



# UNITED STATES PEACE CORPS

HUDUMA ZA KUJITOLEA ZA WAMAREKANI

## DESCRIPTION OF PEACE CORPS SERVICE

**Ross Fischer**

### UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA 2018-2020

After a competitive application process stressing technical skills, motivation, adaptability, and cross-cultural understanding, Peace Corps invited **Ross Fischer** to serve as a **Science** teacher in the African nation of Tanzania.

#### **Pre-service training**

Mr. Fischer began an intensive 10-week pre-service training on July 8, 2018 in Korogwe, a district town of Tanga region, located about six hours north of the commercial capital, Dar es Salaam. He lived with a local host family and attended language, cross-cultural, and technical training, including a four-week teaching internship under observation by Ministry of Education technical trainers and Peace Corps staff. Additionally, Mr. Fischer attended scheduled in-service training events throughout his/her service.

Training program included:

- 131 hours of Swahili language training;
- 117 hours of technical training, including educational pedagogy and practice, and development theory as well as internship teaching;
- 79 hours of health, safety instruction, administration/policy, AIDS education, and cross-culture training.

#### **Assignment**

On September 19, 2018 Mr. Fischer completed training and was sworn in as a Peace Corps Volunteer. He/ She was assigned to Namajani Day Secondary School located in Mtwara, which is approximately 625 km south from the commercial capital Dar es Salaam. The tribal languages in the area are Kimakua, Kimakonde, Kiyao, although Kiswahili is the national language and most widely spoken.

The school was a government-run day school (with informal boarding opportunities) using an English language medium of instruction. The school had an enrollment of approximately 550 students and offered the first four years in secondary education, known as "Ordinary Level". The class size varies from 6 students in senior-equivalent classes to over 60 students in freshman-equivalent classes.

During his time there, Mr. Fischer reported directly to the Head of school, and worked on a full-time basis in formal and informal classroom settings exclusively for Tanzanian students. Mr. Fischer was responsible for teaching 3 levels of Physics throughout his service according to their respective mandatory syllabi. His presence at Namajani Day S.S. allowed the addition of junior and senior level physics classes to be offered to interested students.

Mr. Fischer used the centralized national curriculum in creating lesson plans and visual teaching and learning aids. Due to a shortage of books, facilities, and other resources, students were nearly wholly reliant upon what they copied from Mr. Fischer's lessons to use in place of their Physics textbooks. Mr. Fischer used



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demonstrations and experiments, or ‘practicals’, not only to better explain physics concepts, but also to prepare students for NECTA, the national standardized exam. Locally available materials were often sourced and substituted for hard-to-procure lab equipment.

During his/her service at the local school, Mr. Fischer taught the following courses:

Year	Number of Months	Number of Weeks	Subject	Grade (U.S. Equivalent)	Number of Students	Class Hours per Week
2018	4	14	Physics	9, 10	200	9 hours/wk
2019	12	52	Physics	9, 10, 11	200	16 hours/wk
2020	3	10	Physics	10, 11, 12	250	17 hours/wk

## Language Skills

Mr. Fischer has achieved a Kiswahili competency level of advanced-medium during his/her service and effectively used Kiswahili to communicate in his/her work at school, with his/her colleagues, Tanzanian counterparts, and in daily life. Due to language insufficiencies in the classroom, Mr. Fischer was often required to teach and explain difficult physics concepts in both English and Kiswahili. In addition, Mr. Fischer was also able to learn basic tribal language from his area, which he used in informal conversation and integration.

## Secondary Activities/Projects

As part of the school teaching team, Mr. Fischer lived amidst local residents and other school teachers. This led to working with the community (and Peace Corps staff) on some secondary activities and projects, including:

- *Taught and tutored informal physics and math sessions after school during service.*
- *Coordinated and procured \$5000 in federal funding via grant application for a water hand pump to be drilled and installed on school grounds.*
- *Hosted a 2 month long ‘projects club’ for student to supplement the water pump project.*
- *Implemented a HURU project at his school, where all ~300 girls from Namajani Day Secondary School attended a day long training on menstrual hygiene management, healthy relationships, HIV/AIDS education. 100 girls received a HURU kit consisting of reusable pads in order to assist girls to stay in school.*
- *Procured a collection of English story books via Darian Book Aid, and implemented a library lending system for all students.*
- *Led the planning and organization of a Science Student Conference, and co-facilitated 2 additional Student Conferences in the Mtwara Region. Conferences consist of:*
  - *Finding important contacts to assist the conference with boarding, meals, transportation, and tours of nearby facilities.*



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- *Organizing logistics and communications for up to 45 students and counterparts to arrive, eat, and learn at a conference center for 3-4 days.*
- *Following and facilitating planned sessions and tours for 30-45 students on topics such as leadership & life skills, HIV/AIDS education, and test taking strategies.*
- *Procuring up to \$3000 in funding through Peace Corps' grant writing process.*
- *Designed a new volunteer-centered website for 200+ Tanzania Volunteers which hosts staff and volunteer information including: office forms, medical and training contacts, and resources for 9 volunteer led committees.*
- *Served on the PSIDN committee (Peer-Support, Inclusivity, and Diversity Network) to provide peer-support, advocate for disadvantaged volunteers, and provide guidance when navigating complex or sensitive medical needs.*

Pursuant to section 5(f) of the Peace Corps Act 22 U.S.C 2504 (f) as amended, any former volunteer employed by the United States Government following his or her Peace Corps Volunteer service is entitled to have any period of satisfactory Peace Corps Volunteer service credited for purposes of retirement, seniority, reduction in force, leave and other privileges based on length of federal government service. Peace Corps service shall not be credited toward completion of the probationary or trial period or completion of any service requirement for career appointment.

This is to certify in accordance with Executive Order No. 11103 of 10 April 1963, that Ross Fischer served satisfactorily as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Her/his service in Tanzania ended on March 20, 2020 S/he is therefore eligible to be appointed as a career-conditional employee in the competitive civil service on a non-competitive basis. This benefit under the Executive Order entitlement extends for a period of one year after termination of the Volunteer's service, except that the employing agency may extend that period for up to three years for a former Volunteer who enters military service, pursues studies at a recognized institution of higher learning, or engages in other activities that, in the view of the appointing authority, warrant extension of the period.

Mr. Fischer has earned lifetime eligibility for the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows graduate school fellowship program.

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Nelson Cronyn, PhD  
Country Director

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Date