

EVALUATION SUMMARY



Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of Policy and Evaluation

Impact of International Professional Exchanges on a U.S. Community: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the overall impact that international professional exchange programs have on American volunteers who host or meet with foreign exchange visitors. The evaluation focused on the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor, Community Connections and Sister Cities Programs conducted in the Greater Philadelphia area.

Key Findings

➤ Impact on the Individual Host

- 94% of U.S. host/resource respondents reported having "basic to advanced knowledge" about the culture and country of the foreign visitors *immediately after* the hosting experience, compared to 75% *before* the experience.
- 80% reported that the hosting experience allows them to share U.S. values and beliefs with foreigners.
- 79% reported the experience increases their interest in international events and news.

➤ Impact on the Hosts'/Resources' Family, Friends, Colleagues and Community

- 86% of respondents shared information about their hosting experience with family, friends and/or colleagues, and as a result, family/friends (72%) and colleagues (67%) developed a greater appreciation of foreign visitors and countries.
- 71% reported that hosting allows them to volunteer their time and resources to their community.
- 68% of colleagues and 54% of family/friends participated in conversations with foreign exchange visitors and became directly involved in the hosting experience.

➤ Developing and Sustaining International Relationships

- 97% of respondents reported the hosting experience promotes mutual understanding among Americans and foreigners.
- 87% reported the hosting experience increases their appreciation of foreign exchange visitors and countries.
- 47% of all respondents have maintained contact with the foreign exchange visitors they hosted.

➤ U.S. Foreign Policy and Department of State Involvement

- 82% of respondents reported that hosting promotes peaceful relations between the United States and other countries.
- For every dollar allocated in Fiscal Year 2001 by the State Department to support these exchange programs, an additional \$2.64 was generated by the Philadelphia hosts/resources in monetary and in-kind contributions. *This \$1.00 to \$2.64 ratio is the most conservative baseline calculation.*

Project Information: T.E. Systems, Inc. (TES) of Falls Church, Virginia conducted the evaluation from September 2001 to March 2003, in collaboration with the Department of State and the International Visitors Council (IVC) of Philadelphia. In June and July of 2002, a survey was completed by 584 of 1,365 IVC of Philadelphia hosts/resources, resulting in a 47% response rate. In addition, TES conducted 28 interviews and five focus groups with program administrators and hosts/resources.

Program Information: International professional exchange programs bring together foreign exchange visitors with their professional counterparts in the United States for opportunities to exchange information, knowledge, practices and experiences, as well as for training or internship experiences. These exchanges also allow time for visitors to spend time in the homes of American hosts to enhance their personal and cultural experiences. These exchanges are designed to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and people of other countries. Program information can be found at <http://exchanges.state.gov>.

Contact Information: For more information regarding this evaluation, or to request a copy of the 200-page, two-volume report, please contact the Office of Policy and Evaluation at (202) 632-6325, email ecaevaluation@state.gov, or by mail at State Annex 5, 2200 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20522-0505. Additional program information may be found at <http://exchanges.state.gov>.