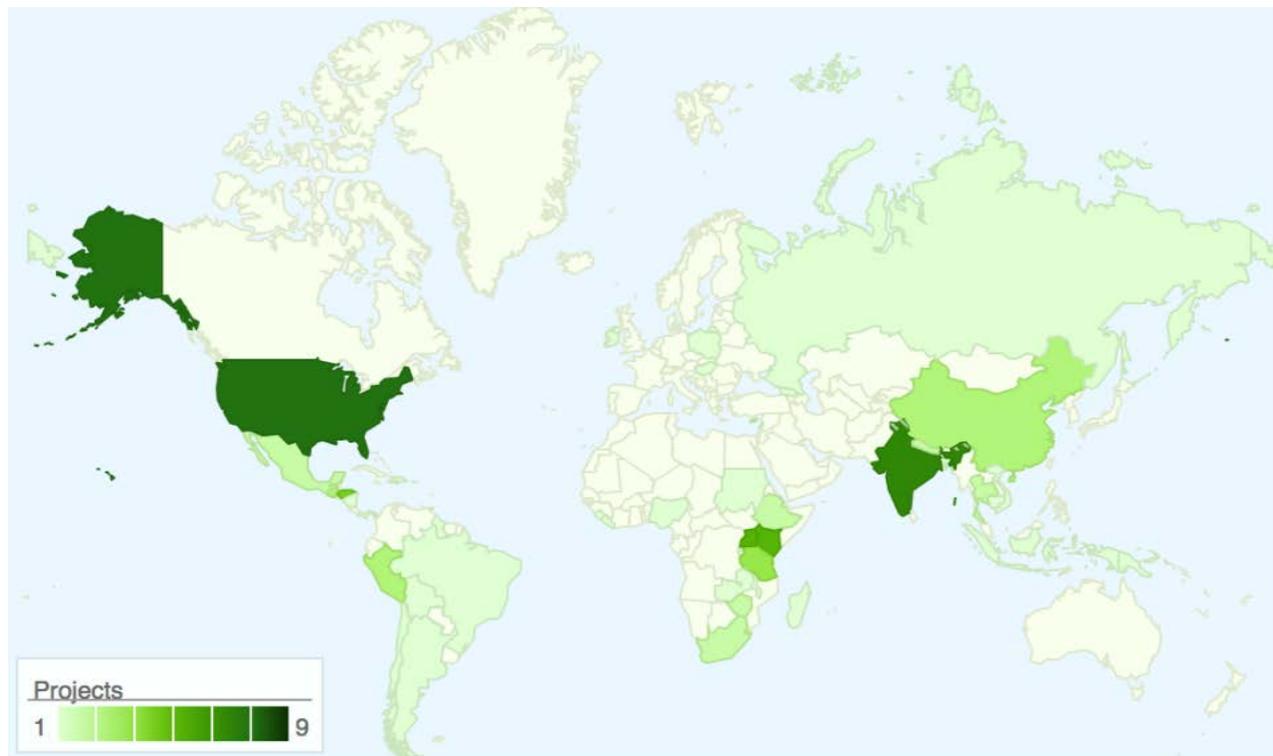


Supporting Successful Project Implementation: A Study of the Projects for Peace 2009 Cohort

A Projects for Peace Research Project

In partnership with the Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Middlebury College



2009 Cohort Projects

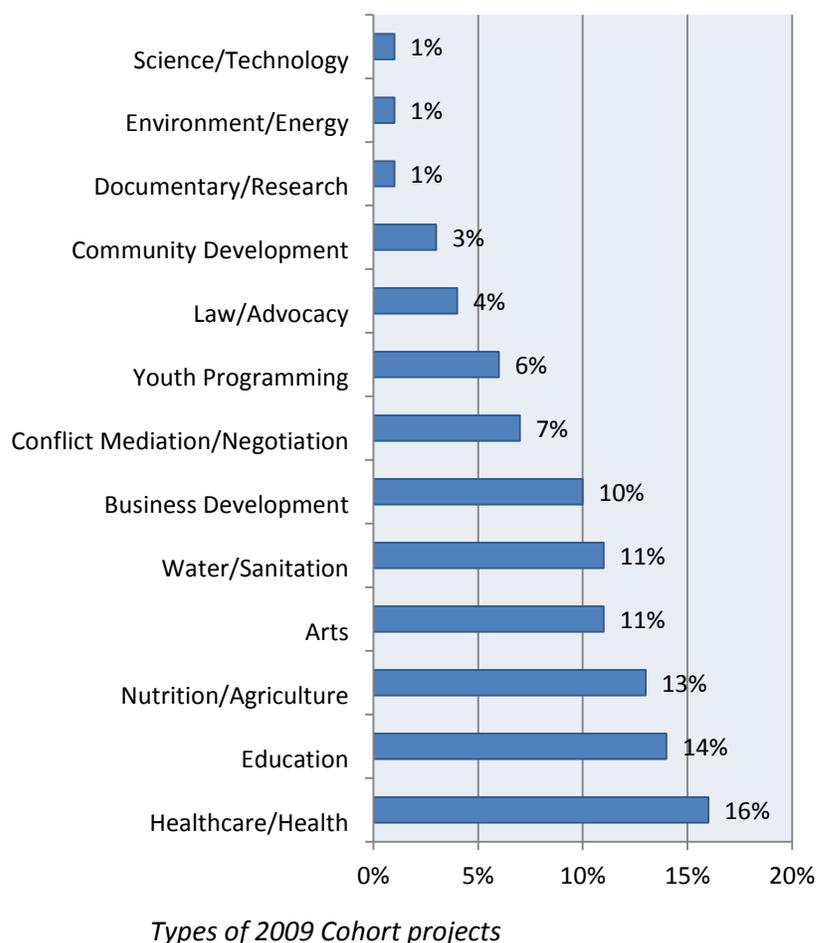
This past year, the Projects for Peace and the Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Middlebury College conducted a research study of the 2009 cohort of the Projects for Peace. This cohort – 175 students comprising 98 teams – travelled to 51 countries to conduct their projects (see map above). The projects, characteristic of the over 900 projects funded by the Projects for Peace to-date, spanned a number of key areas: from Science and Technology to the Arts, from Law and Advocacy to Healthcare and Health. Nearly 75% of the projects focused on either Healthcare/Health, Education, Nutrition/Agriculture, Arts, Water/Sanitation, or Business Development. While most of these projects served groups of fewer than 100 people directly (65%), a sizable number

of projects worked directly with more than 100 individuals (35%). Almost a quarter of projects specifically targeted women, and many worked primarily with children and youth. Suffice it to say, the 2009 cohort consisted of an exciting portfolio of projects.

The Question

This research study was primarily concerned with the question: *What contributes to the successful implementation of the Projects for Peace projects?* A student team that accomplished its

“original or modified goals” within the “original or modified timeframe” was seen as having successfully implemented their project. Seeing as virtually all student teams encounter a plethora of anticipated and unanticipated challenges to implementation, it is a considerable achievement to successfully implement a project. The research team had many ideas as to what could be contributing to projects being successfully implemented: the country in which the project took place, the number of students in a team, or whether the students could speak the local language, for example. To answer this question the research team conducted a mixed-methods study which included both interviewing students and conducting statistical analysis of the 98 projects.



Key Findings

Through 13 in-depth interviews, students described key project attributes that were necessary to “get it done” – some of which they learned the importance of by not having included. In particular, they discussed the importance of having an understanding of the local context, engaging with the local community, limiting the scope of their projects, communicating effectively, and obtaining project assistance. When looking at all 98 projects from the 2009 cohort, there was variation in terms of whether the projects incorporated these attributes. For example, some student teams actively worked with local organizations, while others did not; some projects had team members who were fluent in the local language, while others did not. The research team therefore statistically tested these five attributes to determine if there was evidence to say that these attributes contributed to projects being successfully implemented.

The research team found convincing statistical evidence that student teams were more likely to successfully implemented their projects if they:

1. Demonstrated an understanding of the local context
2. Engaged the local community, and
3. Limited the scope of their projects

The research team tested the other attributes as well, and were unable to find statistical evidence to support the idea that they increase the likelihood of successfully implementing a project when looking at the 2009 cohort. For example, the research team did not find statistical evidence that student teams need to have a team member who is fluent in the local language to successfully implement their project.

Overall, our findings help us understand what attributes to focus on for future projects. By taking these findings into account, we hope to increase the likelihood that student teams will be able to successfully implement their projects.

To obtain a copy of the full report, please email Elana Dean at edean@middlebury.edu