False Hope: The Case Against the Peace Corps

By "Coach Vance" Trefethen

***Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reform its foreign aid.***

Summary: This plan abolishes the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps was brought to life by Pres. John F. Kennedy in 1961. Young people were going to prove to the world that America cared about the downtrodden by going where they were and representing our country with a friendly face and a helping hand. But the results never lived up to expectations, and in many cases made things worse. It was always an idealistic dream that Americans with no knowledge of foreign cultures and no specific skills could somehow make life better in poor countries they had never been to before. And history has borne out that common sense conclusion: The Corps has no statistics nor studies from outside that have ever indicated it has made any appreciable difference in any country it has ever operated in. But it has managed to do more harm than good. Its presence in some countries is used by evil dictators to create the illusion of caring and progress, while the regime loots and oppresses its own people, thus prolonging the oppression. And it perpetuates a bad mindset among Americans sometimes called the "White Savior Complex." It's a dangerous attitude that suggests people of color in poor countries are too primitive and ignorant to solve their own problems and they need some rich white folks to come in and straighten them out. Such was the mindset of colonialism in past generations and it's no less oppressive today, however good the intentions are of those doing it.

False Hope: The Case Against the Peace Corps 3

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS 3

Substantial 3

Foreign Aid 3

OBSERVATION 2. BACKGROUND. 2 Key Facts 3

FACT 1. The Peace Corps 3

The Peace Corps, with a budget of about $400 million/year, has over 7000 American volunteers overseas 3

FACT 2. Legacy of Failure 4

Just 8 years after Peace Corps was founded, a large group of former volunteers advocated its abolition, for several reasons that we will see still persist today. 4

OBSERVATION 3. Our PLAN, to be enacted by Congress & the President 4

OBSERVATION 4. The JUSTIFICATIONS 5

JUSTIFICATION 1. Worse than Useless 5

A. Useless Goals That Aren't Achieved. Even the useless goals it sets for itself aren't met, according to its own volunteers 5

B. False hope masks real problems. Volunteers admit the Corps does little to help others, and the false hope it creates masks our awareness of real world problems 5

JUSTIFICATION 2. Prolongs Oppression. 5

The Peace Corps prolongs oppression by creating the illusion of progress. 2 Examples: Liberia and Kenya 5

JUSTIFICATION 3. White Savior Complex 6

A. The Link: Patronizing Mentality. Peace Corps is founded on a patronizing mentality that poor foreigners "need" us to save them 6

B. The Impact: Blocks Real Solutions. In addition to being wrong for its own sake, this "White Savior Complex" undermines Africans making progress toward their own solutions 7

2A Evidence: Abolish the Peace Corps 8

OPENING QUOTES 8

Good intentions / Bad Results 8

Peace Corps only exists because people have faith that someday it may start working 8

Dying wish: Abolish the Peace Corps 8

Lots of optimism but no results 8

TOPICALITY / DEFINITIONS 9

Peace Corps = Foreign Aid. Congress appropriates money for Peace Corps out of the foreign aid budget 9

MINOR REPAIR RESPONSES 9

A/T "Hire more qualified volunteers": Can't -- there aren't enough older, better-trained people available 9

INHERENCY 9

A/T "Peace Corps has reformed a lot since 1961" – Neither its sentiments nor its programs have changed 9

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY 9

Peace Corps is outdated and ineffective. It's time to abolish 9

No reason for taxpayers to pay for college grads to have an overseas vacation 10

Peace Corps mission should be left to private charities, who could do it more effectively 10

JUSTIFICATIONS 10

Ineffective / Goals Not Met 10

Peace Corps hasn't achieved any of its goals, just coasting on good intentions 10

No effective goodwill or diplomatic ambassadors: The villagers don't even know they're from America 10

"Goodwill" generated by hard-working volunteers is offset by the bad behavior of delinquent volunteers 11

Peace Corps spokesperson admits: It doesn't really help foreigners, it's just designed to enrich the lives of the volunteers 11

A/T "Peace Corps doesn't cost much" – Because it doesn't do much. 11

Volunteers sent where they're not needed: Most of the countries (59 out of 70) they go to are not poor 12

Peace Corps fails at economic development – because of the youth and inexperience of its volunteers 12

No actual measurements are ever taken to find out if Peace Corps is really accomplishing anything 12

Prolongs Oppression 13

Peace Corps enabled African dictators to starve their people through oppression and ruinous farm policies 13

Enables government failure: Still teaching math & science in Cameroon after 46 years instead of expecting their government to do it 13

Condescending Colonialism / Imperialism / White Savior Complex 13

White Savior Complex defined: Unqualified rich kids who think they are can uplift or empower others 13

Link to the Peace Corps: P.C. sends white teachers to poor countries without any analysis of the role of race and privilege 14

Imperialistic mindset is unavoidable: The volunteers have no other frame of reference to impart than the one they grew up in 14

White Savior Complex sets back locally-driven solutions to problems in poor countries 14

Colonial mindset blocks the search for systemic solutions to the problems that colonialism created in the first place 15

False ideology that Africa needs to be saved and cannot save itself is a form of racism 15

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES 15

A/T "Soft Power" – Peace Corps doesn't do anything for soft power 15

A/T "Poor countries won't get help" – Lots of other agencies will do it 15

Works Cited 16

False Hope: The Case Against the Peace Corps

The Peace Corps was a plan brought to life by Pres. John F. Kennedy in 1961. Young people were going to prove to the world that America cared about the downtrodden by going where they were and representing our country with a friendly face and a helping hand. But the results never lived up to expectations, and in many cases made things worse. Please put aside any preconceived ideas you might have about the Peace Corps and let the evidence lead you to join us in affirming that: The United States federal government should substantially reform its foreign aid.

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS

Substantial

Merriam Webster Online Dict. copyright 2018 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial>

"important, essential"

Foreign Aid

Britannica copyright 2018 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/foreign-aid>

**Foreign aid**, the international transfer of [capital](https://www.britannica.com/topic/capital-economics), goods, or services from a country or [international organization](https://www.britannica.com/topic/international-organization) for the benefit of the recipient country or its population.

OBSERVATION 2. BACKGROUND. 2 Key Facts

FACT 1. The Peace Corps

The Peace Corps, with a budget of about $400 million/year, has over 7000 American volunteers overseas

Curt Tarnoff 2018 (Specialist in Foreign Affairs, Congressional Research Service) 26 Apr 2018 "The Peace Corps: Current Issues" <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS21168.pdf>

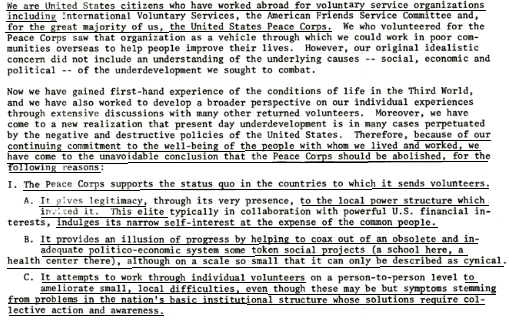
Founded in 1961, the Peace Corps has sought to meet its legislative mandate of promoting world peace and friendship by sending American volunteers to serve at the grassroots level in villages and towns in all corners of the globe. As of the end of September 2017, about 7,376 volunteers were serving in 65 nations. In 2018, the 115 th Congress may consider the President’s annual funding request for the Peace Corps, changes to the Peace Corps authorization legislation, and related issues. On March 23, 2018, the Consolidated Appropriations, 2018 (P.L. 115-141), was signed into law, providing $410 million for the Peace Corps, the same level as in FY2017, 3% above the Administration request of $398.2 million.

FACT 2. Legacy of Failure

Just 8 years after Peace Corps was founded, a large group of former volunteers advocated its abolition, for several reasons that we will see still persist today.

**The Committee of Returned Volunteers wrote in 1969 QUOTE**

Committee of Returned Volunteers 1969. (association of 3000 US citizens who worked in voluntary organizations overseas, most with the Peace Corps, along with other groups) CRV: Abolish Peace Corps <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10714839.1969.11724321?needAccess=true&journalCode=rnac16>



**END QUOTE. We'll prove to you in our case today that these problems are no better and sometimes even worse today, after we present…**

OBSERVATION 3. Our PLAN, to be enacted by Congress & the President

1. Congress votes to abolish the Peace Corps.  
2. Funding is phased out over 2 years to allow for the return of current volunteers back to the United States.  
3. Enforcement through normal means, any government employee not in compliance subject to discipline or termination of employment.  
4. Plan takes effect next October 1.  
And all Affirmative speeches may clarify.

OBSERVATION 4. The JUSTIFICATIONS

JUSTIFICATION 1. Worse than Useless

A. Useless Goals That Aren't Achieved. Even the useless goals it sets for itself aren't met, according to its own volunteers

Ryan Rommann 2013 (journalist) 21 Nov 2013 THE GUARDIAN The Peace Corps: out-dated and out-performed? <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/nov/21/peace-corps-us-development-policy>

The programme's mission is "to promote world peace and friendship." Clearly only the crass would denounce such universal aspirations, but they do not withstand scrutiny. "Promoting friendship" is a vapid slogan considering the anti-US sentiment in former Peace Corps posts like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Iran and Venezuela. Its mission is broken into three goals: providing skilled assistance, promoting mutual understanding of America and the peoples of recipient countries. But fewer than one-third of returning volunteers are confident they achieved the goals and only 25% think the assignments were well defined, according to a 2011 report by the National Peace Corps Association.

B. False hope masks real problems. Volunteers admit the Corps does little to help others, and the false hope it creates masks our awareness of real world problems

James Bovard 2011 (*serves as policy adviser to The Future of Freedom Foundation. He has written for the New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post*) Apr 2011 **THE FORGOTTEN FAILURES OF THE PEACE CORPS** <http://peacecorpsworldwide.org/the-forgotten-failures-of-the-peace-corps/>

Most of the former Peace Corps volunteers I have met conceded that their time abroad did little good for the foreigners but was a wonderful growing experience for them personally. It’s nice to have growing experiences — but we don’t morally canonize people for going to graduate school, and we shouldn’t do it for those who join the Peace Corps. Some Peace Corps volunteers, like some Americans who volunteer for religion missions abroad, have truly helped foreigners. But that cannot redeem either the Peace Corps or U.S. foreign policy. Insofar as the Peace Corps makes Americans believe that the U.S. government’s actions abroad are a fount of benevolence, they prevent citizens from recognizing the harm inflicted on many nations in their name.

JUSTIFICATION 2. Prolongs Oppression.

**The Committee of Returned Volunteers earlier made the observation that the Corps was masking the oppression of evil rulers in poor countries by creating the illusion that small projects could lift them up when the entire social structure was keeping them down. Unfortunately, that's still going on today.**

The Peace Corps prolongs oppression by creating the illusion of progress. 2 Examples: Liberia and Kenya

Karen Rothmyer 2011 (former Peace Corps volunteer; former managing editor at THE NATION) 2 March 2011 "The Nation: A Radical Alternative To Peace Corps" <https://www.npr.org/2011/03/02/134194082/the-nation-a-radical-alternative-to-peace-corps>

The only person on the dais who expressed any uncertainty about the value of the Peace Corps was Mary Jo Bane, the Kennedy School academic dean and an early volunteer in Liberia. She commented that the Peace Corps probably helped President William Tubman maintain power longer than he would have otherwise (as Tubman grew increasingly dictatorial before his death in 1971, the efforts of volunteer teachers and rural advisers arguably helped him create an appearance of government concern for the poor), which she said "might or might not have been a good thing."

**END QUOTE. Rothmyer goes on later in the same context to say QUOTE:**

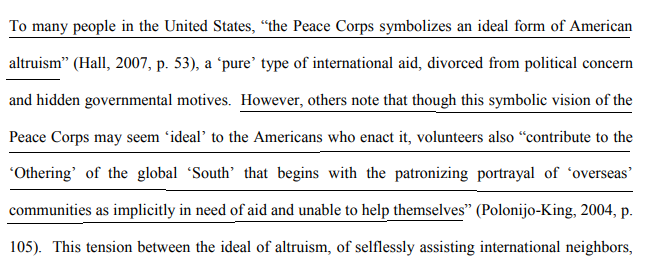
Karen Rothmyer 2011 (former Peace Corps volunteer; former managing editor at THE NATION) 2 March 2011 "The Nation: A Radical Alternative To Peace Corps" <https://www.npr.org/2011/03/02/134194082/the-nation-a-radical-alternative-to-peace-corps>

Speaking directly to the point raised by Bane — that the Peace Corps may have helped to tamp down, rather than encourage, demands for change in Liberia — I wonder how much we Kenya volunteers, in a small way, did the same thing. Countries need an engaged citizenry that insists on decent services and public accountability. But early on, Kenya developed a political class that seems to think that if it throws citizens a few bones from time to time (many of them supplied by donors), it can concentrate most of its efforts on looking out for its own political and financial interests. So why is the United States still sending Peace Corps workers to Kenya and many other countries? Maybe it's because the Peace Corps has always been more about U.S. superpower goals than about world peace.

JUSTIFICATION 3. White Savior Complex

A. The Link: Patronizing Mentality. Peace Corps is founded on a patronizing mentality that poor foreigners "need" us to save them

Jenna N. Hanchey 2012. (master's degree candidate, Dept. of Communication, Univ. of Colorado) A Postcolonial Analysis of Peace Corps Volunteer Narratives: The Political Construction of the Volunteer, Her Work, and Her Relationship to the ‘Host Country National’ <https://scholar.colorado.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=comm_gradetds>



B. The Impact: Blocks Real Solutions. In addition to being wrong for its own sake, this "White Savior Complex" undermines Africans making progress toward their own solutions

Prof. Kathryn Mathers 2014 (visiting assistant professor in the Department of International Comparative Studies at Duke University) Op-Ed: Why Won’t White Savior Complex Go Away?23 July 2014 <http://www.takepart.com/article/2014/07/22/why-wont-white-savior-complex-go-away>

One of the most intrinsic characteristics of the white savior complex is its ability to ingrain and spread the notion that Westerners are the solution to African problems. This requires portraying the latter as helpless and endlessly recirculating images only of abandonment and violence, or innocence and primitivism. Another trait of the white savior complex is that unlike the imperial, top-down "white man's burden," it takes place in a virtual space shared by the savior and the people being saved and in a world in which the goals, personalities, and projects of white saviors can be immediately beamed out, commented on, "liked," or retweeted into the worlds of Africans themselves. This can undermine the work of Africans in their own communities. Africans are, after all, actively mobilizing new technologies and social media to shape their own worlds and engage directly with the ways that others represent them. So why, even in these shared spaces, do narratives in which Africans are just the backdrop to American saviors' stories still persist?

2A Evidence: Abolish the Peace Corps

OPENING QUOTES

Good intentions / Bad Results

Robert L. Strauss 2010. (has been a Peace Corps Country Director, recruiter, consultant, and Volunteer) "Grow Up" <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2010/01/01/grow-up/>

As had been the case during my 27 months in Liberia, what confronted me in each encounter was the huge disparity between the Peace Corps’s public reputation and the reality in the field. Each observation reconfirmed for me what a fellow volunteer had said many years ago—that “Peace Corps is the worst-run example of good intentions I’ve ever seen.”

Peace Corps only exists because people have faith that someday it may start working

Robert L. Strauss 2010. (has been a Peace Corps Country Director, recruiter, consultant, and Volunteer) "Grow Up" <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2010/01/01/grow-up/>

The Peace Corps has lasted as long as it has because it is based on hope and faith—hope that someday, somehow, the policies, tactics and strategies that have failed it for so long will start working. I suppose this makes the Peace Corps one of the original faith-based organizations.

Dying wish: Abolish the Peace Corps

Rep. Otto Passman 1972. (D-Louisiana) quoted by journalist Colman McCarthy in WASHINGTON POST 23 Nov 1985 (ellipses in original) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1985/11/23/the-peace-corpsits-place-in-history-earned/28554a75-7adb-46fc-b1f5-b85d034e4891/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.89bad1dc3f6c>

"If I had to meet my Maker in three minutes, and the last decision the Good Lord would let me make . . . it would be to abolish the Peace Corps. Then I could die in peace."

Lots of optimism but no results

Robert L. Strauss 2008 (has been a Peace Corps Country Director, recruiter, consultant, and Volunteer) Think Again: The Peace Corps 22 Apr 2008 FOREIGN POLICY <http://foreignpolicy.com/2008/04/22/think-again-the-peace-corps/>

In the eyes of Americans, no government agency better exemplifies the optimism, can-do spirit, and selfless nature of the United States than the Peace Corps. Unfortunately, it’s never lived up to its purpose or principles.

TOPICALITY / DEFINITIONS

Peace Corps = Foreign Aid. Congress appropriates money for Peace Corps out of the foreign aid budget

[Note: At first glance it sounds like this evidence is saying Congress hasn't funded P.C. in the last decade, but that's not the case – P.C. has never been defunded since it was started in 1961. What it is saying is that Congress hasn't funded a specific authorization for P.C., but has funded it instead by authorizing money to come out of the foreign aid budget.]

Congressional Research Service 2018. " The Peace Corps: Current Issues" 26 Apr 2018 <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RS21168.html>

Despite repeated efforts during the past decade, Congress has not enacted a new Peace Corps funding authorization. The last such Peace Corps authorization ([P.L. 106-30](http://www.congress.gov/cgi-lis/bdquery/R?d106:FLD002:@1(106+30))), approved in 1999, covered the years FY2000 to FY2003. Appropriations bills, however, routinely waive the requirement of authorization of appropriations for foreign aid programs, as the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (§7022), did in the case of FY2017 unauthorized foreign aid program appropriations, including those for Peace Corps.

MINOR REPAIR RESPONSES

A/T "Hire more qualified volunteers": Can't -- there aren't enough older, better-trained people available

Curt Tarnoff 2018 (Specialist in Foreign Affairs, Congressional Research Service) 26 Apr 2018 "The Peace Corps: Current Issues" <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS21168.pdf>

The Peace Corps is a volunteer force composed largely of generalists. For much of its history, more than 80% of volunteers have been recent college graduates under the age of 30. While some have argued that the Peace Corps should alter its composition to meet the increasing needs of developing countries for educated specialists, the assessment team decided, with some exceptions noted below, to accept demographic reality and the constraints of career paths in the United States that would likely limit the number of older specialists available to it.

INHERENCY

A/T "Peace Corps has reformed a lot since 1961" – Neither its sentiments nor its programs have changed

Ryan Rommann 2013 (journalist) 21 Nov 2013 THE GUARDIAN The Peace Corps: out-dated and out-performed? <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/nov/21/peace-corps-us-development-policy>

Over 210,000 Americans have served as volunteers in 139 countries since the programme's founding in 1961. John F Kennedy envisioned the Peace Corps as a call to service for qualified Americans to venture abroad and help developing countries. It represented an idealised humanitarianism in a time of cold war tensions and racial segregation. Today, over a half century later, neither the sentiment nor the programme itself have changed

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

Peace Corps is outdated and ineffective. It's time to abolish

Karen Rothmyer 2011 (former Peace Corps volunteer; former managing editor at THE NATION) 2 March 2011 "The Nation: A Radical Alternative To Peace Corps" <https://www.npr.org/2011/03/02/134194082/the-nation-a-radical-alternative-to-peace-corps>

The Peace Corps was, for me and for many others, a formative experience. And there's no question that America has benefited from having a large number of citizens with deeply local experience overseas. But I think it's time to ask whether the Peace Corps, and indeed most aid programs, are a remnant of an outdated era. If Americans really want to give Kenya a hand, why not scrap the Peace Corps and instead underwrite jobs for young people who already live here so they can help their neighbors and live better lives? Or why not abandon the idea of aid altogether and instead encourage U.S. investment in businesses that create decent, long-term jobs — in my opinion the only sure way to development? That would be a far more radical idea than the Peace Corps ever was.

No reason for taxpayers to pay for college grads to have an overseas vacation

Gal Beckerman 2011 (journalist) BOSTON GLOBE 15 May 2011 The Peace Corps: What is it for?" <http://archive.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2011/05/15/the_peace_corps_what_is_it_for/?page=full>

“Why should the American taxpayer in a time of horrendous budget cuts pay for these college grads to have a two-year vacation in a foreign land?” asked Paula Hirschoff, a two-time Peace Corps volunteer who along with her husband, Chuck Ludlam, authored the critical memo. “Why? It doesn’t make sense.”

Peace Corps mission should be left to private charities, who could do it more effectively

Cato Institute 2001 (non-partisan libertarian think tank) "Costly Agencies" https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/serials/files/cato-handbook-policymakers/2001/9/hb107-15.pdf

The Peace Corps spends $260 million a year to provide support for more than 6,500 volunteers working in about 80 countries. Peace Corps members work to reduce poverty, hunger, disease, and illiteracy in other countries, and they work on projects in education, the environment, small business development, health, and agriculture. Such activities are not within the proper purview of government. They would be more appropriately, and no doubt more effectively, conducted by private charitable organizations.

JUSTIFICATIONS

Ineffective / Goals Not Met

Peace Corps hasn't achieved any of its goals, just coasting on good intentions

Robert L. Strauss 2010. (has been a Peace Corps Country Director, recruiter, consultant, and Volunteer) "Grow Up" <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2010/01/01/grow-up/>

Decades later, it’s hard to say that the Peace Corps has done a good job of achieving any of its three original goals: helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for skilled men and women; promoting a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; and promoting a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. The Peace Corps has always simply assumed that its good intentions justified its existence, whether the results have been good, bad, negligible or non-existent.

No effective goodwill or diplomatic ambassadors: The villagers don't even know they're from America

Robert L. Strauss 2008 (has been a Peace Corps Country Director, recruiter, consultant, and Volunteer) Think Again: The Peace Corps 22 Apr 2008 FOREIGN POLICY <http://foreignpolicy.com/2008/04/22/think-again-the-peace-corps/>

When the Peace Corps is characterized as an effective diplomatic weapon, it is thanks to the goodwill that volunteers generate toward the American people, not toward official U.S. policy. Unfortunately, of the tens of millions of people with whom Peace Corps volunteers have interacted during the last 47 years, many have no idea what the Peace Corps is. Few have any idea that the Peace Corps is a U.S. government agency funded 100 percent by American taxpayers. On the plus side, over my five years as a country director in Cameroon, hundreds of villagers and officials told me how happy they were simply to have volunteers in their communities. Less encouraging is that just as often, I was told how fondly they remembered the Peace Corps volunteer from Rome, Paris, or Tokyo. Its tough to be an effective diplomatic weapon and build goodwill among nations if people dont understand what nation you came from in the first place.

"Goodwill" generated by hard-working volunteers is offset by the bad behavior of delinquent volunteers

Robert L. Strauss 2008 (has been a Peace Corps Country Director, recruiter, consultant, and Volunteer) Think Again: The Peace Corps 22 Apr 2008 FOREIGN POLICY <http://foreignpolicy.com/2008/04/22/think-again-the-peace-corps/>

Like any large organization, the Peace Corps has its share of deadbeats, philanderers, parasites, gamblers, and alcoholics. The problem is that the agency sends these people tens of thousands of miles from home and expects them to work responsibly with minimal supervision. Disasters logically result. The Peace Corps is remarkably effective at cleaning up the messes those volunteers make and getting them back to the United States before local authorities step in. Whats less clear is the Peace Corps overall impact on peoples impressions and understandings of the United States. Does the goodwill generated by the small minority of great volunteers outweigh the indifference or outright hostility caused by the mediocre or truly sinister ones? The agency doesnt know, because it doesnt ask.

Peace Corps spokesperson admits: It doesn't really help foreigners, it's just designed to enrich the lives of the volunteers

Gal Beckerman 2011 (journalist) BOSTON GLOBE 15 May 2011 The Peace Corps: What is it for?" <http://archive.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2011/05/15/the_peace_corps_what_is_it_for/?page=full>

When I asked Edmunson, the agency’s spokeswoman, about this broader complaint that the Peace Corps is not structured to carry out real development work, she gave me an answer that suggested the Peace Corps was more focused on the character-building side of its mandate. “With an agency that has had over 200,000 Americans serve over 50 years in 139 countries, everybody has such different and unique experiences,” Edmunson said. “For the majority of volunteers, they say that the Peace Corps was truly a life-defining leadership opportunity. And they come back to the United States as truly global citizens who have a bigger perspective on the world.”

A/T "Peace Corps doesn't cost much" – Because it doesn't do much.

Robert L. Strauss 2008 (has been a Peace Corps Country Director, recruiter, consultant, and Volunteer) Think Again: The Peace Corps 22 Apr 2008 FOREIGN POLICY <http://foreignpolicy.com/2008/04/22/think-again-the-peace-corps/>

Supporting a volunteer in the field costs just $41,000 a year, including overhead. Thats about $12,000 less than a years worth of tuition, room, and board at Georgetown Universitys School of Foreign Service and a small fraction of the cost of supporting a single American diplomat or USAID worker in a developing country. The agency has long prided itself on doing more with a dollar than most other development outfits. Peace Corps Press Director Amanda Beck estimates that the agencys direct expenditures per volunteer are actually only $3,000 a year. But if that is the case, one then has to wonder what the Peace Corps is doing with the other $38,000 it spends per year for each volunteer. However you count it, the agencys relative leanness says more about the lack of significant results in the development business than it does about the Peace Corps cost effectiveness.

Volunteers sent where they're not needed: Most of the countries (59 out of 70) they go to are not poor

Robert L. Strauss 2008 (has been a Peace Corps Country Director, recruiter, consultant, and Volunteer) Think Again: The Peace Corps 22 Apr 2008 FOREIGN POLICY <http://foreignpolicy.com/2008/04/22/think-again-the-peace-corps/>

The Peace Corps Sends Volunteers Where They Are Needed Most  
Rarely. Like many bureaucracies, the Peace Corps operates predominantly on inertia. The agency sends most volunteers to the same places where volunteers have been sent before, often to do the same thing volunteers were doing 20 and 30 years ago regardless of whether their mission still makes sense. Reviewing the most recent U.N. Human Development Report shows that the Peace Corps is active in 10 countries with high human development, 49 with medium human development, and 11 with low human development. With so few resources to achieve its goals, one wonders why the Peace Corps hasnt concentrated what little it has on the worlds poorest countries, where the need is likely greatest. Granted, half a dozen of those places are either so unstable or dangerous that theres little hope of achieving much. But even if the Peace Corps didnt concentrate only on the poorest of the poor, one has to question what it is still doing in Romania and Bulgaria, two countries that have already become members of the European Union.

Peace Corps fails at economic development – because of the youth and inexperience of its volunteers

Robert L. Strauss 2008 (has been a Peace Corps Country Director, recruiter, consultant, and Volunteer) Think Again: The Peace Corps 22 Apr 2008 FOREIGN POLICY <http://foreignpolicy.com/2008/04/22/think-again-the-peace-corps/>

Indeed, if the Peace Corps were as successful at development as its literature and many volunteers and staff members attest, one would expect other organizations and scholars to cite it as a model. Yet pick up any of the recently popular books on development by Paul Collier, William Easterly, or Jeffrey Sachs, and you wont find a single reference to the Peace Corps. Tony Blairs 464-page Commission for Africa report? Not a word. Beyond Assistance, the 215-page report of the HELP Commission on foreign-assistance reform? Just three passing mentions. The reason the Peace Corps is overlooked as a development organization has a lot to do with the youth and inexperience of the majority of its volunteers.

No actual measurements are ever taken to find out if Peace Corps is really accomplishing anything

Robert L. Strauss 2008 (has been a Peace Corps Country Director, recruiter, consultant, and Volunteer) Think Again: The Peace Corps 22 Apr 2008 FOREIGN POLICY <http://foreignpolicy.com/2008/04/22/think-again-the-peace-corps/>

The real problem is that the Peace Corps has never done a serious job of evaluating its impact. If it is a world peace and friendship organization designed to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served, then, as a start, it ought to ask the peoples served if they even know which country Peace Corps volunteers come from. If its a development agency, then it needs to undertake rigorous measures to assess its impact. Currently, it does neither but rather relies on biannual surveys in which volunteers comment on whether they think they are making a difference. Its a bit like asking a bunch of doctors how they think they are doing without ever talking to the patients or even checking to see if they are still alive.

Prolongs Oppression

Peace Corps enabled African dictators to starve their people through oppression and ruinous farm policies

James Bovard 2011 (*serves as policy adviser to The Future of Freedom Foundation. He has written for the New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post*) Apr 2011 **THE FORGOTTEN FAILURES OF THE PEACE CORPS** <http://peacecorpsworldwide.org/the-forgotten-failures-of-the-peace-corps/>

Moreover, throughout Africa in the 1980s, governments butchered their people, scuttled their economies, and devastated living standards. Bad government policies starved far more Africans than did bad weather. Throughout much of Africa, governments monopolized the buying and selling of crops, and to boost revenue, most governments paid farmers far less than the market value of their harvests. As a consequence, per-capita food production fell 20 percent in Africa between 1960 and 1982. Far from protesting those destructive policies, the Peace Corps enthusiastically poured in more volunteers to staff government agricultural bureaucracies. In some countries, Peace Corps volunteers toiled on state farms and cooperatives that have been unmitigated disasters across the continent, with production falling by 30, 40, 50 percent, or more over previous levels.

Enables government failure: Still teaching math & science in Cameroon after 46 years instead of expecting their government to do it

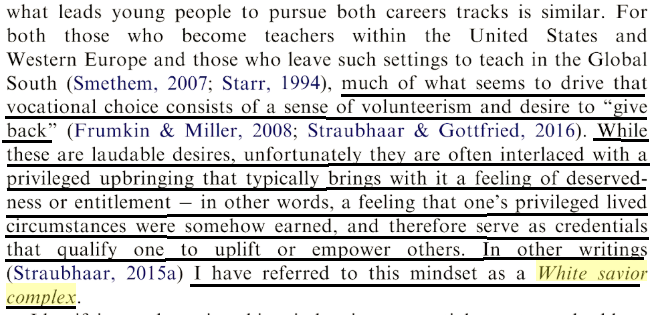
Robert L. Strauss 2008 (has been a Peace Corps Country Director, recruiter, consultant, and Volunteer) Think Again: The Peace Corps 22 Apr 2008 FOREIGN POLICY <http://foreignpolicy.com/2008/04/22/think-again-the-peace-corps/>

In Cameroon, volunteers are still teaching math and science, the job they originally came to do in 1962. This was a situation I tried but failed to change because the placing of volunteers in the field was more important to the Peace Corps than questioning whether the Cameroonian government had failed to do its job by not training and hiring adequate numbers of local teachers over a period of more than four decades. In any case, doing the same thing for 46 years ought to indicate that something is broken, something the Peace Corps is unlikely to fix.

Condescending Colonialism / Imperialism / White Savior Complex

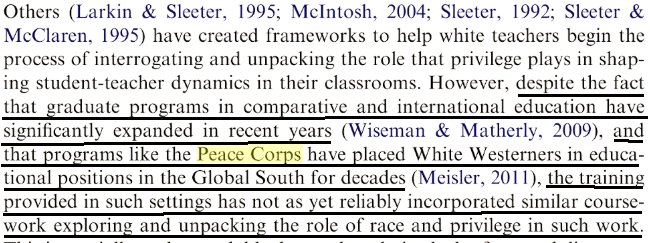
White Savior Complex defined: Unqualified rich kids who think they are can uplift or empower others

Dr. Rolf Straubhaar 2017 (PhD; education policy scholar trained in anthropology who has co-written and co-managed numerous externally funded research projects) "Acknowledging and interrogating the place of race and privilege in comparative and international education" Annual Review of Comparative and International Education <https://books.google.com/books?id=C3jBDQAAQBAJ&pg=PA73&lpg=PA73&dq=%22white+savior+complex%22+%2B+%22peace+corps%22&source=bl&ots=YvwA2jYQfH&sig=ylG8XigeLiJJl3j3UGav5mr9adA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjT9b3crMfbAhVH2VMKHVaSBGE4FBDoAQg6MAM#v=onepage&q=%22white%20savior%20complex%22%20%2B%20%22peace%20corps%22&f=false>



Link to the Peace Corps: P.C. sends white teachers to poor countries without any analysis of the role of race and privilege

Dr. Rolf Straubhaar 2017 (PhD; education policy scholar trained in anthropology who has co-written and co-managed numerous externally funded research projects) "Acknowledging and interrogating the place of race and privilege in comparative and international education" Annual Review of Comparative and International Education <https://books.google.com/books?id=C3jBDQAAQBAJ&pg=PA73&lpg=PA73&dq=%22white+savior+complex%22+%2B+%22peace+corps%22&source=bl&ots=YvwA2jYQfH&sig=ylG8XigeLiJJl3j3UGav5mr9adA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjT9b3crMfbAhVH2VMKHVaSBGE4FBDoAQg6MAM#v=onepage&q=%22white%20savior%20complex%22%20%2B%20%22peace%20corps%22&f=false>



Imperialistic mindset is unavoidable: The volunteers have no other frame of reference to impart than the one they grew up in

Tom Twardzik 2018 (journalist) 29 Mar 2018 Exploring the controversies surrounding the Peace Corps <https://www.libertyproject.com/united-states-peace-corps-controversies-2551344005.html>

The Peace Corps has drawn criticism since its inception in 1961 for its actions and intentions as an international development organization. Some think that its goal is mainly to create a positive image of the U.S. despite the country's imperialistic military engagements. Others think of the Peace Corps, itself, as an imperialistic strategy, developing Western culture and planting American influence in impoverished regions around the world. Hayley White, a volunteer in Uganda, [wrote](https://www.notion.so/ttwardz/Little-known-Peace-Corp-controversies-2767e58aad0b42b59c4029ae18f2996c#24c45a36cdc9491abfbefbf5cbaffcf6) that the Corps should work more closely with in-country social entrepreneurs than with nongovernmental organizations that are "often too indoctrinated in Western ideas of how things must be done." It is difficult to separate imperialism from a foreign aid program such as the Peace Corps or [WorldTeach](http://worldteach.org/why-worldteach/peace-corps-alt/). After all, how can a U.S. citizen, perhaps only recently graduated from college, and maybe on their first trip outside of the country, provide meaningful help to a foreign community based on any other system than the American one in which they grew up?

White Savior Complex sets back locally-driven solutions to problems in poor countries

Andrew Hernandez 2015 (*public anthropologist and teacher and is completing his PhD in cultural anthropology at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, and he adjuncts at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and Baruch College*) 18 Oct 2015 " 4 Ways Humanitarian Work Abroad Reinforces the Oppression It Should Be Fighting" <https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/10/humanitarianism-oppression/>

Indeed, reflecting centuries of political, cultural, and narrative imperialism, white saviors tend to swoop in and reproduce supremacist discourses, rather than working with and providing a platform for marginalized groups to articulate real grievances and produce their own narratives. Not surprisingly, many in these communities accuse NGOs and their spokespersons of exploitation, suggesting that they’re more interested in improving their images than they are about actually helping impoverished groups around the world. This is bad news. Because even well-intentioned white saviors thus prevent community-driven collaboration that more effectively addresses local issues.

Colonial mindset blocks the search for systemic solutions to the problems that colonialism created in the first place

Andrew Hernandez 2015 (*public anthropologist and teacher and is completing his PhD in cultural anthropology at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, and he adjuncts at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and Baruch College*) 18 Oct 2015 " 4 Ways Humanitarian Work Abroad Reinforces the Oppression It Should Be Fighting" <https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/10/humanitarianism-oppression/>

Thus, the reason for European- and American-driven charity work in the first place is the [result](http://news.stanford.edu/news/2015/april/humanitarian-congo-daughton-042315.html) of centuries of predatory European and American imperialism. Nonetheless, charity organizations rarely address [systematic poverty](http://newint.org/features/2014/12/01/ngos-keynote/). Why? First, it is not in these countries’ economic interests to restrict their private sectors’ (neocolonial) investment in poor countries. Reproducing a “blame the victim” viewpoint, they fail to turn the lens onto themselves, ask some difficult questions, take responsibility for global poverty, and commit to changing the systems from which they benefit.

False ideology that Africa needs to be saved and cannot save itself is a form of racism

*Hyoyoung Minna Kim 2017. (Former Peace Corps Volunteer in Africa who resigned upon realizing the detrimental aspects of her work) 23 Aug 2017* Open Letter from a Peace Corp Volunteer <http://www.cihablog.com/open-letter-peace-corp-volunteer/>

This itch to serve abroad is anticipated, given the messages about communities already flooded with foreign aid, like Africa: primitive, diseased, and impoverished.  As a result, on varying levels of consciousness, many US citizens believe (subconsciously or consciously) that Africa and other “developing” communities around the world 1) need to be saved and 2) cannot save itself.  In other words, there is a ubiquitous ideology that members of “developing” communities are fundamentally inferior and are inherently incapable of “achieving” what “developed” communities have – also regarded as a form of racism.

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

A/T "Soft Power" – Peace Corps doesn't do anything for soft power

Gal Beckerman 2011 (journalist) BOSTON GLOBE 15 May 2011 The Peace Corps: What is it for?" <http://archive.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2011/05/15/the_peace_corps_what_is_it_for/?page=full>

Born during the Cold War, the agency was essentially started by Kennedy as a form of what we would today call “soft power,” presenting the friendly face of America at a moment when Washington was fighting Communist expansion in every corner of the world. But the Cold War has been over now for 20 years, and in that time there has been no redefinition of the Peace Corps’ mission. Individual volunteers still manage to do good work, and they gain experience that can help them get jobs in aid agencies if they want to. But the Peace Corps is not set up to function as a development agency, and its soft-power role is no longer the national priority it once was — leaving a large bureaucracy with no clear answer about what its objectives should really be.

A/T "Poor countries won't get help" – Lots of other agencies will do it

Charles Kenny 2011 (senior fellow at the Center for Global Development, a Schwartz fellow at the New America Foundation) "Corps Concerns" 22 Feb 2011 FOREIGN POLICY <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/02/22/corps-concerns/>

When it started, the Peace Corps had this playing field all to itself. In 1961, the agency was the only American volunteer organization operating internationally. But times have changed. For one thing, the corps no longer enjoys a monopoly on service abroad: In 2008, more than 1 million Americans reported volunteering in another country, according to [Benjamin Lough](http://www.scribd.com/doc/33744391/International-Volunteering-from-the-United-States) at Washington University in St Louis. Alongside a number of other government-backed programs, organizations ranging from church groups to private companies to Doctors Without Borders send people overseas to provide everything from manual labor to advanced technical expertise.

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