

A Towering Task: Exploring the Role of the Peace Corps and International Organizations in Relation to Business Ethics, International Development, Economics, Global Citizenship, and Global NGO Work

Suggested courses

- Business Ethics
 - Ethics and Public Policy
 - International Business and Management
 - International Community Economic Development
 - International Development and Economics
 - International Political Economy, Global Citizenship
 - Global Inequality and Development
 - Global Service and Volunteerism
 - Humanitarianism and Global Politics
 - Nonprofit Organizations and Global Engagement
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Notes to the Instructor

Overview

The Peace Corps and other international organizations play a crucial role in promoting economic development and fostering cross-cultural understanding in emerging nations. Accordingly, this work comes with challenges that are ripe for rigorous scholarship and intellectual inquiry. Topics that can be explored include ethical considerations, sustainability concerns, and the influence of implicit bias and neo-imperialism. This curriculum guide explores these issues through the lens of business, economic development, and international aid, focusing on the Peace Corps's experiences and lessons learned. These materials may spark new scholarly inquiry and research regarding the Peace Corps and may lead to the development of new case studies in the field of international work.

Curriculum Guide Content Topics

This curriculum guide contains four modules designed for courses such as Business Ethics, International Development and Economics, Global Citizenship, and Nonprofit Organizations and Global Engagement. These modules can be used all together, but also can each stand alone for rich inquiry and student engagement. All modules include Readings, Discussion Questions, Case Studies, and Topics for Further Investigations.

Module Topics:

1. **Two-Way Street — Peace Corps Programming, Returning Volunteers, Ethical Responsibilities:** Examines the impact of the Peace Corps on host countries, the continuing responsibilities of returning volunteers, and the ethical considerations surrounding their work.
2. **Community Development, Natural Resources, Ethical Modules for Sustainability:** Explores the role of the Peace Corps and other international aid organizations in promoting sustainable community development and natural resource management.
3. **The Peace Corps's Role in Microfinance in Emerging Nations:** Investigates the Peace Corps's involvement in microfinance initiatives, the challenges faced, and best practices for client-centered microfinance.
4. **Implicit Bias, Neo-Imperialism, and International Aid:** Addresses the influence of implicit bias and neo-imperialism on international aid work and explores strategies for promoting equity and cultural responsiveness.

Instructor Preparation: Details of the Modules

The recommended reading list provides a comprehensive set of resources, including books, journal articles, dissertations, and online materials, to support the curriculum. Each module includes **instructional materials** that start with a context section that provides background information on the topic and sets the stage for exploration and discussion. Class discussion questions are designed to encourage critical thinking, reflection, and analysis of the topics covered in each module. Case studies offer concrete examples of the challenges and successes of the Peace Corps and other international aid organizations in their work.

The *Investigative Topics for Student Research* provide opportunities for in-depth exploration of specific issues and encourage students to develop their own insights and recommendations. This resource can also be used to **assess** student learning.

Student Preparation

- Review the recommended readings to gain a broad understanding of the Peace Corps, international aid, and the topics covered in each module.
- Complete the assigned readings for each module before class to prepare for discussions and activities.
- Familiarize themselves with the glossary of key terms and concepts.
- Select an investigative topic for research based on their interests and the requirements of the course.

Course Outcomes

By engaging with this curriculum, students will develop a comprehensive understanding of the ethical responsibilities and challenges faced by the Peace Corps and other international aid organizations in their work. They will examine the role of international aid in promoting sustainable community development and natural resource management, analyze the Peace Corps's involvement in microfinance initiatives, and explore best practices for client-centered microfinance.

Students will recognize the influence of implicit bias and neo-imperialism on international aid work and develop strategies for promoting equity and cultural responsiveness. Throughout the curriculum, students will enhance their critical thinking, research, and problem-solving skills through engagement with case studies, class discussions, and investigative research topics. The curriculum guide is designed to be adaptable to different course formats and objectives, encouraging active participation, drawing connections between topics, and applying learning to real-world contexts through research and analysis.

Recommended Readings

Books

Hellstrom, Travis and Kevin Quigley. *The Peace Corps Volunteer's Handbook: A Personal Field Guide to Making the Most of Your Peace Corps Experience*. Hatherleigh Press, 2016.

Meister, Stanley. *When the World Calls: The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and Its First Fifty Years*. Beacon Press, 2012.

Online Resources

"[Peace Corps](#)." Peace Corps. Accessed 22 December 2023.

[The Peace Corps: Overview and Issues](#). Accessed 16 Jan 2024.

Journal Articles

Gilbert, E., J. Morabito, and E.A. Stohr (2010), "[Knowledge sharing and decision making in the peace corps](#)." *Knowl. Process Mgmt.*, vol. 17, pp.128–144.

Peterson, Anne Palmer. "[Academic Conceptions of a United States Peace Corps](#)." *History of Education*, vol. 40, no. 2, March 2011, pp. 229–240.

Proano, L., M. Gash, and A. Kuklewicz. "[Strengths, Weaknesses and Evolution of the Peace Corps' 11-Year-Old Savings Group Program in Ecuador](#)." Publication | FinDev Gateway, October 2010.

Schuckman, H. E. "Peace Corps Volunteers and the Boundaries of Bottom-up Development." *UCLA*, 2012. ProQuest ID: Schuckman_ucla_0031D_10653. Merritt ID: ark:/13030/m5z04p2r. Retrieved from [UCLA E-Scholarship](#). Accessed 16 Jan 2024.

Glossary

Advocacy: Public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy.

Capitalism: An economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state.

Community-driven: Guided or led by the members of a community, often in decision-making processes or development initiatives.

Conservation: The act of preserving, protecting, or restoring the natural environment, ecosystems, or wildlife.

Cultural competency: The ability to collaborate effectively with individuals from different cultures in personal and professional settings. This usually involves a recognition of the diversity both between and within cultures, a capacity for cultural self-assessment, and a willingness to adapt personal behaviors and practices. Cultural competence, also known as intercultural competence, has become a central concept in business, education, health care, government, and many other areas (dictionary.apa.org).

Deforestation: The clearing or removal of forests or trees, often for agricultural or industrial purposes.

Economy: The system of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services within a particular geographic area.

Ecotourism: Tourism that involves visiting natural areas to conserve the environment, respect the culture of local communities, and promote sustainability.

Equity: Fairness and justice in the distribution of resources, opportunities, or benefits among different individuals or groups.

Forest transition: A shift from deforestation to reforestation in a particular region, often associated with changes in land use and economic development.

Gender equality: The state of equal rights, opportunities, and treatment for individuals of all genders.

Implicit bias: A negative attitude, of which one is not consciously aware, against a specific social group. Implicit bias is thought to be shaped by experience and based on learned associations between particular qualities and social categories, including race

and/or gender. Individuals' perceptions and behaviors can be influenced by the implicit biases they hold, even if they are unaware they hold such biases. Implicit bias is an aspect of implicit social cognition: the phenomenon that perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes can operate prior to conscious intention or endorsement (apa.org).

Indigenous peoples: Communities with a distinct cultural identity, often connected to a particular territory, who have historical continuity with pre-colonial or pre-settler societies.

Inequality: The condition in which there are disparities in opportunities, wealth, or access to resources among individuals or groups.

Memorandum of understanding (MOU): A formal agreement between two or more parties outlining their mutual understanding and intentions, typically without the legal binding of a contract.

Natural resource: Materials or substances found in the environment that are used by humans for various purposes, such as energy, food, or raw materials.

Neo-colonialism: A form of global power in which transnational corporations and global and multilateral institutions combine to perpetuate colonial forms of exploitation of developing countries. Neocolonialism has been broadly understood as a further development of capitalism that enables capitalist powers (both nations and corporations) to dominate subject nations through the operations of international capitalism rather than by means of direct rule (Britannica.com).

Neo-imperialism: A form of domination and sometimes even hegemony over others, primarily by way of formally free legal agreements, economic power, or cultural influence (Encyclopedia.com).

Non-governmental organization (NGO): A nonprofit organization that operates independently of government and is typically dedicated to addressing social, environmental, or humanitarian issues.

Preservation: The act of protecting and maintaining natural or cultural resources in their existing state, often to prevent degradation or loss.

Reforestation: The process of replanting trees in areas where they have been cut down or removed.

Resilience: The ability of a system or community to recover from shocks, adapt to changes, and withstand adversity.

Resource extraction: The removal or harvesting of natural resources, such as minerals, oil, or timber, from the earth for human use.

Sexual assault and sexual harassment: Sexual assault involves unwanted sexual activity, with perpetrators often using force, making threats, or taking advantage of victims not being able to give consent. Immediate reactions to sexual assault may include shock, fear, or disbelief. Long-term symptoms may include anxiety, fear, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Sexual harassment involves conduct of a sexual nature that is unwelcome or considered offensive, particularly in the workplace (apa.org).

Subsistence farming: Agricultural practices focused on producing food primarily for the farmer's own consumption, often using traditional methods.

Sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; often applied to environmental, social, and economic practices.

Sustainable: Capable of being maintained or continued over the long term without causing significant negative impacts, especially on the environment.

Sustainable forestry: The practice of managing and harvesting forests in a way that maintains ecological balance, biodiversity, and the long-term health of the forest ecosystem.

Module One: Two-Way Street: Peace Corps Programming, Returning Volunteers, Ethical Responsibilities

Readings:

Frontani, H. G., and L. C. Taylor. "[Development through civic service: the Peace Corps and national service programmes in Ghana.](#)" *Progress in Development Studies*, vol. 9 no. 2, pp. 87–99, 2009.

Hall, Michael R. "[The Impact of the U.S. Peace Corps at Home and Abroad.](#)" *Journal of Third World Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2007, pp. 53–58. JSTOR.

Milligan, Jeffrey Ayala. "[Neocolonialism and Peace Corps Teaching in the Philippines.](#)" *Philippine Studies*, vol. 48, no. 1. (First Quarter 2000): 109–120.

Schein, Rebecca. "[Educating Americans for 'Overseasmanship': The Peace Corps and the Invention of Culture Shock.](#)" *American Quarterly*, 67, no. 4 (December 2015): 1109–1136.

Schuckman, H. E. [Peace Corps Volunteers and the Boundaries of Bottom-up Development](#). eScholarship, Thesis, University of California. 2021.

Wilcox, Lilly W. (2021) "[Reforming the Unreformable: The Peace Corps, Neocolonialism, and the White Savior Complex.](#)" *Undergraduate Journal of Global Citizenship*, Vol. 4 : Iss. 1, Article 5. Accessed 16 Jan 2024.

Class Discussion Questions:

1. How has the Peace Corps influenced the countries where Peace Corps Volunteers are placed?
2. What continuing responsibilities do returning Peace Corps Volunteers have to the communities they served while abroad once they return to the U.S.?
3. How do country-based groups of returned Peace Corps Volunteers continue to interact with people in the countries where they served?
4. What factors have contributed to the peak and subsequent decline in the number of active Peace Corps Volunteers over time?
5. Do you think power dynamics between countries affect the work of Peace Corps Volunteers on the ground? If yes, how so? If not, why not?

Cases for Exploration:

[“Ann Moore Snugli Consumer Devices.”](#) Accessed 13 Jan 2024.

[“The “Peace Corps Postcard”](#): A Brief History of Peace Corps Critiques. Accessed 16 January 2024.

Investigations for Student Research Topics:

- *Business Creations:* Looking at the Ann Moore Snugli example, have students consider and explore the responsibilities of returning Peace Corps Volunteers who launch businesses based on ideas and solutions they observed while serving abroad. Encourage students to conceptualize an equitable model in which local individuals and organizations in other countries are compensated and/or recognized for their contribution to a business launched by a returning Peace Corps Volunteer. Students can explore profit-sharing models or even create models that do not yet exist.
- *Comparative Analysis: Peace Corps Postcard Incident and Social Media:* Focus on the Peace Corps Postcard incidents within the current lens of social media and the ways that intercultural exchanges are portrayed on social media. Have students consider the post-colonial legacy of such exchanges and of social media postings. Students could also explore the ways that social media can contribute to neocolonialism and the ways that it can counter neocolonialist mindsets.

Module Two: Community Development, Natural Resources, Ethical Modules for Sustainability

Readings:

Explore [Peace Corp Volunteer opportunities](#) associated with conservation and community economic development.

Explore the interactions and perceptions of communities at the people/protected land interface. Seek to understand the ways that this can help guide management strategies that strengthen conservation efforts. Review the following study: [A Framework for Understanding Community Resident Perceptions of Masoala National Park, Madagascar](#).

Faeth, Paul, Cheryl Cort, and Robert Livemash. "[Evaluating the Carbon Sequestration Benefits of Forestry Projects in Developing Countries](#)." World Resources Institute. February 1994.

Heinz, Dan and Mike Davis. "[An Assessment of the Potential for Peace Corps-USAID-Host Country Cooperation in Social Forestry Projects: Kenya](#)." Office of Program Development, Peace Corps. March 1981.

Joyce, Steven and Bruce Burwell. "[Community-Level Forestry Development: Options and Guidelines for Collaboration in PL 480 Programs](#)." Produced Under the AID/PC Forest Resource Management Project, 19865. Accessed 20 February 2024.

Leandra Canepa, Sarah. "[Finding Place in Paraguay: Rethinking the Placement of Peace Corps Volunteers](#)." Professional Paper, University of Montana-Missoula. Spring 2007.

Nations, James D., Bruce B. Burwell, Gary R. Burniske. "[We Did This Ourselves: a case study of INAFOR/CARE/Peace Corps soil conservation and forest management program, Republic of Guatemala](#)." Biodiversity Links. 1987.

Storti, Craig. "[Forestry Case Studies, Appropriate Technologies for Development](#)." March 1982.

Discussion Questions:

1. What responsibility do the Peace Corps and other international aid organizations have to the co-development of programs with local communities?
2. What systems and structures are most conducive to sustainability of projects by the local community without continued reliance on international support?
3. What responsibility do aid organizations have to local individuals who work with the organization's volunteers and employees?
4. Why is it important to center the work of aid initiatives within local economies?
5. Compare and contrast the impact of community-led initiatives with externally imposed solutions in providing long-term environmental sustainability within communities. What additional resources may help support initiatives of this kind?
6. What challenges might Peace Corps Volunteers or other international aid organizations face in supporting sustainable forestry projects? What best practices exist for assessing strategies and outcomes of these projects? Find examples from [Peace Corps Volunteers](#) of the impact that cultural barriers, policy constraints, and resource limitations can have on the sustainability of projects related to forests and climate.
7. What challenges might Peace Corps Volunteers or other international aid organizations face when developing sustainable ecotourism projects?

Cases for Exploration:

[How a Growing Timber Business Revived a Forest](#)

The project detailed here focuses on the transformation of Cristóbal Colón, a town in Ecuador that was struggling economically. Faced with limited opportunities, residents had begun clearing forests for timber and subsistence farming. The arrival of a commercial timber company intensified deforestation, posing environmental threats and further exploiting the community. An initiative by the local community in collaboration with the Peace Corps and the Pinchot Institute, however, led to the establishment of a community-owned and -managed enterprise providing an economically and environmentally sustainable alternative. The success of this community-driven project challenges the conventional narrative by demonstrating that economic development can coexist with forest conservation. It also highlights the importance of connecting international aid initiatives to markets and emphasizing the role of community-led

initiatives in achieving long-term sustainability.

Reflective Questions for this Case Study:

1. Consider the impact of multinational corporations on deforestation in the Chocó rainforest. How did their activities contribute to the initial trend of deforestation in the region?
2. To what extent do you think the presence of the local timber business, EcoMadera, served as an effective alternative to the big logging companies and plywood factories?
3. Consider the role of aid organizations and other NGOs in the region. How would you evaluate the successes and failures of these organizations in addressing deforestation and promoting sustainable practices in Colón?
4. Consider the factors that may have led to the success of the sustainable forestry project in Colón. How do you think the collaboration between the community, the Peace Corps, and Pinchot Institute contributed to the project's success?
5. Consider the relationship between economic growth, patterns of land use, and environmental conservation in the case of Cristóbal Colón. How does the concept of the "forest transition" apply to this scenario? What strategies might influence the potential for other communities worldwide to pursue a similar path in transitioning from deforestation to reforestation alongside economic growth?
6. Explore the Marxist critique of capitalism embedded in EcoMadera's design. In what ways does this project attempt to address wealth distribution and empower the local community? What challenges or opportunities might accompany economic models that prioritize community wealth over individual profit in the context of environmental conservation?
7. Analyze the role of structural transformation in the case of Cristóbal Colón. How did the shift from resource extraction (logging and farming) to sustainable forestry help alleviate poverty? Reflect on structural transformation as a means for larger populations to move out of poverty, drawing connections to similar examples elsewhere in the world.

Ecotourism

Holliday, Patrick and Allison Ormsby. "[A Comparative Study of Local Perceptions of Ecotourism and Conservation at Five Blues Lake National Park, Belize.](#)" *Journal of Ecotourism* 10(2). (June 2011):118–134.

Reflective Questions for this Case Study:

1. Consider the role of community support in the success or failure of ecotourism initiatives. How did the attitudes of the local St. Margaret's community change over time? What factors contributed to these changes? How would you evaluate effective engagement of residents in decision-making processes like this?
2. Reflect on the historical land use of the FBLNP area. How might past activities, such as logging, agriculture, hunting, or fishing, have shaped the current ecological features of the park? How have land-use pressures from increased population density affected conservation and community attitudes towards the park?
3. Compare the attitudes of residents in 1995 and 2003 towards the conservation of Five Blues Lake National Park. How did residents initially justify the importance of conserving natural resources? What factors may have contributed to the shift in perceptions?
4. Do you think ecotourism, as characterized in the case study, leans more towards preservation, by maintaining the natural state of the park, or conservation, by promoting sustainable use? How do community members perceive the balance between these two approaches? Do certain demographics or historical factors influence whether residents prioritize preserving the park's natural state or conserving it for practical use?

Investigative Topics for Student Research:

- *Capacity-Building Programs:* Explore the role of education and capacity-building programs within international aid projects in enhancing community understanding of sustainable forestry and its climate-related benefits.
- *Forest Transition Projects for Business Success and Environmental Sustainability:* Research common demographic and economic drivers of forest transition. Consider the responsibility of international aid organizations regarding sustainable forestry in communities impacted by climate change. Research examples of partnerships between international aid organizations, such as the Peace Corps or USAID, and local communities who are working together to restore globally important forests.¹

¹ Recommended Reading: Bare, M., et al. "[Assessing the Impact of International Conservation Aid on Deforestation in Sub-Saharan Africa.](#)" *Environmental Research Letters*. December 18, 2015. Hernandez-Aguilar, J., et al. "[Understanding Drivers of Local Forest Transition in Community Forests in Mixteca Alta, Oaxaca, Mexico.](#)" *Forest Policy and Economics*. Vol. 131.

- *Natural Resources and Sustainability*: Create a community development project that honors community access to natural resources and sustainability.
- *Neocolonialism, Preservation, Conservation*: Compare and contrast neo-colonial/outsider approaches to preservation and conservation and country-specific/indigenous approaches to preservation and conservation in a country or region of your choosing. Research the following examples from other ecotourism initiatives in Belize: (1) Gales Point Manatee Forest Reserve and (2) Aguacaliente Wildlife Sanctuary. Discuss the common challenges and successes in community involvement and conservation for each initiative.
- *Sustainability, Indigenous Knowledge, and Climate*: How can the perceptions and knowledge of Indigenous peoples be integrated into sustainable forestry and climate change initiatives in communities where international aid programs are present?

Module Three: The Peace Corps's Role in Microfinance in Emerging Nations

Readings:

Amin, J. A. (2013). [Serving in Africa: US Peace Corps in Cameroon](#). *Africa Spectrum*, 48(1), 71-87.

Datar, Srikant M., Marc J. Epstein, and Kristi Yuthas. "[In Microfinance, Clients Must Come First](#)." Stanford Social Innovation. Hop Studios, 2008. Web. 15 Apr. 2013.

Shahidur R. Khandker. "[Microfinance and Poverty: Evidence Using Panel Data From Bangladesh](#)." *World Bank Economic Review* (2005).

[Peace Corps Savings and Loan Association Guide](#) (selections to be determined by professor).

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the models that the Peace Corps uses to bring microfinance opportunities to emerging nations?
2. What were some of the unexpected challenges faced by Peace Corps Volunteers in their efforts to implement microfinance opportunities in Cameroon?
3. What are some lessons we can learn from the struggles that Peace Corps Volunteers found in successfully meeting their goals in Cameroon?
4. What are some policies that microfinance institutions can adopt in order to keep the needs of the client centered in their efforts?
5. What are some ways to measure the effectiveness of microfinance initiatives in reducing poverty in the short term?
6. How can long-term impacts of microfinance initiatives be measured?

Case Studies for Exploration:

[Report](#) on the impact of the PROCAJA Green line microfinance project in Panama.

[Video](#) account of a refugee woman's experience with microfinance in Panama (the video is in Spanish but is subtitled in English).

[Village Savings and Loan Association in Ghana](#)

This case study includes both quantitative and qualitative data collected from a Village Savings and Loan (VSLA) program in some of the poorest cocoa producing districts in Ghana. Read the case study and discuss the quantitative and qualitative data reported. If you were assessing the success of this project going forward, what other types of data might you look for? What are some factors that might obscure the impact of the VSLA program, and how would you compensate for those in your study?

The Impact of Village Savings and Loan Associations on the Lives of Rural Women Pro Resilience Action (PROACT) project, Nigeria Oxfam [Case Studies](#).

The Role of Village Savings and Loan Associations in Poverty Graduation Programs: [A Process Analysis](#).

Investigations for Student Research Topics:

- Using the [Peace Corps Savings and Loan training simulation as a guide](#), have students create a shorter version of a microfinance simulation that could be completed in one or two class periods. Run the simulation with your class and discuss its strengths and weaknesses as a training exercise.
- *Comparative Analysis*: Have students select two microfinance projects to research so that they can compare and contrast the effectiveness of each. Students should lay out what best practices for microfinance they can identify from the analysis and the assigned readings, as well as suggest solutions for various challenges faced in this setting.
- Write a proposal for a method of evaluating the impact of microfinance initiatives in small communities in an emerging nation. Describe your data collection methods (surveys, interviews, secondary data analysis, etc.). Outline the analysis methods you would use. Discuss any ethical considerations and how you will address them. Explain why your model would effectively measure and analyze the impact of microfinance initiatives.

Module Four: Implicit Bias, Neo-Imperialism, and International Aid

Readings:

Busch, David S. "[Service Learning: The Peace Corps, American Higher Education, and the Limits of Modernist Ideas of Development and Citizenship.](#)" *History of Education Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2018): 475–505.

Dirjahn, Vernon R. "[The Peace Corps in Sierra Leone.](#)" *Challenge*, 12, no. 8 (May 1964): 16–19.

Gautam, Kul Chandra. "A host country perspective from Nepal. Remarks from July 2020 global ideals summit: Peace Corps Connect to the Future." *National Peace Corps Association*. Accessed 13 March 2024.

Moore, Miranda. "[Why the Peace Corps' Mission Is Needed Now More Than Ever.](#)" *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 2021.

Netabay, Nuredin. "[When Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clash: Can Both Prevail Together?](#)" *Beyond Intractability*. Accessed 20 February 2024.

Siekmeier, James F. "[A Sacrificial Llama? The Expulsion of the Peace Corps from Bolivia in 1971.](#)" *Pacific Historical Review*, 69, no. 1 (February 2000): 65–97.

Class Discussion Questions:

1. Explain the concept of "global solidarity, not charity," as advocated by Kul Chandra Gautam, former deputy director of UNICEF, who was taught by Peace Corps Volunteers as a child in Nepal. How might this agree with and/or counter the traditional approach of the Peace Corps? According to the article, what other traditions should the Peace Corps consider updating?
2. Consider Bolivia's expulsion of the Peace Corps in 1971. What geopolitical factors influenced this decision? What role did neo-imperialism or the perception of neo-imperialism play in the relationship between the Peace Corps and Bolivian leadership?
3. In the *Smithsonian Magazine* article, the author references the "paternalistic approach" of the Peace Corps. How does this approach reflect implicit bias? How does it reflect colonial and imperialist legacies regarding geopolitics?

4. What power dynamics exist within international aid systems, including the Peace Corps? What can be done to shift power dynamics? What can be done to improve equity and parity regarding Volunteers and individuals they work with in the host countries?
5. What methods can be used to address implicit bias with Peace Corps Volunteers?
6. What is the role of colonialism and neo-colonialism in the countries that the Peace Corps and other international aid organizations serve?
7. What are equitable organizational structures that demonstrate a break from neo-colonialist structures of work and power dynamics? How can international aid organizations, including the Peace Corps, shift toward equitable programming and leadership?

Cases for Exploration:

Amin, Julius A. "[United States Peace Corps Volunteers in Guinea: A case study of US-African relations during the cold war.](#)" *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 16, no 2 (September 21, 2007): 197–226.

Arnold, Amy. "A participatory approach in practice: Lessons from a Peace Corps experience." M.A. Thesis, University of Wyoming, May 2008. 118 pp.

Hallgren, William. "[Peace Corps Volunteers: Personal Story of In-Service Training Linked with Community Capacity Development in Mali.](#)" *MEAS HRD Case Study Series*, No. 6 (January 2013). *Feed the Future: The U.S. Government's Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative*.

Office of the Inspector General (OIG). "[Peace Corps: A Case Study of Effective Peace Corps Programs: The Counterparts' Perspective in Honduras, Panama, and Paraguay.](#)" September 2006. Accessed 25 March 2024.

Watson, Marcus D. "[Experiencing Development: Corporeal Tensions and Grassroots Development in South Africa's Limpopo Province.](#)" Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 2009. Accessed 25 March 2024.

Investigative Topics for Student Research:

- *The Effectiveness of International Aid:* A challenge to international aid, historically, has been the continued need for it. Even well-planned programs often require continued dependence upon outside aid providers. In what ways could the Peace Corps contribute to the creation of models that end national

dependence on outsiders? In short, could the Peace Corps create systems and models that would, ultimately, mean that the Peace Corps's economic development work would no longer be needed, allowing the agency to focus exclusively on cultural exchange programming? Debate the value, challenges, benefits, and drawbacks of such a system.

- *Neo-Imperialism and International Aid:* Examine the role that the legacies of imperialism and colonialism play in the realities of modern international aid and development work. Assess various organizational approaches and note what organizations seek to acknowledge and address historical abuses. Imagine best practices that aid organizations could put into place that take those historical abuses into account and integrate restorative approaches with opportunities for realistic reparations through the establishment of progressive aid approaches.
- *Implicit Bias and Volunteer Placement:* Investigate the presence of implicit bias in the assignment and placement of Peace Corps Volunteers. Analyze the factors that may influence these decisions, such as cultural background, language proficiency, and regional preferences. Assess the impact of implicit bias on the effectiveness of Volunteer projects and the Volunteers' ability to engage with diverse communities.
- *Implicit Bias and Volunteer Training:* Examine the effectiveness of current Peace Corps training programs in addressing and mitigating implicit bias among Volunteers. Evaluate the content and methods used in cultural sensitivity training. Assess the impact of this training on Volunteers' awareness and ability to recognize and address their own biases. Explore best practices for incorporating culturally responsive training as a strategy for reducing the influence of implicit bias in international aid work.