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Into the World We Go, the Peace Corps Program as a Facet of America-Ghana Relations

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“Certainly, I owe this gift to the boy Peace Corps Larry Grobel, who helped me to discover an attribute that would later give me my livelihood from 1982 after I had lost my job at the Ghana News Agency as an editor. May God bless the boy wherever he may be and all those who fostered the Peace Corps concept. Without their vision, I would be selling chains in the streets in Accra.”

After Ghana had attained its independence in 1957, Nkrumah’s greatest domestic challenge became the transformation of the Ghanaian educational system as a tool towards modernizing the newly independent country. Having spent many years under colonial rule, little attention had been paid to the Ghanaian education system resulting in only a five percent literacy rate in 1957 when Ghana attained its independence. Upon assuming power, Nkrumah developed a Five-Year Plan which sought to ensure self-sufficiency in Ghana through universal education, a tool of a modernized nation. To enhance the ambition of making Ghana self-sufficient, the education sector had a role to play despite the major challenges facing the education system of the new country. Ghana sought to revise its educational system to remove incorrect information guided by colonial policies as it sought to achieve modernization. Nkrumah envisaged making elementary education free to allow all Ghanaians to have access since mass education is a tool towards modernization. Built on the British system of education, Ghana’s pre-tertiary system of education consisted of primary, secondary, and high school. Ironically, Nkrumah’s program for self-sufficiency and independence relied on the dependence on other postcolonial powers—creating outside relationships, especially with Americans, whom Nkrumah did not particularly trust. The United States’ establishment of the Peace Corps program coincided with Ghana’s need for more teachers.

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2 Ghana, Information Services Department. Ghana Reborn. (New York, 1966), 64.


4 Archie S. Long to Ambassador, “Conference of Independent African States: Final Resolutions,” 23 April 1958, box 1, Ghana, General Records, 1956-1958, RG 84, Foreign Service Posts of State Department, National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD [hereafter record group and NARA].

as an attempt to modernize following Nkrumah’s declaration of free universal basic education in 1961.\textsuperscript{6}

Nkrumah initially expressed his reservation towards American foreign policy, especially in Africa despite having faith that America could assist in Ghana’s aim of achieving modernization. Being aware of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and how it operates in fighting against some “Third World” leaders, Nkrumah became skeptical because he thought the volunteers were CIA partners although Americans believed the program had been instituted to assist developing countries in their bid towards modernization.\textsuperscript{7} Even in Washington, Nkrumah had been identified as a communist associate of which the \textit{New York Times} editorial on July 16 published Senator Dodd of Connecticut’s statement that Ghana is the “First Soviet Satellite in Africa.”\textsuperscript{8} Despite Nkrumah’s suspicion about the Peace Corps program, he later accepted the Peace Corps program, advised Ghanaians to accept the program, and requested for volunteer teachers by the commencement of the school term in September. Nkrumah’s desire to modernize Ghana sustained his relations with America despite his skepticism about the United States.\textsuperscript{9} Along the line, the Peace Corps program faced the challenge of the fidelity approach of curriculum implementation in the Ghanaian education system. Such a centralized approach made it difficult for the volunteers to implement innovations to easily facilitate the modernization of Ghana since they were obliged to conform to the central curriculum which the Ghanaian government developed. Despite some challenges the program faced, the development of the project became successful through personal relationships between Nkrumah and John F Kennedy, rather than relationships driven solely by ideology or necessarily economics. President Kennedy was committed to supporting Ghana to modernize its education system despite Congress’ criticisms about Nkrumah’s ideology as a communist. The American dream of helping all people to achieve a better life shaped their foreign policies. On the other hand, the Ghanaians culture of being friendly and the willingness to corporate while doing it themselves shaped Ghana-American relations.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{6}Amin. “The perils of missionary diplomacy. 40.
\textsuperscript{9}Amin. “The perils of missionary diplomacy, 35.
\textsuperscript{10}Africa, TRYBE. “First Impressions of Ghana,” 02 March 2019, \url{https://trybe.one/first-impressions-of-ghana/}
The United States Peace Corps program contributed immensely to modernizing Ghana’s education system amid suspicion which surrounded America-Ghana foreign policy. This chapter seeks to examine the contributions of the United States in developing the Ghanaian education system together with the challenges the United States and its volunteers faced in their support towards transforming the Ghanaian education system as a tool towards modernizing the new nation. The study would provide an understanding of the contributions of the Peace Corps program and United States organizations as a facet of United States-Ghana relations in building up the newly independent nation through the development of Ghana’s education.

**Colonial System of Education in Ghana**

Unlike other regions in Africa where missionaries established the first European form of schools, large European trading companies established the first Western form of schools that existed in Ghana. Before 1951, Ghana had achieved a minimum level of internal self-government and Britain controlled the educational system of the country. Schools were not evenly distributed within the nation since the educational system was at the minimum level with about 3,000 schools catering to about 312,000 pupils. Missionary organizations operated the available schools without any governmental funds.\(^{11}\) Although educational activities expanded from the beginning of the twentieth century, the general policies that guided educational development remained static.\(^{12}\) From 1940, the educational sector experienced rapid growth. The demand for primary education in the southern region of Ghana led to the creation of numerous non-aided primary schools in the South. The local communities established these primary schools of which most lacked equipment and were staffed with untrained teachers.\(^{13}\) By 1945, the number of unaided schools had increased to 2,000 with an enrolment of about 105,000 pupils. The number of unaided schools and pupils in such schools outnumbered the government’s assisted schools and pupils in the government-assisted schools. The Educational Department’s reports in 1951 and 1952 indicate the Colony and Ashanti areas had high numbers in terms of the number of schools and pupils enrolled in the primary, middle, secondary, teacher training, and technical schools compared to the Northern Territories.\(^{14}\)

\(^{12}\)George. *Education in Ghana*, 23.
\(^{13}\)George. *Education in Ghana*, 26.
\(^{14}\)George. *Education in Ghana*, 32-33.
The colonial education curriculum in Ghana sought to satisfy the European administrators who wanted to train personnel for their economic and administrative gains. The colonial educational system was not structured to benefit Ghanaians and Ghana interest. Colonial authority prioritized its interest against Ghanaian interest as it implemented an educational system meant to indoctrinate Ghanaians against modernizing Ghana. During the colonial days, formal education segregated boys and girls and minimize the idea of universal education. Girls were seen as family keepers and mainly focused on family and home care related subjects while boys were prepared to take up white color jobs. Also, the fidelity form of curriculum implementation which was instituted during the colonial days hindered educational innovations and modernization. Teachers were restricted to the implementation of the colonial government curriculum without modification to suit the Ghanaian interest, promote nationalism, and modernize the colony.  

**Educational System in the Days of Nkrumah**

From 1951, the achievement of internal self-governance in Ghana led to the emergence of a new African government in the British colony with an increment in the number of Ghanaians in the legislative and executive council. The new government under the leadership of Nkrumah considered education as the greatest domestic challenge before the modernization of Ghana. Built on the British system of education, Ghana’s pre-tertiary system of education consisted of primary, secondary, and high school. Moreover, colonial schools had been restricted to some areas in Ghana. Nkrumah moved to up and the colonial system of education; he insisted that every individual must be entitled to an education that brings holistic changes in a nation. Nkrumah envisioned Africanizing and removing colonial practices and expanding the educational system to many regions to allow all Ghanaians at school-going age to be enrolled.

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17Archie S. Long to Ambassador, “Conference of Independent African States: Final Resolutions,” 23 April 1958, box 1, Ghana, General Records, 1956-1958, RG 84, Foreign Service Posts of State Department, National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD [hereafter record group and NARA].
President Nkrumah admired the American education system which he had studied for both his Bachelor’s and Master's degrees. As a nationalist leader and an individual interested in continental leadership and nationalist activities, he preferred the United States to the British as an academic center. He believed the United States educational system develops people holistically to promote national interest. Nkrumah believed the problem of subsistence could be more manageable and allow both the rich and poor to have access to education. Moreover, the United States had rebelled against Britain and established a quality education system that he envisaged Ghana would model. Great Africans such as Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, who had arisen as great nationalists, had also gone through the American education system.\textsuperscript{18}

Nkrumah's educational aim for Ghana began to manifest during his days at the University of Pennsylvania. He believed the activities of every educational system should be tailored to match the life of the people intended for as education seeks to equip and meet the needs and interests of both citizens and nations. This vision became his long-term educational policy to shape the newly independent country between 1957-1966 as he modernized the new country.\textsuperscript{19} For Nkrumah, the Ghanaian education system should develop Ghanaians into the highest and most beneficial relationship with the Ghanaian culture and philosophy of the society in which they find themselves as a way to shape them for a better future. He wanted to modernize the Ghanaian education system and provide universal education to all Ghanaians by making education accessible and free for all school-going children in Ghana. The objective of making education accessible to all prompted Nkrumah to implement the 1961 Act (Act 87) to ensure free universal primary education in Ghana.

\textsuperscript{19}University of Pennsylvania. “Challenges to Education War and Post-War,” Thirtieth 184 Annual Schoolmen’s Week Proceedings. (University of Pennsylvania: Philadelphia, 1943), 89.
He is reported to have indicated during a speech that the circumstances in Ghana have made it such that the mere acquisition of knowledge does not impress Ghanaians. Rather, the application of the knowledge to obtain practical and positive outputs for the benefit of the nation makes knowledge impressive. Nkrumah was exalting the role of science as he prioritized the acquisition and application of knowledge for the benefit of all, what science seeks to achieve, as the thrust of Ghana’s education system. Nkrumah envisaged developing the education system that would nurture Ghanaians to impact society and their lives. Nkrumah believed the development of University education seeks not to only produce engineers, architectures, town planners, and builders, but plays a key role in contributing to the development of Ghana. Nkrumah’s central goal became empowering and developing Ghanaians and Africans with the needed skills and necessary information to manage their affairs. Nkrumah believed education is the basics for the creation of Pan-Africanism and a nation-state.20

During the election campaign, Nkrumah promised Ghanaians that he would expand the educational opportunities amid the great demand for school facilities in Ghana. He envisioned change and development in Ghana. He believed education could be the primary means to achieve that goal.21 To enhance the ambition of making Ghana self-sufficient, the education sector had a role to play despite the major challenges facing the education system in the new country.22 Nkrumah desired an education system that would produce scientifically literate people in Ghana, increase productivity rate, and provide knowledge to enhance improvement in the Ghanaian economy.23 In August 1951, the new government under Nkrumah implemented the Accelerated Development Plan that sought to ensure rapid expansion of the public education system to provide

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21George. Education in Ghana, 36.
education for all school-going children in Ghana. Unlike the colonial system of education, the Accelerated Development Plan made it possible for the government to sponsor all schools that won its approval. On July 4, 1961, Nkrumah declared to Parliament that universal education is the sole means to ensure the development of the latent abilities and intelligence of Ghanaians.

The major challenge that hindered Nkrumah’s vision proved the lack of qualified teachers to execute the teaching project. The number of schools and pupils that existed in the Ghanaian education system outnumbered the number of trained teachers in Ghana. Although the Ministry of Education had indicated the Peace Corps program together with the recruitment from overseas would provide enough graduates to promote the expansion of education, there remain grave doubts.

**Overview of the Peace Corps Project**

The Peace Corps Project began during John Fitzgerald Kennedy’s campaign as an American presidential candidate on October 14, 1960, when he addressed a group of 10,000 students and asked how many Americans were willing to spend some years in developing countries to work for America as doctors, engineers, or technicians. This speech inspired the Michigan students who took a step in organizing the “American Committed to World Responsibility” drive and petitioned for the establishment of a program in which students could assist people in developing countries. On January 21, 1961, Kennedy appointed Sargent Robert Shriver Jr, former president of the Chicago Board of Education and his brother-in-law as the head of the task force following Kennedy’s assumption into power as the 35th American President. Shriver’s initial task centered on studying the possibility of the Peace Corps project. Upon studying the feasibility of the Peace Corps Project and making pleasant recommendations, Kennedy issued an Executive Order #10924 on March 1, 1961, to establish the Peace Corps project. The president appointed

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27 George. *Education in Ghana*, 51.
Shriver as the first director three days after the Executive Order. Distinctively, the Peace Corps program sought to provide maximum trained manpower to contribute towards the developmental needs of developing countries. The other programs the United States had organized before the Peace Corps program provided military aid, capital assistance, and technical assistance to other nations. The three essential goals of the Peace Corps program as the United States Congress defined them were: Firstly, to help the people of interested countries and areas in meeting their needs for trained manpower; secondly, to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; and third, to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. Volunteers were to assist in raising the standard of living and the educational system of foreign countries.

Over the years, there has been a debate on whether Kennedy had a moral justification for the institutionalization of the Peace Corps or whether the program became a tool of American cold war policy. Some scholars have described the program as an ideological tool meant to preach about the American idea of democracy, liberty, and equality to developing countries at the height of the Cold War. This is evident in Kennedy’s inaugural speech when he indicated America’s intention of supporting people in misery because they believe it is right. One claim has also been that the program was to counter the spread of Soviets communism by showing American friendship towards developing countries. Other people believed the Peace Corps program was developed as part of the Central Intelligence Agency program to promote its vision of providing tactical and strategic importance for America. It is worth noting that despite the various skepticisms surrounding the Peace Corps program, the program contributed immensely to transforming the Ghanaian education system as a tool towards modernization.

The Peace Corps in Ghana

Ghana became the first country to receive the first group of Peace Corps volunteers. Before Kennedy’s appointment of Shriver to run the agency, Shriver had toured Ghana and other countries.

32Gift in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps, 137.
in Africa.\textsuperscript{38} Ghana’s significance as the first Sub-Saharan African country to gain its independence on March 6, 1957, made Shriver choose Ghana as the first site for the Peace Corps Program. Moreover, Nkrumah had been a major figure in the anti-colonial movement in Africa. Besides, Nkrumah, who had studied in the United States and served as an educated teacher, prioritized the educational goals of the new country and regarded the Peace Corps as a means to build the Ghanaian educational system which needed more teachers in the modernization of Ghana.\textsuperscript{39} Nkrumah believed universal education served as the means to develop the ability and intelligence of Ghanaians as he envisaged to transform Ghana into a developed country. These motivational factors inspired Shriver in his choice of Ghana as the first beneficiary of the Peace Corps Project.\textsuperscript{40}

On August 30, 1961, the first Peace Corps Volunteers from America stepped down from a Pan Am project in Accra. The first fifty volunteers were in their summer suits and light cotton dresses when they first touch the land of Ghana.\textsuperscript{41} The Peace Corps Volunteers at their best began to sang the Ghanaian new national Anthem “Yen Ara Asaasa Ni” (This Is Our Homeland) in Twi, the Akan dominant local language in Ghana which they had studied before they came to Ghana.\textsuperscript{42} The ability of the volunteers to sing in the local dialect of the Ghanaians signified to the world and the Ghanaian population an act of friendship and understanding of the Peace Corps’ respect and dedication to serving Ghana.\textsuperscript{43} After the volunteers had finished singing, Kenneth Baer presented a speech in Twi and indicated the Peace Corps volunteers had come to both learn and teach. Tom Livingston from Woodale, Illinois became the first volunteer to take up a position as an English Teacher at Dodowa Secondary School in Ghana on September 12, 1961. Afterward, other volunteers began to work as teachers.\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{Contributions of the Peace Corps Program Towards Ghana’s Education}

Before the arrival of the Peace Corps volunteers, Ghanaians were optimistic the volunteers would contribute towards the development of Ghana’s education as a mark towards
modernization. Given Nkrumah’s obvious skepticism of the corps, the very fact that he did not deport the volunteers, but rather expanded the program, suggests its success in Ghana as a contributing factor in transforming the newly independent nation. Moreover, the fact that the United States later expanded the Peace Corps program in Africa and invested more money into the program suggests the United States was completely satisfied with the results of the program.

The Peace Corps Project’s major contribution towards modernizing Ghana since its foundation had been educational contributions. Although Nkrumah knew the provision of universal education was a mark of a modernized nation, he believed such a vision could be materialized only through support from a superpower like the United States. The Peace Corps Program contributed towards Nkrumah's ambition of ensuring free education for all desiring Ghanaians up to the secondary level. The program saved the Ghanaian Ministry of Education from a huge amount of money that would have been spent on teachers’ salaries, development cost, and indirect costs. An examination of the number of volunteer teachers by 1966 brings to light the amount the country saved in training teachers, paying teachers’ salaries, developing institutions, and indirect cost that would have drained a huge percentage of the country’s budget. The cost of training one teacher for five years amounted to about $15,000. Per calculation with the first batch of volunteer teachers sent in 1961, the Ministry of Education was relieved of the stress in employing more Ghanaian teachers which would have affected the country’s budget allocation. American support through the provision of teachers released Ghana from financial burden while the available resources were channel towards the various sectors in the transformation of the country.

The expansion of the education system in Ghana could also be attributed to the Peace Corps Program. The absence of the corps would have made only the major cities to enjoy universal education while the rural centers continue to suffer. While Ghanaian teachers had avoided being posted to the “bush” schools since the rural areas lacked amenities, the volunteer teachers welcomed working in the rural centers and newly established schools. Volunteer teachers preferred teaching in rural and newly established schools compared to the urban centers because the

volunteers felt they were more needed and useful to the rural schools and newly established schools. Through the support from American volunteers, each region felt the guaranteed free education system introduced in Ghana since teachers were provided to handle classes in both the rural and urban centers. Also, the introduction of the Peace Corps Program increased the number of graduates from the teacher training colleges. Volunteer teachers occupied positions in the teacher training colleges which called for an increase in the teacher training college enrolment. With enrolment increases, the graduation rate also increased over the years. The role of the United States in increasing graduates in Ghana must be commended. These graduates contributed towards the national interests and goal of modernization.⁴⁹

Peace Corps volunteers served as math and science teachers in the various institutions in Ghana: Universities, Teacher Education, and Secondary schools. In the secondary schools, the success of Ghanaian science teaching depended on the Peace Corps volunteer teachers. Over the years, volunteer teachers were assigned to work with the Ghanaian Ministry of Education as teachers in the various secondary schools and teacher training colleges. Some also taught in Ghana’s three major universities in the biological and physical sciences.⁵⁰ Between 1961 and 1991, about 675,000 Ghanaians had American teachers who taught them. Looking at the Ghanaian population, the above figure mentioned represents about 5% of the total population as of 1991. In the later years of the Peace Corps program, the program became the means to produce white-collar workers. Ghanaians who achieved white-collar status between 1961-66 invariably had at one point in time encountered a Peace Corps teacher.⁵¹ Formal students of the Peace Corps program testified about the impact they had received from the volunteer teachers. For example, Ansah Barnor, a formal student of the Peace Corps program appreciated how the program had shaped his professional life in shifting him from the streets. He believed the program placed him in a white-collar job. In the absence of the peace corps program, the unemployment rate in Ghana would have increased vehemently. Ghana-American relations provided Ghanaians with the prerequisites needed to function in the various workplaces.⁵²

The Peace Corps program also increased enrolment in schools and raised the number of new schools between 1960 and 1965. Primary school enrolment rose from 444,117 to 1,137,495.

Moreover, secondary schools had increased from 59 to 105 between 1960 to 1965 with enrolment jumping from 16,577 to 42,111.\(^{53}\) In 1957, Ghana had an enrolment of 571,580 pupils in both primary and middle schools, by 1963-64, the number had jumped to over 1.3 million. There were 38 secondary schools with 9,860 pupils in 1957 and this figure shot to 89 schools with an enrolment of 32,000 in 1963-64. Teacher-training institutions also increased more than four times from 1957 to 1963-64.\(^{54}\) Peace Corps volunteers contributed immensely towards this expansion in enrolment and institutions. The coordination between the two countries played a major role in making the program successful, hence the increment in enrolment.

Eighty-five percent of the volunteers taught in the Ghanaian educational cycle and prepared students for the General Certificate of Examination Level. Most of the teachers were placed in chemistry, physics, zoology, and general science to prepare students for their final exams.\(^{55}\) For instance, Lee Carlson as a volunteer taught engineering at the Accra technical institute, while Donald Graff, a network volunteer taught physics and chemistry to prepare students for their final examination.\(^{56}\) American relations with Ghana contributed to the development of science education in the new country. Each part of Ghana felt the volunteers’ impact which brought a major transformation.

Most of the volunteers also engaged in secondary activities such as organizing drama and clubs, building athletic teams, organizing sporting activities, serving as role models to Ghanaians, and providing an enthusiastic spirit for Ghanaians.\(^{57}\) In some rural and newly established schools, volunteer teachers got involved in institutional development by either putting up or providing assistance to headmasters to construct science Labs and libraries and as well as providing materials.\(^{58}\) These volunteers contributed to increasing Ghanaian citizens’ level of numeracy and creativity. Peace Corps volunteers in the sciences created space for the heavy demand for more volunteers which led to twenty-five (25) volunteer geologists being sent to help in the development of Ghana’s mineral reserves.\(^{59}\)

\(^{54}\) Ghana, Information Services Department. *Ghana Reborn*, 64.
\(^{55}\) Amin. “The perils of missionary diplomacy, 42.
\(^{56}\) Amin. “The perils of missionary diplomacy, 43.
The Peace Corps program through the American volunteers also contributed towards restructuring the Ghanaian system of education by introducing new math and learning styles that emphasize reasoning over rote learning. Some of the volunteers created an enhanced mathematics syllabus to improve the teaching of mathematics in Ghanaian schools.\textsuperscript{60} With the growth of the Peace Corps project, community development also became the second agenda after teaching. Volunteers, however, were ambivalent about how to implement such an initiative. Today, the existence of the Ghanaian National Service Scheme in Ghana can be traced from the Peace Corps Project. Some years after the introduction of the Peace Corps, Ghana began a mandatory version of youth service meant to address the educational, technological, and agricultural needs of the nation modeled on the Peace Corps program. Ghanaians sought to replicate the Peace Corps in their national volunteer organization that appears a strong affirmation of the American endeavor.\textsuperscript{61}

**Cornell-Ghana Project: Facet of Ghana-U.S. Relations in Education**

While state-to-state relations existed in the modernization of Ghana through educational contributions, organizations from the United States as well contributed towards the development of the Ghanaian education system. Between 1961-1975, Cornell University (U.S.) assisted in building the Ghanaian education system through the development of the Cornell-Ghana Project at Winneba Teacher Training College. In 1961, Ghana’s Ministry of Education officially requested assistance from Cornell University’s faculty of Home Economics in developing a post-secondary level curriculum for teachers. The project brought many Cornell faculty to conduct an assessment for planning and staffing between 1962-1967. The Winneba Teacher Training College became the site for the project.\textsuperscript{62}

The Cornell-Winneba Project envisioned developing a 4-year home economics curriculum at the college level at Winneba Training College while the project would as well establish a home economics department at the University of Ghana, Legon. The curriculum had as its central focus the Ghanaian family system with teachers trained as leaders who could guide family members in raising their standard of living at homes.\textsuperscript{63} Understanding the family system in Ghana would serve as a medium for women to adjust to Ghanaian society which had experienced a dramatic change.

\textsuperscript{60}Heidi G Frontani and Lauren C Taylor. “Development through Civic Service: The Peace Corps and National Service Program in Ghana.” *Progress in Development Studies* 9, 2 (2009), 91.

\textsuperscript{61}Frontani and Taylor. “The Peace Corps and National Service Program in Ghana.” 94.


and was undergoing a rapid agricultural and industrial expansion. The project, the combined work of the Winneba Training College, the New York State College of Home Economics, the University of Ghana, and the Ghanaian Ministry of Education materialized due to the interaction between the United States and Ghana leading to the United States sponsoring the project. The project was geared towards contributing to the Ghanaian society by training people on family life. Financing the Cornell program became the major problem the project had to face at the initial stage. Although members from the United States made contributions to support the program, the amount was below the figure needed to facilitate the operation of the project.64 The creation of home economics and agriculture studies as part of the Ghanaian school curriculum can be attributed to Ghana’s relations with United States foundations in the early 1960s, USAID policies, and Ghana’s contact with the US land grant college system. These interactions between Ghana and the United States ushered in Cornell University’s contributions to restructuring the education system as a mark of launching Ghana towards modernization.65

In 1962, a plan for the project was drafted in Ghana and refined at Cornell. Cornell faculty visited Ghana at the beginning of the project. Professor Kathleen Rhodes and Harold Feldman made a short visit to Ghana. Rhodes was qualified for the job. Born in Britain and having earned her doctoral degree at Cornell, she was well qualified for the job due to her clear understanding of both British and American education systems. Professor Harold Feldman from Cornell’s department of Child Family Studies led the development of contemporary studies of family practices. Based on an earlier visit to Ghana in 1963, Feldman was convinced the country needed research centers at various levels of which he helped in developing to facilitate the education system.66 Most of the students developed an interest in the classes and testified about the practicality of the skills. Many of the students who enrolled in the home economics course had previous experience as teachers in the lower forms. In 1963, Feldman recommended that subjects in social sciences theory, marriage, and family be added to the Ghanaian curriculum. Having gained the needed skills, the students contributed to the development of the new nation. The idea of creating an avenue for Ghanaians to contribute towards the nation-building worked through the United States support for Ghana.67

64New York State College of Home Economics. Annual Report, 10.
Through the financial support from the United States together with constant contact with various organizations in the United States, Ghanaians began to realize that the concepts of post-secondary education could be broadened to include more public service, extension education as well as applied research.\(^6\) At the center of the new teacher training curriculum for home science at Winneba lies a deeper understanding of the Ghanaian family system. The introduction of a home science course envisaged training teachers who through research and demonstration, brought new practices in home management and children's development. Cornell University embraced the task of training teachers and preparing the research Centre for such a goal.\(^6\) Cornell supported the transformation of the Ghanaian education system through the inclusion of home economics and agriculture studies as courses that prepared the Ghanaians mindset about the family system and planning together with agricultural practices. The development of home management and agricultural life which are tools for a modernized materialized through the support of the United States in launching Ghana towards modernization.

**The Peace Corps Challenges**

Even before the commencement of the Peace Corps Program, challenges had begun unfolding in the United States as the civil rights movement hit its peak in the 1960s. America's racial sentiments and foreign policy overshadowed volunteer training from the start. In Africa, the Peace Corps program’s reputation became questionable due to the scandalous behavior of Margery Michelmore Heffron in Nigeria.\(^7\) Heffron, having graduated *magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa* from Smith College joined the first batch of the Peace Corps program. Although she did not resembles an individual who could set off an international incident, she created a scene on October 14, 1961, that threatened the success of the Peace Corps program in Africa. During her training at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, Michelmore sent a postcard to her boyfriend that derided Nigeria’s “Squalor and primitive living conditions.” Before the postcard was mailed, a Nigerian student who was offended by the description of the country got hold of the letter and distributed copies to all over the campus. This led to mass riots and Nigerians who perceived their country to be better than “primitive” as described in the content of the letter gathered to torment Michelmore. The press had also picked up the issue and published it on the front page of the

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newspapers. The tension that arose forced Michelmore to flee Nigeria to Washington D.C.\textsuperscript{71} The uproar over Michelmore reached Ghana in a short time. Peace Corp volunteers worried it would upend the carefully laid plans of both Americans and Ghanaians. Volunteers believed the Peace Corps program could be closed down as volunteers would be sacked from Nigeria and then Ghana would follow suit by throwing out the Peace Corps officials.\textsuperscript{72} Instead of apologizing to Nigeria, United States officials justified the racist comments of Michelmore. President Kennedy sent a personal letter expressing his deepest sympathy to the “poor girl”, the president, in turn, faced American racists demonstrations to defend victims of racism.\textsuperscript{73}

While the volunteers envisaged a transformation of the Ghanaian education system through their service, the volunteers contributed towards the challenge the program faced as a majority of the Peace Corps volunteers were unqualified to teach. Upon submitting a proposal for the official request of American teachers, the Ghanaian Ministry of Education had requested that only those personnel with a Master’s degree from an American institution could qualify as teachers for Ghanaian secondary schools. The Ministry of Education considered the American master’s degree to be equivalent to the British bachelor’s degree. However, likely, the heavy demand for teachers to match the increased enrolment in education facilities eliminated the qualification demand.\textsuperscript{74} Out of the numerous volunteers, most were not educationists nor specialists who had not majored in the area of specialization they were assigned to teach. Only sixteen volunteers out of the total volunteers dispatched in 1961 had teaching experience.\textsuperscript{75} The experienced teachers were sent to first-class secondary schools since the government of Ghana wanted to maintain a higher standard for the best students in the bid to modernized the new country.\textsuperscript{76} For most of the volunteer teachers, their first year of teaching in the various schools was trial and error experiences. Still comparatively, since the standard of the Ghanaian secondary school system was below that of the
United States, the volunteers were better qualified than the local pupil teachers despite not being education majors.\textsuperscript{77} Volunteer teachers who taught courses in which they have little training during college became vulnerable. Many also performed numerous teaching and co-curricular activities that made it difficult for them to effectively prepare for class. For instance, Peace Corps volunteer Howard Ballwanz, taught English, history, geography, and religion at Swedru Secondary School while doubling as the dormitory supervisor. However, the quality they possessed as Americans played a role in launching Ghana towards modernization despite their deficiency \textsuperscript{78}

The Ghanaian political environment also created a fierce challenge to the Peace Corps volunteers. The Peace Corps suffered from editorial comments from Ghanaian newspapers which often described the program as a new form of imperialism.\textsuperscript{79} Nkrumah also began to chastise the volunteers. Nkrumah who had initially called for the service of the Peace Corps volunteers with the hope of restructuring the Ghanaian education system as he sought to launch Ghana towards modernization, posed perhaps the greatest challenge to the program from 1963. Although he had acknowledged his vision of modernizing Ghana through quality education could only be achieved through support from the United States, his skepticism about the Peace Corps program remained. After the attempted coup to overthrow Nkrumah had failed, he began to implement steps to counter the volunteers’ influence because he believed the CIA and the Peace Corps volunteers had joined to mastermind the \textit{Coup D’état}. Nkrumah banned Peace Corps volunteers from the teaching of English and history because he believed the volunteers would use such courses to indoctrinate students against his government.\textsuperscript{80} According to George Ayi-Bonte, the Associate Director of the Peace Corps program in Ghana, American volunteers had used George Orwell’s \textit{Animal Farm} in their English classes to give an insight into the Ghanaian system of government and this, Nkrumah was not happy to hear for he believed students might later rebel against his government. This restriction never extended to Canadian and Soviet volunteers.\textsuperscript{81} Moreover, Nkrumah went a step further to invite some young volunteers from Russia and other Western volunteers which brought competition between American volunteers and European volunteers. Nkrumah might have lost trust in solely depending on America’s support towards launching

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\textsuperscript{77}Hoffman, \textit{All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s}, 158. \\
\textsuperscript{78}Amin. “The perils of missionary diplomacy,” 43. \\
\textsuperscript{80}Bekoe, “The United State Peace Corps as a Facet of the United States- Ghana Relations.” 231. \\
\textsuperscript{81}Hoffman, \textit{All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s}, 160.
\end{flushright}
Ghana towards modernization. While one American volunteer had stated Nkrumah wanted to neutralize the Peace Corps teachers, he wanted to as well limit the influence of the American teachers despite believing the United States was a backbone towards Ghana’s modernization. The invitation of Russians into the scene led to tension and competition between the two blocs as each strife for influence in Ghana.\textsuperscript{82} On the part of Nkrumah, he seems to see nothing wrong with the invitation of Russian teachers since he was desired to use every possible means to modernize the newly independent country through support from superpowers.

The Peace Corps volunteer teachers were faced with a rigid teaching environment because of the structure of the Ghanaian education system which was new to American teachers. From the floor before independence, Ghana stuck to the fidelity approach of curriculum implementation. This approach requires the Ministry of Education to design the syllabus while teachers only served as the final implementers. Modeled on the British Education System, this centralization of the curriculum gave teachers minimal room for changes. The African-American Institute had to deal with the frustration that American teachers faced due to the centralization of the curriculum. Volunteer teachers were required to strictly comply with how the government structured the syllabus. Volunteers envisioned upgrading the Ghanaian education system to make the syllabus match the needs and interests of both learners and Ghanaian officials by restructuring the content and pedagogy. Since some headmasters resisted innovations, the tension between volunteers and headmasters resulted.\textsuperscript{83}

**The Status-Quo of Ghana’s Education at the End of Nkrumah’s Reign**

By 1966 when the Coup D’état overthrew Nkrumah, major transformations had taken place in the Ghanaian Public educational system through the United States support. Many schools had been built while the government had formerly absorbed most private schools. Compared to 1951 when the Educational Report recorded lesser than 1,700 schools with about 226,000 pupils, the number increased to about 11,000 schools and 1.5 million pupils by 1966.\textsuperscript{84} The 1951 enrollment and number of schools figures increased vehemently with each educational level experiencing expansion. Between 1965-1966, university enrolment increased 20 times, while secondary school enrolment saw growth of 14 times the figures recorded in 1951. Primary and middle schools


\textsuperscript{84}George, *Education in Ghana*, 51.
recorded 7 and 4-times enrolment increment respectively. Moreover, education had become tuition-free in all public education system while the government provided free textbooks for all children schooled in the primary, middle, and secondary schools.\(^{85}\) Untrained teachers consisted of 65 percent of the total teachers at the elementary level while expatriate and Peace Corps volunteers heavily dominated secondary schools in Ghana. University education as well expanded though partly due to the failure of the secondary schools to transform qualified graduates in science into the needed manpower for the country.\(^{86}\) Ghana paid a heavy price for its educational success since the central government took the sole responsibility of sponsoring education and implemented policies to make the educational system work. By 1965, a total of 67 million Ghanaian cedis, which was 14 times that of 1951 was invested in the educational sector. The United States' support towards the launching of Ghana to modernization contributed massively towards the expansion of the Ghanaian educational facilities, school enrolment, and the provision of teachers. American Peace Corps program together with the pivotal roles of Cornell University had transformed the Ghanaian education to the road of quality education by 1966.\(^{87}\)

The figure below represents the transition in enrolment status from 1951 to 1965-66:

![Educational Enrolment (1951 and 1965-1966)](chart)

**Figure 4 Source:** *(Washington: U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, 1976),51*

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\(^{85}\)George. *Education in Ghana*, 52.

\(^{86}\)George. *Education in Ghana*, 52.

\(^{87}\)George. *Education in Ghana*, 52.
Conclusion

The Peace Corps contributions, challenges together with the roles of Cornell University (U.S.A.) were examined in this study. The Peace Corps achieved its first stated goal thus; to serve the need of other countries. While it had not changed the entire globe by 1966, Ghana benefited immensely from the United States' contributions. The United States support to Ghana ensured the success of the free education policy, increased enrolment, expanded the Ghanaian education system, increased the number of teacher training graduates, and increased the number of educational and non-educational facilities. Moreover, through the efforts of Cornell University, Ghana had a taste of Home economics as a course of study which restructured Ghanaians view about family structure and planning. Nonetheless, the instituted program faced major setbacks due to the rigid nature of the Ghanaian education system, the political environment in Ghana, volunteers' lack of teaching experience, and a low standard of living. Although the United States-Ghanaian relations went through a series of challenges, volunteers needed love and passion for the American dream, which shaped their thought as the spirit of the 1960s. Currently, major transformations are been carried out to diversify the Ghanaian education system and the Peace Corps program has expanded to other non-educational sectors to ensure economic and social developments in Ghana.

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