

TRAINING



Language, Skill and Service: The Education of a Volunteer

PEACE CORPS

COVER PHOTO—Above all else, training is a continual give-and-take of ideas and experiences. Issues and events are discussed, not accepted, as everyone shares in the training process.

Photo by Donald Livingston



Roughing it: Whether they needed it or not, early trainees learned how to survive on hiking treks, as these trainees headed for Brazil did in New Mexico. Page 4.

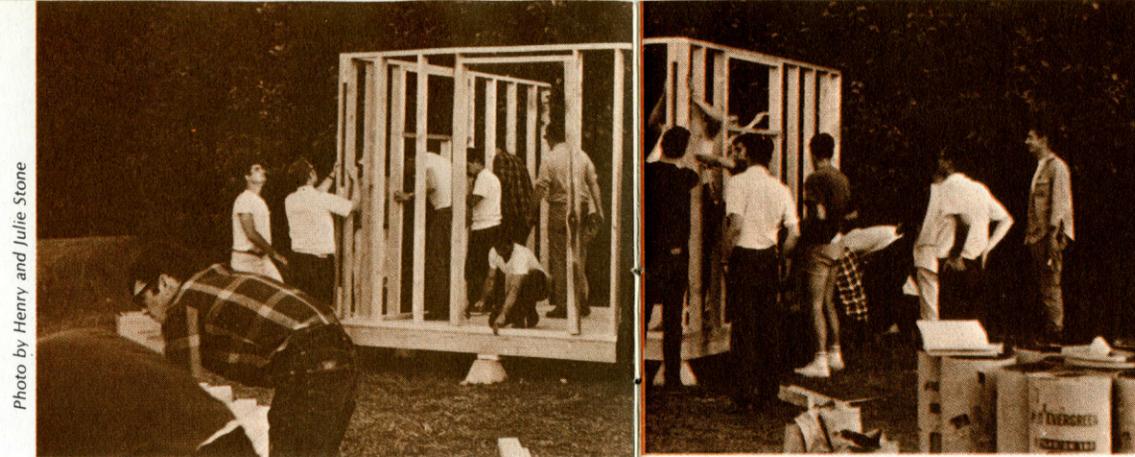


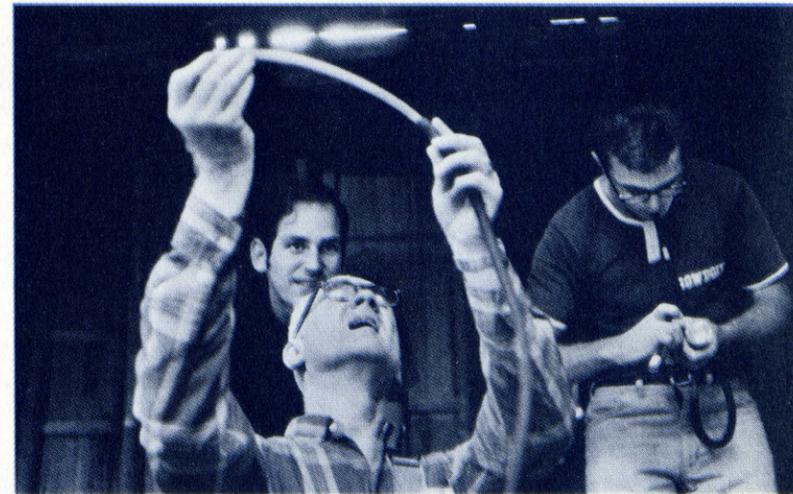
Photo by Henry and Julie Stone

Skills: These Chile-bound trainees learned how to build homes for a self-help housing project. They built 11 houses in the first three days of training. Page 11.

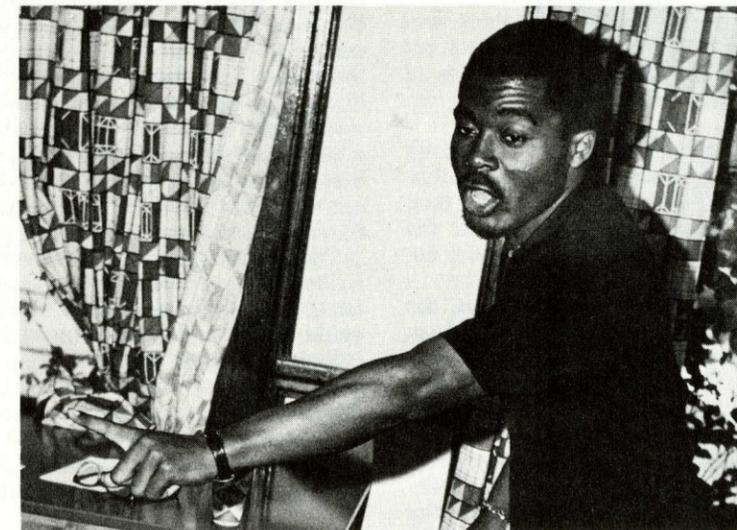


Photo by James Archambeault

Crossing cultures: This Philippine-bound trainee tries out his newly learned folk dancing on an Hawaiian audience. His partner is his language teacher. Page 12.



In-country: Malaria eradication trainees bound for the Philippines hunt infected mosquitos in the most logical setting, a Philippine barrio. Page 6.



Language: Personal instruction is the most productive method. It is intense, demanding, challenging—and emotionally satisfying. Page 8.



Training staff: Although one trainee called her program “wacky,” the formula proved inspired: long hours, hard work, intense study, frustration, embarrassment—and determined teachers. Page 14.

PREPARATION

A Process of ‘Learning to Learn’ the Peace Corps Way

Several thousand young Americans go through training each year to become Peace Corps Volunteers. It is a difficult task requiring patience, wisdom and compassion—and a great deal of practical expertise.

The Peace Corps believes it has come a long way from the early training programs, described in embarrassing terms by an official who helped steer training through those difficult times:

“A small band of hand-picked trainees went to a half-dozen colleges where they embarked upon a vague

academic program which had been described over the telephone and in Peace Corps literature in glowing terms. The Volunteers’ first experience with what we call culture shock may well have occurred at the training site on opening day. They did push-ups in the morning, had three vitamin-packed meals a day, ran through the selection gamut, were pummeled, punctured, and tested. Presto! We had instant Volunteers who knew a little about their destination, had a lot of guts and a remarkable spirit, but not much more know-how than

when they started.”

Nearly all the first Peace Corps programs were held on a college campus. They began and ended there, with breaks from classroom lectures sometimes taking them no farther than the lawn behind the building.

Today, one is more likely to encounter trainees on an Indian reservation, in a classroom in Quebec, in a city slum, or in a village in Ghana. The potential Volunteer is learning by tasting, feeling and smelling the environment in which he will spend his next two years.

Experimentation is the key to Peace Corps training programs, because the agency is operating in unexplored areas. The techniques for educating Americans to live and work in a foreign society are still uncertain. What any particular Peace Corps program develops might become a precedent, and fair game for alteration in a subsequent program.

The Peace Corps has known since its inception that the preparation of a Volunteer is a unique educational experience. How the Peace Corps teaches is just as essential as what it

teaches.

A great need today, says a prominent educator, “is to enable an individual to find his own voice, to speak with it, to stand by it. . . . The new education program of the Peace Corps promises to assist Volunteers in finding their voices, just as the Peace Corps promises to assist people overseas to find their voices.”

Training, then, becomes an attempt to combine the “remarkable spirit” that Volunteers have always shown with the proper know-how they will need to live and work effectively

in a different culture. It is an effort to teach an individual to speak well enough to carry on a meaningful conversation in one or more foreign languages; to learn a skill that will enable him to fit productively into that society, and to develop insights about himself that will help him understand his motivations and actions and accept those of others as expressions of self just as valid as his own.

It is, says one Peace Corps official, most of all “a process of learning to learn.”

PROLOGUE

From Early Confusion, Some Promising Gains

More than 33,000 Volunteers have served in the Peace Corps since that day in June, 1961, when the first trainees arrived at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey—81 Americans eager to become community development workers in Colombia.

What to prepare them for, though, and how to do it, was an immediate problem. "We had embarked upon a program for training Volunteers with neither a syllabus nor a curriculum," says one of the agency's early planners, "just a lot of ideas and a few fundamental principles. Like a patchwork quilt, training programs were pieced and scraped together for those early contingents; programs to prepare young, middle-aged and older Americans for tours of duty in vastly different cultures under conditions with which few of them were familiar."

The first attempts at training people who were both excited and apprehensive were carried out in the dark. No one knew for certain what the particular demands of life overseas would be for the Volunteer. At the time, it seemed logical to follow patterns already prevalent in education, so contracts were arranged with many colleges and universities to train the Volunteers.

But by training almost exclusively on the campus the Peace Corps became locked into the tradition of forced learning by classroom and lecture presentation, and taught by people, it soon became apparent, who often did not know what life would be like for the Volunteers.

Also, because of the vision of a rough, demanding existence, the agency believed hard physical training was necessary. Many trainees went through "Outward Bound" sites,

where they learned to climb mountains, survive in water with their hands and feet tied, find their way through foreboding forests, camp out for several days with a minimum of provisions, and forage for their survival.

One educator involved in early training projects said, "The philosophy of Peace Corps training then was to separate the men from the boys. It was a testing experience, not a learning experience."

It wasn't long, though, before the first Volunteers began reporting from the field, and a more realistic portrait slowly took shape. What the Volunteers had to say about the reality of their work, the special nature of a Volunteer, and the day-to-day intellectual and emotional demands gradually began to transform training. The staff found out what it was like to be a Volunteer, so they knew what they would have to tell future trainees.

One of the first and most essential lessons learned was that training, like the Volunteer himself, must be flexible. Every situation abroad is different, so every training program has to be different. This ability to adjust to changing conditions has served the Peace Corps well, but it has posed an educational burden at times. A successful technique in one program often cannot be applied elsewhere. It is almost impossible to devise general rules to govern all training. Each staff has to come up with new approaches.

It was apparent, too, that the Peace Corps would have to reassess its relationship with universities. Rather than scatter programs among many schools, the agency developed deeper relationships with a few. The most extensive has been with the University of Hawaii, where a year-round staff,

most of them former Peace Corps staff people and Volunteers, handles training for many Asian countries. The Peace Corps draws on people and programs there and at other schools for expert guidance in training for special regions.

A major advance in the last two years has been the establishment of six Peace Corps training centers, known as "in-house" sites. There are two camps each in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, one in Escondido, California, and one in Micronesia, the first Peace Corps training camp overseas.

Consonant with the establishment of these special centers has been a move away from the physical presence of the campus in search of "realistic" settings in this country. If a Volunteer is to work among relatively poor people in impoverished areas, if he is to learn to understand people different from himself, if he is to realize whether he can make the necessary adjustments—then it is essential for him and the Peace Corps that he find out what it will be like before he is thrown into the actual situation.

Thus, a trainee being prepared at California State College in Los Angeles for a program in the Dominican Republic will live for two weeks in a village in Mexico. Other trainees are likely to find themselves living in a city slum or on an Indian reservation, teaching in a school in Quebec where only French is spoken, working in a factory, spending time in a village in

Puerto Rico, or being trained at least part of the time actually in the country to which he is assigned.

As the Peace Corps has learned more about the ingredients that make a successful Volunteer, it has been able to make adjustments in other areas.

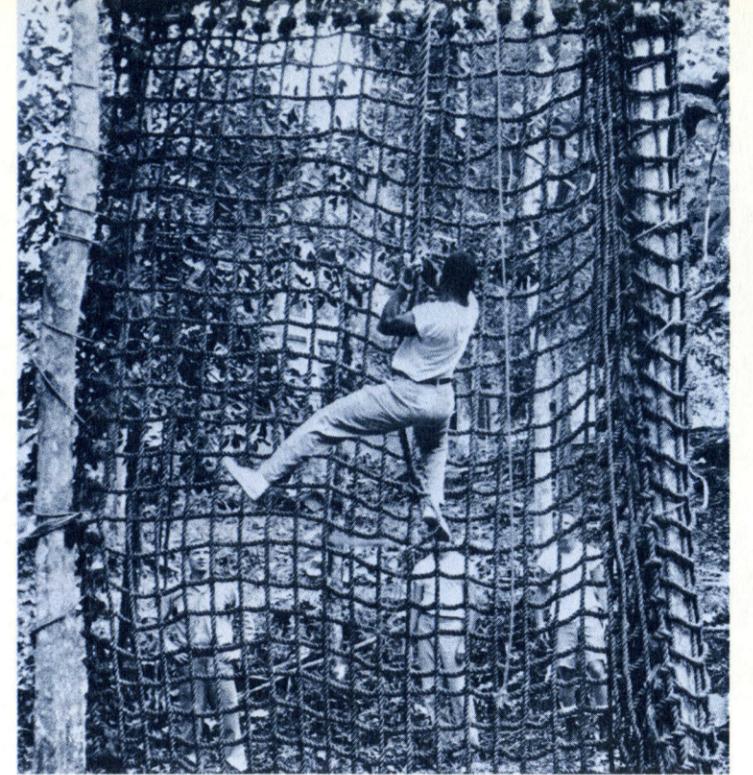
Volunteers reported from the beginning that no other aspect of their program was so directly correlated with success than language training. So the number of languages taught and the time spent teaching them have been increased.

The Volunteers discovered they needed a solid foundation in technical training, and the agency realized that many Volunteers lacked the skills most in demand by the host countries. Whether such skills, from teaching to brick-laying to co-op organizing, could be taught effectively in a brief time became a major question. The answer has been a resounding yes.

The ability to understand other people, and live in a different culture with a minimum of friction and frustration, is not as simple as many people thought. The Peace Corps devised many methods of preparing people for such an experience.

Realistic training sites, language, skills, cultural studies—these areas are emphasized in training because time has proven success to be dependent on a solid grounding in all of them. How the Peace Corps approaches such challenges is the real story behind its success.

A pause in the trail was a welcome respite to these young people in training for Brazil. The forest area is in the Pecos River wilderness near Santa Fe, N.M.



This trainee, 1961-style, has just swung across a stream and now will climb the cargo net. Such hard, physical activity, once common though not required, is rarely seen in Peace Corps training today.



In the Peace Corps' first years, training often was little more than an extension of the classroom. Lectures still are used, but sparingly, and as supplements to more realistic preparation.



Photo by James Archambeault

In the Philippines, trainees preparing to work with rice farmers learn the techniques. Here they practice hand threshing.

Moving training into more realistic settings was a bold step for the Peace Corps. It has proved a wise one, for in such situations many trainees are able to discover more readily whether they are able to live and work for two years abroad.

But even more real is the host country itself, a fact the Peace Corps has recognized by scheduling an increasing number of programs actually in the countries to which the trainees are assigned. In the summer of 1968, more than half of all Peace Corps trainees spent at least part of their training time in-country. Seven programs were trained entirely overseas.

"In-country training may well be the answer to many of the most vexing problems of preparing people from this culture to work effectively overseas," says Alexander Shakow, a former Peace Corps training director.

The significance of such a setting cannot be realized fully until one experiences it. A trainee quickly discovers that no matter how many lectures, discussions, seminars, books and con-

versations he has gone through, he will not appreciate what it is like to be a Volunteer until he has lived like one.

"They are taking a harder look at themselves than they have ever done in their life," says a country director of Peace Corps trainees in-country. "They have to come to grips and face reality. They are stripped of any artificial props or scheduling. They have to stand alone. They have to face things. They have to make decisions. They have to have some confidence. It is an experience for them that is geared to the role of the Volunteer, what he is in reality."

The experience helps minimize "culture shock," which is still a formidable obstacle to most Volunteers. Contrary to the nature of the phrase itself, "culture shock" usually is not sudden and explosive. To be sure, an occasional Volunteer hesitantly looks around the country for a few days and decides to return home. (One, in fact, never left the airport after he arrived, but took the next plane back to the

States.)

Usually, though, what happens is a succession of small things, many unnoticed and occurring over a period of time, that bring on the depression so common to Volunteers: The loneliness of a strange land and people. The fumbblings with the language. The misunderstood gesture. The unintended insult. The constant pressure to be aware of every word and movement. In sum, the strangeness of one's surroundings and the inability to escape the frustration of dealing with them makes living a steady battle for emotional survival.

By being in-country as a trainee, an individual has a chance to experience all of this without the specter of failure. He discovers what will be demanded of him while he still has recourse to a staff that can help him judge and learn from his experience.

The trainee benefits by being freed from the pressure of learning in the field, where there may not be a second chance. The Peace Corps gains because it gets Volunteers who can es-

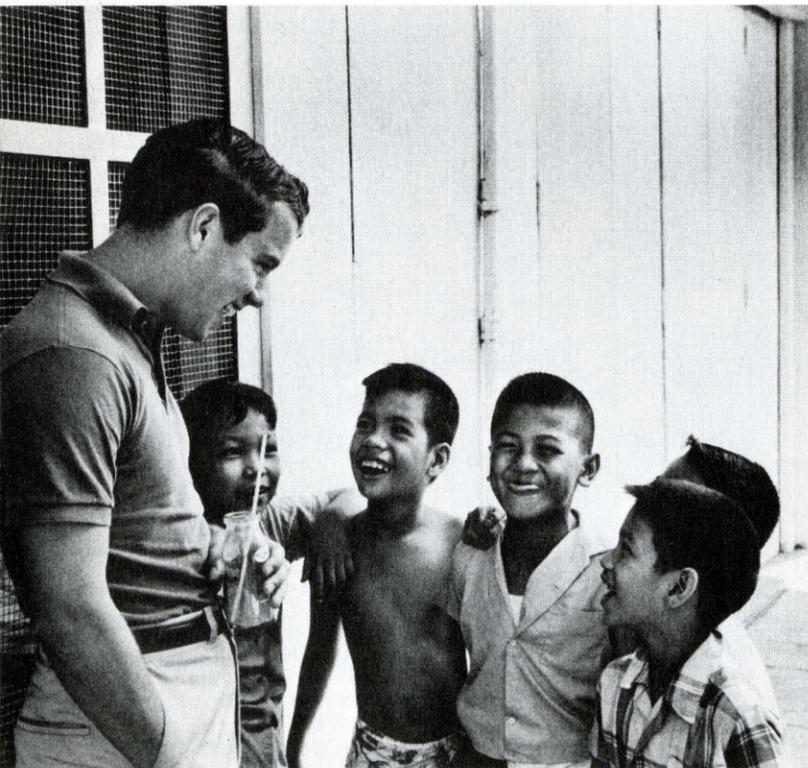
tablish themselves more quickly, and thus have a longer span of time in which to be productive.

The entire process helps give the overseas staff a closer look at the people they will work with. It is thus easier for them to make site assignments, further easing the Volunteer's entrance into the country.

Training in the country of assignment makes the learning process easier, too. The training staff makes use of host country nationals, either as language teachers or cultural informants. (In the Philippines, for example, each trainee in a malaria eradication program was assigned a young Filipino student as a constant companion, teacher and guide to the language, customs and daily living habits of the people there.)

But then, almost everyone the trainee comes in contact with in-country is a teacher. The simplest act, like shopping, becomes an indelible educational experience. How he makes use of it all will determine his success.

Simple contacts with the people provide a good learning experience that cannot be duplicated. This trainee meets neighborhood children in Manila.



REALISM

Living Like a Volunteer Increases Effectiveness

These malaria-eradication trainees are on a field trip learning where to find and how to identify infectious mosquitos. It could be done only in the Philippines.



Photo by Henry and Julie Stone



Trainees in Chile study various forms of domestic skills needed in their work in community development. Here, they try knitting.

Sophisticated language labs are common. Scores of tapes are available to these French West Africa trainees at Dartmouth College.



This group learns Spanish from an instructor speaking to them through individual, transistorized headsets.

Language instruction takes many forms, each reinforcing the others. In Micronesia, small groups are drilled by host country nationals.



COMMUNICATION

Undoing the Notion of the Tongue-Tied American

Communication is essential for a successful overseas experience. If a Volunteer wants to know and help people, he must be able to talk with them.

The Peace Corps has made significant progress in meeting this deceptively simple challenge. Techniques in language teaching developed by the agency are being adopted by established linguists and academicians. In the past three years, the Peace Corps has spent more than \$1,000,000 for language material development. Many of the languages now spoken by Volunteers never were taught before in the country; some were never taught beyond the tribe. More than 50 universities helped develop the language texts, providing many scholars with rare opportunities for field work. The same texts now are being used by universities and other government agencies in their regular courses of instruction.

In 1961 the Peace Corps taught 15 languages; in 1968 it taught more than 150. The agency has become the largest language training institution in the country, and the biggest producer and user of language training materials.

That the Peace Corps is able to teach a language—and sometimes two

—in the space of 12 weeks is testament to its professionalism and high trainee motivation. In the first years, however, instruction was limited to about 100 hours, and ability to speak the language was poor. Now, Volunteers receive a minimum of 300 hours in the standard 12-week training program, as much as 550 hours in some cases.

Many faculty members have used their experience in training programs to alter their approach to the regular curriculum in their schools. Dartmouth, for example, has trained Volunteers since the Peace Corps began. As a result, the school now is introducing intensive French and Spanish courses that call for 14 hours of class work a week, enabling students to complete their language requirements in no more than two trimesters.

In addition, Dartmouth plans to offer freshmen a one-month, high-intensity course in French. Allan M. Kulakow, director of language training for the Peace Corps, says: "Imagine the boon to language instruction if college students could learn to speak a language in four to six weeks well enough to begin literature courses!"

A major difference between Peace Corps language instruction and that

used in colleges and universities is the agency's emphasis on oral proficiency. Volunteers learn to speak and understand what is spoken to them, not to read as such. They learn through what is known as the audio-lingual method.

The emphasis in a training program, therefore, is on speaking the language. Rather than stressing vocabulary, teachers encourage trainees to learn basic structural forms that correlate closely with the spoken, instead of the literary, language. Constant practice involves actual dialogues rather than memorization of word lists.

The most crucial difference, however, is the intensity of language instruction in the Peace Corps. The agency is making greater use of the high-intensity method now, which is simply a solid month of "language only" at the start of the training program. For six days a week, eight hours a day, the trainee studies and speaks the new language. He is urged, and sometimes required, to speak only this language the rest of the time. (It also is called the "language saturation technique.")

Trainees respond vigorously to the demands of the intensified method. In a recent program in which Swahili

and Luganda were taught, the trainees spoke these languages exclusively at meals. The visiting Deputy Director of the Peace Corps, under the rules of the program, had to eat in a separate room because he couldn't speak either language—and the trainees weren't about to revert to English for his sake.

At Dartmouth College, one young man was injured in a soccer game and taken to a local hospital to have a slight wound treated. When the nurse asked him routine questions, he replied only in French. A staff member had to translate.

The results of such intense learning have been impressive. Dr. John B. Carroll of the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, recently compared the level reached by Peace Corps trainees in several high intensity programs with oral ability of selected college language majors in a study for Harvard University. Of 2,784 seniors tested, 2,604 had an average listening and speaking proficiency in French and Spanish after four years that was comparable to the level attained by the trainees, who had spent only four weeks in learning the language. He also concluded that the intensity of the Peace Corps program, plus its emphasized use of

the language by trainees, builds a foundation for growth in the language.

Much, of course, depends on the language teachers and the manner in which they present the materials. Nearly all teachers either come from the country for which Volunteers are being trained, or at least from an area in which the language is spoken extensively. The few who do not are returned Volunteers who are particularly fluent in the language.

Morning hours usually are used for introduction and drilling of new material and afternoons for review, with "reality" activity, which includes role-playing and "action scripts," structured into or supplementing the lesson at the language coordinator's discretion.

Role-playing often requires the trainee to play the role of a host country national or an American interacting with him in a real-life situation. In action scripts, trainees perform a task and then explain their actions.

There usually are several daily breaks, for relaxation. A few programs used language labs. One program even changed classroom locations three times a day for variety.

"The important thing," says Kula-
koff, "is to have a variety of inter-

esting, relevant and pedagogically productive learning activities in a training environment that promotes use of the language outside of class in meaningful contexts."

In a recent program for the Dominican Republic, the language coordinator divided language training into three levels: routine drilling, other practice in grammar and structure, and free-for-all discussions. In the latter, trainees simply discussed whatever topics came to mind, practical and philosophical, always in Spanish.

If two languages have to be taught—such as French and Hausa for Niger or Spanish and Quechua for Peru—the trainees start with high-intensity in French or Spanish. At the end of that month's preparation, they begin the second language.

Volunteers are urged to continue their language studies overseas, for even the best-trained may not necessarily be fluent in the language. Although Volunteers learn and improve simply by talking with people they live and work among, more structured efforts are made to help Volunteers progress toward fluency. In a few countries the Peace Corps has set up language programs under the direction of a full-time specialist. These

persons find and train teachers in the villages where Volunteers live, arrange intensive seminars during holiday periods, provide texts and supervise testing.

All language training programs attempt to teach Volunteers how to continue studying on their own. One approach consists of detailed suggestions on how to work with unwritten languages and with native speakers who have no experience in teaching, and on how to write one's own simple but effective lessons.

A long-range effect of the Peace Corps' work with languages is the experience of the Volunteer. For the first time, thousands of young Americans are learning and using languages that only a handful of students, if any, used to learn. Many Volunteers are returning to do graduate work in linguistics, with teaching careers in mind; 20 are at the University of Indiana alone.

"The great asset which these Volunteers have, from the point of view of the university," says Kulakow, "is their prior speaking proficiency and extensive first-hand familiarity with the culture in which these languages are still living languages." A few Volunteers already are teaching at the college level; some have written new language text materials.

The main purpose of language training in the Peace Corps, however, remains its usefulness in helping the Volunteer perform effectively overseas. "When you get down here," said one Volunteer in Bolivia, "things are different, things are new, and you're not quite sure of the situations. If you do have the language you can compensate for a lot, because you feel more comfortable in the situation."

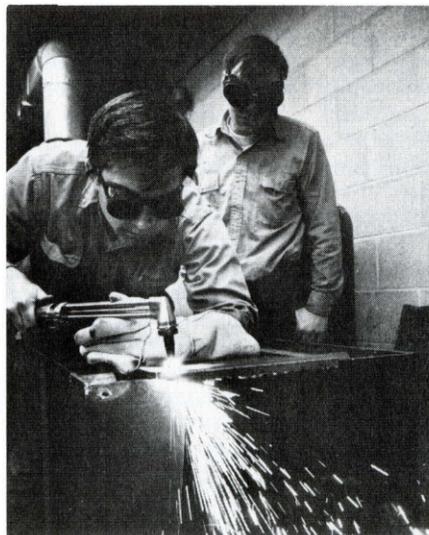
The simple act of communication has many benefits, for both the Volunteer and the people he lives among. There is a rippling effect when a Volunteer arrives at his assignment and approaches not with guidebook in hand but with a strong command of the people's language.

"One basic characteristic of the 'ugly American' is being erased by the Volunteer: He is no longer tongue-tied," says Kulakow. "Peace Corps Volunteers are trained to speak as equals with people throughout the world who remember too well the disdain and deprecation expressed in the linguistic ethno-centrism of the old colonial powers."



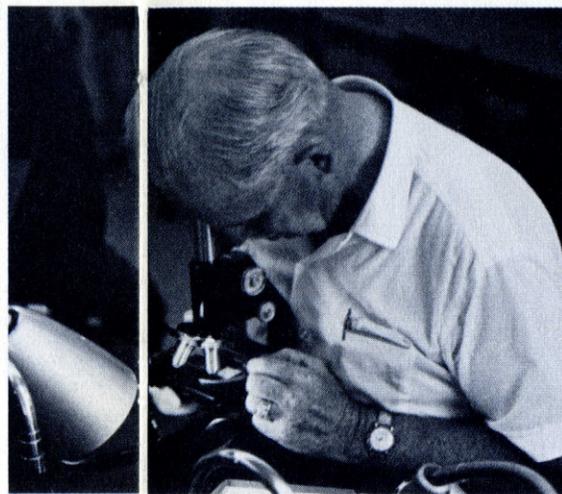
Public health is an essential need in many areas of the world. The Peace Corps has established clinics in several nations, including this one in the Bolivian Andes.

'What Can I Do in Peace Corps?' Answer May Be Learning of New



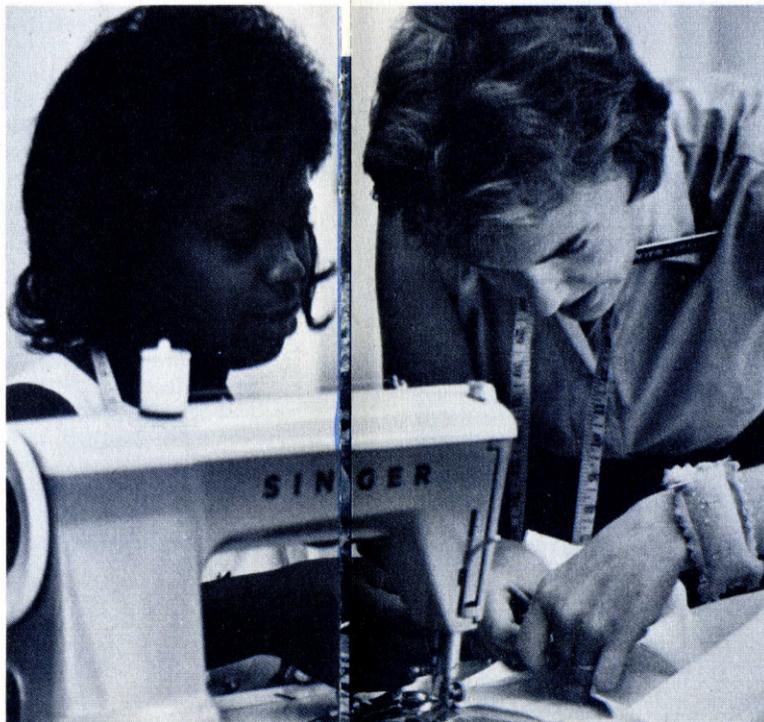
These trainees will help West African mechanics maintain heavy earth-moving machinery. The Peace Corps can train for many specialized skills. Here, it is vertical welding.

Several doctors have served as Volunteers. Highly trained and with extensive experience, they still must study the needs of underdeveloped countries.



SKILL

These girls are training in New Mexico for Brazil. Because they will work with women in their assigned countries, they have to learn such skills as sewing.



When the Peace Corps began, it was hoped that many applicants would already be trained in the skills developing countries need most, especially in teaching, mechanical and technical skills and public health work.

Some were prepared, of course. But most Volunteers have been liberal arts graduates with no particular technical skills. They do have the ability and the desire to learn, however, and these qualities have proved more than enough. The Peace Corps' term for such people is "A.B. Generalists," a label that has become a badge of pride for what they are able to accomplish in skill training in a relatively brief training period.

There was some anxiety at first as to whether the Peace Corps could provide these people with the know-how to perform the tasks foreign nations wanted accomplished. Some people still say it can't be done.

But the Peace Corps is not being asked to develop experts, because most of the jobs that need to be done are fairly elementary. An individual with high proficiency in a particular skill may find himself overtrained for what he is asked to do overseas, and the resulting frustration can be deep and lasting.

Thus, the generalist is well-suited for the types of work the Peace Corps is asked to perform. Intelligent, imaginative, innovative, conscientious, quick-learning, flexible—these are the qualities needed more than expert knowledge. The latter can be taught; the other qualities must come from within the individual.

A philosophy major may wonder what the Peace Corps can teach him, and how effectively it can do the job, in a 12-week period already crammed with language courses, cultural studies and a series of seminars, discussions, field trips and bull sessions.

Time, and repeated success, has provided the guidelines. Consider, for example, trainees being prepared for a public works program: The Peace Corps has learned that it takes from 150 to 200 hours to teach surveying and drafting. The same time is needed for learning how to operate heavy equipment, to build simple bridges and culverts, and to be a brick or stone mason. Such skills as carpentry, sheet-metal construction, roofing and

cement and concrete work take less time: from 100 to 150 hours.

Many Volunteers find that their most effective work is done in helping people set up or improve businesses, small industries or cooperatives. Some may shy away from such work, thinking that an innate "business sense" or refined skills in management are needed, but many Volunteers with no previous business experience have been very successful in this work.

If a special "business sense" is needed, it may not be as elusive as some people think. Accounting can be taught in from 100 to 150 hours; marketing in from 150 to 200. Production control takes longer, from 300 to 400 hours. More technical work, such as electrical installation and the repair of electrical equipment, essential to many small industries, can be taught in from 300 to 400 hours.

There are more Volunteers in teaching than in any other single type of work, and most of these have not taught before. About a third never took education courses, because they hadn't thought of being teachers.

Because of the many intangibles involved, the art of teaching is difficult to learn. But the success of Volunteers overseas, and the many teaching jobs open to them when they return, have demonstrated the value of the Peace Corps experience for teachers.

Training staffs have to be flexible, because the type of teacher needed determines the time spent in training and the form that training takes. The same techniques cannot be used for elementary, secondary, university and vocational-arts teachers. Usually, however, little time is spent on theory. Practical experience in the classroom is emphasized, with the time spent in practice teaching varying with the requirements of the job.

Evaluators of a public-health program in Malawi recently noted of generalists: "It can be said that well-selected generalists can be trained to perform almost any field-type of procedure that might be seen in a public health program, providing certain precautions are taken.... They do have enthusiasm and pride in their achievements and an excitement that gives an aura of discovery and adventure to the entire project."



In Hawaii's Waipio Valley, trainees headed for the Philippines learn a complex dance in which they must step in and out of bamboo poles slapped rapidly together.

UNDERSTANDING

Learning How to Cross the Culture Boundary

There is a dual purpose to what the Peace Corps calls "cross-cultural understanding." Essentially, it is an attempt to get the trainee to understand the customs, values and thought patterns of the country to which he is assigned.

"We have to de-activate the action-orientated American," says Jules Pagano, former director of training, "and turn him into a slower mover who accepts the habits of other, different people. Tolerance is an applicable concept in any part of the world. . . . Americans may come to believe that priorities other than our own have validity."

But there is another prerequisite, too: "To develop honest communication and a base for friendship between people of diverse cultures," he adds, "there must be some self-analysis, some coming to terms with the whys and wherefores of American attitudes."

Thus, a trainee cannot fully understand others until he knows himself. How this is accomplished is what makes the implementation of the ideas of tolerance and comprehension difficult.

An Education Task Force, set up by the Peace Corps in 1965 to examine training and the entire educational process implicit in the Peace Corps, developed the guidelines that affect

every training program.

"Instead of a fragmented curriculum," the task force reported, "there must be intercultural comparative studies of issues such as race here and caste abroad, poverty in Appalachia and in the Andes, the sources of American or Nigerian thought, considered and compared in the context of the problems a Volunteer will face."

It is essential to have people on the training staff who are familiar with the country for which the trainees are being prepared. Host country nationals usually are included, most often as language teachers. Returned Volunteers and staff members from the country are available. Guest speakers with intimate knowledge of the country and its political, sociological and anthropological make-up are used. Trainees can draw upon these basic resources for both the broad picture and the little details they will have to know.

Techniques for acquiring the right knowledge range from the lecture (which is used sparingly; seminars have proved more valuable) to role-playing, where a trainee is asked to act out a situation he may find himself in.

Field trips and in-country training have great impact. Any illusions an individual has as to what his host country is like or how he can react to

its citizens must be erased before he enters the field as a Volunteer. He must know what he is capable of—mentally, physically and emotionally. He must know whether he can live intimately for two years in another culture and not denigrate its values nor try to impose his upon it. He must learn to appreciate other people for what they are and what they believe; through this broadening of his awareness of others, he will understand himself better.

"Cross-cultural studies," says Pagano, "provide a comparison, a contrast between attitudes, mannerisms, traditions and language that show the Volunteer how he can submerge part of himself but not lose his total identity in his new environment while assimilating its way of life. He learns how to acclimate himself to a new experience, do his job, and plant the seeds for social change within the fabric or framework already in existence."

It is a difficult process because the forces at work often are subtle ones, and attitudes so deeply ingrained that they are difficult to understand or change. It is a process that takes a long time to master, and must continue throughout one's service as a Volunteer. The grounding for realization of such goals occurs in the cross-cultural sessions.



THE STAFF

Sharing Ideas, Facts, Enthusiasm

"The most important element in any training program is its staff," says Shakow. "Good staff leadership can make the difference between success and failure overseas; good staff are even more critical to good training."

The job of the training staff, as stated by the Education Task Force, seems simple enough: "The training programs must concentrate on starting processes of learning that will continue throughout two years."

No training officer will disagree with this. Says Alan F. White, director of the University of Hawaii's Peace Corps Training Center at Hilo: "We

Games may be fun in training, and perhaps a little silly. But this trainee also is gaining a small but helpful insight into the ways of the Philippines.

try to set conditions so the trainee can be more aware of the culture to which he is going, so he can learn certain skills in learning, so he can actually begin to learn a language. We test their service motivation. A trainee has to have commitment to the Peace Corps. He has to be interested in some way in the ideals of the Peace Corps."

More basic tasks are required in pursuit of these goals, however, and it is the staff's job to see that the elementary functions are performed efficiently.

Language instructors are host country nationals, or native speakers. Cultural and technical studies staff have first-hand knowledge of the country, and expert knowledge of the skill. Psychologists are on hand for counseling. And returned Volunteers are available as general resource people to field the myriad questions about the life of a Volunteer.

Ideally, everyone shares in the teaching process. Language teachers and returned Volunteers help in cultural studies. Depending on the technical training necessary, various people on the staff may be able to help teach the required skills. Sometimes the staff is able to call on experienced trainees to help teach.

Everyone from language teachers to returned Volunteers is involved in the planning of a program, and shares equally in its evaluation as the weeks progress. Attempts are made to bring in the trainees, too, so that decisions about the effectiveness of any particular phase of the program can be made after deliberations by those involved.

Of all the elements of a good training program—superior teaching, efficient planning, proper environment for learning—perhaps the most important is the attitudes that develop between the staff and trainees.

One trainee calls it "an atmosphere of trust." Others—trainees, Volunteers and staff alike—have emphasized mutual respect and concern. It all adds up to a recognition that a good training program basically is a sharing of knowledge, ideas and enthusiasm.

A frequent and valuable source of information on a nation is a host country national. West Africa trainees at Dartmouth settle down for a session with a visiting lecturer.



Photo by James Archambeault

REACTION

'It Was Wacky,' Said One Trainee Who Describes How She Prevailed

Few training programs are alike. The varying demands of the many Peace Corps projects require differing approaches in training. An indication of what training can be like, however, is evident in this account of her program by Sandy Thomas, a 1964 graduate of Miami (Ohio) University who is now a Volunteer in Togo. A former college newspaper editor, Miss Thomas worked for the Dayton Journal-Herald and the public information office of the Peace Corps prior to her Togo assignment in 1966 with a health education project.

It was all wacky right from the start.

Who ever heard of training for African service in the dead of a New Hampshire winter?

For three months we scraped snow from our kneecaps, choked down the worst food east of Los Angeles, mullied over malaria cycles, struggled through light years of French class, psycho-analyzed the psychiatrist, and swore

the Peace Corps was attempting to commit mass murder.

We 50 were without doubt the unhappiest, most rebellious, super-intelligent, omnipotent crew ever to hit the Peace Corps, and we let everyone know it. Why we had to put up with training, of all things, was beyond us. It's an insult, we huffed.

From the first week we had a long, laborious list of complaints that would have made Pollyanna commit hari kari. We were determined to revolutionize training and show those guys in Washington that we could train ourselves.

To begin with, seven hours of French a day, including laboratory work and dialogue memorization, was out of the question. At the end of each day we tumbled into bed muttering disconnected French words, too exhausted to read about health education and Africa, or even to talk to each other. Our conversations became rather limited:

3:25 a.m. Pixie Mary sits upright in

bed.

"Qu'est qui se passe ici?"

"Mary, for God's sake lay down and let us sleep."

"Do you remember where I left the tape recorder?"

"You're dreaming, Mary. Lab isn't until 8 o'clock. Please go to sleep."

Every so often my roommate rose at 6 a.m. to find me snoring on the bathroom floor, huddled against the radiator, my French book clutched to my bosom. I always did study best during the morning hours.

We complained, but we tried to speak French until at times it was embarrassing, even for our instructors. One evening at dinner, while attempting to impress a rather important guest speaker, I tried to express my pleasure at an exceptionally good meal. Mistaking word usage, I calmly announced, to the surprise of the reddening program director and myself, that I was pregnant. It made for interesting dinner table conversation.

As one of those anonymous "AB generalists," French was not my greatest frustration. We were a mixed batch of rural community development workers and medical teams, with six nurses in the group. That meant two to three hours of medical lectures each evening, technical sessions that stymied me. I became discouraged.

But I found great pleasure in exploring the mind of the modern African—studying what created him, what he thinks, what influences him, what his future might be.



Recuperative powers of one Dartmouth group were documented by trainee Norman Skougstad.

Togo during those days was a cardboard country—the “they,” the “people,” the “host nationals” in whom everyone was interested but whom no one knew. More frustrating than not knowing Togolese temperament was the feeling of unpreparedness, for our job was experimental, unexplored. No one could answer our many questions or ease our apprehensions.

Preventive medicine is your goal, they told us. My role as a health educator meant I was to create approaches to communities, determine priorities, and establish programs from scratch—providing I could convince the Africans it would all be worthwhile.

We spent countless afternoons role playing, solving problem situations, teaching health to our fellow trainees, making visual aids, peering at stool specimens, validating statistics, formulating surveys, investigating resources, giving shots, diagnosing diseases—in short, practicing being a Peace Corps Volunteer.

“How are you going to convince this mother the water she gives her children is contaminated?” we were told. “She never heard of a germ. She can’t see those ‘microbes’ you keep talking about. She hasn’t the time to boil the water. And anyway, you’re a white man and things are different for white men and Africans.”

We became committee conscious. We had schedule committees, report committees, question committees, evaluation committees, observation committees, teaching committees, protest committees, recreation committees, potato chip committees, committee committees.

It all seemed to be busy work, and we screamed our bloody heads off. Give us a break; let us breathe. At times we were so impressed with our own voices that we failed to hear what was being said about Togo. Sometimes we just had to learn the hard way.

For months we discussed the importance of first impressions, of demonstrating our respect for African customs and honoring the chief. But you can’t anticipate everything. When my teammate and I arrived in Togo and moved into our village, we immediately violated ethics by greeting the chief and were booted out the next day. Fortunately we were able to salvage the situation, but it could have meant the demise of our project if we hadn’t been able to.

They say training is the most dif-

ficult part of the Peace Corps experience, and I believe every word of it. Yes, we had problems. We howled at staff suggestions and tried all kinds of ideas that seemed totally insane at the time, from kindergarten French playlets to making bricks in the snow.

But how many times have we sat here in our village and said, “Why don’t we try it this way? Remember in training when Joe Schmoe said . . . ?” Or how many times have we rooted through our trunks for training notes, vaguely recalling a cold New Hampshire afternoon when the crazy Dr. What’s-His-Name made a point that might apply to our latest crisis? I can’t even count them.

And the French language. How important is communication? Those chilly mornings on the bathroom floor have paid off.

One afternoon things had become a bit too much for me, and, as female-type Volunteers tend to do once in a while, I had a good cry. Our cook became terribly concerned that I was unhappy in Togo, so he sat me down and gave me an old-fashioned pep talk.

“You see,” said Andre gently, “when you cry we’re unhappy. Life, you know, is like an African house. Sometimes the wind comes strongly and the thatched roof blows off. But in the morning the sun shines, and you can always find a way to repair it.”

The full beauty of his simple parallel is lost in translation. The point is, I understood what he said and could enjoy the color of his expression.

The chief of a nearby town made an interesting observation one afternoon over a beer.

“I’ve discovered the difference between Africans and Europeans,” he said. (European means any white man.) “When an African hears a lion in the forest, he says, ‘There’s a lion in the forest. I must stay in my village.’ But when a European hears the lion, he says, ‘There’s a lion in the forest. Let’s go find him.’”

Perhaps the secret of the Peace Corps is just that, good old curiosity—and a willingness to try anything because it just might work.

I tell you, it’s wacky.

ONE DAY IN A TRAINEE’S LIFE

Training schedules vary from program to program, and quite often within a program. The nature of the Peace Corps demands flexibility, so programs are always being altered to meet the needs of insights gained in the training process.

Some idea of what a day looks like in a training camp, though, can come from this schedule of a recent group being trained in Hawaii in teaching and physical education for Thailand:

- 6:30—language classes
- 7:30—breakfast
- 8:30—language classes
- 10:30—technical training
- 12:30—lunch
- 1:30—language classes
- 3:30—area (cultural) studies
- 5:30—physical education
- 6:00—dinner

The evening schedule varied.

Some nights there would be group discussions, generally from 7:00 to 9:00 or 10:00. Other nights might include seminars or be free. Trainees usually were off from Saturday noon until Monday morning, during which time they could do as they pleased.

Language classes usually are the only required part of a program. Frequent absence at any other time, of course, would lead the staff to question a trainee’s motivation. Many trainees skipping some segment of the program would lead the staff to question the wisdom of that segment.

Practice teaching, laboratory work, field trips, special assignments—all extra parts of the program are planned around the standing schedule, which is used more as a guide than a mandate.

LANGUAGES

Who Speaks What, Where

The Peace Corps has taught more than 150 languages to Volunteers who have served in 65 countries since the agency began in 1961. They are serving now in 59 countries. The following are languages currently being taught. Those marked with an asterisk are taught in the field only.

LANGUAGE	COUNTRY
Aklanon*	Philippines
Amharic	Ethiopia
Arabic (Chadic)	Chad
Arabic (Libyan)	Libya
Arabic (Moroccan)	Morocco
Arabic (Tunisian)	Tunisia
Aymara	Bolivia
Azerbaijan*	Iran
Bahasa Malay (Mainland)	Malaysia
Bambara	Upper Volta
Baoule	Ivory Coast
Bariba	Dahomey
Basa	Cameroon
Bengali	India
Berber*	Morocco
Bete*	Ivory Coast
Bhojpuri*	Nepal
Bicolano	Philippines
Bihari	India
Bini	Nigeria
Bobo*	Upper Volta
Bula	Cameroon
Cabrais	Togo
Cakchiquel	Guatemala
Caribbean Creole	British Honduras
Cebuano	Philippines
Chamorro	Micronesia
Chinese* (several dialects)	Malaysia
Chinyanja	Malawi
Creole	Jamaica
Creole (French)	Windward/Leeward Islands
Dioula	Ivory Coast
Djerma	Niger
Douala	Cameroon
Efik	Nigeria
Ewe	Ghana, Togo
Fante	Ghana
Farsi (Afghan)	Afghanistan
Farsi (Iranian)	Iran
Fijian	Fiji
Fon	Dahomey
French	Cameroon, Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, Upper Volta
Fula	Gambia, Senegal, Sierra Leone
Ga	Ghana
Gourmantche	Upper Volta
Grebo	Liberia
Guarani	Paraguay
Hausa	Ghana, Niger, Nigeria
Hiligaynon	Philippines
Hindi	Fiji, India
Iban*	Malaysia
Igbo	Nigeria
Ilocano	Philippines
Kanembu	Chad
Kannada	India
Kanouri	Niger
Kissi	Liberia, Sierra Leone*
Korean	South Korea
Kotokoli	Togo
Kpelle	Liberia
Kran	Liberia
Krio	Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone
Kru	Liberia
Kuranko*	Sierra Leone
Kusaie	Micronesia
Lao	Thailand
Liberian English	Liberia
Limba*	Sierra Leone
Loma	Liberia
Luganda	Uganda
Magindanao*	Philippines
Maithili*	Nepal
Malayalam	India
Mam	Guatemala
Mandingue	Gambia
Mano	Liberia
Maranao*	Philippines
Marathi	India
Marshallese	Micronesia
Mende	Sierra Leone
Mina	Togo
More	Upper Volta
Nepali	Nepal
Oriya	India
Pampagano	Philippines
Pangasinan	Philippines
Pashto	Afghanistan
Pidgin	Nigeria
Pidgin (Weskos)	Cameroon
Pizar Malay (Sabah/Sarawak)	Malaysia
Ponapean	Micronesia
Portuguese	Brazil
Punjabi	India
Quechua	Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru
Samoan	Western Samoa
Sara	Chad
Sesotho	Lesotho
Sherbro*	Sierra Leone
Singhalese	Ceylon
Somali	Somali Republic
Spanish	Bolivia, British Honduras, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Morocco*, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela
Susu	Sierra Leone
Swahili	Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda
Swazi	Swaziland
Tagalog	Philippines
Tamil	Ceylon, India
Telegu	India
Temne	Sierra Leone
Thai	Thailand
Tharu*	Nepal
Tomacheck*	Niger
Tongan	Tonga
Trukese	Micronesia
Trukese (lagoon dialect)	Micronesia
Tswana	Botswana
Tumbuka	Malawi
Turkish	Turkey
Twi	Ghana
Ulithi	Micronesia
Vai	Liberia
Waray-Waray*	Philippines
Woleain	Micronesia
Wolof	Senegal
Yacouba*	Ivory Coast
Yalunka*	Sierra Leone
Yapese	Micronesia
Yoruba	Dahomey, Nigeria
Zomboangueno (Chabacano)	Philippines