of this SPA project were to 1) determine needs of Kutaisi Youth, through a participatory needs assessment process (FGDs with multiple interest groups, online survey) and 2) increase youth activism by empowering youth participants with skills to advocate for solving relevant issues.

[NEED] Needs Assessment – This project included one of the most distinguished and comprehensive needs assessment activities among all SPA projects reviewed within this evaluation. The PCV, local counterpart and youth club members organized a brainstorming session to discuss possible project ideas for a SPA grants. As participants were deciding on the most pressing needs of local youth that needed to be addressed with the project, it was decided that actually the lack of knowledge about young peoples’ needs was the most obvious gap they needed to fill with the project. It was therefore decided that the SPA project should focus on a thorough needs assessment activity to analyze the needs and challenges of local Kutaisi youth.

[...] we wanted to come up with a fresh idea and do something which had not been done by other organizations in Kutaisi. So, we voted for different project ideas, and this one [needs assessment] was picked by the majority of us.” Young female, FGD, 2020

[SUPP] Support from a well-connected counterpart – The counterpart organization for the projects was Local Democracy Agency-Georgia (LDA) which was established in 2006. Over the decade of its operation it had worked extensively with the youth of Kutaisi which meant that the organization had cultivated valuable connections with local youth and local stakeholders working on youth issues in the region. This proved instrumental for the success of the project as the needs assessment planned within the project relied heavily on active engagement of youth and institutions such as Kutaisi City Hall, Kutaisi State University, local NGOs working on youth issues, parents and teachers. LDA proved to be a well-connected and influential counterpart in Kutaisi that gave a very strong footing to the project.

[ADM] Assistance with administrative and logistical tasks – The PCV enjoyed support from the Executive Director of the counterpart organization as well as two additional administrative staff who provided support in the matters related to logistics and accounting. In PCV’s own words, not having to deal with tedious administrative tasks was a huge relief.

“I didn’t have to manage the money. My organization did, which is great for me. I had managed an LGL [Let Girls Learn grant] and that was very stressful. And I’m very organized and generally on top of things but even for me it was very stressful.” IOD-PCV, Imereti, 2020

Because of this assistance, the PCV did not need to be concerned with choosing vendors for supplies, negotiating prices, and transporting materials. She had the time to see the big picture of the project, steer the general process and get involved when she was needed the most. This support received from the counterpart organization played a critical role in ensuring the project’s smooth implementation especially when project faced budget issues caused by the US government shutdown. The shutdown delayed the transfer of grant funds, so, the project activities had to be implemented within a shorter time period to complete the project before the PCV’s close of service.

[TRAINER] Local counterpart is actively involved in capacity-building trainings – The PCV was not involved in conducting the capacity building activities at all. Trainings were conducted by one of the LDA staff members. For the second round of capacity building, youth from the first round of trainings became peer educators and assisted the main trainers during trainings. Involvement of local trainers and young peer educators improved the effectiveness of capacity building activities. Peer educators served as role models to participating youth as they represented local young people concerned with community needs and driven to take action for improving the lives of young people in Kutaisi.

[CBCORE] Capacity building as the core of the project – The project was exclusively focused on capacity building and aimed to increase participants’ skills and knowledge in the following directions: 1) research methods and needs assessment techniques, 2) advocacy techniques and civic activism, and 3) disseminations of needs assessment findings. After project’s completion, the young participants published a report which included the main findings of their needs assessment activity. The report was presented during a conference to a wider audience of stakeholders and interested parties which included many local

actors working on the issues of youth (NGOs, local government, and educational institutions). An unexpected positive outcome of the project was that in the aftermath of the project, LDA was invited to serve on the local government's Youth Council of Kutaisi. Notably, the needs assessment report prepared as a part of the project is widely used and cited by local and international NGOs working with Kutaisi youth. The findings of the needs assessments study have been used by a number of NGOs in the design of their projects as well as for the establishment of baseline indicators for their programming. The project's impact on building young participants' capacities was evident during focus group discussions with beneficiaries:

"Before coming to LDA Georgia, I felt insecure even about speaking up in public and during the project, I managed to conduct a focus group discussion and not just any focus group discussion, I had to work with a group of parents, which is a very difficult group, you know. So, I managed to develop important skills like establishing communication with different types of people. Also, some basic techniques of conflict resolution. And these skills are not only applicable in focus groups, they might help you on a daily basis even." Young female, FGD, 2020

Case 3: Rubric Rating "Excellent" – Khobi Tech Training Room, Samegrelo, 2016

The goals of this project were to 1) transfer new teaching methods and create access to learning through technology for public school's teachers and students in Khobi and 2) transfer new teaching methods to surrounding public school communities.

[NEED] Needs Assessment – This idea for this SPA project was born over the course of several discussions between the PCV and her teacher counterpart. During interviews, PCV spoke about having very close and trusting relationships with fellow teachers at the school which enabled her to have honest discussions about the needs and challenges in the school. In the presence of such relationships, the PCV did not see the need for a formal needs assessment activity. Instead, she was patiently cultivating close ties and friendships among teachers, encouraging them to openly share their concerns and ideas for improved teaching in the school. The PCV was deliberate in engaging all teachers of the school and not limiting herself with solely English teachers. The goal of the project was to improve the teaching and learning experience for all, not exclusive during English classes. Thus, the project was not just an "English Cabinet" but more of a technology room for all teachers.

"I talked to other teachers, not only my Counterpart who was the one who wrote the grant with me. I asked them what they thought, and they liked the idea and a lot of them really wanted that. There were Russian and German teachers in the school who were really involved as well." EE-PCV, Interview, 2020

[SUPP] Support from a well-connected counterpart – The school director, who is also an influential and well-connected member of the community, was extremely supportive of the project throughout the planning and implementation process. The PCV noted that the support from the school director was a key to ensuring strong and continued engagement of teachers throughout the capacity building activities.

"I was also a part of what they called "the director's club" so I was really good friends with the director and a few teachers. [...] I think, honestly, having someone who is so well respected in the community respect me and trust that my project is good, allowed everyone else to trust and respect it too. [...] I think because my director had my back everyone else was like, alright." EE-PCV, Interview, 2020

The PCV emphasized that even when teachers seem to be fully supportive of an idea during the planning process, when the actual activities start and scheduling issues emerge, their enthusiasm wanes. The school director was instrumental in resolving such challenges and encouraging teachers to actively engage in the capacity building efforts of the project.

[ADM] Assistance with administrative and logistical tasks – The PCV was well integrated into the community and had established close ties with many community members. Even though the PCV was the primary responsible party for administrative and logistical tasks of the project, when in need, she was able to acquire support from the school director, teachers, other school staff, students and fellow PCVs.

[TRAINER] Local counterpart is actively involved in capacity-building trainings – The project had two iterations of capacity building trainings on the use of technology in teaching. The first set of trainings was designed for the teachers in the school where PCV was placed and the second set of trainings targeted English teachers from public schools in the surrounding area. The PCV actively participated in the trainings for teachers in her school, however, the PCV's Counterpart was the lead trainer for the second set of trainings for the teachers from other schools. The PCV's Counterpart had completed an English as a Second Language (ESL) course in the USA and, thus, was a very highly regarded teachers and a role model for local teachers.

"I think it's instrumental to show them [teachers] the need of these resources in teaching and their added value. Otherwise, they won't have the motivation to learn and change their old ways. You need to show them this makes their lives and teaching easier, more pleasant. A PCV would struggle to explain all of this in their terms so I think these kinds of trainings should be conducted collaboratively by a PCV and a counterpart or a Georgian teacher." Counterpart, Interview, 2020

[CBCORE] Capacity building as the core of the project – Since arriving at the school for her primary PC assignment, the PCV observed how teachers did not cater for the different learning needs of students and used uniform teaching practices that did not manage to engage students in the learning process. The PCV's Counterpart, and other teachers, discussed these issues and decided that the objective of the SPA project should focus on teacher trainings that would introduce them to diversified teaching approaches, methods, practices and resources and on the ways technology can help in this process.

"The resources [from the SPA project] had a big impact on the teaching in our school. [PCV] helped our teachers develop the skills of lesson planning [...] they were planning lessons together, exchanging best practices, and learning how to use the resources available to them." School Director, Interview, 2020.

In addition to technology, the PCV introduced numerous non-tech resources into school classrooms, such as Velcro boards, diverse teaching materials (flashcards, posters, exercise sheets, etc.) small boards for students to practice writing and other inventive additions.

Teachers saw added value in using diverse teaching resources as they made the teaching process more engaging and fruitful. In addition, students mentioned the more diverse and engaging lessons not only in English but in other subjects as well which involved quizzes, videos, games, and hands-on activities. In addition to teaching, the tech room was used by the school for extracurricular activities, such as movie screenings, student conferences, award ceremonies and others. It is important to note that the counterpart who was instrumental to the project's success and participated in capacity building activities as a trainer and a role model left the community few years after the completion of the project. Still, with the support of the school director who remains in the school, practices remain instilled in other teachers.

"When I left [the school and the community] other foreign language teachers were using it [the room] as well. Our declared mission from the very beginning was to make this room available to the whole school. So that all teachers could use the resources created here." Counterpart, Interview, 2020

Case 4: Rubric Rating "Poor" – Samtredia Community Resource Center, Imereti, 2015

The project's objectives were to 1) increase employability skills among citizens of Samtredia by making a new Community Resource Center available where visitors can drop in and use the Center's computers to apply for jobs online through Georgia's Jobs website and 2) increase employability skills among citizens of Samtredia by conducting trainings in employability skills and English language in the new appropriate space in the new Community Resource Center.

[NEED] Needs Assessment – The PCV and her counterpart did not conduct any type of a needs assessment prior to the project. The project design and objectives were primarily shaped by the project counterpart and PCV relied on the Counterpart's experience and judgment.

"I do vaguely recall the phrase needs assessment, and I know that's a stage we went through in the training, but I don't know if [counterpart] did anything like that. She just said that this was a need in the community, you know, so I don't think we went around and asked people in the community, from what I'm aware of, this wasn't really a practice in the organization." IOD-PCV, Interview, 2020

Although unemployment was widespread in the community and the lack of English language and employability skills seemed self-evident, the unemployed population did not show much interest for attending the trainings or utilizing the space to hunt for jobs. Local residents did not have confidence that the jobs for which they were qualified would have been posted online or that having a CV would have been useful in their line of work. The project highlighted the importance of not solely identifying a valid need in the community but designing an intervention with community's active engagement.

[SUPPI] Support from a well-connected counterpart – The Counterpart was well-connected in the community and she leveraged her connections to obtain the space for the new community center/office space free of charge in a municipality-owned building. Although the counterpart's connections and resourcefulness proved instrumental in accomplishing project activities, they did not make up for the design flaws of the project which were the primary cause for ineffective capacity building efforts in the project. Furthermore, it became evident in the course of the project that the counterparts saw the refurbishment of the community center, which simultaneously served as an office space for the counterpart organization, as already a successful outcome of the project. During the project, very few people attended trainings or visited the community center to apply for jobs. By the end of the project, the relationship between the PCV and Counterpart was strained. Five years after the completion of this project, the Counterpart has managed to keep this space but has done little outreach to the community to find uses to service community interests and needs.

[ADM] Assistance with administrative and logistical tasks – Administrative and logistical aspects of the project were fully handled by the counterpart. Still the reliance on the local government caused issues during project implementation. The organization was not given the space it was promised and negotiations significantly delayed project activities. Eventually the counterpart was able to successfully resolve the issues and administratively the project was successfully completed although capacity building targets were not met.

[TRAINER] Local counterpart is actively involved in capacity building training - Trainings were primarily delivered by the staff of the counterpart organization but very few people showed up and none of them attended trainings consistently. Therefore, capacity building efforts were unsuccessful, reaching far fewer beneficiaries than anticipated and not leading to the employment outcomes initially envisaged in the project design document.

[CBCORE] Capacity building as the core of the project – Although the project included a capacity-building element, its primary focus was unequivocally on the infrastructural component. The primary purpose was the creation of a resource center that could also build employability skills in the community. Such approach can be contrasted with a project design in which the building of employability skills is the central issue of a project and a variety of activities are designed to address that issue while spending the funds as efficiently as possible.

"[...] we were able to purchase equipment for our organization and renovate a new space for our office. We bought computers, we renovated a larger office space in the municipality building which we were given free of charge by the municipality. To this day we are working from here." Counterpart, Interview, 2020

Examining the Sufficient Pathways to NON-success

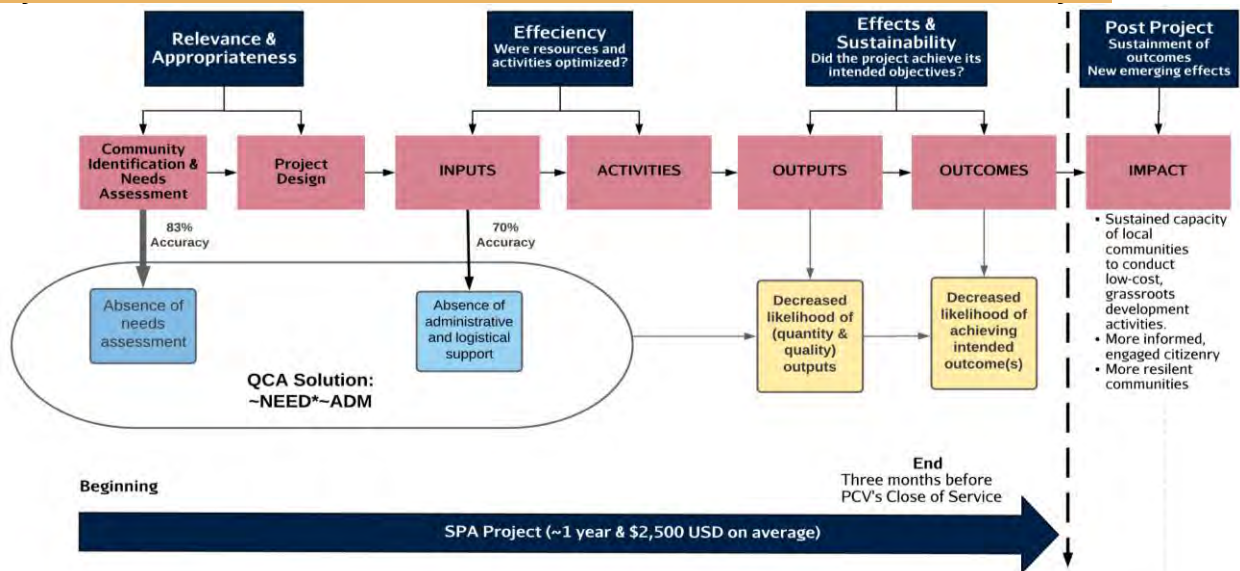
A sufficiency analysis was also conducted on unsuccessful projects to examine which combinations of factors led to *Unsuccessful* projects. The sufficiency analysis of unsuccessful projects is presented in the table below. The symbol, ~, in front of each factor means the "absence of" that factor. The simplest pathway, or combination, to an unsuccessful project is ~NEED*~ADM, which means the absence of a needs assessment and the absence of administrative and logistical support. The Consistency score (1.0) indicates NEED or ADM were absent in none (0) of 12 successful projects (completely consistent). The Coverage score (0.50) indicates that 9 of the 18 non-successful projects had this combination. The Accuracy score includes the accuracy of none of the 12 successful projects having the absence of both NEED and ADM (100% accuracy) and 9 of the 18 unsuccessful projects having NEED and ADM absent (50% accuracy): thus, $12 + 9 = 21 / 30 = 70\%$ overall accuracy.

Table 11: Complex to Simple (Sufficient) Pathways to NON-Success

Type	Sufficient Pathways	Consistency	Coverage	Accuracy
Complex	~NEED*~ADM*~SUPP*~CBCORE	1.00	0.17	0.50
	~NEED*~ADM*~SUPP	1.00	0.33	0.60
	~NEED*~ADM	1.00	0.50	0.70
	~ADM	1.00	0.50	0.70
Simple	~NEED	0.89	0.84	0.83

SPA projects conducted without a needs assessment often led to inaccurate identification of community needs, which then led to a lack of enthusiasm from participants, and ultimately challenges to genuinely building capacities of beneficiaries. And, when these issues were coupled with the burden placed on the PCV for most, if not all administrative and logistical tasks, this created even further complications for the project to be successful.

Figure 18: Combined Factors Related to Increased Likelihood of an Unsuccessful SPA Project



Often, EE-PCVs' SPA projects were more likely, than IOD-PCV SPA projects, to have this combination of factors present because:

- Due to prior expectation that the lack of a technology room in a school is an "existing need," few EE SPA projects included any needs assessment at all. The idea of a technology room was discussed with their Counterpart and school directors, both of whom gladly accepted having a room renovated with new equipment. Sometimes, technology rooms stemmed from PCVs' ideas to bring Georgian schools to, some degree, to US standards which were not always firmly grounded in local needs and aspirations.
- EE-PCVs have more logistical and administrative demands placed on them in projects because they do not have dedicated organizational staff, such as IOD-PCVs, who can assist with these tasks. For EE-PCVs, their Counterpart is a teacher who is busy with teaching her (generally a woman) classes as well as conducting private tutoring after school. With renovation and rehabilitation of school infrastructure, a significant part of logistical and administrative tasks falls on the PCV who can be ill-equipped with language and technical skills to handle such tasks.

7. Findings for Cross-Cutting Issues

The following paragraphs present findings for the cross-cutting issues of Volunteer Roles, Gender Issues, Positive Unintended Outcomes/Impacts, Negative Unintended Outcomes/Impacts, and the involvement of Marginalized Communities and Groups.

Volunteer Roles

According to the PC's handbook, *Roles of the Volunteer in Development* (2012), PCVs can take on one or more of six different roles when implementing a project, which are: 1) **Learner** – which involves in observation, interviewing and listening, information gathering, synthesis, and analysis; 2) **Co-Trainer** – which involves teaching technical skills, presentation skills, facilitation skills, leading participatory activities, and session planning; 3) **Co-Facilitator** – which involves listening, questioning, others, facilitating group tasks and decision-making, leading meetings; 4) **Change Agent** – which involves organizing participatory activities with community groups, conducting gender analysis, strategic planning, promotion skills, and networking skills; 5) **Project Co-Planner** – which involves working together with a counterpart and/or community members in project design, action planning, drafting budgets, proposal writing, mobilization, and project monitoring and/or evaluation; and 6) **Mentor** – coaching, guiding, and modeling.

Each of the 273 projects were reviewed based on the end of project report completed by the PCV about her/his activities and PCVs roles were recorded. The table below shows a frequency of the roles fulfilled by PCVs. Not surprising, all (100%) of PCVs fulfilled the learner role, in that they involved in listening, observing, and information gathering. In SPA projects implemented by EE-PCVs, the majority of EE-PCVs fulfilled Co-Trainer (88.5%) and Co-Facilitator (86.1%) roles whereas for SPA projects implemented by IOD-PCVs the majority of IOD-PCVs fulfilled the roles of Co-Planner (74.3%) and Co-Facilitator (68.6%) and this difference was statistically significant (Chi-square=17.35, df=3, p<0.00).

On average, both EE- and IOD-PCVs filled four roles in their project. Comparatively, in EE-PCVs averaged more roles (4.2) than IOD-PCVs (3.8), which is statistically significant (F=7.93, df=2, p<0.00).

Table 12: Percentage of SPA Projects by PCVs' Roles.

PCV Roles	EE (N=165)	IOD (N=105)	Response (N=3)	Total (N=273)
Learner	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Co-Facilitator	86.1	68.6	66.7	79.1
Co-Trainer	88.5	61.0	33.3	77.3
Co-Planner	73.3	74.3	66.7	73.6
Change Agent	43.0	44.8	0.0	44.3
Mentor	29.1	27.6	33.3	28.6
Range	2 - 6	2 - 6	3 - 5	2 - 6
Average # of roles per project	4.2	3.8	4.0	4.0

Gender Issues

Female PCVs and Georgian social norms

Although not reported frequently, for a few female PCVs Georgian cultural norms can be restrictive of women in general but even more so for foreign women who are "guests" in the community, thus, female PCVs confront more challenges related to the roles and everyday life than male PCVs.

"... your experience will be 100% driven by being a female. For example, I had the most wonderful host dad, my host family was wonderful, so my host dad would go with me. But could I go by myself to the bazaar? Could I go up to some people and ask how much that cost if it was all men? In 2008, they were telling us there's a lot of Russian people at that time, before the conflict, so you know they tell you. I'm blonde and tall and you know funny looking in that community. It's just that you stand out. Male [PCVs] were able to develop relationships way quicker and in a safer capacity than females [PCVs]. For example, I used to smoke and if you smoked, you can't let people see you because they will have some kind of negative ideas about you. Again, not in Tbilisi. These are small little communities, so it was challenging. But if you want to build trust with people you cannot drink, you cannot smoke. You cannot be walking around with your volunteer friends who are boys, things like that. So, of course, it's the driving factor in your experience being female. My male [PCV] friend said this was one of the best experiences. The men are so kind, of course, and helpful and generous so... I was very protective and scared." (PCV, Kakheti, 2010)

"...my experience has been that [female PC] volunteers do feel constrained at times by some traditional gender roles. Especially in the context of placing them in small communities in really traditional communities, (and I think that probably there's maybe less of it in the larger towns or cities than what they

may experience when they go to villages to work) and especially as we also move into working with minority communities. It's important for us to think about, and I think it's probably an important thing to think about when we think about SPA grants. (PC/Georgia staff, Tbilisi, 2020)

Female PCVs reported encountering hardships related to gender norms especially in the realm of logistical and administrative aspects of project implementation (such as supervision of construction workers, dealing with local authorities, etc.). Such challenges were markedly diminished when PCVs had strong support from their counterparts in dealing with administrative and logistical issues.

Issues with gender were not commonly discussed among challenges by male PCVs, however there were a few isolated cases when PCVs struggled to establish a relationship with counterparts/community members due to gender/cultural norms that were prevalent in the community. In such settings, presence of a strong female counterpart who could serve as a “translator” between the volunteer and female beneficiaries was decisive for effective needs assessment and capacity building.

“I mean me being a white male from the US who is not part of the Muslim community [...] It was really hard for me to gain access to engaging with women because it was not part of their culture to interact with a strange man. I wasn't able to be in a room by myself with another woman from that community and I think the challenge was that I really wanted to get their honest opinion or their feelings on things, but because there was both the language barrier and this gender, I couldn't.” (PCV, Kakheti, 2014)

Parents' concerns regarding mixed-gender camps

Some parents are hesitant or refuse to allow their daughters to attend mixed gender camps.

“I think there were some [female] students that didn't go [to camp] because it was mixed gender. Although they didn't outright say that, I kind of felt it, maybe an issue or something parents would worry about in that context. But we didn't have any conflict in the camp, at least around that.” (PCV, Shida Kartli, 2017)

Stereotypes regarding sports

Sports related SPA projects found it challenging to engage girls and women due to stereotype of females not being involved in athletics.

“Although we only had three girls' teams participating, the reality in Georgia and girls' participation in sports makes that a fairly successful number even still.” (PCV, Kakheti, 2013)

Positive Unintended Outcomes/Impacts

Invited to be local government advisor

After a SPA project publishing a formative research report on youth issues, project members were asked to join the local government's youth council in an advisory role.

“we [SPA project members] were asked by them [city hall] to become members of the youth council after publishing this research document, [which] could also be considered as an unintended outcome of the project. So yeah, we were able to get quite a few small-scale [unintended] outcomes, but the scale of the project was also small.” (PCV Counterpart, Imereti, 2019)

Broad community use of training materials

A youth professional development training module was developed in a SPA project, which was used a couple of times in the project. However, after the SPA project ended, the training module was revised with new material. Increasingly, youth-focused organizations within the community became interested in this training well after the SPA project had ended.

“We used the module couple of times after the project had ended. Eventually we updated it and made it more interesting. We also managed to get more local businesses involved. I would also say that interest and engagement from the community was also increased. Last year, when we had some trainings [through EU

project] we received 60 applications on the first day the call was announced.” (PCV Counterpart, Mtskheta-Mtianeti,, 2014)

Amplifying PCV's assignment

The primary objective of the SPA project was to obtain new equipment for a school English Cabinet and little else, which is why this project was rated “adequate.” However, after the equipment was purchased and the project officially ended, teachers in the school slowly began to become interested in how technology could improve their teaching skills. Thus, the PCV's assignment in the school was able to support many more teachers in the school.

“In the beginning, teachers didn't really see the benefits of having this technology in the school but little by little they realized and started using it. I didn't know either [how to use this equipment], [PCV] taught me and taught other teachers as well on how technology can improve teaching. This [training] wasn't a part of this project per se, but [PCV] did that as a part of her service in general.” (PCV Counterpart, Adjara, 2011)

Increased teacher/student bonding

The SPA project's objective was to provide a technical training room in the school for skill enhancement of teachers and students. However, the technical training room was used for extra-curricular activities, such as movie screenings, that helped teachers and students with bonding experiences.

“Another one of the coolest things that came out was the bonding experiences that my students had with each other and with the teachers in the classrooms. Because it wasn't necessarily part of the [SPA] grant, but when we had the room, we did like movie nights or like movie screenings and it was so cool because we would like, we'd make popcorn and then, we'd like set it up like a theater.” (PCV Counterpart, Samegrelo, 2016)

Negative Unintended Outcomes/Impacts

“Cash Cow” Expectations of SPA Program

Some schools and organizations where PCVs are placed expect and in some cases insist on the PCV to apply and obtain SPA grant regardless of need or interest.

“A lot of people kind of saw Peace Corps volunteers as a cash cow, which is unfortunate. But you know, if a volunteer is able to write a grant and get money for computers at your school that was one of the incentives behind applying for a volunteer - to get the money (that people thought came with a volunteer) and I think Peace Corps could do a better job in doing training about that.” (SPA Committee Member, 2020)

Hesitancy to host another PCV

A previous PCV placed in an organization had left a bad impression on her/his counterpart, which meant that this organization, and some others, were unwilling to host another PCV in the future.

“I wasn't interested to host another volunteer for a very long time. At this point, I'm ready for that, but the [next] volunteer himself should come prepared to accept the lifestyle of the community and shouldn't try to boss around.” (PCV Counterpart, Samegrelo, 2015)

Marginalized community members and groups

View of PCVs in the online survey

A total of 32 EE and 22 IOD-PCVs complete the online survey. They were asked the question, “To what extent to you agree or disagree that your SPA project focused on the most vulnerable in your community?” The table below presents the frequency of responses by EE and IOD-PCVs. Among EE-PCVs, 56.3% “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” increasing to 68.2% for IOD-PCVs that their SPA project focused on the most vulnerable. Since EE-PCVs are primarily placed in schools, there are fewer opportunities to focus on the most vulnerable who may not be in school, whereas IOD-PCVs are placed in organization that may have a mission to focus on the most vulnerable.

"To what extent to you agree or disagree that your SPA project focused on the most vulnerable in your community?"	EE-PCVs (N=32)	IOD-PCVs (N=22)	Total (N=54)
1 - Strongly disagree	9.4	0.0	5.6
2 - Disagree	9.4	18.2	13.0
3 - Neither agree or disagree	25.0	13.6	20.4
4 - Agree	25.0	31.8	27.8
5 - Strongly Agree	31.3	36.4	33.3
Mean	3.6	3.9	3.7

Inclusion by broad outreach

When asked, PCVs often mentioned that their SPA project did not specifically target nor document marginalized community members involvement.²⁵ Rather, the approach to reach marginalized community members was to have a broad outreach to all the community, thus, reaching the marginalized.

"... we try to get a cross section of the community when doing our focus groups and then for the trainings we wanted to make sure that we reached every part of the community, including IDP groups. So, we did that by going into each of the 12 administrative districts. For me it's always kind of uncomfortable to have on the form when you're signing in: are you an IDP? So I think it can be very difficult to accurately count that kind of information, so it could be that you know we ended up serving more or fewer IDP in our target just because of the locations where we were at or you know, the people involved in our project. We were trying to reach the IDP community, but we weren't specifically targeting only them it was a community-wide activity for everybody." (PCV, Imereti, 2019)

"...you know it was kind of just an open invite if I remember correctly, but I don't remember any conversations on like a very specific particular group." (PCV, Kakheti, 2010)

Confidentiality of marginalized status

There are some vulnerable and marginalized groups in the community that are protected through confidentiality and, thus, there are some restrictions on reporting certain information for a SPA project report.

"We create a personal development plan for each victim of domestic violence, and we set some priorities in accordance with her interest. Whenever we have a project in the organization, we always try to engage these victims as much as possible since they are one of the main target groups for our organization. However, information about their status could only be accessible for a small group of people, that includes a social worker, a lawyer, a psychologist, and me, so [the PCV] wouldn't have any way of knowing who could have been a victim." (PCV Counterpart, Samtskhe-Javakheti, 2014).

Outreach via marginalized community member

To engage marginalized communities, PCV Counterparts are either from the marginalized community or are an assistant to the primary Counterpart. Thus, a project needs someone in a "leadership" position, from the marginalized group, in order to engage and sustain the interest of marginalized groups.

"As for minority groups, [Name], is Armenian and she was my assistant back then, which means she was also involved in the project. Besides, we also have focal points in Armenian communities, and these focal points provide information about the women who might be interested and then we make the final selection. We always make sure that women from the Armenian communities are involved since we have a multiethnic community." (PCV Counterpart, Samtskhe-Javakheti, 2014).

Local knowledge to identify marginalized groups

Sometimes marginalization is subtle and unseen by the PCV and, thus, reaching marginalized groups requires local knowledge from an informed Counterpart.

²⁵ The term "marginalized" refers to individuals and groups that face discrimination and social exclusion due to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, education, geographic locality or some other reason.

"So we had about 30% of our students that were displaced or their parents have been displaced. I was an outsider [as a PCV], I did not see the interpersonal dynamics happening between displaced students and Gori native students, and so it was hard for me to see the need or the relevance of this project, but [Counterpart's name] was displaced as well, and so she had a really close connection with her IDP students, and she was very passionate about that. Yes, there is still a need, there is still a lot of segregation and isolation and they need some extra help in being involved in the school. So I definitely believed her and as my [Georgian] language got better the longer I stayed there, the more I did see that this was definitely a need. There was a lot of isolation and it seems that the IDP students were all put in one class, in [Counterpart's name] class instead of kind of dispersed among other students. So they were kind of segregated from the rest of the student body as well. It was really important to kind of get kids from all the different classes together to have conversations and work together because we didn't really do that. Yeah, I think they were likely other communities that could have benefited from a projects like this." (PCV, Shida Kartli, 2017).

Engaging marginalized communities may incur additional costs

Frequently, engaging marginalized communities and groups in SPA projects, especially those involving training, requires additional costs related to translation into languages other than Georgian.

"We were able to spread a word about the process through our focal point in villages and they coordinated collecting application from interested candidates. Here we were limited to candidates who could understand Georgian, since the trainings (for peer educators) were conducted in Georgian. And out of these people we selected people who conducted trainings in their community. We covered both Georgian and Armenian villages. We didn't intend to translate material and cover Armenian communities at the beginning, but translation was done pro bono, therefore I would say that we received more community contribution than it was expected." (PCV Counterpart, Samtskhe-Javakheti, 2019)

Being respectful to encourage participation

To engage ethnic minority communities requires the SPA project design and activities be sensitive to cultural differences and be respectful of those differences.

"Whereas we [PCV and Counterpart] focus on Guria and Adjara, we went through the different trainings and we try to accommodate the individuals who are attending the camp. While yes, they're all young girls, we also knew that being from more rural conservative areas we wanted to be mindful of that, especially when we had a doctor come and discuss female health issues and stuff like that. We wanted it to be very respectful and also we kept in mind that all these girls had different religious backgrounds as well. some did identify as Muslim and some were Georgian Orthodox, so we wanted just to be very respectful. And I think we did do some slight modifications just to make it more tailored for the group that we had." (PCV, Adjara, 2014).

8. Four Key Evaluation Questions Answered

Below are the four key questions this evaluation was designed to answer with a summary of key findings for each question.

1. To what extent did SPA projects address community-identified priorities?

In 2007, Peace Corps developed the resource book, *Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA) Field Guide for Volunteers* (PC, 2007) for PCVs to use during their service as well as for secondary projects regardless of sector. However, during the early years (2010 to ~2017) PACA was not used much in PC/Georgia and PCVs had little training or exposure to systematic participatory analysis.

"I don't think PACA was used by all posts, and I'm not sure that Peace Corps Georgia used PACA all that much as my impression. I didn't see a lot of use of PACA which was not uncommon." (PC/Georgia SPA Program staff member, 2020)

The rating of projects over the 10 years, for both EE and IOD projects using the evaluation rubric, show a greater percentage of SPA projects rated as Adequate and Poor, which is related to many PCVs primarily willingly or blindly relying on their Counterpart to either know or identify community need(s) without conducting a systematic needs assessment. Sometimes the Counterpart knew of or identified a valid community need, but sometimes the identified need was not a community need but only a wish of the Counterpart. And, for those few PCVs that did attempt to conduct a needs assessment with community

involvement, it was conducted informally rather than systematically and PCVs mentioned their uncertainty if community members identified “real” needs or agreed on a need to please the PCV.

In 2017-2018, the PACA Field Guide was updated by the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS), which included a more systematic approach to participatory analysis and community action and additional analysis tools. This updated PACA guide encourages PCVs to work through three phases prior to designing a SPA project: a) **Develop Relationships** – learn how people in the community are connected, b) **Discover** – what are community priorities, and c) **Dream** – how to identify the most promising project ideas. For each of these phases, a set of tools are recommended for PCVs to use: Develop Relationships – 6 tools, Discover – 7 tools, and Dream – 9 tools.

In 2017- 2018, PC/Georgia SPA Program staff began incorporating the revised PACA guide into the PDM training and encouraging PCVs to use the PACA process and assessment tools.

“...essentially we introduced PACA as a framework or methodology for thinking about how we do all of our work, and then when we come to the PDM training, which is a little bit later, (you know after three months for the IODs then after six or seven, for the EEs,) we're saying now you're going to take these same concepts, and you're going to [...] apply them to how you begin to think about developing secondary projects. You're going to use these same concepts to frame how you go about designing new projects. so again, I would not say that in the period of time that you're [Evaluators] looking at, that was necessarily strongly promoted anywhere in PC. Because it just had not been recognized as so critical. But ideally that's what we would be looking for. That's really the ideal.” (PC/Georgia SPA Program staff member, 2020)

In Figures 13 and 14, for both EE and IOD SPA projects the proportion that were rated Good to Excellent began increasing from 2017. About this time, a project assessment rubric was developed, based on a set of SPA criteria, and used by the SPA Review Committee to score project applications.

“I think that 18-point threshold really did work and we were able to only pass grants that we thought could successfully complete itself and sustain itself....Because those [criteria] were so specific they kind of became embedded in our brain. I think without [the key] elements you can't score 18. And with those elements, you can't score less than 18. It wasn't really left up for opinion, it was so specific.” (PC/Georgia SPA Program staff member, 2020)

“Not all Peace Corps volunteers are good writers and I think what the rubric makes them think critically about what aspects of their project they need to focus on. [...] They are able to look at the Rubric and basically answer all of the questions that are posed: how is this going to be sustainable? What's going to happen in five years down the road? SPA committee...I really liked the Rubric. I also a lot of the times encouraged volunteers to use the rubric when reviewing their grant before they submit it, to kind of score themselves.” (PC/Georgia SPA Program staff member, 2020)

Since PCVs’ service is for 2 years, there is a relatively short period of time, maximum 1 – 1.5 years, to implement a SPA project that can meaningfully fulfill all the steps in the ToC. The first and critical step in the ToC, Relevance and Appropriateness, requires a good needs assessment. However, expectations of a SPA project prior to the PCVs’ arrival, sometimes Counterparts with an existing preference for a SPA project, and the time it takes a PCV to integrate into the community knowing they must complete the SPA 3-months before their Close of Service, often short-cut a thorough needs assessment which then can derail other steps (community involvement, activities, outputs, outcomes) in the ToC.

2. To what extent were the SPA projects designed and implemented with community involvement?

In most SPA projects, the writing of the proposal and design is done by EE and IOD-PCVs although PCVs do discuss design issues with their Counterpart. EE-PCVs and their Counterparts report that the EE-PCVs are overwhelmingly responsible for project design, proposal writing, and activities and responsibilities since teachers (EE-PCV’s primary Counterpart) are quite busy. On the other hand, for IOD-PCVs there is more engagement by their Counterparts in project design, proposal writing and implementation, although there are some exceptions.

A proxy for community involvement in project design and implementation is the degree to which SPA projects address the same (relatively similar) or different (relatively different) priorities and issues. Over the

10 years, 53% of all EE-PCV SPA projects implemented were either English Cabinet and Camps whereas 61% of all IOD-PCVs SPA projects were classified as “Other” in that they were quite different and could not be easily grouped together (Chi-square=42.97, df=3, p<0.000). These findings suggest that IOD-PCVs were more likely than EE-PCVs to conduct more relevant needs assessments to identify local priorities and needs.

Community involvement in project implementation is based on the extent the project addresses critical problems and issues of the community. The challenge is, given the relatively short period of time between when a PCV 2-year posting and a SPA project implemented period (3-months before PCV’s Close of Service) having the community sufficiently involved in the design of the project in order to ensure relatively good community involvement during implementation and an involved counterpart who helps with project management and administration, engaging beneficiaries, community networking, negotiating with local government officials, and local language skills.

3. To what extent have SPA projects achieved their expected results?

All SPA projects are expected to achieve two objectives, which are capacity-building and sustainability, as well as specific project related outcomes. An evaluation rubric, that included these criteria, was used to rate all 273 SPA projects implemented from 2010 to 2019. Using the most strict criteria of achieving both general objectives and achieving all project objectives, among the 165 EE SPA projects implemented, 38 or 23% achieved both general objectives as well as project specific outcomes compared to the 105 IOD SPA projects implemented, in which 41 or 39.1% achieved both general objectives and project specific outcomes.

The number of SPA projects by year are too few to generalize findings, but nonetheless the Figures 14 and 15 present the tendencies over the 10 years for SPA projects to achieve their expected results. For both EE and IOD SPA projects, since 2017 there is a tendency for an increasing percentage of SPA projects to achieve both general SPA objectives and project specific results.

Using a slightly lower criteria level, to include projects that achieved one of the two general objectives and most of the project related results, then 145 or 90.3% of EE SPA projects and 90 or 85.8% of IOD projects met these criteria.

Also, it is important to point-out that this retrospective impact evaluation was unable to assess SPA Program impact; that is, what long-term outcomes had been sustained after project completion. This is due to 1) lack of resources and 2) covid-19 pandemic. In order to assess long-term impacts would require following-up with the 273 completed SPA projects to identify what was sustained since the project was completed; however, with a limited evaluation budget, it was not possible to track down all 273 PCVs, Counterparts, and beneficiaries or visit project sites. In addition, due to the covid-19 pandemic, Georgia imposed restrictions on gatherings as well as travel, thus, even if the budget was adequate the evaluation would have limited findings regarding long-term impact.

4. How has the work of the Volunteer and SPA project-partners increased the capacity of local communities and/or organizations to carry out low-cost, grassroots sustainable development?

USAID’s Journey to Self-Reliance, as well as Peace Corps SPA projects, place a priority on building human and institutional capacity across sectors to help countries overcome barriers to self-reliance. The PC/Georgia’s Small Grants Handbook (pg. 16) defines capacity building as *“strengthening the skills, competencies, and abilities of people in the local community so they can overcome the obstacles that inhibit them from realizing their developmental goals.”* Three aspects of capacity building were examined in the 273 SPA projects from 2010 to 2019:²⁶ **Whose** capacity-building was targeted – individuals (leaders, youth activists, change agents), organizations (civil society, community-based organizations, gov’t departments), networks (NGO networks, coordinating bodies), and/or systems (regional / national interest groups); **What** capacity-building was being delivered – technical (service delivery, managing systems, business development), organizational (financial management, human capital development, resource mobilization), adapting (planning, analyzing, learning), and influencing (advocacy, lobbying, negotiation,

²⁶ PACT Capacity Development Gold Standard Handbook: A practical guide to operationalizing our principles, approach, methods, and tools, 2012, PACT, California.

research); and, **How** capacity-building was being delivered – consultancy (training delivered by expert), mentoring (coaching), and/or peer exchange (learning from others similar to themselves).

The capacity-building data reported in this section are drawn from the PCVs' Project Completion Reports, where the number individuals / organizations attending capacity-building trainings and activities. None of the capacity-building data are based on pre- or post-tests to measure change in capacity of those participating, thus, this section represents "delivery and exposure to" rather than "accomplishment of" capacity-building because few, if any, SPA projects used pre- and post-test to assess change.

The table below presents the three aspects of capacity-building over the 10 years in these 273 SPA projects. When comparing the Whose capacity-building was targeted, although the majority of EE-PCV and IOD-PCV projects involved building the capacity of organizations and professionals and service providers, the main difference was that a larger proportion of IOD-PCV projects (61%) delivered capacity-building training to general community members than EE-PCV projects (21%) which were predominately school staff.

When examining What capacity-building was delivered, since EE-PCV projects were primarily school based, a slightly larger proportion (87.9%) of EE-PCV projects focused on building *technical* capacity when compared to IOD-PCV projects (72.4%); on the other hand, since IOD-PCV projects were tied to community-based organizations, a larger proportion of IOD-PCV projects focused on capacity building of *influencing* (57.1%) and *adapting* (41.9) than EE-PCV projects (36.4% and 31.5% respectively).

How capacity-building was delivered was similar for both EE-PCV and IOD-PCV projects; that is, almost all EE-PCV (98.2%) and IOD-PCV (99.0%) projects relied on *consulting services* (individuals from a local organization, fellow PCVs, local teacher, and or a specialist) and less often on *mentoring* (27.9% and 25.7% respectively) or *peer exchange* (13.9% and 15.2% respectively).

Table 13: Delivery of Capacity Building in the SPA Projects

Aspects of Capacity-Building	EE (N=165)	IOD (n=105)	Response (N=3)	Total (N=273)
<u>Whose capacity-building was targeted?</u>				
Organizations (civil society organizations, gov't departments)	90.1	82.9	100.0	87.9
Professionals & Service Providers (teachers, counselors, IT staff, NGO staff)	91.5	77.1	100.0	86.1
Individuals (leaders, youth activists, local change agents)	75.2	70.5	66.7	73.3
Communities (local residents of children, youth & adults)	20.6	61.0	66.7	36.6
Average per project	2.8	2.9	3.3	2.8
<u>What capacity-building was delivered?</u>				
Technical (service delivery, business development, system management)	87.9	72.4	66.7	81.7
Organizational (financial management, resource mobilization, human)	58.8	63.8	66.7	60.8
Influencing (advocacy, lobbying, negotiation, research)	36.4	57.1	66.7	44.7
Adapting (planning, analyzing, learning)	31.5	41.9	66.7	35.9
Average per project	2.2	2.4	2.7	2.2
<u>How capacity-building was delivered?</u>				
Consultancy services (training delivered by specialist)	98.2	99.0	100.0	98.5
Mentoring (coaching, tutoring)	27.9	25.7	100.0	26.7
Peer Exchange (learning from others similar to themselves)	13.9	15.2	33.3	14.7
Average per project	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4

SPA projects focused on delivering capacity-building to individuals within the community and various local professionals, such as teachers, school counselors, NGO leaders, and local officials. Even though SPA projects have been involved in capacity building from the beginning, only in 2014 did SPA projects begin documenting the number of individuals and service providers receiving the capacity building training. The tables below present the absolute and average number of individuals and service providers, by age groups, receiving capacity building from the 169 projects implemented from 2014-2019 by EE-PCV, IOD-PCV, and Response-PCV projects.

As shown in the table below, the 98 SPA projects implemented by EE-PCVs from 2014 to 2019 reported delivering capacity-building to 16,679 individuals in the community, mostly adolescents (9,907) and females (55%). These 98 EE-PCV projects delivered, on average, capacity-building training to 170 individuals. Assuming the 67 SPA projects implemented by EE-PCVs from 2010-2013 delivered capacity-building to the same number of community individuals, on average (170), then an additional 11,390 individuals received capacity building trainings bringing the overall total of 28,069 community members receiving capacity building training in EE-PCV projects over the 10 years.

The 98 SPA project implemented by EE-PCVs from 2014-2019, provided capacity-building training to 1,707 professional service providers, mostly professionals 25 years of age and older (369) and overwhelming females (72%). Again, assuming the previous 67 SPA projects implemented by EE-PCVs from 2010-2013 provided capacity-building to 17 professional service providers, on average, then an additional 1,139 professional service providers were reached bringing the overall total to 2,846 professional service providers receiving capacity-building training over the 10 years due to EE-PCV projects.

*Table 14: Capacity-Building Delivered to Individuals and Service Providers by EE-PCV Projects from 2014 to 2019 (N=98)**

10-2019 (N=78)

	Age Groups				Average per Project
	25 yrs & older	15-24 yrs	<15 yrs	Total	
Individuals in the community					
Females	1,171 (81.0%)	2,835 (53.2%)	5,128 (51.8%)	9,134 (54.8%)	93
Males	275 (19.0%)	2,491 (46.8%)	4,779 (48.2%)	7,545 (45.2%)	77
Total	1,446 (100%)	5,326 (100%)	9,907 (100%)	16,679 (100%)	170
Average per project	15	54	73	170	
Professional Service Providers (teachers, counselors, IT staff, NGO staff)					
Females	875 (83.3%)	194 (52.6%)	151 (52.4%)	1,220 (71.5%)	13
Males	175 (16.7%)	175 (47.4%)	137 (47.6%)	487 (28.5%)	5
Total	1,050 (100%)	369 (100%)	288 (100%)	1,707 (100%)	17
Average per project	11	4	3	17	

* From 2010 to 2013, data on capacity building was not documented in SPA project reports.

The 68 SPA projects implemented by IOD-PCVs from 2014-2019, provided capacity-building to 5,965 individuals in the community, primarily individuals 24 years of age (3,012) and younger and primarily females (60%). Assuming that the previous 37 SPA projects implemented by IOD-PCVs provided, on average, capacity-building training to 88 individuals in the community, then an additional 3,256 community individuals were reached bringing the overall total of 9,221 individuals in the community involved in capacity-building trainings over the 10 years due to IOD-PCV projects.

*Table 15: Capacity-Building Delivered to Individuals and Service Providers IOD-PCV Projects from 2014 to 2019 (N=68)**

2012-14-087

	Age Groups				Average per Project
	25 yrs. & older	15-24 yrs.	<15 yrs.	Total	
Individuals in the community					
Females	465 (41.7%)	1,894 (62.9%)	1,234 (52.1%)	3,593 (60.2%)	53
Males	118 (58.3%)	1,118 (37.1%)	1,136 (47.9%)	2,372 (39.8%)	35
Total	1,116 (100%)	3,012 (100%)	2,370 (100%)	5,965 (100%)	88
Average per project	16	44	35	88	
Professional Service Providers (teachers, counselors, IT staff, NGO staff)					
Females	335 (76.5%)	73 (62.9%)	1 (50.0%)	409 (73.6%)	6
Males	103 (23.5%)	43 (37.1%)	1 (50.0%)	147 (26.4%)	2
Total	438 (100%)	116 (100%)	2 (100%)	556 (100%)	8
Average per project	6	2	0.03	8	

* From 2010 to 2013, data on capacity building was not documented in SPA project reports.

The 68 SPA projects implemented by IOD-PCVs from 2014-2019 provide capacity-building to 556 professional service providers, mostly professionals 25 years of age and older (438) and overwhelmingly females (74%). Assuming the previous 37 SPA projects implemented by IOD-PCVs from 2010-2013 provided capacity-building training to 8 professional service providers, on average, then an additional 296 professional service providers were reached bringing the overall total to 852 professional service providers receiving capacity-building training over the 10 years due to IOD-PCV projects.

The 3 Response-PCV SPA projects, implemented from 2014-2019, provided capacity-building trainings to 191 individuals in the community, primarily individuals 25 years of age and older (87) as well as 15 years of age and younger (74) who were overwhelmingly females (77%). These 3 Response Volunteer SPA projects, implemented from 2014-2019, provided capacity-building training to 42 professionals service providers, mostly professionals 25 years of age and older (41) and overwhelmingly females (81%).

Table 16: Capacity-Building Delivered to Individuals and Service Providers by R-PCV Projects in 2016, 2017, and 2019 (N=3)

and 2012-14-37

	Age Groups				Average per Project
	25 yrs & older	15-24 yrs	<15 yrs	Total	
Individuals in the community					
Females	74 (85.1%)	25 (83.3%)	48 (64.9%)	147 (77.0%)	49
Males	13 (14.9%)	5 (16.7%)	26 (35.1%)	44 (23.0%)	15
Total	87 (100%)	30 (100%)	74 (100%)	191 (100%)	64
Average per project	29	10	25	64	
Professional Service Providers (teachers, counselors, IT staff, NGO staff)					
Females	33 (80.5%)	1 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	34 (81.0%)	11
Males	8 (19.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (19.0%)	3
Total	41 (100%)	1 (100%)	0 (100%)	42 (100%)	14
Average per project	14	0.3	0	14	

In summary, the evaluators believe that a conservative estimate is that all 273 SPA projects over the 10 years reached 37,481 individuals in communities and organizations (an average of 137 individuals per project) and 3,740 professional service providers with capacity building activities (an average of 14 service providers per project).²⁷

²⁷ Global administrative data for 2,560 SPA IV grant activities, reported in Performance Evaluation of the Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program, FY13-FY17, USAID, October 2018, pg.40, states capacity building, on average, of 363 individuals and 18 service providers per project.

9. Recommendations

Based on the descriptive and qualitative analyses, the evaluation team would like to suggest the following recommendations as they relate to specific components of the SPA Program's Theory of Change.

1. Relevance & Appropriateness

1.1 Community

- 1.1.1 – PC's Small Grants Handbook (2019) states, pg.22, that a basic requirement of Peace Corps small grant fund is, *"All projects should be initiated, designed, and implemented by a **local** community organization or group, with the support of a Peace Corps Volunteer."* "Local community" is used consistently, rather than just "community." Most often, "local community" is interpreted by some PC staff as "geographic community" where the PCV is posted. However, some PCVs prefer to identify a "community of interest" for their SPA project that represents members and groups beyond their local, geographic community where s/he is posted, such as camps for girls or a community of softball athletes residing in various communities and, possibly, regions. The PC Georgia and the SPA Review Committee need to come to an agreement on what constitutes a "local community" that meets grant requirements.
- 1.1.2 – Generally, EE and IOD-PCVs identify the school or organization, where they are posted, as their SPA project "community" because they feel obligated to contribute to the school/organization's development. Even when the PCV feels the school/organization is not committed or interested, the PCVs feel it would be inappropriate to find a new counterpart, school, or organization/school that would be more interested in a SPA project. If PC/Georgia SPA team wants to encourage PCVs to find the most suitable counterparts for community projects, their messaging about this needs to be clearer, so that PCVs' allegiance is primarily to the community rather than the specific host organization/school they are placed in.
- 1.1.3 – Peace Corps' publication, *Roles of the Volunteer in Development* (2002), clearly identifies six roles a PCV can take during her/his assignment and provides classification and definitions as well as examples for each role. Identifying the roles of PCVs in this evaluation was based on this publication. In the future, PC/Georgia, or Peace Corps Washington, should consider developing a similar publication for the roles of the PCV counterparts. This will allow future evaluations to compare the roles of both PCVs and their counterparts and the types and number of roles a counterpart takes on in a SPA project may very well be an influential factor related to project success.

1.2 Needs Assessment

- 1.2.1 – PCVs often struggle to identify needs in their communities that are considered important by community members and at the same time can be addressed through a SPA project. It would be helpful for the Peace Corps staff to support PCVs in "needs identification" prior to proposal development. Willingness to engage with PCVs in such manner was expressed by previous SPA committee members as well as those who saw PCVs struggle and noted the prevalent lack of quality needs assessments in project proposals.
- 1.2.2 – The Covid-19 pandemic has accentuated the need for remote work and intensive use of technology in teaching. PCVs and counterparts argued that in the post Covid-19 period teachers may be more likely to acknowledge the need of technology in teaching as they have a better awareness about its applicability in their work. While previously PCVs noted a disconnect between the lack of technology use and beneficiaries' perceived needs, in the post-pandemic period, SPA projects may find greater needs among teachers to use online technology for teaching as well as in organizations needing real-time technology for meetings, donor relations, and contact with constituents.

1.3 Project Design

- 1.3.1 – Expand SPA Project Review Committee's role to include providing additional support, such as online conferencing using Zoom, to PCVs during project proposal writing, project management, and project implementation.
- 1.3.2 – Create an easy to use system for the effective transfer of PCVs' experiences and lessons learned to successive PCVs interested in implementing a SPA project during their PC assignment. These

experiences and lessons learned could be integrated in PDM training in which trainers share with PCVs common factors of success and failure of SPA projects to date, such as common challenges of identifying and working with counterparts, working with local authorities, engaging beneficiaries, and potential shortage of time during the assignment. It is important to focus on the challenges and pitfalls of project implementation and continuously update training materials based on PCVs' project completion reports, PC staff's personal communication with PCVs and counterparts.

- 1.3.3 – Ensure that project proposals include and budget for follow-up activities after capacity building trainings to ensure the skills are practiced and skills are transferred to other community members.
- 1.3.4 – The IOD SPA project proposals should include a questions of how the project will align with the organization's current and future plans and activities. The proposal should address issues such as 1) how will the SPA project support the organization's mission or start on a new mission and 2) how will the organization continue the SPA-related activities once the SPA project has ended.
- 1.3.5 – PCVs who served on the SPA Committee pointed out that they had learned substantially from reading, reviewing and discussing different SPA project proposals, therefore, PC/Georgia may want to have a wider variety of grant proposals, rated as good, available online for PCVs who are considering a SPA project or currently writing a SPA project proposal. Having a wide variety of project proposals is important also in terms of expanding PCVs' thinking about possible SPA projects. Interviews with PCVs seemed to indicate that when example proposals are primarily about one specific type of a project (ex. English cabinet) PCVs tend to limit themselves when thinking about possible SPA project ideas.
- 1.3.6 – During the project review process, PC/Georgia should develop a mechanism that would assist PCV identify potential social and cultural clashes, related to gender, social, cultural, and religious norms in Georgia, to mitigate such clashes that can be detrimental to a SPA project.
- 1.3.7 – If a SPA project is based on a degree of commitment and support---whether verbal or contractual--- from the local government, PCVs should assess the risks to the project related to political change that is common in Georgia as well as loss of interest by local government to fulfill the obligations taken on at the beginning of the project. Such cases were common in the reviewed projects, however, PCVs were often unprepared for such course of events.
- 1.3.8 – Strengthen the feedback mechanism from the SPA committee to approved projects. For example, "Your project includes reliance on local government, based on our experience this entails risks because agreements are predominantly made verbally." "Your project includes travel to remote areas, have you considered transportation problems?" "Your project includes trainings with women on sensitive issues, thus, how will you mitigate potential problems?"
- 1.3.9 – Identify a formal mechanism that will allow the exchange of knowledge and experiences between a PCV writing a SPA proposal with one or more PCVs who implemented a similar project in the most recent years.
- 1.3.10 – Too often, needs assessments are conducted with a small convenience sample from one group of stakeholders, thus, PCVs should be engaging multiple stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, and students, in the needs assessment, which also contributes to capacity building.

2. Efficiency

2.1 Inputs

- 2.1.1 – Incentives in capacity building activities.²⁸ Beneficiary enthusiasm is a challenge even when there is a clear and acknowledged need in the community. PCVs should be warned of this extremely common challenge in SPA projects and encouraged to introduce specific measures in their projects that are aimed at increasing beneficiaries' enthusiasm and engagement.

²⁸ Some PCVs used monetary incentives for beneficiaries. As adult training participants had to forgo daily income for the participation in the training, they saw it justified to offer monetary compensation. Other PCVs included free lunches and small gifts for training participants. Still others included non-material rewards for the successful "graduates" of trainings such as internships, small grants, etc. Some of the camp projects included a sort of "career growth" programs for their alumni, which was by far the most successful tool for achieving long-term engagement from camp participants.

- 2.1.2 – A committed, experienced, and well-respected Counterpart is critical for PCVs when implementing a SPA project, however, relying only on a single person can be risky, thus, a main Counterpart and Co-Counterpart help reduce risks of a discontinued or a poor project.
- 2.1.3 – Pay attention to the quality of community contribution rather than quantity. Increasing the quantity (percentage) of community contribution is easy and depends on the creativity of volunteers, but quality can be a good indicator of community's engagement, such as counterpart's organization allowing the use of office space for meetings (low engagement), an organization allowing the use of their office space (high engagement), or a private enterprise donating curtains for a school conference room (high engagement).

2.2 Activities

- 2.2.1 – Expand the SPA Project Review Committee's role to provide more online support to PCVs during project implementation.
- 2.2.2 – Plan and budget for follow-up activities after capacity building trainings to ensure the skills are used as well as transferred to other community members.
- 2.2.3 – When confronted with potentially unenthusiastic target group (e.g., teachers in schools) requires innovative activities as well as exciting follow-up activities and incentives.

3. Effects & Sustainability

3.1 Outputs – No recommendations

3.2 Outcomes

- 3.2.1 – Overwhelmingly, English Cabinets that represent a substantial portion of EE-PCV SPA projects, focus on the lack of resources in schools and provision of those resources and less so on the SPA Program's main objective of capacity building. Greater focus needs to be placed on capacity building in school-based projects in order to improve the outcomes of such projects.
- 3.2.3 – Increased community capacity is achieved more often when, during the needs assessment, multiple stakeholders (e.g., teachers, parents, students) are engaged in identifying relevant and appropriate capacity building needs. As such needs assessments are more challenging for PCVs, they are very rarely done.
- 3.2.4 – This report provides the number of individuals and organizations that received capacity-building training, however, to document whether capacities have been built / improved, it is critical to assess pre- and post-project capacities of beneficiaries, thus, the SPA Program should consider having a proportion of each SPA budget include monitoring and evaluation of this critical outcome.

4. Post Project

- 4.1 – PC/Georgia should consider a small budget that would fund a mechanism to follow-up on SPA projects that ended in the previous year to document post-completion impacts on a continuous basis. This would greatly enhance documenting each year's accomplishments and provide quality data for multi-year, summative evaluations such as this one.

5. Additional Recommendations

- 5.1 – Value for Investment, or Vfi, (King, 2016) investigates whether a program provides value for the resources invested. Vfi examines both costs and consequences. PC/Georgia, or PC Washington, may want to consider in the near future assessing the Vfi of the SPA Program.

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Annex 1: Conflict of Interest Statement

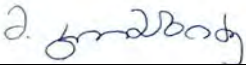
Name	Larry Dershem
Title	Practice Lead, Monitoring & Evaluation
Organization	PMCG International
Evaluation Position?	☒ Team Leader Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	Small Projects Assistance Program, Peace Corps Georgia
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	Yes ☒ No
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to: 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
Date	15 October 2020

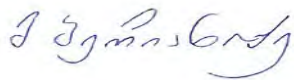
Name	Maya Komakhidze
Title	Researcher
Organization	PMCG International
Evaluation Position?	☐ Team Leader ☒ Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	Small Projects Assistance Program, Peace Corps Georgia
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	Yes ☐ No ☒
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to: 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
Date	15 October 2020

Name	Mariam Berianidze
Title	Junior Researcher
Organization	PMCG International
Evaluation Position?	☐ Team Leader ☒ Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	
USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	Small Projects Assistance Program, Peace Corps Georgia
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	Yes ☐ No ☒
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to: 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	
Date	15 October 2020

Annex 2: Evaluation Statement of Work

A. Statement of Work (SOW) and Specifications for Services

Under the SPA IV agreement (Fiscal Year 2013 – Fiscal Year 2018), PC Georgia has implemented 181 small grants and 24 trainings and under the SPA V agreement, (Fiscal Year 2019 – ongoing), PC Georgia has implemented 18 small grants and 2 trainings in the program areas of leadership, volunteerism, youth empowerment, community development, gender, disability, ecological education, professional development for English teachers and use of modern technology.

Peace Corps and USAID created the SPA Program to build the capacity of host country individuals, organizations, and communities to meet their own development needs and priorities. It builds on Peace Corps' model of placing Volunteers in local communities for two years, where Volunteers work side by side with host country partners on projects. Peace Corps assists communities to identify common concerns, develop strategies to address these concerns, and design and implement small-scale community-level projects. The SPA Program provides additional resources for Peace Corps to train its Volunteers and host country partners on small-scale projects utilizing a project design and management methodology. Additionally, the SPA Program provides small grants that communities can access (up to \$10,000) so that community members can put into practice what they learn regarding project design and management. The small-scale grant projects address community needs through capacity-building.

Purpose of Program Evaluation

Peace Corps and USAID/Georgia staff will utilize the results of this evaluation to improve the effectiveness of the implementation of the SPA program in Georgia. The evaluation will provide the perspective of the projects from the people of Georgia with whom the Volunteers lived and worked. It will assess the sustainability of the projects, and any activities or actions that evolved from them. Peace Corps aims to better understand the impact of SPA projects in communities and learn the factors that contribute to the success and sustainability of projects over time. The evaluation will also be submitted to Peace Corps/Washington to share best practices amongst other Peace Corps Posts implementing the SPA Program.

Program Evaluation Objectives and Key Questions

Peace Corps and USAID/Georgia identify two principle objectives for the current SPA Evaluation:

Objective I: To understand whether and how SPA grant activities, as currently designed and implemented, support broader local ownership of development in the communities served.

Objective II: To identify lessons learned and good practices for locally owned, community-driven development which have applicability for the SPA Program and other programs with similar goals.

Key Questions: The evaluation will assess project performance by seeking answers to the following key questions:

1. To what extent did SPA projects address community-identified priorities?
2. To what extent were the SPA projects designed and implemented with community involvement?
3. To what extent have SPA projects achieved their expected results?
4. How has the work of the Volunteer and SPA project-partners increased the capacity of local communities and/or organizations to carry out low-cost, grassroots sustainable development?

Methodology

The Contractor will evaluate 273 SPA projects completed by Peace Corps Volunteers and their community partners over fiscal years 2010-2019. The Contractor will utilize a design that includes desk review, in-person interviews and focus group interviews. The field review will include a subset of the 273 projects (see additional guidance below.)

Program Evaluation Deliverables (timeline to be managed and confirmed by POCs)

1. Document review and initial consultations with Peace Corps.
2. Final research design.
3. Draft questionnaires for review with and approval by Peace Corps.
4. Translation of questionnaires.
5. Data collection/data entry.
6. Brief midterm progress report, including a presentation.
7. Data analysis and preparation of first draft of report, and case studies.
8. Final evaluation report and case studies (electronic). The final report will be reviewed against the criteria identified in Appendix D (Final Report Criteria and Outline).
9. Final in-person briefing presentation to Peace Corps.
10. Evaluation data in an electronic file in an easy to read format.

Host Country Individuals to be interviewed

Host Country Individuals	Definition
<i>SPA Project Stakeholders</i>	Local leaders who sponsor, support, or otherwise have a stake in the project; e.g., community leaders, school directors, NGO directors, etc.
<i>SPA Project Partners / Counterparts</i>	Individuals who worked with the PCV to design and/or implement the SPA project, e.g., NGO staff, extension worker, PCV counterpart, youth leader, teacher
<i>Beneficiaries</i>	Individuals who receive assistance and benefits from the project and the people the project is primarily designed to advantage, e.g., community members, students, teachers, parents, etc.
<i>Programming and Small Grants Coordinator & SPA Committee Members</i>	PC Georgia staff member coordinating the SPA program and the staff, PCV, and USAID representative

Note – for each site there should be at least 5-8 interviews per site including:

- Project Stakeholders – at least 2 individual interviews
- SPA Project Partners/Counterparts – 3-5 individual interviews
- Beneficiaries – at least one (1) one-hour group interview including interviewees covering a representative range of gender and age

PC Georgia Staff & SPA Committee Members to be interviewed

Individuals	Definition
<i>Programming and Small Grants Coordinator</i>	PC Georgia staff member who is the designated SPA coordinator
<i>PC Georgia SPA Committee Members</i>	Staff and PCV SPA Committee members
<i>Outside SPA Committee Member(s)</i>	USAID representative

Note – all individuals above should be interviewed:

- Programming and Small Grants Coordinator – at least 2 interviews during the evaluation process; one at the beginning and one at mid-point – a final interview/meeting may be necessary to clarify any findings or ask additional questions.
- PC Georgia SPA Committee Members (Director of Programming and Training and 6 Volunteer SPA Committee members) – at least one (1) one-hour group interview.
- Outside SPA Committee Member(s) – at least one individual interview with a USAID staff member associated with SPA grants; may also participate in a group SPA Committee group interview.

Appendix C

List of Locations of Completed Projects

PC Georgia SPA Program (FY10-FY19)

#	Location (Region)	# of projects
1.	Adjara	19
2.	Guria	32
3.	Imereti	46
4.	Kakheti	76
5.	Kvemo-Kartli	22
6.	Mtskheta-Mtianeti	4
7.	Racha Lechkumi-Kvemo Svaneti	7
8.	Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	17
9.	Samtskhe-Javakheti	28
10.	Shida-Kartli	19
11.	Tbilisi	3
	Total	273

Appendix C

Information to be covered in Interviews

Key questions to be addressed

Structured interviews and focus group/community discussion topics will include a range of questions in the following general categories (more detailed questionnaires and surveying instruments will be provided at the training):

- **Benefits & Impacts:** What have been the overall benefits and impact(s) of the SPA program at the community-level as perceived by male, female, youth and elder community members and their leaders?
- **Special Objective:** Have projects increased the capacity of local communities to conduct low-cost, grassroots sustainable development? Are the participating communities capable of creating low-cost, grassroots sustainable development?
- **Specific SPA Objectives:** Are SPA projects achieving their expected results as perceived by communities concerned? Are community residents satisfied/dissatisfied with the results of a SPA project as relates to their needs?
- **Community Priorities and Involvement:** Are the projects addressing community-identified priorities? How was the project idea determined, and what was the planning process? Are the SPA projects community-driven? Do local communities feel genuine ownership of the activities? Are communities making cash and/or in-kind contributions?
- **New Skills:** How did community residents benefit from SPA activities? Did they report that they had gained, for example:
 - a. New technical skills directly or indirectly related to the types of SPA concerned, e.g., youth development, health, sanitation, environmental protection, eco-tourism, small business, literacy/numeracy, agriculture, horticulture, etc.
 - b. Project management skills, e.g. project planning, scheduling, design, implementation, evaluation/monitoring, procurement, resource allocation, proposal writing, reporting, etc.
 - c. Financial skills, e.g. budget preparation, budget tracking, accounting, bookkeeping, financial reporting, etc.
- **Sustainability:** Are SPA projects sustainable? Is there any measurable or demonstrable multiplier effect that demonstrate that SPA outcomes increase over time?
- **Unintended Outcomes:** What other outcomes or unintended consequences result from SPA activities—other than those stated in the approved SPA proposals—positive or negative, such as leveraged or new funding from other sources, unexpected side benefits, or new programs?
- **Volunteer Roles:** What was the role of the PCV in developing and implementing the SPA project?
- **Gender Issues:** How do SPA projects address the role of gender in the community development process? As Volunteers develop SPA projects in conjunction with their communities, what role does gender play in the development of the projects?
- **Marginalized Community Members:** How do SPA projects include and benefit marginalized members of the communities in which they have been implemented? What role did marginalized members of the community play in developing the project, and how have they benefitted?

Appendix D

Final Report Criteria and Outline

Criteria to Ensure Quality of the Evaluation Report:

- The evaluation report should represent a thoughtful, well-researched and well-organized effort to objectively evaluate what worked in the project, what did not and why.
- Evaluation reports shall address all evaluation questions included in the scope of work.
- The evaluation report should include the scope of work as an annex. All modifications to the scope of work, whether in technical requirements, evaluation questions, evaluation team composition, methodology or timeline need to be agreed upon in writing by the technical officer.
- Evaluation methodology shall be explained in detail and all tools used in conducting the evaluation such as questionnaires, checklists and discussion guides will be included in an Annex in the final report.
- Evaluation findings will assess outcomes and impact on males and females.
- Limitations to the evaluation shall be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.).

- Evaluation findings should be presented as analyzed facts, evidence and data and not based on anecdotes, hearsay or the compilation of people's opinions. Findings should be specific, concise and supported by strong quantitative or qualitative evidence.
- Sources of information need to be properly identified and listed in an annex.
- Recommendations need to be supported by a specific set of findings.
- Recommendations should be action-oriented, practical and specific, with defined responsibility for the action.
- The cover page should follow [USAID Branding and Graphics Standards](#) and be co-branded with Peace Corps as appropriate using [Peace Corps Branding Guidelines](#).
 - o Include a title block with the word "Evaluation" at the top and the report title underneath. The title should also include the word "evaluation."
 - o Include the following statement across the bottom: "This publication was produced at the request of the PC Georgia and through the support of the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared independently by [list authors and/or organizations involved in the preparation of the report]."
 - o Feature one high-quality photograph representative of the project being evaluated. The photo should be high resolution, visually simple, colorful, and in focus. Include a brief caption on the inside front cover explaining the "who, what, when, where, and why" of the photo and with photographer credit.

Outline:

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary, between three to four pages in length, should stand alone as an abbreviated version of the report. All content of the full report should be summarized, and the Executive Summary should contain no new information.

Evaluation Purpose and Questions

The evaluation purpose should be clearly defined at the beginning of the report. It should describe in about one page or less why the evaluation is being conducted now, how the findings are expected to be used, what specific decisions will be informed by the evaluation, and who the main audiences are for the evaluation report. The evaluation questions are linked to the purpose, and should be listed here. Good practice is to limit the questions to three to five that are clear, focused, and that will directly inform specific decisions.

Project Background

This section should summarize the project being evaluated in one to three pages, including the original problem the project is designed to address, any changes that have occurred since the project was started, a description of the beneficiary population, geographic area of the project, and the underlying development hypothesis, or causal logic, of the project or the broader program of which the project is a part. If a results framework (for strategies, objectives or programs) or logical framework (for projects) is available, this should be included here. For projects designed under the project design guidance released in 2011, the evaluation team should have access to the final Project Appraisal Document and related annexes (which includes a logical framework and original monitoring and evaluation plans, among other things). This information provides important context for understanding the evaluation purpose, questions, methods, findings and conclusions.

Methods and Limitations

This section should provide a detailed description within one to three pages of the evaluation methods and why they were chosen. If more space is needed, additional detailed information on the methods should be provided in an annex. The reader needs to understand what the evaluation team did and why to make an informed judgment about the credibility of the findings and conclusions and the underlying evaluation design including the data collection and analysis methods.

Evaluation methods should correspond directly to the questions being asked and should generate the highest quality and most credible evidence possible, taking into consideration time, budget and other practical considerations.

This section should provide information on all aspects of the evaluation design and methods, including tradeoffs that led to selection of specific data collection and analysis methods, a description of data availability and quality, and sampling strategies (purposive, random, etc.), including how interview subjects or site visits were selected. Just as important as describing the evaluation methods is describing any limitations in data collection and analysis, data quality, access to data sources, or any other factors that may result in bias. To show the relationship between the evaluation questions and methods, it is useful to include a chart that lists each evaluation question, the corresponding evaluation method to be used for data collection and analysis, data sources, sample sizes, and limitations.

Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Findings, conclusions, and recommendations, make up the main body of the report, synthesizing what was learned during the evaluation and presenting it in an easy to understand and logical fashion. Findings are empirical facts based on data collected during the evaluation and should not rely only on opinion, even of experts. Conclusions synthesize and interpret findings and make judgments supported by one or more specific findings. Recommendations, if applicable, are specific actions the evaluation team proposes be taken by program management that are based on findings and conclusions. The reader should be able to discern what evidence supports the conclusions and recommendations. Whenever possible, data should be presented visually in easy to read charts, tables, graphs, and maps to demonstrate the evidence that supports conclusions and recommendations. All graphics must have a title, be clearly labeled, and include a caption.

Appendix E

Overview of tasks

The Contractor shall appoint a Senior Researcher (SR) who shall be the point of contact for the duration of the Performance Evaluation.

Required Tasks

Working with the PC Georgia senior staff, the SR shall perform the following tasks:

Desk Review

1. Participate in-person in an initial meeting with PC Georgia to review background information and research study project objectives.
2. Review PC Georgia SPA Program documents, grants, procedures, and additional background materials provided.
3. Prepare and **present brief report of initial findings** based on the desk review of the grants to PC Georgia staff.

Design of Field Review

4. Based on the initial findings of the grants review, prepare the research design of field work and present it to PC Georgia staff.
5. Prepare data collection instruments for individual interviews with project participants (questionnaires), an interview guide for the group discussions, and a protocol for the case studies.
6. Include a core set of questions to be provided by PC Georgia.
7. Present research design, methods, questionnaires, logistics, and timeline to PC Georgia.
8. Translate the interview questions from English to Georgian (see Appendix C for general areas of inquiry). Translated questions will be reviewed by PC Georgia staff for accuracy. The completed and reviewed translations must be ready for use for conducting training of interviewers.

Assembling and preparing the Field Review Team

9. If not on staff, hire local interviewers to conduct interviews at PC-designated project sites in Georgia. Interviewers must be fluent in the local languages and the Senior Researcher must be fluent in English.
10. Prepare a training workshop for the entire research team, in collaboration with PC Georgia, prior to the start of data collection. At a minimum, training will include an overview of the Peace Corps' approach to development, the Peace Corps program in Georgia, the SPA program, the purpose of the research, interviewing techniques, and the questionnaires.
11. The training will include sufficient time to test pilot the data collection protocols and field-based-data entry with former PC Georgia work partners and project beneficiaries who will be identified by PC Georgia. This will help to ensure interviewers are confident and competent in conducting interviews, taking notes and implementing the survey correctly.

Establishing the logistics of the field review

12. Contact individuals at each site, using the list of initial points of contact for each site provided by PC Georgia.
13. Verify individuals that are available at site, identify additional interviewees (stakeholders, project partners, or beneficiaries), and determine how they may be contacted to set up group meetings and interviews in coordination with PC Georgia (Appendices A and B).
14. Develop a detailed logistics plan for the fieldwork, including lodging, transportation, and travel to various sites.

Conduct Field Review

15. Conduct field work, group meetings, beneficiary interviews, and direct observation in selected SPA project sites in multiple regions across Georgia (Appendix B). At each site, researchers will conduct approximately 3-6 individual interviews. Each interview is expected to last 20-30 minutes.

Data Review and Reporting

16. Conduct detailed analysis of the information gathered in the Field Review.

17. Develop three (3) two-page Case Studies of representative projects, including beneficiary and project photographs, and excerpts from interviews.
18. Communicate the status of the project to PC Georgia Senior Staff weekly, or more frequently, as needed.
19. Conduct debriefing meeting(s) with PC Georgia staff at the end of the fieldwork.
20. Submit a brief mid-term progress report and presentation to PC Georgia when field research has concluded.
21. Enter all interview data into a data entry system. Data will be entered in English. A copy of the raw data will be turned over to PC Georgia along with the final report.

Final Evaluation Report

22. Prepare a **final evaluation report, including the three Case Studies** with photos and informative captions in English. The report must include a detailed analysis of the evaluation findings, conclusions, recommendations for the project, and a description of the methodology. The final evaluation report must also be consistent with the requirements outlined in [USAID's How-To Note: Preparing Evaluation Reports](#). Detailed tables, including cross-tabulations and descriptive statistics, accompanied by appropriate charts and graphs, will summarize all data by types of SPA activities, cost, outcomes and impacts. Data will be analyzed to address the key evaluation goals and objectives (above) as well as the specific topics included in the major evaluation questions (Appendix C). The report should also include a discussion of the aspects of the research that worked well, and suggestions for improvements in the methodology or design of the evaluation. A draft report outline is provided in Appendix D.
23. At the conclusion of the research, all completed questionnaires will be turned over to PC Georgia.
24. The Contractor will present research findings to the PC Georgia staff.

Annexes

All evaluation reports must include the following as annexes:

1. The Evaluation Statement of Work
2. Detailed description of the evaluation design and methods
3. Copies of the actual data collection tools such as survey or interview questions
4. A list of information sources (including documents reviewed, sites visited, and key informants, assuming they gave permission to be identified)

Disclosure of any conflict of interest by including a signed statement by evaluation team members that attests to a lack of conflict of interest or describes an existing conflict of interest relative to the project being evaluated. Additional annexes can be included at the discretion of the evaluation team and USAID, and in some cases implementing partners, including, if applicable, any Statements of Differences with the evaluation.

Annex 3: Description of the Evaluation Design and Methods

In keeping with the theory-based causal analysis approach, the research used a mixed methods approach that integrated both qualitative as well as quantitative data analysis where such data was available, reliable and informative. The design and methods used were the following:

1. **Desk Review** – The desk review involved collecting all SPA Program related documents that are listed in the Data Sources Annex. The objectives of the desk review was to understand the purpose and objectives of the SPA Program, the numbers and types of PCVs that apply for a SPA project, the guidelines and process of obtaining a SPA grant, the SPA project review and approval system, and review of all SPA project Completion Reports.
2. **Inception Meeting** – After the desk review, an inception meeting was held with SPA program staff to obtain a consensus on the evaluation objectives and the finalize the evaluation design. In addition, some SPA project Completion Reports could not be found and, thus, the SPA Program staff searched and located these project completion reports.
3. **Key Informant Interviews, FGDs, and Online Survey with Stakeholders** – Interview guides were developed and Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted to gain a deeper insight into the design and implementation of the SPA program as well as planning and implementation of SPA projects. KIIs were conducted with SPA Program leadership, SPA Program support staff, donor representative (USAID), PCVs, PCVs Counterpart, and project beneficiaries. Focus Group Discussions were conducted with the SPA Review Committee members and PCVs. See annex of Data Collection Instruments for issues discussed and information obtained during the KIIs and FGDs. For PCVs, an online survey was created and deployed to obtain additional data that were not present in the SPA Completion Reports.
4. **Digitizing SPA Program Data** – All 273 SPA project Application and Completion forms were in hard copy, PDF, or MSWord format. All the information and data from these forms were transferred to a MSExcel spreadsheet, which became the SPA Project database. This Excel database was imported into Version 20 of

SPSS as well as the PCVs online survey, which was matched to the PCVs project data. SPSS was used to conduct complex data transformations and to conduct statistical analyses.

5. **Developed and Illustrated the SPA Program Theory of Change** – Since this evaluation used a theory-based approach, the evaluation team needed to develop the SPA program's Theory of Change because none was found in all the SPA Program documents reviewed during the Desk Review stage of the evaluation. The Theory of Change was developed and illustrated and presented to PC/Georgia for approval to use in this evaluation.
6. **Established a SPA Project Performance Rubric** – In consultation with PC/Georgia's SPA Program staff, the evaluation team developed a SPA Project Performance Rubric to identify "least successful" and "more successful" cases (projects). Using the Performance Rubric, which was based on a set of agreed criteria and standards, the evaluation team reviewed and placed each project into one of the four performance categories: a) poor, b) adequate, c) good, and d) excellent.
7. **Identified Key Factors Related to Project Success** – The evaluation team attempted to identify relevant factors related to project success, rubric categories of "good" and "excellent", researchers examined all KIs, FGDs, and survey data where stakeholders expressed what they thought were key factors that led to project success. The selection of explanatory factors that would be used in the QCA model were based on the following criteria: 1) repetition, most if not all stakeholders mentioned a factor as critical to SPA project performance, 2) operationalizability, the factor could be justifiably determined as present or absent in a case (project), and 3) variance, presence and absence of the factor varied sufficiently across different projects. The number of factors analyzed with QCA should not be too large, thus, the evaluation team selected the 10 factors that met the criteria mentioned above.
8. **Selected Sub-group of Projects from each Performance Rubric category for Qualitative Comparative Analysis** – Approximately 8 SPA projects were selected from each of the four Performance Rubric categories. For the "poor" category, 8 projects were selected that represented the worst of the poor category. For the adequate and good categories, 8 projects were selected that represented the "average", that is, neither the worst or best. And, for the excellent category, 8 projects that represented the best of the best were chosen. This allowed for the greatest variation for analysis.
9. **Conducted QCA to identify combination of causal factors of project success** – the evaluation team used fsQCA software to analyze the crisp set QCA data. The factors selected were based on their level of Consistency primarily but also on their level of Accuracy.
10. **Identification of Causal Recipe for Project Success** – the causal recipe selected was based on the Consistency and Accuracy of the model. Two models fit about equally well, a complex model with 5 factor and a simple model with 2 factors. In consultation with PC/Georgia it was decided that the complex model better represented the "reality" of SPA projects and, thus, the 5 factor "recipe" model was selected.
11. **Conducted Process Tracing to examine QCA Factors within specific cases** – With the 5 causal factors identified, three successful and one unsuccessful SPA projects were selected and the 5 causal factors were examined in each project and how they affected project success or non-success.
12. **Related Causal Recipe for Success within the SPA Theory of Change** – the five combinatorial factors were placed within the SPA Program's Theory of Change to show critical junctures in the project cycle that SPA Program staff and PCVs should pay close attention to to improve the likelihood of project success.

Annex 4: Data Collection Tools

1. Focus Group Discussion Guide for SPA Committee Members

Hello everybody, thank you for finding time for this interview on a Saturday. I appreciate the time you put into this evaluation study and look forward to our discussion. To give you a short overview of the evaluation we are doing. We are a research center of PMCG which is a Tbilisi-based organization. We are evaluating SPA program from 2010 to 2019 and the goal is to see to what extent SPA projects contribute to sustainable capacity building and change in the communities of Georgia. For this, we have studied project documents (proposal forms and completion reports) for all 275 projects implemented in this period, spoke with the Peace Corps and USAID staff involved in program management and administration. Now, we are focusing on volunteers, counterparts and beneficiaries. It has been a very interesting process learning about this program, how it operates and what are the ideas shaping it in the form in which it exists today. We found it especially interesting to delve into individual projects and see broader patterns of challenges encountered by volunteers and successes achieved.

I want to speak to you in order to learn more about the work of the SPA committee, I am interested in the routine process, strengths and weaknesses of the existing arrangement as well as challenges that you may encounter in the process.

To start, I would like to ask each of you to present yourself, noting

- your name
- where you served until your recent departure from Georgia and
- how long you have been on the SPA committee.

Let's go around a virtual circle starting with _____

Committee membership

- 1) In your opinion, what are the most important qualities that a volunteer needs to have in order to be a good fit for the SPA committee?
 - a) In your opinion is the selection process organized in a way to identify and attract these qualities among candidates? What do you think can be improved to make the selection process of volunteers into the committee better?
2. What do you think about Peace Corps' approach to SPA committee's composition (first- and second-year volunteers, EE and IOD volunteers, SPA coordinator)?
 - a) In your opinion what are some of the characteristics of the committee's structure that contribute to its effective functioning?
 - b) What are the characteristics that inhibit the committee's effective functioning?
3. How would you assess the guidance given to you before you started serving on the committee? How useful was the preparatory training?
4. How do you see your role as a SPA committee member? What in your opinion are the primary responsibilities of SPA committee members?

Evaluation process

Let's move on to project evaluations.

- 1) How useful is the evaluation matrix for you when scoring projects?
- 2) Can you describe the process of project assessment during quarterly meetings?
 - a) Once average scores are calculated, is there a discussion about projects afterwards? What is the discussion mainly about? Are there cases when a member changes the score given to a project after the discussion?
- 3) Overall, to what extent do you think this format of project assessment allows the selection of projects with real potential of making sustainable change in communities?
 - a) What needs to be changed to allow for more comprehensive assessment of projects?

Project quality

- 1) What could you say about the general quality of grant proposals that you have reviewed so far? To what extent do submitted projects satisfy good standards of project design?
 - a) Every project receiving at least 18 points usually gets funding, what do you think about this approach?
 - b) Do you think there should be more guidance to help volunteers in designing their projects?
- 2) The proposal form requires volunteers to do some type of community needs assessment. How do you assess if community needs assessment was duly completed for the project? What are some of the indicators you look for in the projects that show that a project is truly addressing a community need?
- 3) What are the key factors you look for in projects to ensure its prospects of sustainability?
 - a) What are some of the common shortcomings in projects that undermine their long-term sustainability?
- 4) In your opinion, what can be changed in the work of the SPA committee to improve sustainability prospects of projects?

Mentorship/consultations

Now I would like to ask you about your mentorship experience as a PCV member of the SPA committee.

- 1) Can you talk about the support you provide to volunteers prior to their submission of applications?
 - a) How often do you receive requests for assistance prior to submission? What are these requests mainly about?
- 2) Even rejected applications are provided feedback and are assigned a committee member for project improvement? Can you talk more about this, what kind of feedback are rejected projects usually given?
- 3) What role does the committee have in monitoring the implementation of SPA projects?
 - a) Do you see any need for this?
- 4) Do you provide any mentorship or assistance to volunteers during project implementation process?
 - a) Do you see need for this?
 - b) What type of mentorship do you provide?

Final question

We used this rubric to categorize projects into four categories. What do you think about these criteria? In your opinion, in which category would most of the projects fall into?

Poor <i>SPA projects that clearly show unsatisfactory functioning or performance on PC criteria</i>	P1. Project was terminated early or not completed (Excluding non-foreseeable causes) (necessary) P2. Less than half of the objectives achieved (necessary) P3. 0 final (actual) beneficiaries or much less than the # of intended (initial) beneficiaries. P4. Sustainability – Neither economic nor managerial sustainability achieved
Adequate <i>SPA projects that clearly show fair performance overall with some troublesome weaknesses on PC criteria</i>	A1. Project was completed with some delay (Excluding non-foreseeable causes) A2. Most or all objectives were achieved A3. # of final (actual) beneficiaries was less than # of intended (initial) beneficiaries A4. Sustainability – At least one of economic and managerial sustainability considered
Good <i>SPA project that clearly show good performance overall; might have a few slight weaknesses on PC criteria but nothing of real consequence</i>	G1. Project was completed on time (or approximately on time) G2. All objectives were achieved (unachievable objectives were modified/adapted) G3. # of final (actual) beneficiaries same or similar to # of intended (initial) beneficiaries G4. All four dimensions of sustainability are considered G5. Partial transition of ownership to the community
Excellent <i>SPA projects that clearly show exemplary performance or very good practices according to PC criteria.</i>	E1. Project was completed on time (approximately) E2. All objectives were achieved, and the project went beyond them towards the goal E3. # of final (actual) beneficiaries exceeds the # of initial (intended) beneficiaries E4. Four dimensions of sustainability are considered (cultural, political, economic, managerial) E5. Project was scaled up and there is a clear and strong indication that further activities were (older projects) or will be (newer projects) implemented beyond the timeframe of the project E6. Partial or full transition of ownership to the community

2. Interview Guide for PCVs

I would like to request your permission to record this interview. This recording will be used solely by me to ensure completeness of interview notes.

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this interview. In the course of the evaluation of the SPA program, we completed the desk review of all SPA projects implemented in Georgia from 2010 through 2019 but that was primarily based on application forms and completion reports. We are interested to take a deeper look at projects now, speak with volunteers themselves and gain a better understanding of the implementation process, main challenges encountered and lessons learned. Please, note that our entire discussion is confidential and any details you share with me will be used only in an anonymized form for the purposes of this evaluation.

Do you have any questions about the evaluation you would like to ask?

Alright, can we start the interview?

Background

- As a PCV you served in _____ community in Georgia. What was your **primary work** as a PCV in your community?
 - What did you consider as your **secondary work** in the community?
- What was your **experience with community projects prior** to your SPA project in _____ community? I don't necessarily mean project management, rather any involvement in project implementation
- Peace Corps provides **PDM training** to volunteers serving in communities. What was your experience of participating in the PDM training?
 - In your opinion, does it provide PCVs with **sufficient knowledge to write** a SPA project grant?
 - Does it provide **sufficient knowledge to implement** and manage a SPA project?
- Was your **counterpart** participating in the **PDM training** as well?
 - Why did you **decide to invite** that particular counterpart?
 - What was his/her **motivation to participate**?
- Do you **remember** if you and your counterpart worked on a **specific project idea during** the PDM training? What was the idea?

Project planning & design

- How did you **decide to implement a project** in addition to your volunteer work in the community?
- How did your SPA project **idea originate**?
 - What were **some of the other project ideas** you had for a SPA grant?
 - [only if relevant] Did you consider any project ideas that **were not focused on your host organization** specifically?
 - Why did you decide to **choose that specific project idea** that you eventually implemented?
- Thinking back, do you think your SPA project **addressed a valid community need**? What makes you think so?
 - What did you do to **identify the most relevant community need** for your SPA project?

- b) In your opinion, **how can volunteers identify a valid community need** for their SPA projects?
- 4) Why did you decide to apply for the **SPA grant specifically** as opposed to other **funding schemes**?
- 5) What are some of the reasons why many volunteers choose not to apply for a SPA grant? What are some of the factors that might **discourage PCVs from applying** for a SPA grant?
 - a) What are some of the factors that **motivate PCVs to apply** for a SPA grant?
 - b) Do you think it's always a **PCV's personal decision** to apply for a SPA grant? What are some of the external factors that influence PCVs' decision?
 - c) In your opinion is the **budget ceiling** a limiting factor for applicants? Did you think it was too low for your project?
- 6) How did you **choose the counterpart** with whom you eventually implemented your project?
 - a) Who were your counterparts for the project? Who was your **primary counterpart**?
 - b) **How did you choose** partners for your project? Who was your primary **partner** organization for the project?
 - c) Please describe any **initial consultations** with project partners
- 7) How did you **obtain community contribution** for your project?
 - a) To what extent was that a **challenge** for you?
- 8) Can you describe the **process of designing the project** for the SPA grant?
 - a) How helpful were the **guidelines and example provided** by the Peace Corps team?
 - b) Were the knowledge and resources gained during PDM helpful in this process? Did you use **PDM resources** when working on the proposal? **PACA** resources?
 - c) What **role did your counterpart** play in the project design process?
 - d) What **support** did you receive from the **SPA committee** throughout the project design process?
 - e) **Who else supported** you in this process? Did you get any help from the **PCV community** in the country?
 - f) If your community had **hosted a PCV before you**, how did his/her work contribute to this process?
- 9) While you were designing your project, do you feel like you were **able to learn and build** on the **experience of other PCVs** who had implemented projects similar to yours? In retrospect, do you think it would have been **useful**?

Project implementation

Now I would like to move on to project implementation

- 1) Once your project was selected, what **feedback** did you receive from the **SPA committee**? Did you **introduce any changes** in the project design based on their recommendations?
 - a) Did you **find the feedback useful** for improving your project?
- 2) What were the **main challenges** for you during project implementation?
 - a) Were these **expected or unexpected**? How were these challenges **addressed**?
 - b) In your opinion, how could these have been **avoided**? Do you think you could have been **warned about** the possibility of such challenges based on previous PCVs' experiences?
 - c) Did any **issues arise** during project implementation regarding **gender** issues or **marginalized** communities?
- 3) What were some of the **challenges** related to managing the **project budget**?
 - a) Were there some **lessons learnt** for you in terms of budgeting and budget management?
 - b) Did the **inflation rate** in Georgia negatively affect project budget and project?
- 4) Did you receive any support from the **SPA committee** during the project **implementation** process?
 - a) Do you think that support from the SPA committee would have been **helpful**?
 - b) **What kind of support** would have been helpful during project implementation?
- 5) Can you describe what was the **role of your counterpart** in project implementation?
 - a) How would you **describe your role** with **respect to the project counterpart**?
 - b) In retrospect, do you think you chose the counterpart **correctly**?
- 6) To what extent did you manage to **engage your community members** in project implementation?
 - a) Where did you **struggle** the most to engage community members? Where was it the **easiest**?
 - b) some PCVs report that community **involvement declines** after the initial phase of the project (ex. reconstruction, setting up technology) did you have a similar experience?
 - c) [only relevant projects] To what extent did you manage to engage **vulnerable groups** of the community (women, youth, minorities etc.)?

Project outcomes & sustainability

- 1) To what extent did the project **achieve expected results**? What was **not achieved** in your project?
 - a) What were some of the **factors that helped you** in achieving results, that we haven't discussed so far?
 - b) What were some of the **hindering factors** we haven't discussed so far?

- 2) In your opinion, what is the **most important outcome** of your project that became or could become the **foundation of your project's sustainability**?
 - a) What could you say about the **capacity building component** of the project? In your opinion, **what capacities** were you able to build in your community?
 - b) Overall, how would you assess **sustainability prospects** of your project?
- 3) Have you been **in touch with the community** after you left Georgia? What do you know about the **outcomes of your project activities**?
 - a) **What changed** in the community after the project?
 - b) Do you know if the community has pursued **other local development activities** since the SPA project ended?
- 4) The SPA handbook distinguishes four types of sustainability: **cultural, political, economic and managerial**. These relate to project's sustainability after a PCV leaves in terms correspondence with cultural values, sociopolitical context, economic resources available and managerial capacity present.
 - a) In your opinion, **which dimension of sustainability** would be the most **challenging** for your project? Why?
- 5) What do you think are some of the good **indicators** of a project's **potential sustainability** at the project application stage?
 - a) Do you think **community contribution** is a valid indicator for measuring potential sustainability of the project?

Recommendations

- 1) Based on your experience, what can be done by the **Peace Corps team** to **improve the sustainability** of SPA projects?
- 2) What can be some of the ways to track sustainability of projects after PCVs leave?
- 3) Do you have any concluding thoughts you would like to mention that we haven't touched upon during the interview?
- 4) [If PCV has not filled the survey] We are also conducting a survey among PCVs to collect more generalizable quantitative data on the SPA program. I would really appreciate your input in this. The survey takes approximately 30 minutes.

3. Interview Guide for PCV Counterparts

[Description of the evaluation and reminder about the content of the project.]

Project planning

- 1) Are you still working/living in the community?
- 2) What is your current role in the [organization/school]?
 - a) What was your position in the [organization/school] at the time when [PCV name] was serving in the community?
 - b) How long had you been working in [school/organization] at the time when [PCV name] was serving in your community?
 - c) Can you describe your involvement in community development at the time? Did you have an experience of implementing community projects?
- 3) What had your experience been of working with Peace Corps volunteers at the time? Was [PCV name] the first volunteer you had worked with?
- 4) What was the nature of your work with [PCV's name] prior to the project?
 - a) How did you see your role with respect to [PCV name] as he/she was serving in your community?
- 5) Why do you think is it that the vast majority of SPA project counterparts are women?
- 6) Did you have a chance to attend Peace Corps' PDM training with [PCV name]?
 - a) How useful was that training, do you think that the training provided you with sufficient knowledge to handle the project?
- 7) How was the idea for your project with [PCV name] born? Can you describe the process?
 - a) Can you describe how the specific need that the project addressed was identified?
 - b) What was community involvement in the identification of the need?
- 8) In your opinion, how relevant was the project to the real needs of the community?
- 9) Can you describe the process of how the project was designed?
 - a) Who was the primary person responsible for designing the project and writing the grant?
 - b) What was your involvement in the grant writing process?
 - c) To what extent was the budget ceiling a limiting factor for your project? Did you think it was too low?

Implementation

- 1) Looking back, how do you see your primary role in the project implementation with respect to the volunteer?
 - a) [prodding question] Do you see yourself as a support to [PCV name] responding to emerging needs or more as an actively involved supervisor?
 - b) What were some of the tasks that were your personal responsibility within the project?
- 2) To what extent were other members of the community involved in the implementation process?
 - a) Please describe their involvement in project implementation
- 3) What were some of the challenges you faced during implementation process?
 - a) How were these challenges addressed?
 - b) Did the inflation rate in Georgia negatively affect project budget and project accomplishments?
 - c) Did any issues arise during project implementation regarding gender issues or marginalized communities?
- 4) [Only when relevant] How did you select/recruit project beneficiaries? What were some of the procedures that you followed in selecting participants?
 - a) What were some of the challenges in working with beneficiaries during project implementation?
 - b) [prodding question] To what extent did they show interest to take part in the project? Did you manage to keep them engaged until the end of the project?

Outcomes & sustainability

- 1) Did the project have any activities beyond the project's initial timeframe, after PCV had already left the community?
 - a) Was there a specific person assigned to the project to take on the PCV's role in the project?
- 2) To what extent did the project achieve desired outcomes?
 - a) What could not be achieved? What was the reason behind this?
 - b) Were there any unexpected/unintended outcomes? These can be both, positive and negative
- 3) What could you say about the capacity building component of the project, in your opinion what capacities were built in the community?
- 4) How did the project influence you personally? Did it provide any valuable capacity building you were able to use in your subsequent professional activities? How?
- 5) In your opinion, what is the most important outcome of your project that could become/became the foundation of the project's sustainability?
- 6) If this SPA project had not been implemented by the PCV, do you think this outcome would still have occurred in the community? How?
- 7) In your opinion, what can be done to improve the sustainability of PCVs' SPA projects?
 - a) What do you think are some of the good indicators of a project's potential sustainability at the project application stage that the Peace Corps team can pay attention to?

4. Interview Guide for previous SPA Coordinators

- 1) In your opinion what distinguishes SPA program from other funding schemes of the Peace Corps?
- 2) How do you see the role of SPA in PCVs' work for community development?
 - a) How do you see the interaction between SPA and PCVs' primary work in communities?
 - b) I want to ask about the PCVs who apply for the SPA programs. Not all PCVs apply for the SPA grant, in your opinion what distinguishes PCVs who implement a SPA project or does anything distinguish them from other PCVs?
- 3) Are there any priorities within SPA when it comes to project funding? Have these changed over the years?
 - a) What are current limitations on what SPA projects should be like?
 - b) Do you think there should be further limitations on projects to ensure that they meet SPA goals?
- 4) What is your perspective on projects that aim to generate income for communities, like social enterprises and such? Do you think SPA is well-equipped to assess such applications and provide due support during implementation?
- 5) How do you see the role of the SPA committee in the program? What is the committee's main function?
 - a) Has the role of the committee shifted over time?
 - b) Where do you see the committee's biggest value in the SPA program? Where do you think the role of the committee should go in the future?
 - c) Do you think the committee should play a bigger role in supporting the implementation of projects?
- 6) I would like to ask about the project selection process, as I know, this process changed somewhat, what is your perspective on the change in the procedures overtime?
 - a) Do you think further changes are necessary?

- 7) In your opinion, how well do PCVs identify true community needs with their projects?
 - a) Do you think SPA committee and the Peace Corps staff are able to assess if a need is truly community-driven?
- 8) There are some repetitive project ideas in the SPA program (such as English cabinets), what is your perspective on this? Why do you think are these so common?
 - a) Do you think the experience of previous similar projects is helping new PCVs to better design and implement these projects?
- 9) PCVs face various challenges throughout the project implementation process, did you get approached by PCVs with these problems?
 - a) What were these problems primarily about? What do you think are the main reasons behind these issues? How can these be prevented?
 - b) What were PCVs' main challenges in their work with counterparts during project implementation?
 - c) What type of support do you provide in resolving these issues?
 - d) Do you think there is need for more support to PCVs during project implementation?
- 10) Do you think new generations of volunteers repeat similar mistakes in their SPA projects? Do you see any transfer of knowledge between PCVs in this regard?
 - a) Do you see any continuity between the SPA projects of PCVs serving in the same community?
- 11) Overall, how would you assess sustainability of SPA projects?
 - a) What are the main challenges to sustainability?
 - b) Do you think there are ways for the Peace Corps to better track sustainability of projects?
 - c) How can sustainability be improved at the project selection stage?

5. Interview Guide for USAID (donor) Representative

- 1) How long have you been involved with the SPA Program?
- 2) Can you describe your role in the SPA program?
- 3) The SPA Program is an intervention to fulfill the US govt's strategy of "Journey to Self-Reliance" among countries where USAID has a mission. How do you see unique role of SPA program in this strategy?
- 4) Over the past 10 years, most SPA projects have been in Education (47%) and Youth Development (24%), followed by Community Economic Development (13%), with few in health, NGO development, ICT and other sectors. Do you think this represents appropriate focus of the program for local capacity building?
- 5) Where do you see major benefits and challenges of a small community grants program like SPA?
- 6) Due to the sheer number of small projects, it's difficult to track the impact and sustainability of SPA projects in communities. To what degree do you think SPA Program is able to track the impact and sustainability of **its contribution to development and capacity building in communities**?
 - a) Do you think a better mechanism for continuous tracking of sustainability is necessary? How feasible do you think it would be?
 - b) What improvements in measurement and reporting would you suggest?
- 7) Over the past 10 years, to what extent does USAID mission in Georgia feel the **SPA Program has achieved the self-reliance goals and objectives related to capacity building**?
- 8) How do you see the evolvement of SPA program in the future?

6. Interview Guide for PCVs / Counterpart involved in Camp Projects

I would like to request your permission to record this interview. This recording will be used solely by me to ensure completeness of interview notes.

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this interview. In the course of the evaluation of the SPA program, we completed the desk review of all SPA projects implemented in Georgia from 2010 through 2019 but that was primarily based on application forms and completion reports. We are interested to take a deeper look at projects now, speak with volunteers themselves and gain a better understanding of the implementation process, main challenges encountered and lessons learned. Please, note that our entire discussion is confidential and any details you share with me will be used only in an anonymized form for the purposes of this evaluation.

Do you have any questions about the evaluation you would like to ask?

Alright, can we start the interview?

Background

- 1) In which community did you serve in Georgia?
- 2) Can you briefly describe what was your primary work as a PCV in your community?
 - a) What did you consider as your secondary work in the community?
- 3) What was your experience with community projects prior to your SPA project? (I don't necessarily mean project management, rather any involvement in project implementation.)
- 4) Peace Corps provides PDM training to volunteers serving in communities. What was your experience of participating in the PDM training? In your opinion, does it provide PCVs with sufficient knowledge to plan and implement a community project?

Project planning & design

- 5) How did you decide to implement a project in addition to your volunteer work in the community?
- 6) The CAMP [name] existed well before [year], how did you make the decision to work on this project?
- 7) Can you elaborate more, why you chose to implement a more widescale project going beyond your community?
 - a) Did you also consider some of the other project ideas for a SPA grant?
- 8) Thinking back, do you think your SPA project addressed a valid need of a wider community in Georgia? What makes you think so?
 - a) Can you talk more about what measures you took to ensure that the camp topic was truly relevant to the existing needs of the Georgian communities?
 - b) In your opinion, how can volunteers identify a valid community need for their SPA projects?
- 9) Why did you decide to apply for the SPA grant specifically?
 - a) Why do you think many volunteers choose not to apply for a SPA grant?
 - b) What are some of the factors that motivate PCVs to apply for a SPA grant?
 - c) Do you think it's always a PCV's personal decision to apply for a SPA grant? What are some of the external factors that influence PCVs' decision?
 - d) What are some of the factors that might discourage PCVs from applying for a SPA grant?
 - e) In your opinion is the budget ceiling a limiting factor for applicants? Did you think it was too low for your project?

I assume the process of designing this particular project must have been a little bit different compared to other SPA grants, since you weren't developing the idea from scratch. Therefore, I'd like learn more about to what extent did you follow experience of previous generations in the process and where did you make adjustment to ensure that the project deserved SPA funding once again.

- 10) [If relevant] What was the composition of the camp committee? (First year PCVs, second year PCVs, representatives of partner organizations)
 - a) Who recruited PCVs for committee membership?
 - b) Who do you consider to be your primary counterpart(s) in the project?
- 11) How did you choose the partner for your project?
 - a) Please describe any initial consultations with project partners
 - b) Do you think the decision to choose this organization as the partner was correct?
- 12) How did you obtain community contribution for your project?
 - a) To what extent was that a challenge for you?
 - b) Could you elaborate more on identifying potential counselors and counterpart
- 13) Can you describe the process of designing the project for the SPA grant?
 - a) What role did other PCVs (committee members) play in this process?
 - b) Who else supported you in this process?
 - c) What support did you receive from the SPA committee throughout the project design process?
 - d) Were the knowledge and resources gained during PDM helpful in this process? Did you use PDM resources when working on the proposal? PACA resources?
- 14) What support did you receive from the SPA committee throughout the project design process?
 - a) Did you submit your project for review before final submission?

Project implementation

Now I would like to move on to project implementation

- 1) Once your project was selected, what feedback did you receive from the SPA committee? Did you introduce any changes in the project design based on their recommendations?
 - a) How useful was the feedback for improving your project?
- 2) What were the main challenges for you during project implementation?
 - a) Were these expected or unexpected? How were these challenges addressed?
 - b) In your opinion, how could these have been avoided?

- 3) Did you have any challenges in managing the project budget?
 - a) Did the inflation rate in Georgia negatively affect project budget and project?
- 4) Did you receive any support from the SPA committee during the project implementation process?
 - a) Do you think that support from the SPA committee would have been helpful?
 - b) What kind of support would have been helpful during project implementation?
- 5) Please describe how were the roles distributed during project implementation process?
 - a) What were some of the tasks that were undertaken by other PCVs?
 - b) What was the role of your counterpart from the partner organization?
 - c) Did you have counselors involved in the implementation process from early on?
- 6) To what extent were the experiences of past Camps in Georgia useful for you in the implementation of the project?
 - a) To what extent did you use materials created in previous years?
 - b) To what extent did you use Information about logistical issues (venues, vendors etc.)
- 7) To what extent did you manage to have outreach into different regions of the country?
 - a) What was the procedure for recruiting campers?
 - b) To what extent did you manage to engage vulnerable groups?

Project outcomes

- 1) To what extent did the project achieve expected results?
 - a) What was not achieved in your project?
 - b) What were some of the important enabling factors that contributed to the achievement of results we haven't discussed so far?
 - c) What were some of the hindering factors we haven't discussed so far?
- 2) What could you say about the capacity building component of the project? In your opinion, what capacities were you able to build through your project?
 - a) Did you have any follow up activities designed for camp alumni?
- 3) Have you been in touch with your partner organization after you left Georgia? What do you know about the outcomes of your project activities?
 - a) Do you know if the organization has pursued other local development activities since the SPA project ended?
- 4) Have you been in touch with the beneficiaries of your project? What do you know about the influence of your project on their lives?

Sustainability

- 1) In your opinion, what is the most important outcome of your project that could become the foundation of project's sustainability?
- 2) In recent years PC Georgia moved towards the approach that PCVs' projects should be more community-focused, while large scale projects, such as national camps can be taken over by local partner organizations. What are your thoughts on this matter?
 - a) What were some of the actions [name] camp took to ensure long-term sustainability?
 - b) Do you think it's feasible to fully transition camps from PCV run committees to local organizations?
- 3) What do you think are some of the good indicators of a project's potential sustainability at the project application stage?
 - a) Do you think community contribution is a valid indicator for measuring potential sustainability of the project?

Recommendations

- 1) Based on your experience, what can be done by the Peace Corps team to improve the sustainability of SPA projects?
 - a) What can be done to improve the sustainability of camps specifically?
- 2) What can be some of the ways to track sustainability of projects after PCVs leave
- 3) Do you have any concluding thoughts you would like to mention that we haven't touched upon during the interview?
- 4) [If PCV has not filled the survey] We are also conducting a survey among PCVs to collect more generalizable quantitative data on the SPA program. I would really appreciate your input in this. The survey takes approximately 30 minutes?

7. PCV Online Survey Questionnaire

Dear Peace Corps volunteers,
 Peace Corps Georgia is conducting a retrospective impact evaluation of the Small Projects Assistance (SPA) Program in Georgia from 2010 to 2019. The goal of this evaluation is to understand what changes occurred in the

communities because of SPA projects and what were the major factors that either enabled or challenged the implementation process so that future SPA projects can be improved.

With this survey the evaluation team intends to enrich the information already available in project reports in order to gain additional insights from PCVs. This survey asks questions about you, the SPA project, your counterpart, and the community where the SPA project was implemented. It will require approximately 35 – 40 minutes of your time to complete.

Your input is crucial and any information you provide will be used solely for the purposes of this evaluation. If you decide to participate in this survey, we would appreciate your being as candid as possible. This is a confidential survey and, thus, all responses will be held in complete confidentiality by the evaluation team. The survey includes some open-ended questions, and with your consent, we may include some comments in our final report.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey and assisting us to provide Peace Corps Georgia a more insightful SPA Program evaluation.

Sincerely,
PMCG evaluation team

Consent

1. I have been informed about the purpose of this survey, and the uses of the data I will provide, and **I hereby consent to participate** in this survey ____ Yes ____ No (end survey)
2. I give **my consent for PMCG to include any comments** I provide in this survey as quotes in the final evaluation report. ____ Yes ____ No

Your Background

We would like to ask you questions about yourself when you served as a PCV in Georgia.

3. **Name:** Please provide the First and Last name you used when you were a PCV in Georgia _____
4. What **years** did you serve in Peace Corps Georgia? _____
 3. At what age did you begin your PCV assignment in Georgia? _____
5. **Thinking back**, would you agree or disagree with the following statements about yourself **when you were a PCV in Georgia**:
 - a. I was a self-starter who could self-manage Mostly me / Mostly not me
 - b. I was a highly creative problem solver Mostly me / Mostly not me
 - c. I accomplished important things with limited resources Mostly me / Mostly not me
 - d. I embraced ambiguity Mostly me / Mostly not me
 - e. I was a great communicator Mostly me / Mostly not me
 - f. I thrived on risk and adventure Mostly me / Mostly not me
 - g. I was not afraid of failure Mostly me / Mostly not me
6. Did you have any previous experience with organizing, or being involved in, community development initiatives prior to your PCV assignment in Georgia? None, Some, a Lot
7. Did you have any previous experience with planning and implementing small projects prior to your PCV assignment in Georgia? None, Some, a lot

Your SPA Project

We would like to know more about the SPA project you worked on when you were a PCV in Georgia. If you were involved with two or more SPA projects, please refer to the first SPA project you were involved to answer these questions.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experiences with the SPA project as a PCV:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree not disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
8. When writing the SPA grant, I felt I had enough knowledge and qualification for designing a SPA project.					
9. Upon deciding to apply for a SPA grant, I was provided sufficient support and guidance from PC Georgia in designing the project.					
10. The community was actively involved in identifying the need/problem before the project was designed.					
11. The community was actively involved in designing the project					
12. I was given sufficient flexibility, by PC Georgia, to design a SPA project I thought was needed in my community					
13. I was given sufficient flexibility, by PC Georgia, to revise the original project plan during implementation in order to adapt it to existing reality					
14. I was able to learn from experiences of other PCVs' who had implemented Spa projects similar to mine					
15. The project I implemented built on or was an extension of a previous initiative/project in the community					
16. The project was sensitive to gender issues during the planning and implementation					

17. According to Peace Corps' handbook, Roles of the Volunteer (2012), there are six roles a PCV can take on. Please select a primary and a secondary role you filled in your SPA project.

Primary

Secondary

Learner

Trainer

Co-Facilitator

Change Agent

Project Co-Planner

Mentor

Your Counterpart

For each SPA project the PCV must have a Counterpart who works with the PCV to design and implement the project. We would like to know more about your counterpart.

18. How was your counterpart identified for your SPA project? Describe why you decided to involve them in the project as a counterpart.

19. How many counterparts did you have

20. Gender of counterparts

21. What was their main role?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

22. How actively was the project counterpart engaged in project implementation?

23. My project counterpart was involved with community development activities before becoming involved with my SPA project?

24. My counterpart was "well known and influential" in the community

25. Just prior, or during, the implementation of the project, did your counterpart hold an official position in the community? If so, what? _____

26. What were two major challenges of working with your project counterpart?

27. What were two major benefits of working with the project counterpart?

28. Three adjectives

Previous volunteers who served in my community – contact

The Community

29. What were significant community-related factors you believe influenced, both positively and negatively, the SPA project?

30. Did any minority, or marginalized, group benefit from the project? If yes, who and how?

31. Do you think the community felt ownership of the project upon its completion?
32. How do you know this?
Why did they feel ownership?
33. To what degree were local leaders involved in project implementation? Who specifically (govt, school, Etc.)?
34. Strong stakeholders working on community development

Concluding Thoughts

35. What do you think is the greatest accomplishment of the project that is likely to be sustained in the community?
36. What was the major challenge you had to confront during the project implementation?
37. Do you know of any unintended outcomes/impacts of your project, whether positive or negative, or both?
38. If given the chance to redo your SPA project, what would you change?
39. In your opinion what can PC Georgia do to improve the SPA program so that projects meaningfully impact communities?
40. What would you recommend to future PCVs wishing to implement a SPA project?
41. From 2010 to 2019, only a small proportion, about ranging from 25% to 35%, of PCVs implemented a SPA project. What do you think are the primary characteristics that distinguish PCVs who do and those PCVs who do not become involved in the SPA Program?

One Last Question

In about one month, PMCG will be selecting approximately 30 SPA projects for a more detailed analysis. If your project is selected, would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview, most likely via Skype?

I am willing to participate in a follow-up interview ____Yes ____ No

AGAIN, THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Annex 5: Information and Data Sources

List of Reviewed Documents

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Annual Report 2017 | 8. SPA Proposal Evaluation Rubric |
| 2. Annual Report 2018 | 9. USAID FY2020 Georgia Country Roadmap |
| 3. FY18 SPA Year End Report | 10. Small Grants Handbook Georgia |
| 4. FY19 SPA Year End Report | 11. Roles of the Volunteer |
| 5. Grant Application Form | 12. PC/Georgia Volunteer Handbook |
| 6. Small Grants Handbook Georgia | 13. USAID Journey to Self-Reliance |
| 7. SPA Performance Evaluation FY13 – FY17 | |