Community Development — ‘Mass Alienation to Mass Participation’

The Peace Corps has coined a new term for what it does in Latin America — community development.

Frank Manskie, chief of Peace Corps operations in Latin America, addressing the Foreign Language Program in New York City in 1964, said, "The techniques of community development are essentially revolutionary techniques. For to help a community and have located the real levers through which they can enter the life of their country is a revolutionary act."

Most people around Peace Corps headquarters in Washington get a little uneasy when a word like revolution starts getting kicked around; but that is, in a sense, what the Peace Corps is all about — in much the same way as SNCC workers in Mississippi or freedom marchers in Alabama are dealing with the stuff of revolution.

Manske likens it to "the change from mass alienation to mass participation." Of course this doesn’t mean that the Volunteer is out to stir up a shooting war. There is too much basic work to be done. Basic developments have to take place in a community regardless of politics. Water, schools, drainage and elementary education have to be provided. It’s the goal of community development to bring into being an organization within a neighborhood that is capable of providing these items itself.

Jim Pines is chief of West Coast operations in Latin America. He points out that it often works out best if a Peace Corps CD worker goes into an urban neighborhood or rural town without any real technical skills. This forces him to go out and find people and resources and talents in the community able to do a job, and he doesn’t end up doing it himself.

"There is every difference in the world between attitudes of the local people towards a small school they put up themselves, through their own organization, and a school stuck in the middle of the town by an outside aid program — whether from their own central government or from the United States," he said.

The essence of community development, then, is an emphasis on what people can do for themselves through organization. The Peace Corps Volunteer can work only as a catalyst, spending long hours learning about a community, how it works, what it needs, what it does in Latin America — community development at a boys’ school as part of a community development project in Osorno in southern Chile.

Agitating Overseas Takes Time and Special Talents

by Peggy Krause

"Wheeling and dealing" is the life of the Peace Corps "agitators," according to Bruce Reeves, who coordinates the requests for Peace Corps volunteers from 17 Latin American countries.

Anyone can march into a country and build a schoolhouse with a bit of technical help — the real talents is in making the people want a school house enough to build and maintain it themselves, he said. Otherwise empty schoolhouses can become monuments to departed depressions.

"It’s like calling a meeting for free speech, which is easy, versus getting people to the point where they care enough to go to jail," he explained.

"That’s what makes Savio a ‘gunner’ — he believes in the community.

Around the Peace Corps offices there are many words for the agitator type — including "gunner" and "wheel." In the eyes of the Peace Corps, this is community development — getting people involved in improving what’s around them.

A dog-gone leave could easily organize a work group to build a school in a village forgotten by the ministry of education, Reeves said.

"But can you get people worked up so they’ll go to the ministry office, which is two days away, and sit there until a teacher for the school?"

Getting a leave accepted, sometimes suitably with a sentence stated at the right time, sometimes blantly with loudspeakers and movie projectors, that is the job of the Peace Corps Volunteers.

In Malaysia, community development worker Bill Call reports, "Some days I just sit and talk ... talk all day long and I feel as if I’ve really gotten somewhere if these people understand their own problems a little better.

On the other hand, Peruvians accepted the idea of an electricity cooperative with enthusiasm, reports Peace Corps Volunteer Peter Lara.

"The techniques of community development are essentially revolutionary techniques. For to help a community and have located the real levers through which they can enter the life of their country is a revolutionary act."

The Peace Corps has passed its severest test to date — survival amid revolution in the Dominican Republic.

According to Dr. Joseph Colmen, Deputy Associate Director of the Peace Corps, the Volunteers did the most to bring real peace to Cuba. Peace Corps Volunteers, who would have been lined up on the rebel side, according to Peace Corps officials.

Remarkably little criticism surrounded the Peace Corps actions — although a few newspapers ran editorials like the Richmond News Leader’s which asked "just exactly where the Corps' humanitarian objectives leave off and the illegitimate requirements of national loyaty resume."

In a syndicated column, Goldwater compared the Dominican Republic to Cuba and said, "Imagine who could have done the most to bring real peace to Cuba. Peace Corps Volunteers, who would have been lined up and shot pretty early in the Castro gaol, or U.S. Marines who could have restored the order needed for free decisions."

But even he went on to praise the Peace Corps’ Dominican Republic action, saying the Volunteers "simply prove by their action that America has not only an iron fist but a warm heart."

Dr. Joseph Colmen, Deputy Associate Director of the Peace Corps, said the Volunteers "generally felt their projects had been throttled . . . yet they felt they were needed there. If they really had any sense of commitment to leave without any sense of continuity would demonstrate a lack of patriotism." Social workers.

Sometimes he and the Peruvians working with him had to explain what it was the goal of community development — to bring the nature of the project as well as the methods used in pushing the idea.

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Continued on Page 3
Fruition, Culture Shock Seen In Peace Corps Administration

by Robert Johnston

David Reisman claims that the job the Peace Corps has taken on is impossible. He may be right, but nobody who lets that sort of an attitude stop him ever accomplished much. The answer is al- ways the same, "We shall overcome."

But to say so doesn't make it so, and the hard reality of dealing with the problems, or sometimes usual hits Peace Corps Volunteers pretty hard. One of them writing from Peru said:

"I live in a picturesque bamboo mat house I built myself. I buy my water from a pic- turesque boy with a burro loaded down with water cans. I read and write under a kero- sene lantern, sleep on a cot, and cook on a camp stove. There comes a day when all this suddenly becomes no longer picturesque, no longer pleasant, but frustratingly hard. And you want like crazy to just get out of there, to go home. This is called "culture shock." It happens to be to me a fact, and usually about the third or fourth month.

Some skin to culture shock has hit the Peace Corps. It came to realize fairly quickly that the beneficiary, all-knowing American disseminating skills, knowledge and friendship among the world wasn't going to get very far.

As a school in Peru needs a roof, it does no good to two or three Volunteers to spend a day putting it up. "It would always be a gift, the gringo's roof. When it needed fixing, no one would fix it, a Volunteer. It has to be "their roof on their school."

So the outlook of Peace Corps officials is begin- ning to change. Fortunately, changes are possible, for no government agency is more ready to listen to dissent and internal or external criticism or more willing to experiment with new ways of spreading its influence and benevolence. "Peace Corps Washington." (This doesn't make it immune, however, to biting accusations on all these points, the federal government agency which is a part of the world and what it now can or cannot understand.

"My perspective has been broadened. I have met a few more environmental situations. I have accepted it as well as been accepted by it. I have seen life from a different point of view. I have learned a new language and culture things and a new way of looking at things."

Another Volunteer wrote, "You cannot imagine the gulf between the States and West, and it makes me laugh now to think that I expected to bridging it with a smile and a handshake."

As anyone who attended the conference of re- turned Peace Corps Volunteers knows, changes are deep and meaningful. Those who successfully emerge from culture shock have acquired many values and concepts which are rambunctious and perceptive. Viet Nam petitions were spiritedly passed around the cafeteria of the Voluntary Service Office.

The Peace Corps' determination to be something more than a worldwide welfare agency isn't always carried through successfully into fact. But it is honestly loudly and frequently repeated. Not to give to people, to feed them and clothe them, but to involve them in meeting their own needs, leading to their own self-fulfill- ments. That is the Peace Corps' true function, it is in fact revolutionary.

Not to give to people, to feed them and clothe them, but to involve them in meeting their own needs, leading to their own self-fulfill- ments, is revolutionary. Wiggins admits that there is a long way to go yet, that there is often more talk than realization; but if any idea can remake the world socially "essential" to the Peace Corps idea, or a succession of such ideas, can.

Peace Corps, students from abroad brought here to teach outgoing Volunteers and to aid in this coun- try. In fact the idea of youth corps sent out to stim- ulate and speed up lagging parts of a fast-moving world, to keep the world revolution in economics, politics, and personal behavior, or something, is gaining momentum and re- spect in many different countries as well as at home.

The Foreign Minister of Thailand recently paid tribute to the Peace Corps. He told the United States, "It is indeed striking that this most important idea, the most powerful idea in recent times, of a Peace Corps, of youth mingling, living, working with youth, should come from this mightiest nation on earth, the United States," he said.

And these revolutionary developments to which the Peace Corps is dedicated work in both direc- tions. For in the interaction that takes place be- tween the Volunteer and the community, which he thrust and which he has to understand and help to organize and develop, both sides are pro- foundly affected.

"If I learned anything here, I've learned I know nothing of Thai people. The unique quality of having a home in Thailand is the individuality of that experience. There is no "Thai" of concern — that which I need to understand most - there's me. It would be impossible to estimate how many years I have changed, how much I have learned, what I now easily accept as a part of the world and what I now can or cannot understand.

"My perspective has been broadened. I have met a few more environmental situations. I have accepted it as well as been accepted by it. I have seen life from a different point of view. I have learned a new language and culture things and a new way of looking at things."

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In the midst of wide-spread public- 
licity concerning a "re-entry crisis" for 
returning Peace Corps Volun-
tees, officials claim overempha-
sis on the problem. Dr. Colmen, the 
Volunteers actually face major 
problems like language barriers 
... Several top officials at the Peace 
Corps headquarters have said news media have overemphasized the 
problems experienced by Volunteers in re-
joining American society. "Most of 
the Volunteers agree the re-entry 
problem is a serious one," Dr. Colmen 
... of a crisis has been "very much 
overemphasized," Dr. English said. "The average 
... the main problem of the return-
ing Volunteer is finding a meaningful 
situation with responsibility, ac-
cording to Dr. English. As a result of their responsibility over-
seas, ex-Volunteers need a stimu-
lating job which provides independ-
ence and a source of commitment, accordin-
g to Deputy Associate Director of the 
Peace Corps, John D. Chillingworth. 
... the Volunteers working with him 
... the Volunteers had not been func-
tional at the beginning. I still think that it is a 
... Certainly no gloom and des-
pair to report from this random 
check with leaders on the Hill. Vol-
unteers can be assured that the 
... new dimensions of peace on an 
equals-to-equivalents basis. Congressmen J. Edson Johnson, Jr. 
(O-D) saw the Peace Corps as one of the most "imaginative pro-
grams" initiated by the U.S. He 
found that the Corps' particular value was in "creatively channeling 
efforts and aspirations of American 
young people toward directly build-
ing a better world." 

The problem is that some media have 
overemphasized the crisis, according to 
Dr. Joseph English, of the Pea-
... crucial for the Volunteers to 
... the Volunteers have at least a 
... Americans can serve 

CAPITOL HILL CONSENTS WITHOUT MUCH ADVICE 

by Mary Richardson 

To avoid an insular view of the 
Peace Corps image, this reporter 
went to Capitol Hill for an evis-
ual experience of the Volunteers 
... Said the Senator: "What emerged most impressively 
... The Volunteers need to see that the 
... to stir your blood, give you experi-
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IT TAKES TALENT 

Continued from Page 1 

what electricity was, and sometimes 
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Sit-Ins Boring? Try Peace Corps 

Have you been arrested five times 
in the last five months for sitting in? 
... Do you think we should ban the 
... Do you think it might be 
... Americans can serve 

Loans Set For Juniors 

College juniors - as a result of the 
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Community Development...

Continued from Page 1

wants and feels its needs are, who the leaders are and how to plan the seed of motivation. It is a long and trying and often frustrating experience for the Volunteer, for gains are often miniscule and may disappear within days after the Volunteer leaves an area. Organization and motivation are the real goals, and they are fragile and often temporary. Once instilled, however, they can accomplish many things after the Peace Corps leaves.

About 50 percent of the Volunteers sent to Latin America are classed as CD workers, but, as Pines says, "Everyone there is a community developer. If he is doing his job right." The Volunteer’s first job as he enters a community is to figure out what the felt needs of the people are. If the goals stem from the Volunteer’s perceptions of what he thinks the community needs in line with his own cultural background and not from what the people think they need, then everything is lost from the beginning.

Once he understands the felt needs, the community must be organized to tackle them and will, hopefully, be able to do the job on its own. Pines says, "The specific projects are incidental. Community organizations coupled with the people that they can do something for themselves, that improvements can take place, are what is vital."

Peace Corps workers throughout the urban areas must change their perception from one of charity to a philosophy that most changes require help from the government, so that one goal of community organization is to enable the people to make their own chicken coop, put its pooled resources and skills to work and turn a profit through the savings effected by divisions of labor.

Urban community development in the barrios of cities is often more difficult than it is in rural vil-
dews, according to Pines. The men are tied up in their jobs and there is little time to work on neighborhood projects. Most projects, such as water, sewer or education systems, also require large amounts of capital.

In these cases relations with the government are important. "We have to sell it, we have to hammer it home, to get the word out," Pines says. But in spite of the problems, and the years it takes for community develop-
ment to really work, "there are communities where the people are happier and live better because of the Peace Corps. We make it available to them ways and means of improving themselves."

The aim is to build a sense of society in a community that can fend for itself within, or if necessary by going around, the larger, usually oligarchic, city structure, and to build it through the community’s effort, not the Volunteer’s. Quite often credit unions will bring a group of artisans from the edge of starvation up to a decent living standard.

Another device often used is the cooperative. Chicken cooperatives have been spraying all over India. A group will get together, build its own chicken coop, put its pooled resources and skills to work and turn a profit through the savings effected by divisions of labor.

Security officers around Washing-
ton are a jumpy lot. Many a White House Secret Service agent still remembers calls in the middle of the night, seeking a red-carpet parade for President Eisenhower. A famous movie cowboy can still remember being up on the grandstand on his horse and calmly lassoing the smiling Presi-
dent.

Similar feelings of despair and horror were prevalent among state and federal agents when the returned Peace Corps Volunteers were held. Petitions protesting the U. S. policy in Viet Nam were widely and prominently circulated in the State Department.