



DESCRIPTION OF PEACE CORPS SERVICE

MR. TRAVIS J. LAGEMAN

GHANA 2015-2017

After a competitive application process stressing technical skills, motivation, adaptability, and cross-cultural understanding, Peace Corps invited Mr. Travis J. Lageman to serve as an Education Volunteer in Ghana, West Africa.

TRAINING

Mr. Lageman began an intensive 10-week pre-service training on June 2, 2015 in Kukurantumi, Eastern Region: a small town located two hours north of the country capital Accra. The program consisted of language, technical skills, cultural, HIV/AIDS and malaria training. As part of the technical training, Mr. Lageman underwent classroom management and lesson plan orientation, which culminated in two weeks of teaching students at a local Senior High School. Both Ghanaian and American instructors evaluated Mr. Lageman and ultimately approved him for service.

The Pre-Service Training program included:

- 163 hours of formal language and cross-cultural training. At the end of which Mr. Lageman gained certification of intermediate (INTM) proficiency in the Asante Twi language.
- 119 hours of formal technical training in teaching techniques and the Ghanaian educational system.
- 12 hours of medical education and protocol.
- 17 hours of safety and security procedures.

In addition, Mr. Lageman participated in other trainings during his service. These included:

- 32 hours of Grass-Roots Soccer Training: a program designed to create HIV/AIDS and Malaria awareness among students, using sports as an educational medium.
- 16 hours of Cashew training related to Pre/Post-Harvest Handling, Processing and Beekeeping.
- 24 hours of Student Friendly Schools training on gender-equity, creating a safe school environment and literacy improvement.

PRIMARY ASSIGNMENT

On August 13, 2015, Mr. Lageman completed training and was sworn in as a Peace Corps Volunteer. After which, he started his service in Sekyedumase, a rural community in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Mr. Lageman's primary assignment was to teach at the Sekyedumase Senior High School as a Chemistry teacher, and to build professional and academic capacity of teachers and the institution.

Chemistry Teaching

The school consisted of three academic forms, the Ghanaian equivalent of tenth through twelfth grade. There were roughly 1300 students enrolled in the school and class sizes varied from 35 to 80+. Mr. Lageman was part of a large school staff (teaching and non-teaching) nearing 90 individuals, and reported directly to the headmaster, Dr. Berko Acheampong. Mr. Lageman would regularly face school-based challenges such as lack of teaching resources/space,

administrative oversight, student tardiness and insubordination, and teacher absenteeism. Nevertheless, he was responsible for lesson planning as well as the creation of suitable visual aids and resources to aid student comprehension of the subject material. He also devoted time to assisting with various administrative duties and preparation of internal exams as part of the examination committee. Mr. Lageman taught Chemistry in Form 2 during the 2015-2016 school year and Form 1 and 3 in the subsequent year. Mr. Lageman also held additional instructional sessions outside of normal school hours to support students. In particular, he assisted the Form 3 students in preparation of their West African Secondary School Certificate Examination.

During his service at the school, Mr. Lageman taught the following:

Academic Year	Number of Weeks	Subject	U.S. Grade (Equivalent)	Number of Students	Hours per Week
2015-2016	Term 1: 15 Term 2: 14 Term 3: 12	Chemistry	11	220	10
2016-2017	Term 1: 15 Term 2: 12	Chemistry	10 & 12	330	10

School Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Lab Project

In partnership with his school and counterparts, Mr. Lageman helped procure a projector and additional computers to accommodate the ICT lab. With average class size nearing 40 students, teaching students ICT with 10 functional computers was challenging. The additional equipment has greatly increased capacity of the ICT lab as well as promoted student comprehension. While Mr. Lageman does not teach ICT, through collaboration with the ICT teachers and school administration various actions have been taken to further improve the ICT lab.

Grass-Roots Soccer Program

Mr. Lageman, along with two teacher counterparts who attended Grass-Roots Soccer training, co-facilitated practices for students that used games to teach about HIV/Reproductive Health and Malaria education. Multiple sessions were held throughout individual school terms, reaching upwards of 35 students. This program has been running for two consecutive terms.

Staff Credit Union

Along with teacher counterparts, Mr. Lageman helped establish a Staff Credit Union that provides school staff with a place to save and take loans out at reasonable and affordable rates, as well as invest money in smart income-generating activities.

School-Based Extracurriculars

Mr. Lageman helped students create extracurricular clubs such as a 4-H club, where students undertake agriculture, science and health related projects while developing leadership skills; and a Student Savings Group, where students learn the value of saving money towards a goal rather than spending it immediately.

PRIMARY ASSIGNMENT

Education Peace Corps Volunteer Trainer (PCVT)

Mr. Lageman was selected as a PCVT for the education group that entered Ghana in 2016. His role consisted of attending Training of Trainers, developing and delivering technical training sessions, as well as providing feedback, support and mentorship to Peace Corps Trainees.

Supporting Education Across Sectors (SEAS)

Mr. Lageman was Vice President of the SEAS working group, which promotes and supports education initiatives across all sectors of Peace Corps Ghana (including Agriculture and Health).

During his tenure, he led the organization of the group's annual creative writing competition, as well as the implementation and grant writing of an inaugural creative arts competition.

Cashew

Mr. Lageman was a general member of the Peace Corps Ghana working group, Cashew Initiative. Information he learned from In Service Trainings was used to hold a workshop for cashew farmers in his community, where topics such as grafting, farm management, and processing/secondary cashew products were taught. He also helped to GPS map 10 cashew farms providing farmers with certificates to prove their land holdings. Through Cashew Initiative, Mr. Lageman assisted his school in acquiring 550 hybrid grafted cashew seedlings as a source of future income and opportunities for agriculture teaching tools.

Sekyedumase Presbyterian JHS

He worked with the Headmaster of the Presbyterian Junior High School, local stakeholders and government officials to enable the rebuilding of their defunct school block. Additionally, Mr. Lageman promoted recycling in the school by teaching students to reuse plastic water sachets to make soccer and volleyball nets. He also encouraged students to participate in SEAS competitions to inspire creativity as well as an intra-Ghana pen pal program.

Beekeeping

Mr. Lageman successfully secured a small grant to fund a beekeeping project for a local farmer with previous beekeeping experience. Using training from Cashew Initiative, Mr. Lageman assisted the set-up of the farmer's apiary. Subsequently, this farmer has become a local resource for beekeeping in the Sekyedumase community.

Students Taking Action Reaching for Success (STARS)

Mr. Lageman helped facilitate the annual STARS conference at Kumasi National University of Science & Technology in 2016 where he was a group leader for SHS boys attending the conference. Mr. Lageman brought two students from his SHS to the weeklong conference that promoted leadership, continuing education, HIV/Reproductive Health education, and gender equality among other topics.

Mentoring Program

Mr. Lageman applied to be a mentor in a newly developed support program for incoming volunteers. In his second year, Mr. Lageman was paired with a first year education volunteer to provide guidance and support. He encouraged his mentee through regular correspondence and site visits. The position also allowed Mr. Lageman to advise his mentee on beneficial strategies for initiating projects.

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 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 Mr. Travis Lageman served satisfactorily as a Peace Corps Volunteer. His service in Ghana ended on July 12, 2017. 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.



Carla E. Ellis, Ed.D.

Country Director

Peace Corps Ghana

July 12, 2017

Date



Travis Lageman