

Annual Report 2024



**Peace
Corps**
UGANDA

About Us

Peace Corps is a volunteer agency of the United States Government. It was established in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy to promote world peace and friendship. At the request of the Government of Uganda, Peace Corps established its presence in Uganda in 1964. Peace Corps' goals are to support Ugandans to meet their need for trained men and women, enable Ugandans to have a better understanding of American culture and people, and teach Americans about Ugandans by sharing their culture. To date, 1,956 Volunteers have served in Uganda.

Currently, we have a total of 52 Volunteers in country. These Volunteers work with their communities on locally prioritized projects in Agriculture, and Economic Development, Education, and Health. During their service in Uganda, Volunteers learn to speak local languages, including Ateso, Acholi, Lango, Luganda, Lusoga, Lumasaba, Lusamia, and Runyangkole/Rukiga.

Health Volunteers work in communities and Health Centers to reduce malaria related morbidity and mortality, improve knowledge and access to HIV care and treatment, support maternal and child health and strengthen community health worker capacity.

Education Volunteers work in schools to help pupils attain literacy skills and improve learning outcomes. They build the capacity of teachers to enhance both general and literacy teaching skills, improve the learning environment, and encourage caregiver participation.

Agriculture and Economic Development Volunteers support household members, especially women, youth, and farmers, in pursuing new economic opportunities and achieving improved food and nutrition security.

Current Peace Corps Volunteer distribution by sector



20 Agribusiness and Economic Development



17 Health



15 Education

Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations



MAAIF
Ministry of Agriculture,
Animal Industry and Fisheries



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
AND SPORTS

PMI

**U.S. PRESIDENT'S
MALARIA INITIATIVE**



FEED THE FUTURE
The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative



PEPFAR

Breakdown of the Volunteer placements in Uganda:



Key

- In the Northern Region, 7 Volunteers are serving with Agri-business organizations, 2 are serving with health organizations and 3 are serving with primary schools.
- In the Eastern Region, 7 Volunteers are serving with community agri-business organizations, 5 are serving with community health organizations, 1 is serving at a university and 4 are serving with primary schools /education organizations.
- In the Central Region, 5 Volunteers are serving with agri-business organizations, 6 are serving with health organizations and 7 are serving with primary schools/education organizations.
- In the Western Region, 1 Volunteers is serving at a community agribusiness organization, 3 are serving with community health organizations and 1 is serving with a teacher training institution.

Foreword



For 60 years, the Peace Corps has worked alongside the people of Uganda and inspired generations of Ugandans and Americans to live and work side-by-side. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the communities, schools, institutions, local leaders, teachers, health workers, and partners for their support. There is perhaps no better way to celebrate this enduring partnership than to share the success through this annual report that highlights our achievements in past fiscal year. My experience in this country has been one of partnership, cooperation, and mutual respect. Nothing in development can be achieved without partnership. By working together with our partners and led by the expressed needs of the communities we serve, we are proud of the grassroots, community-led development efforts that has always been our hallmark.

The Peace Corps and the over 1,956 American Volunteers who have come here for 60 years have always been and continue to remain committed to supporting the development aims of the Ugandan people in Education, Health, and Agriculture and Economic Development.

I would like to end by reiterating that the Peace Corps approach of development at the grassroots level has never wavered. Building strong, healthy, and resilient communities in Uganda is our aim, and we do it one community at a time.

It is my pleasure to invite you to read this annual report. We look forward to the on-going collaboration and relationship between the people of the United States and Uganda.

Webale nnyo, Afwoyo matek, Apwoyo matek, Mwebale inho, Mwanyala naabi, Mwebare munonga, Mwebale muno, Awadifo saaru, Eyalama noi.

Peace Corps Uganda, Country Director
Dr. Lily Asrat

Agribusiness and Economic Development (AED)

The Agribusiness Project aims to empower households especially youth, women, and farmers to improve livelihoods, nutrition and food security. Agribusiness Volunteers work with host organizations to support community savings groups, provide financial literacy training, facilitate entrepreneurship, create agro-based income generating activities, and reduce malnutrition through improved management practices and adoption of biofortified crops.

In 2024, Agribusiness Volunteers with their host organizations achieved the following:

4,429 

Individuals reached with food security interventions.

1,762 

Youth supported to access productive economic resources.

15,000 

Tree seedlings were distributed to promote environmental sustainability in Ugandan communities. Varieties included fruit trees such as mangoes and indigenous species like the hardwood Mvule.

2,461 

Females supported to access productive economic resources.

1,393 

Individual farmers and farmer groups supported to apply improved management practices and technologies.

901 

Individuals participated in group-based savings, micro-finance, or lending programs.



A nutrition training participant shows off the orange flesh sweet potato in her garden.



PCV Abigail plants orange flesh sweet potatoes alongside pupils at a school garden.

AED in Action: Business Entrepreneurship Camp in Luwero District

The day of the business pitch competition had finally arrived, and the excitement in the air was palpable. As a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) in Luwero, I had spent the time before the camp anticipating the 30 girls immersing themselves in intensive training sessions, learning everything from business planning to marketing and customer service. Now, it was time for them to showcase their newfound skills.

The girls had worked tirelessly on their pitches, perfecting their ideas and practicing their presentations. As they took turns standing before the panel of judges—comprised of local business owners and district officials—I felt a swell of pride and anticipation. Each girl presented with a level of confidence and poise that was so different from the initial nerves they had felt at the start of the camp.

Group by group, they outlined their business plans, demonstrating a deep understanding of the concepts they had learned. I could see the judges nodding in approval and occasionally

smiling at their innovative ideas. The transformation in these girls over the week was remarkable. They spoke with clarity, conviction, and an enthusiasm for their ideas. When the time came to announce the winners, the room was filled with a buzz of anticipation. Three groups were chosen as the winners, their faces lighting up with a mixture of shock and pride. Among them were a group of girls who had pitched a small bakery business aimed at providing employment opportunities for other girls in the community. Their idea had impressed the judges not just for its feasibility but for its potential to make a broader social impact.

The winning groups received startup kits to help launch their businesses, but the real victory lay in the skills and confidence they had gained. The competition had been more than just an event—it was a culmination of their hard work, resilience, and growth. Seeing them stand tall, proud of their achievements, was an incredibly rewarding experience.



Startup participants with their certificates



Avalena helps a member of her community strengthen entrepreneurship skills.

As I watched the girls celebrate their success, I was filled with a deep sense of fulfillment. The business pitch competition had not only highlighted their learning but had also empowered them to envision a future where they could be leaders and innovators. The growth of these girls, showcased in this competition, affirmed the profound impact of our collective efforts.

By PCV Avalena

Early Childhood Literacy

Education Volunteers support Ugandan teachers to enhance pupils' literacy levels through: implementing evidence-based literacy instruction-teaching practices; creating and utilizing teaching and learning materials that are tailored to provide high-quality instruction and cater to diverse learning needs; involving parents and community members actively in their children's learning process to foster a supportive and collaborative educational environment; and cultivating a reading culture within the community by organizing events, activities, and initiatives that promote the joy and importance of reading among both children and adults.

In 2024, Education Volunteers together with their host organizations achieved the following:



2,268

pupils learned English literacy directly from Volunteers and demonstrated improvement in literacy skills



148

primary school teachers have strengthened capacity for teaching early childhood literacy



1,989

pupils currently benefiting from the resourced libraries



1,500

new locally authored reading and learning materials are available to pupils at their primary schools



Pupils reading aloud during a National DEAR Day event that was held at a primary school in Mpigi district



Education PCV John with pupils during a lesson to enhance foundational reading skills.



PCV Taylor in a computer lesson with the pupils in at a primary school in Mpigi district.

Education in Action: A Library Built with Recycled Bottles

Uganda's rural communities face significant challenges in literacy rates and reading comprehension skills. As a Peace Corps Education Volunteer, I witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by students in rural communities due to limited access to reading materials. Determined to make a difference, I embarked on a mission to create a library at St. Kizito Primary School in Kayabwe. With the help of the community, local organizations, and Peace Corps through the small grant's projects, we built an eco-brick library that has become a hub for learning and community engagement. The library has not only improved students' reading skills but also fostered a culture of discipline and community involvement.

Envisioning a School Library: Kayabwe's First Eco-Brick Building

Once I set the goal of improving students' access to reading materials, a new challenge emerged: physical space. St. Kizito Primary School, a small school with a large student population, didn't have an extra classroom or storage area for books. What felt bizarre to me, however, was the abundance of unused land surrounding the school. There was space- just not enough classrooms. That's when the idea of creating a library building came to me. I discussed the idea with my supervisor, and we decided to pursue a Peace Corps grant. The next step was determining the materials for the library.

I proposed using eco-bricks, plastic bottles filled with soil that act as building blocks. Not only are eco-bricks an environmentally friendly solution to plastic waste, but they also offer an educational opportunity for students to learn about conservation efforts. The Peace Corps grants coordinator connected me with Ichupa Upcycle Project, an organization founded by a former Peace Corps Volunteer, known for its eco-brick projects in Uganda. The school staff, pupils, parents and I worked alongside the Ichupa Team to build the library from the ground up.



PCV Liz, U.S. Ambassador William Popp and the school management during the library launch at Kizito primary school.

The eco-bricking process became a community-wide effort, with everyone contributing in whichever way they could.

The Impact on the School and Community

At the time of writing this article, the eco-brick library at St. Kizito Primary School was completed just four months ago. In that short time, the library has already made a significant impact on both the school's students and the greater Kayabwe community.

With books available in both English and Luganda (the local language), all 697 students can utilize the library. Teachers report that students' reading skills have noticeably improved due to the opportunity to borrow books and participate in newly organized library sessions during school hours. Besides the students, the school library has also attracted the attention of the wider local community. Since its opening, 40 new children have enrolled at the school, likely caused by the presence of the library, as St. Kizito is now the only primary school in the area with such a facility. While the library is simply a building, its impact extends far beyond its walls, fostering a culture of reading, discipline, and community engagement that will benefit the school for years to come.

By PCV Liz

Health

Peace Corps' Health Project is focused on community health, in alignment with Uganda's National Development Plan and the Ministry of Health Sector Strategic Plan. Volunteers work with host organizations to implement a variety of health activities to prevent disease among children, promote nutrition, support orphans and other vulnerable children, and strengthen the capacity of community health service providers. All Health PCVs are placed at PEPFAR sites and 9 from Agribusiness and Education sectors engaged in HIV/AIDS especially amongst youth.

In 2024, Health Volunteers with their host organizations achieved the following:

2,795



Orphans and other vulnerable children provided with HIV primary prevention services.

5,195



Priority population such as Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYWs), Adolescent Boys and Young Men (ABYMs), fisher folks, long distance drivers reached with evidence-based HIV prevention interventions.

26,256



Long Lasting Insecticide Treated Nets (LLITNs) distributed to children under 5, OVCs and other vulnerable children and pregnant and lactating mothers.

172



Village Health Teams (VHTs) across five districts collaborated with Peace Corps Volunteers to improve community health.

13,500



Individuals reached with malaria prevention messages through social and behavioral change communication across the country.



Participants during a Grassroot Soccer Coaches training in Luwero that brought together teachers from six schools, VHTs from different areas, and safe space leaders.



Participants during the Grassroot soccer training in Luwero.



Participants at a girls' empowerment camp (GLOW camp) learn to make liquid soap.



PCV Hannah distributes mosquito net to an under 5 and lactating mother after delivering a social behavioral communication messages on mosquito net use.

Health in Action: Malaria Prevention and Control



PCV Ainsley during the World Malaria Day.

Malaria in Uganda

Malaria is the leading cause of sickness and death in vulnerable populations in Uganda. In 2022, before malaria reduction interventions in the Busoga region of Uganda, our district had many cases of severe malaria, significantly impacting children under 5 and their ability to go to school. Malaria is a preventable and curable illness that, with community collaboration, can be eliminated through prevention measures such as sleeping under a mosquito net, slashing bushes, planting locally available repellents, removing stagnant water, and promoting awareness. Through working with community leaders and motivated families, we can mobilize people to prioritize the health of other community members.

Community-based interventions and collaboration

Working through community-based organizations is crucial for sustainability. No one understands community needs and issues better than residents, so it's important to support local leadership and ownership of any intervention. Naigaga R, a local leader who has adapted malaria prevention measures around her home, advises others to "let the prevention methods we implement at household level such as planting lemongrass do the work. We don't experience mosquitoes because of simple prevention methods that save lives in our village." Becoming a personal stakeholder in the community's future by creating connections, learning from others, and listening can be the most beneficial part of the project.

Educational support at the grassroots level

My counterpart and I established a writing club at the local primary school in order to allow students to express creativity and promote awareness of public health issues in their community. The club has enabled me to learn from younger generations, integrate into the community, and give youth an outlet for creative and innovative ideas. We use the Grassroots Malaria Curriculum, where students can learn about malaria through games and discussions and empower the community to implement malaria-prevention measures. Sophie, a student in the writing club, says that as "young leaders in the community, we believe it is our responsibility to fight against malaria by acting as teachers." Aisha, another student in the club, shares that they are "empowered and ready" to continue the effort to fight against malaria.

"Prevention is better than cure"

A phrase consistently heard in malaria prevention activities in our district is "prevention is better than cure." This perspective may seem counter to the anticipated goal of ending malaria, but real and sustained change comes from community members taking the initiative to implement preventive measures in order to reduce the severity of malaria in Uganda. These measures can be taken by community members of all socioeconomic levels, educated or uneducated, giving them a sense of responsibility and ownership. Utilizing prevention as a tool will reduce the burden of malaria and free community members from the economic, health, and societal pressures stemming from this disease.

PCV Ainsley & Charlse M.

Painting Therapy for Young Positives

Early in my service, my Counterpart and I identified an opportunity to address HIV/AIDS in our community through stigma reduction and increasing accessibility to resources for youth living with HIV. Together, we revitalized a dormant resource center at our health center into an adolescent ARV treatment clinic, a youth safe space, and a community library. My Counterpart, now certified as an HIV counselor and tester, has since transitioned into her role as an HIV Support Specialist for my organization.

As the resource center renovations were ongoing, we worked to engage a group of Young Positives, not only to guide us on what they would like to see in the space but also to provide peer support to each other. This group has continued to meet monthly for group counseling sessions and bonding.

After conversations with artists from town, we saw an opportunity to bring an engaging activity to the group. The artists were invited to lead a painting therapy class at a Young Positives meeting. We held the group counseling session before the artists arrived, so the group felt comfortable discussing their challenges and successes from the month. We worked to tie the activity seamlessly with the theme of the month: positive self-expression and acknowledging emotions, whether positive or negative. After the counseling session, the artists arrived and assisted the group members in painting. The group was encouraged to paint anything they had imagined, although they were also invited to express feelings or emotions through their art.

The group really enjoys this activity, with some even showing interest in apprenticing with the artists and possibly pursuing a career in art. The group decided collectively to leave their artwork in the resource center so that they could view it together during future meetings and bring friends to see it. They were proud to have their work displayed for anyone who visits the resource center.

PCV Elizabeth



Children participating in a painting therapy session



Art from therapy painting participants hangs on the walls of the Resource Centre.

Bridging the Gap in Uganda's Nursing Education



When I first began lecturing at Busitema University, I was struck by the stark reality of the nursing education system in Uganda. The skills lab, doubling as a classroom, lacked the physical infrastructure that is present in more well-resourced environments. Students make the most of outdated equipment and damaged furnishings. In addition, I could see a technological divide with only one of 36 students having a laptop. The rest relied on their phones and were at a significant disadvantage to students who have better access to technology.

As I navigated the curriculum, I realized that there was no standardized repository of lectures or teaching materials. Faculty relied on personal knowledge or informal discussions, leaving students without a consistent learning experience. However, a collaboration with Makerere University revealed a potential solution. Faculty from the well-resourced institution shared comprehensive educational tools, including soft copies of entire texts, lecture examples, and other resources. This demonstrated the power of collaboration in addressing the challenges faced by less-resourced institutions. To bridge the gap in Uganda's nursing education, it's clear that Universities must prioritize technological infrastructure, collaborate with other institutions, and streamline curriculum development. By doing so, we can provide students with the education they need to succeed and improve healthcare outcomes in Uganda.



PCRV Christine prepares the simulation lab for nursing students.

As I reflect on my experience, I'm reminded that even in the face of adversity, there's always hope for a better future. By working together, we can create a more equitable and effective nursing education system that benefits all Ugandans. Technology is permeating every aspect of society, and without proper investment, universities like Busitema University will struggle to provide students with the education they need to succeed. By fostering inter-university collaboration, improving technological resources, and streamlining curriculum development, Uganda can take a critical step toward strengthening its nursing education system. If initiatives like Peace Corps engagements were to focus on technology integration rather than just guest lecturing, the long-term impact would be far greater.

PCRV Christine



New Volunteers at their swearing in ceremony with U.S. Ambassador William Popp



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