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How to win friends and influence nations: the international history of Development Volunteering*

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Abstract

This article traces the personal and institutional networks that facilitated the transnational spread of Development Volunteering in the 1950s and 1960s. Examining Australia's Volunteer Graduate Scheme, Britain's Voluntary Service Overseas, and the United States Peace Corps, it destabilizes each nation's claims to pioneering Development Volunteering, and interrogates the reasons for these claims. Once national frames are removed, broader patterns come into view. This article reveals that Development Volunteering held multiple meanings, as discourses of development, colonialism, and control existed alongside those of youthful idealism and national benevolence. It argues that, by involving 'ordinary' people in international development and by re-inscribing colonial-era divisions between the developed and developing worlds, Development Volunteering contributed to the broader process by which colonial discourses were translated into the postcolonial lexicon of development.

Keywords development discourse, foreign aid, international development, Peace Corps, volunteering

Development Volunteering is a core component of the international development system. Over the past sixty years, hundreds of thousands of volunteers from across the West have spent a year or two working in Asia, Africa, or Latin America.[1] From its origins in Australia in 1951, the secular, government-supported model of Development Volunteering quickly spread to New Zealand (1955), Britain (1958), Canada (1960), the United States (1961), France (1962),

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[1] As of 2016, Australian Volunteers International (the successor programme to the Volunteer Graduate Scheme) has deployed some 10,000 Australians across the developing world, Voluntary Service Overseas over 40,000 volunteers, and the Peace Corps over 220,000 Americans. See https://www.avi.org.au/our-history/ (consulted 25 November 2016); Ludmilla Kwitko and Diane McDonald, *Australian government volunteer program review: final report*, Canberra: AusAID, 2009; http://www.vsointernational.org/about; http://www.peacecorps.gov/about/fastfacts/ (consulted 25 November 2016).

Germany, Norway, and Denmark (1963), and Japan (1965). In subsequent decades numerous other countries launched similar programmes. Yet Development Volunteering has rarely been seen as a transnational movement. This is largely because each nation and programme jealously guarded its claim to pioneering the Development Volunteering model, obscuring transnational networks and exchanges in pursuit of national interests.

Based on personal correspondence, private collections, and official archives, this article traces the personal and institutional networks by which the Development Volunteering model spread between Australia, Britain, and America. Its purpose is not necessarily to attribute praise to the 'rightful' creators, but rather to destabilize each nation's claim to pioneering Development Volunteering and interrogate the reasons why they made these claims. Many volunteers regarded their actions through frames of anti-racism and international friendship, but their actions also carried other meanings. Governments harnessed Development Volunteering to counter negative opinion about their nation: in Australia, the Volunteer Graduate Scheme (VGS) was seen as a corrective to Asian charges of racism; in Britain, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) was regarded as proof that the nation had overcome its colonial past; and in the United States, the Peace Corps was thought to demonstrate that Americans were neither 'soft' nor neo-colonial. This is revealing of the extent to which Development Volunteering was implicated in global systems of power, influence, and governmentality at the intersection of decolonization and the Cold War.

Removing national frames allows broader patterns to come into view. This article argues that the spread of Development Volunteering contributed to the broader process by which colonial divisions between colonizer and colonized were translated into the postcolonial lexicon of development. The speed and apparent ease with which Development Volunteering was adopted across national contexts reveals a powerful discursive divide between the categories of 'developed' and 'underdeveloped'. The categories and locations of developed and underdeveloped nations were assumed rather than defined; these assumptions were built on cultural foundations and memories of colonial civilizing missions rather than technical definitions. Moreover, Development Volunteering was an expression of modernization theory's reconceptualization of 'backwardness' as a state of mind, which could be shifted through the presence and influence of a 'developed' person.[2] The cultural chauvinism underpinning this notion, which located Western society as the ideal towards which all nations and people should progress, was mostly unspoken but always present in situations where young and mostly inexperienced volunteers were placed in positions of power and authority. Many receiving nations were conscious of this undertone: strong anti-Peace Corps movements in Nigeria and Indonesia, as well as regular critiques of VGS and VSO in other nations, reveal that many people regarded Development Volunteering as a form of neo-colonialism.

Recent scholarship has shown that 'ordinary people' became agents in international relations during the twentieth century.[3] This article reveals that they were also actors in the international development system. Development Volunteering relied on a close cooperation between ordinary people, NGOs, and governments from the 1950s, challenging the binary that historians have constructed between an international development system characterized by official national and multilateral agencies (representing 'development' and political imperatives, and dominant throughout the 1950s and 1960s) on the one hand, and NGOs (representing 'humanitarianism' and civil society and becoming important from the 1970s) on the other.[4] By uncovering this interrelationship, this article posits that public engagement was vital to the global system of international development even in the 1950s and 1960s, typically regarded as the highpoint of the development expert. It also reveals the fluidity of the 'mixed economy' of international development, which relied on the participation of ordinary people, civil society elites, NGOs, and the state from the very beginning.[5]

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[2] For a discussion of the social and cultural applications of modernization theory, see Michael Adas, 'Modernization theory and the American revival of the scientific and technological standards of social achievement and human worth', in David C. Engerman, Nils Gilman, Mark H. Haefele, and Michael E. Latham, eds, *Staging growth: modernization, development, and the global Cold War*, Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003, pp. 25–45.

[3] See Richard Ivan Jobs, 'Where the hell are the people?', *Journal of Social History*, 39, 2, 2005; Christina Klein, *Cold War orientalism: Asia in the middlebrow imagination, 1945–1961*, Berkeley, CA: University of

Historians and Development Volunteering

Foreign aid and international development are key components of the international system. After a long period of neglect, there is now a blossoming historical literature following Nick Cullather's 2001 call to make 'history the methodology for studying modernization, instead of the other way around'.[6] Despite the fact that development was a global phenomenon, the vast majority of historical scholarship has focused on national agencies and programmes. The dominant narrative continues to be of a 'Great American mission', in which the United States shaped the international development system according to its own interests.[7] Recent research on the imperial origins of humanitarianism and international development has also traced programmes in Britain, and to a lesser extent France and the Netherlands.[8] International histories

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California Press, 2003; Agnieszka Sobocinska, *Visiting the neighbours: Australians in Asia*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2014.

[4] This binary is addressed in Kevin O'Sullivan, Matthew Hilton, and Juliano Fiori, 'Humanitarianisms in context', *European Review of History*, 23, 1–2, 2016, p. 2.

[5] On the mixed economy of humanitarianism, see Tehila Sasson, 'From empire to humanity: the Russian famine and the imperial origins of international humanitarianism', *Journal of British Studies*, 55, 2016, pp. 519–37.

[6] Nick Cullather, 'Development? It's history', *Diplomatic History*, 24, 2, 2000, p. 642. Excellent review essays on the historiography of development include Marc Frey and Sonke Kunkel, 'Writing the history of development: a review of the recent literature', *Contemporary European History*, 20, 2, 2011, pp. 215–32, and Joseph Morgan Hodge's two-part essay, 'Writing the history of development (Part 1: the first wave)', *Humanity*, 6, 3, 2015, pp. 429–63, and 'Writing the history of development (Part 2: longer, deeper, wider)', *Humanity*, 7, 1, 2016, pp. 125–74.

[7] David Ekbladh, *The great American mission: modernization and the construction of an American world order*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011. See also Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as ideology*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000; Michael E. Latham, *The right kind of revolution: modernization, development, and U.S. foreign policy from the Cold War to the present*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010; Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with guns: authoritarian development and U.S.–Indonesian relations, 1960–1968*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008; Larry Grubbs, 'Bringing "the gospel of modernization" to Nigeria: American nation builders and development planning in the 1960s', *Peace and Change*, 31, 3, 2006, pp. 279–308.

[8] Joseph Morgan Hodge, *Triumph of the expert: agrarian doctrines of development and the legacies of British colonialism*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007; Joseph Morgan Hodge, 'British colonial expertise, postcolonial careering and the early history of international development', *Journal of Modern European History*, 8, 1, 2010, pp. 24–44; Charlotte Lydia Riley, 'Monstrous predatory vampires and beneficent fairy-godmothers: British post-war colonial development in Africa', PhD thesis, University College London, 2013. Marc Frey, 'Control, legitimacy, and the securing of interests: European development policy in South-east Asia from the late colonial period to the early 1960s', *Contemporary European History*, 12, 4, 2003, pp. 395–412; Véronique Dimier, 'For a new start? Resettling French colonial administrators in the Prefectural Corps (1960–1980)', *Itinerario*, 28, 1, 2004, pp. 49–66; Suzanne Moon, *Technology and ethical idealism: a history of development in the Netherlands East Indies*, Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2007.

of development, which trace multiple national donor and recipient nations, or transnational cooperation in development projects, are still rare.[9] This is despite the fact that, as Abou B. Bamba notes, development discourses and techniques were transnational forces, which were compared, circulated, and transferred by international networks.[10]

As in the wider scholarship, the literature on Development Volunteering almost exclusively traces the rise of national programmes, with little reference to transnational developments. The origins of Australia's VGS have been sketched in a brief institutional history of its successor organization, Australian Volunteers International (AVI), and more thoroughly in the biography of its 'pioneer' volunteer, Herb Feith.[11] In Britain, VSO has been examined within the broader contexts of decolonization and the rise of youth as a political category. Recent work links civil humanitarianism with state-based narratives, particularly in situating young people's activism within the British experience of decolonization. However, this scholarship remains constrained within national boundaries, with little acknowledgment of the global Development Volunteering movement beyond Britain.[12]

The national framing is most striking in the American context. American scholarship has largely accepted Lawrence Fuchs' 1967 claim that the Peace Corps was a pure expression of American national character.[13] The historian Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman acknowledged that the Peace Corps had foreign 'cousins', yet she nonetheless argued that 'It symbolized what America wanted to be, and what much of the world wanted America to be: superhero, protector of the disenfranchised, defender of the democratic faith.'[14] More recent work has explored the Peace Corps' role in constructing discourses of underdevelopment; however, it too maintains a strictly domestic focus.[15] Research into the Peace Corps' origins has focused on the influence of academic and civic action groups in the United States, but has also ignored broader contexts, including extant Development Volunteering programmes in Australia, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere.[16]

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[9] Histories of development that do take an international perspective often focus on multilateral agencies and elites. See, for example, Véronique Dimier, *The invention of a European development aid bureaucracy: recycling empire*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

[10] Abou B. Bamba, 'Triangulating a modernization experiment: the United States, France and the making of the Kossou project in central Ivory Coast', *Journal of Modern European History*, 8, 1, 2010, pp. 66–84. See also Hodge, 'Writing (Part 2)', p. 142.

[11] Known as the Overseas Service Bureau until 1998/99. Overseas Service Bureau, *Australian volunteers abroad: 25 years working for the world*, Melbourne: Overseas Service Bureau, 1989; Jemma Purdey, *From Vienna to Yogyakarta: the life of Herb Feith*, Sydney: UNSW Press, 2011.

[12] Georgina Brewis, 'From service to action? Students, volunteering and community action in mid twentieth-century Britain', *British Journal of Education Studies*, 58, 4, 2010, pp. 429–49; Jordanna Bailkin, *The afterlife of empire*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012; Anna Bocking-Welch, 'Youth against hunger: service, activism and the mobilisation of young humanitarians in 1960s Britain', *European Review of History*, 23, 1–2, 2016, pp. 154–70. For earlier histories of VSO, see Mora Dickson, *A world elsewhere: Voluntary Service Overseas*, London: Dennis Dobson, 1964; Mora Dickson, ed., *A chance to serve*, London: Dennis Dobson, 1976; Michael Adams, *Voluntary Service Overseas: the story of the first ten years*, London: Faber and Faber, 1968.

[13] Lawrence H. Fuchs, *Those peculiar Americans: the Peace Corps and American national character*, New York: Meredith Press, 1967, p. 4; Fritz Fischer, *Making them like us: Peace Corps volunteers in the 1960s*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998.

[14] Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, *All you need is love: the Peace Corps and the spirit of the 1960s*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 1. See also Elizabeth Cobbs, 'Decolonization, the Cold War, and the foreign policy of the Peace Corps', *Diplomatic History*, 20, 1, 1996, pp. 79–105.

[15] Alyosha Goldstein, 'On the internal border: colonial difference, the Cold War, and the locations of "underdevelopment"', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 50, 1, 2008, pp. 26–56; Sheyda Jahanbani, '"A different kind of people": the poor at home and abroad, 1935–1968', PhD thesis, Brown University, 2009; Rebecca Schein, 'Lansdcape for a good citizen: the Peace Corps and the cultural logics of American cosmopolitanism', PhD thesis, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2008; Rebecca Schein, 'Educating Americans for "overseasmanship": the Peace Corps and the invention of culture shock', *American Quarterly*, 67, 4, 2015, pp. 1109–36.

This is in keeping with the way in which Development Volunteering organizations see their own histories. Programmes typically tell the story of their origins in the lexicon of pioneering achievement; the credit for starting organizations is jealously guarded for individuals and nations. Australia's VGS referred to their first volunteer, Herb Feith, as a 'pioneer', and theirs as the 'pioneer' Development Volunteering programme, from as early as 1954. Although there is truth to this claim, the pride and frequency with which the claim was made points to what the early volunteer Betty Feith called a 'note of confident, even arrogant Australian nationalism'.[17] Alec Dickson, the founder of VSO, claimed to be 'both the guru and the doyen of the volunteer movement' and 'the father of the Peace Corps idea' – despite evidence that he modelled his organization on the Australian VGS, which had operated for seven years before VSO was launched.[18] Moving beyond Dickson as an individual, VSO's first institutional history claimed that 'the volunteer movement is one of the strikingly hopeful phenomena of the post-war world – and it is a movement in which Britain gave the lead'.[19] Prince Philip came close to the mark when noting that the VSO idea was 'so obvious and so simple in fact that I couldn't help wondering why on earth no-one had thought about it before' – but he too went on to claim VSO as an example of British moral leadership during decolonization.[20]

The Peace Corps also claimed the credit for the Development Volunteering model for America. John F. Kennedy argued that the Peace Corps exemplified the American frontier spirit.[21] The first Peace Corps Director, Sargent Shriver, thought that it was proof 'that the American Revolution is on the move again'.[22] The *1st Peace Corps report* traced its origins exclusively within American frames, linking it to the American philosopher William James's 1910 essay 'The moral equivalent of war', and to Congressman Henry S. Reuss and Senator Hubert H. Humphrey's calls for a 'Point Four Youth Corps'.[23] (In subsequent years, even this was cut, and official Peace Corps pamphlets began their section on 'history' with Kennedy's commissioning of a Presidential Task Force to investigate the viability of a Peace Corps in late 1960.[24])

There have, of course, been exceptions. One of the first books published about the Peace Corps, Maurice L. Albertson's 1961 *New frontiers for American youth: perspective on the Peace Corps*, discussed both VGS and VSO.[25] More recently, the historians Georgina Brewis, Ruth Compton Brouwer, and Elizabeth Cobbs have all acknowledged that foreign programmes (particularly Australia's VGS) provided inspiration for Britain's VSO, Canada's

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[16] Anne Palmer Peterson, 'Academic conceptions of a United States Peace Corps', *History of Education*, 40, 2, 2011, pp. 229–40; E. Timothy Smith, 'Roots of the Peace Corps: youth volunteer service in the 1950s', *Peace and Change*, 41, 2, 2016, pp. 221–54.

[17] Betty Feith, 'Putting in a stitch or two: an episode in education for international understanding – the Volunteer Graduate Scheme in Indonesia, 1950–63', MEd thesis, Monash University, Melbourne, 1984, p. 5.

[18] Dickson, *Chance to serve*, frontispiece. Dickson's biography, written by his wife, Mora, in 1976, also claimed that 'tens of thousands of young people … owe this experience to one man – Alec Dickson'.

[19] Adams, *Voluntary Service Overseas*, p. 13.

[20] Foreword by HRH Prince Philip in *ibid.*, p. 7.

[21] 'President likens Peace Corps to the spirit of 1776', *New York Times*, 5 July 1963.

[22] Chalmers M. Roberts, 'Peace Corps head sees pioneer spirit revival', *Washington Post*, 7 March 1961.

[23] *1st Peace Corps report*, Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 1962.

[24] See, for example, National Archives at College Park (henceforth NARA), RG 490, Peace Corps Public Relations Publications, 1961–93, Box 2, Public Affairs Staff, *Opportunities in the Peace Corps: a fact booklet*, Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 1963.

[25] Maurice L. Albertson, Andrew E. Rice, and Pauline E. Birky, *New frontiers for American youth: perspective on the Peace Corps*, Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1961, pp. 8–11.

Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO), and the United States Peace Corps respectively.[26] However, their focus on a single, national programme limited their capacity to fully explore these connections beyond a brief mention. The task of assessing Development Volunteering as a transnational phenomenon and a constituent part of a global history of development remains.[27]

As well as the literature on Development Volunteering, this article contributes to the broader historiography of development. Historians have presented post-war development as a top-down phenomenon – the 'triumph of the expert', to cite Joseph Hodge – by which metropolitan academic and bureaucratic elites set the development agenda.[28] As previously noted, they have also ascribed a centre–periphery model, in which ideology and programmes were developed in America or Britain, before being taken to the world.

This article challenges both the centre–periphery and the top-down conceptions of development. First, it reveals that development innovations sometimes moved from the periphery to the centre, and not the reverse: from Indonesia to Australia, from Australia to Britain (and New Zealand and Canada), and from Britain to the United States. This destabilizes current accounts of development, many of which continue to emphasize American or British origins. Second, it uncovers the crucial role played by civil society and ordinary people from an early stage in the post-war development system. Far from being designed by modernization theorists and implemented by elites, Development Volunteering first arose among students, who shaped it into a viable organization before securing government funding. Their ideas were adapted to a more formal NGO/charity model in Britain, and fully integrated into the government bureaucracy in the United States. Yet, ordinary people remained essential to Development Volunteering. They donated money and resources; most importantly, tens of thousands donated one or two years of their lives to volunteer abroad (often at considerable personal and financial sacrifice). This article reveals that public involvement was an essential, but largely overlooked, component of international development from the 1950s – not just in a single national context, but across the developed West.

Laying the groundwork: the Volunteer Graduate Scheme

Australia's Volunteer Graduate Scheme was established in 1951 as a response to an Indonesian request. On their way to the 1950 World University Service conference in Bombay, two Melbourne University students befriended an Indonesian delegate who told them of the critical skills shortage facing his nation as the Dutch colonial bureaucracy departed. VGS was established shortly afterwards: the first volunteer, Herb Feith, departed for Jakarta in 1951, followed in 1952 by two more volunteers and funding from both the Australian and Indonesian governments. Over the next fifteen years, dozens of VGS volunteers served in Indonesia on two-year postings. They worked as public servants in government ministries, as teachers and librarians, and in technical roles as doctors, bacteriologists, botanists, and radio technicians. Unlike other expatriates (including those working for development agencies), they were paid at Indonesian rates.

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[26] Georgina Brewis, *A social history of student volunteering*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 176–7; Ruth Compton Brouwer, *Canada's global villagers: CUSO in development, 1961–1981*, Vancouver and Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2013, pp. 13-14; Ruth Compton Brouwer, '"Canada's Peace Corps"? CUSO's evolving relationship with its US cousin, 1961–1971', *International Journal*, 70, 1, 2015, pp. 137–46; Cobbs Hoffman, *All you need*.

[27] Several historians have called for a broader, more truly global history of development. See David C. Engerman and Corinna R. Unger, 'Introduction: towards a global history of modernization', *Diplomatic History*, 33, 3, 2009, pp. 375–85.

[28] Hodge, *Triumph*. See also Latham, *Modernization*; Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the future: modernization theory in Cold War America*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003; Ekbladh, *Great American mission*; Matthew Hilton, James McKay, Nicholas Crowson, and Jean-Francois Mouhot, *The politics of expertise: how NGOs shaped modern Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

VGS was not, of course, the first philanthropic organization to send volunteers overseas. Religious missionaries had framed their service in this way for well over a century. In the interwar period, groups including Service Civil International and International Voluntary Service for Peace organized short-term work camps that brought together young people from Europe and North America to rebuild areas devastated by war or famine. However, these were short-term projects framed around reconstruction rather than development; moreover they were resolutely focused on Europe, with relatively few work camps organized in other areas.[29] VGS differed by sending its volunteers on longer postings (usually two years, although individual placements varied between one and three years); by framing its contribution in the language of international development rather than religious or cultural 'uplift'; and by focusing on what was coming to be known as the 'developing world'. These were to become the key characteristics of Development Volunteering.

VGS framed its contribution in the language of international development, which was just beginning to enter mainstream usage. President Truman's Point Four speech was only two years old in 1951, and the system of national and multilateral development agencies that followed it was barely beyond the conception stage. The United States' Marshall Plan for post-war reconstruction in Europe was supplemented by development programmes in Turkey, South Korea, Japan, and other nations thought to be particularly vulnerable to Communism; however, the comprehensive programmes of USAID were years off. The United Nations created its Technical Assistance Administration (UNTAA) in 1950; as VGS came into being, the UN was in the process of sending its first technical experts into the field in Indonesia. Although in later years VGS mounted a cogent and sustained critique of UNTAA, the two organizations arose at the same time, and shared a concern to develop the postcolonial world 'on the basis of cooperation rather than exploitation'.[30]

VGS's initial motive of assisting Indonesia's development was soon joined by another purpose: to improve Australia's image in Asia. In the context of decolonization, Australians became acutely aware of the negative attitudes triggered by its strict immigration restrictions, widely known as the White Australia Policy. In the absence of an official public diplomacy campaign, civil society actors took up the task of improving Australia's image in Asia. VGS was among the best organized of these groups. It cannily recognized that 'the gesture value of such projects' – meaning 'the motive rather than the immediate practical effect' – was 'all-important'.[31] It realized that a group of young people, prepared to put aside self-interest in order to aid another country's development, served as a potent image of altruism. As the influential journalist Peter Russo wrote, 'If there is any better way than that of "showing the flag" in Asia, any surer way of dispelling Asia's lingering distrust of colonial taints, I have not heard it.' Russo thought that VGS volunteers were 'our leading insurance salesmen in Asia'.[32] Australia's Department of External Affairs agreed, noting in 1955 that 'in our view the scheme tapped a useful source of energetic talent from which we profited at a cheap rate'.[33]

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[29] Arthur Gillette, *One million volunteers: the story of volunteer youth service*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968; William Peters, *Passport to friendship: the story of the experiment in international living*, Philadelphia, PA, and New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1957.

[30] For a discussion of the VGS critique of UNTAA, see Agnieszka Sobocinska, 'A new kind of mission: the Volunteer Graduate Scheme and the cultural history of international development', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 62, 3, 2016, pp. 369–87. The quotation is from David Webster, 'Development advisors in a time of Cold War and decolonization: the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration, 1950–59', *Journal of Global History*, 6, 2, 2011, p. 250.

[31] National Library of Australia (henceforth NLA), Records of Volunteer Graduates Abroad, MS 2601, Box 6, Herb Feith to Betty Evans, 20 June 1951.

This image also played well to Indonesian audiences. In the early postcolonial years, republican governments championed interracial equality and international friendship, and President Sukarno was famously sensitive to insinuations of colonialism or racism.[34] These values, most famously expressed at the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung, were shared by VGS. (Indeed, several volunteers, including Herb Feith, helped the Ministry of Information prepare English-language speeches and publications for the Bandung Conference.) As a 1954 VGS pamphlet noted,

> What they do in their actual work is important … But more important perhaps is the fact that these young people assert by the way they live, that racial equality is real. By having natural and friendly relations with Indonesians on a basis of mutual respect, they help to do away with the colonial legacy of mistrust and misunderstanding, which to so large an extent continues to affect relations between coloured people and whites.[35]

The early volunteers were immensely idealistic. In their own words, they were 'a small group of "cranks" who feel strongly enough against racial inequality to be prepared to do something about it', and they placed the stress on service to others rather than personal benefit.[36] Volunteers certainly benefited from their experiences, with many (including Feith) going on to careers as specialists in Indonesian affairs or in the development sector. However, this aspect was downplayed in contemporary publicity and subsequent narratives. The desire for adventure, which also contributed to volunteers' enthusiasm for their task, was rarely acknowledged and definitely not encouraged (indeed, potential recruits were screened on 'the question of their going for adventure or an extended holiday tour'). Yet, among themselves, volunteers admitted that 'One can't deny that there *is* a certain amount of adventure involved – it can't be avoided, but adventure of the right sort perhaps.'[37]

VGS quickly won the support of both Australian and Indonesian governments. In 1952, the Indonesian government agreed to pay volunteers' in-country salaries, while the Australian government paid their fares and covered the costs of clothing, transport, specialist equipment, and resettlement in Australia. Yet some Indonesian officials were wary of the scheme. They thought that, like other foreign aid programmes, VGS was a form of neo-colonialism and a source of national humiliation. The papers of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta reveal that Sugarda Purbakawatja from the Ministry of Education, for one, held strong antipathy to 'the element of patronage which it seems (to him) to embody'.[38] VGS was well aware that foreign aid was not widely trusted in Indonesia during the 1950s. The organization's policy was therefore to minimize publicity, and to hush up the fact that VGS was funded out of the Colombo Plan (Australia's major foreign aid appropriation). As Jim Webb explained in 1956, widespread publicity 'may not achieve any beneficial result, but rather may cause difficulties such as the scheme being seen as some new form of interference backed by powerful propaganda'.[39]

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[32] Peter Russo, 'The students don't need advice', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 12 January 1956, p. 2.

[33] National Archives of Australia (henceforth NAA), A1893, 2032/5/4 Part 1, Patrick Shaw to L. J. Arnott, 15 March 1955.

[34] See J. A. C. Mackie, *Bandung 1955: non-alignment and Afro-Asian solidarity*, Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2005; Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya, eds., *Bandung revisited: the legacy of the 1955 Asian-African conference for international order*, Singapore: NUS Press, 2008; Antonia Finanne and Derek McDougall, *Bandung 1955: little histories*, Melbourne: Monash University Press, 2010. For US responses to the Bandung Conference, see Matthew Jones, 'A "segregated" Asia? Race, the Bandung Conference, and pan-Asianist fears in American thought and policy, 1954–1955', *Diplomatic History*, 29, 5, 2005, pp. 841–68.

[35] NAA, A1893, 2032/5/4 Part 1, NUAUS, 'The scheme for graduate employment in Indonesia: an account of the way the scheme works, and a letter from Indonesia to interested volunteers', 1954 edition.

[36] NLA, MS 2601, Box 3, 'The Australian scheme for graduate employment in Indonesia', 4 November 1954.

[37] NLA, MS 2601, Box 2, Keith Buckley to Jim Webb, 9 November 1963.

Although VGS preferred to keep a low profile, some reports did make it to local media, including mainstream nationalist newspapers as well as the organs of minority and Islamic parties. The coverage suggests a warm reception. Indonesian reports tended to emphasize the fact that the original inspiration for the scheme had come from an Indonesian proposal, and noted approvingly that Australian graduates would work for the same pay as Indonesian public servants.[40] Comments such as Purbakawadja's notwithstanding, VGS also won strong and sincere praise from Indonesian politicians and diplomats. In 1956, Indonesia's Ambassador to Australia, Dr R. H. Tirtawinata, addressed a VGS conference in Melbourne. He had nothing but praise for the scheme, claiming that 'Nothing which has been done to help my country in the eleven years since we gained our independence, has so appealed to the hearts and minds of my countrymen as the graduate employment scheme.'[41] VGS received its highest honour the following year, when two newly arrived volunteers were greeted at the Presidential Palace by President Sukarno, who expressed his 'best wishes for the continued success of the Volunteer Graduate Scheme'.[42]

Forty-eight volunteers served in Indonesia from the Scheme's beginning in 1951, until it was folded into another organization, AVI, during the mid 1960s. Most were in their mid twenties or early thirties, and over a third were women. For many, the experience was positive. As the volunteer Ollie McMichael wrote in 1952, relations with Indonesian co-workers or neighbours were generally good, as 'When they see that you are not another "colonial" they become terrifically friendly … They have bitter memories of the colonial time and are always delighted to hear you are an Australian, and not Dutch or American.'[43] However, things became more difficult from the late 1950s, when the Indonesian political and economic crisis began to affect living standards and when Australia's pro-Dutch stance on the West New Guinea conflict increased bilateral tension. Volunteer numbers dropped, but the scheme's publicity and rhetoric peaked. From 1957 until 1962, VGS produced a quarterly newsletter, *Djembatan* (*The Bridge*), and in 1959 they received UNESCO funding to produce a glossy special edition. Portraying VGS as a pioneering scheme for international development and friendship, over 2,000 copies of this special edition were transmitted to organizations and individuals around the world.[44]

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[38] NAA, A1893, 2032/5/4 Part 1, W. A. Vawdrey to Department of External Affairs, 7 December 1954.

[39] NLA, MS 2601, Box 4, Jim Webb to Ian Newman, 5 April 1956.

[40] 'Presiden Soekarno dihormati kaum intelek dan disembah oleh massa: seorang Australia tentang Indonesia (President Soekarno respected by intellectuals and worshipped by the masses: an Australian about Indonesia)', *Merdeka*, 10 June 1954; 'Pemuda-Pemuda Australia ikut membangun Indonesia (Australian youth join in Indonesia's development)', *Abadi*, 14 January 1955; 'Sardjana Australia sanggup dibajar menurut P.G.P. (Australian graduates can be paid according to PGP)', *Harian Umum*, 2 February 1955; Amir Daud, 'Pemuda-pemuda Australia memberikan tenaganja di Indonesia: Mereka hidup setjara PGP (Australian youth strengthen Indonesia: they live on PGP)', *Pedoman Minggu*, 15 January 1956.

[41] NLA, MS 2601, Box 3, 'Speech delivered by His Excellency Dr R.H. Tirtawinata, Ambassador for Indonesia, to the Volunteer Graduate Scheme conference at Melbourne University on Thursday 23 August, 1956'.

[42] Noela Motum, 'Lemonade with the President', *Djembatan (The Bridge)*, 1, 1, July 1957, p. 2.

[43] Cited in Feith, 'Putting in a stitch or two', p. 5.

The model spreads

The Volunteer Graduate Scheme was very much a product of its context. It was developed specifically to fulfil Indonesia's need for skilled workers and Australia's need to improve its image in Asia. However, almost immediately, VGS sought to expand its remit. Even before its first volunteer had been dispatched, members of the VGS committee explored Burma, India, and Malaya as potential receiving nations.[45] The aim to extend VGS to Burma, in particular, became a priority and took up a good deal of time and energy over several years. A number of overtures were made, and potential volunteers were groomed to be 'pioneers' in Burma, but negotiations were never pursued to success. Nonetheless, VGS continued to believe it was 'desirable that the symbolic value of the scheme in terms of racial equality should not just be limited to one country', and that, in light of continued political instability in Indonesia, 'It would be wise to have our eggs in more than one basket!'[46]

VGS also wanted young people from other 'developed' nations to share the same experiences. It pursued multiple channels and numerous networks in its drive to spread the model of Development Volunteering abroad. Several key personnel, including Herb Feith, his future wife Betty Evans, Honorary Secretary Jim Webb, and Chairman Don Anderson were assiduous letter-writers, initiating correspondence with countless organizations, agencies, and governments. They were firmly engaged in student political networks, with existing contacts within the World University Service and the Coordinating Secretariat of National Unions of Students. Many VGS volunteers were also members of the Australian Student Christian Movement, and were integrated within international religious networks centring on the World's Student Christian Federation, the World Council of Churches, and the United Student Christian Council.[47] In addition, they forged new contacts within relevant UN agencies, particularly UNESCO and UNTAA. In July 1951, the very same month he arrived in Indonesia, Feith wrote to the Australian Association for the United Nations to propose that his experience serve as 'a forerunner of possible other similar ventures in other parts of South-East Asia', possibly in cooperation with UN agencies.[48] Even at this early stage, he hoped that 'Australian graduates can pioneer the way for students of other nationalities'.[49]

VGS directly lobbied other 'developed' nations to establish similar programmes. From early 1951, contact was initiated with the New Zealand University Students' Association and the New Zealand Student Christian Movement. The correspondence continued, and in 1955 Jim Webb shared a flight from Indonesia with New Zealand's Minister for External Affairs and the Department's Secretary. By the time the plane touched down, the New Zealanders had become 'very keen about some of the principles involved'.[50] The New Zealand Volunteer Graduate Scheme (NZVGS) was formally established within a matter of months. Funding came from the New Zealand government, but the NZVGS was administered by the Australian organization.

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[44] NLA, MS 2601, Box 12, Minutes of Meeting, 3 October 1959.

[45] NLA, MS 2601, Box 4, Betty Evans to Tom Critchley, 14 December 1950, and Betty Evans to Tom Critchley, 15 May 1951.

[46] NLA, MS 2601, Box 1, Jim Webb, report to NUAUS Council, February 1955.

[47] The religious elements (and networks) of VGS are beyond the scope of this article, but are discussed in Sobocinska, 'New kind of mission'.

[48] NLA, MS 2601, Box 6, Herb Feith to G. S. McDonald, 26 July 1951.

[49] NLA, MS 2601, Box 1, Jim Webb to NUAUS Council, February 1955.

In 1954, a young Canadian, Lewis Perinbam, heard of the Australian scheme through the World University Service, and immediately decided to try to set up a similar programme. Perinbam visited Indonesia in 1955, hoping to build the necessary contacts, but before long he decided that Ghana would be a more appropriate receiving nation. Ghana was in the Commonwealth, which he thought would make the scheme an easier sell politically, and it was on the cusp of decolonization. As Perinbam wrote to the Canadian government, 'Arising from the Australian experience, it is suggested that a similar program be established with Ghana … in whose progress and prosperity Canada is greatly interested.'[51] Although its early history was complicated by factional rivalry, Perinbam's actions ultimately developed into CUSO, of which Perinbam became founding executive director in 1961.[52]

In 1957, VGS corresponded with Alec Dickson, who went on to establish Britain's Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO). Dickson had initiated contact through his brother Murray, who was Director of Education in the British colony of Sarawak (later part of Malaysia). Murray Dickson wrote to the Australian Commission in Singapore, who in turn contacted Ailsa Zainu'ddin, a newly returned volunteer and the editor of the VGS magazine *Djembatan*. In his correspondence, Murray Dickson explained that Alec was 'anxious to develop something of the kind in the United Kingdom, for voluntary overseas service by young people'.[53] VSO was launched the following year, initially with a group of twelve school leavers heading out to Sarawak, as well as to Ghana and Nigeria.

Previous accounts have documented the significance of the 1957 Sarawak trip in the formation of VSO. According to Dickson's wife, Mora, the trip 'acted as a catalyst', as 'from that moment Alec Dickson saw a real possibility of putting some of his ideals into practice and began to work towards that end'.[54] In the most sustained recent retelling of VSO's origins, the historian Jordanna Bailkin notes that 'one of the key influences of VSO was the Dicksons' visit to Sarawak'. She thought that this was because 'Alec and Mora were deeply impressed by the integration of young people in Sarawak into the communal life' and 'through VSO they would seek to replicate that experience for young Britons'.[55] However, their growing awareness of Australia's VGS was probably a more direct source of inspiration. In a 1973 survey, based on interviews and direct correspondence, Robert Morris located VSO's origins in Dickson's having 'been strongly impressed by the work he had seen being done by these young Australian volunteers', after which he 'worked steadily through the summer of 1958 to put flesh to these thoughts'.[56] The 1957 correspondence involving Dickson, his brother, the Australian government, and Ailsa Zainu'ddin is further evidence that Dickson was aware of VGS and keenly interested in its model of Development Volunteering.

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[50] NLA, MS 2601, Box 1, Jim Webb to Herb and Betty Feith, 1 May 1955.

[51] NLA, MS 9926, Box 20, Papers of Herb Feith, 'Information letter, Canadian Volunteer Graduate Program'.

[52] For a full account of CUSO, see Compton Brouwer, *Canada's global villagers*.

[53] NLA, MS 2601, Box 2, A. H. Borthwick to Ailsa Zainu'ddin, 18 December 1957.

[54] Dickson, *Chance to serve*, p. 83.

[55] Bailkin, *Afterlife of empire*, p. 69.

[56] Robert C. Morris, *Overseas volunteer programs: their evolution and the role of governments in their support*, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1973, pp. 43–4.

VSO and the civilizing mission of development

VSO recast the basic model of Development Volunteering according to British patterns. Launched in 1958 and run in an almost autocratic fashion by the middle-aged Alec Dickson until 1962 (at which point administration was taken over by a committee), it had a very different organizational structure and mission from VGS. Dickson's life straddled the imperial and post-imperial periods in British history (he was born in 1914), and his career exemplifies the broader continuity of personnel and ideas between the two periods. During his years of colonial service, he had developed the conviction that the British empire's greatest attribute was its rousing spirit of adventure. In the early 1950s, he established a training camp for local elites in colonial Nigeria, which was briefly closed following the death of several pupils during gruelling character-building treks. Dickson then moved on to UNESCO in Iraq, where he witnessed and participated in the post-war shift from imperial to developmental systems of governance. By 1957, he held a dual belief in adventure and development; in Development Volunteering he saw a means to combine the two.

VSO was initially aimed at eighteen-year-olds fresh out of school, whose characters were not yet formed and who would therefore derive the most benefit from adventure. As Sir John Maitland enthused in the House of Commons in 1962, 'This scheme is of great value to those taking part in it. They leave this country as boys and girls, and come back as men and women.'[57] In this, VSO revived the colonial practice by which elite boys became men through the adventure of overseas service, and translated it into the postcolonial language of development. In addition, the character-building aspect of Development Volunteering was important in light of the crisis of youth thought to be facing Britain in the 1950s. Like other forms of civil activism, VSO volunteers were presented as a counterpoint to the dissolute and disorderly juvenile delinquents who threatened established British norms.[58] As Prince Philip wrote to mark the tenth anniversary of VSO, the programme was aimed at 'those who are bright enough to realize that constructive action is always better than destruction'.[59]

In addition to the benefits accruing to Britain's youth, the government's support was linked to the twin contexts of decolonization and the Cold War. International development assistance was wielded as a weapon in the Cold War, as both sides intensified their effort to win hearts and minds across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.[60] Dickson thought that improving Britain's image in newly independent nations would help keep them onside in the Cold War; by projecting a positive image of Western youth, friendly young volunteers could provide something of 'an answer to Mao Tse Tung in South East Asia'.[61] The UK government also believed that VSO could help Britain's cause in the intertwined contexts of decolonization and the Cold War. Government support rose throughout this period, eventually reaching 75% of VSO's costs (approximately £680,000 in 1968), revealing a substantial investment in its aims and outcomes.[62]

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[57] House of Commons Debates (Hansard), 12 December 1962, vol. 669, cc 423–81.

[58] Anna Bocking-Welch, 'Imperial legacies and internationalist discourses: British involvement in the United Nations Freedom from Hunger Campaign, 1960–70', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40, 5, 2012, pp. 879–96; Bocking-Welch, 'Youth against hunger'.

[59] HRH Prince Philip in Adams, *Voluntary Service Overseas*, p. 8.

[60] See Odd Arne Westad, *The global Cold War: Third World interventions and the making of our times*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, especially pp. 92–7; Latham, *Right kind of revolution*; Simpson, *Economists*.

[61] The National Archives, Kew (henceforth TNA), CO 859/1445, Alec Dickson, The Thomas Holland Memorial Lecture, 23 February 1960.

[62] Adams, *Voluntary Service Overseas*, p. 16.

It was thought that VSO helped to portray Britain in a positive light, and that decolonizing nations would be impressed by volunteers who worked alongside locals. Dickson was fond of recounting a conversation with an Indian official, who 'was amazed to find two white-skinned youths working beside the dark Tamil villagers, and exclaimed: "The incredible British, they leave as rulers – and return as friends"'.[63] The Colonial Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO) supported VSO largely because of its promise to improve Britain's standing in current and former colonies. The Cultural Relations Department of the CRO noted in 1961 that 'in so far as the psychological effect on Africans of seeing UK personnel working only for pocket money as teachers … VSO might be a more effective form of "technical assistance" than forms of technical assistance which fitted more precisely into a narrow definition of this'.[64] The Colonial Office and the CRO were the scheme's earliest and most ardent advocates in government, providing regular grants before responsibility was transferred to the newly established Department of Technical Cooperation in 1962.

Early VSO volunteers were overwhelmingly posted to current and former colonies. Of the 101 volunteers departing in 1960–61, only 5 were bound for 'foreign' nations (neither current nor former colonies).[65] Moreover, whereas VSO claimed to be assisting the needy people of developing nations, many early postings were to schools or parishes built on the British model, and often still under expatriate management. Of the 1959 cohort to Sarawak, for example, one volunteer became secretary to the Bishop of Borneo, Nigel Edmund Cornwall, and another three were posted to British-run Anglican schools.[66] On close inspection, most of the praise for volunteers during these early years also came from colonial officials or British expatriate staff, and assumed rather than demonstrated local support.[67] A report on the Sarawak volunteers noted that 'there is no doubt whatever that public reaction to the scheme has been most favourable'. However, this report was authored by the High Commission, and presumed rather than measured the support of locals. It went on:

> The native peoples among whom the Student Volunteers have worked, particularly the schoolboys, have greatly appreciated the opportunity of having such close contacts with young Englishmen. The precise reason why they have come to Sarawak is too complex for most of them to grasp, but Urban Chinese have understood what the scheme is and about and thoroughly approve of it.[68]

Rather than measuring local opinion, the High Commission's report presumed the positive response of the elite Anglicized youth taught by volunteers (even while disparaging their capacity for rational judgement), and entirely disregarded the viewpoints of the wider population.

Britain's imperial history facilitated a wider reach for Development Volunteering. Where the Australian VGS had been limited to one country, VSO sent volunteers to current dependencies and former colonies in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the Caribbean.

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[63] Dickson, Thomas Holland Memorial Lecture.

[64] TNA, DO 163/22, Note to file, Voluntary Service Overseas, June 1961.

[65] In 1960–61, two volunteers were posted in the Philippines, two in Ethiopia and one in Laos. See TNA, CO 859/1445, VSO Policy, Colonial Office.

[66] TNA, CO 859/1445, VSO Policy, Colonial Office, 'Report on Student Volunteer Scheme, Sarawak'.

[67] This assessment is based on the reports submitted to the Colonial Office following requests for feedback on VSO in 1960. TNA, CO 859/1445, VSO Policy, Colonial Office.

[68] TNA, CO 859/1445, VSO Policy, Colonial Office, 'Report on Student Volunteer Scheme, Sarawak'.

Within a decade VSO broadened its remit beyond the boundaries of the former British empire to 'the under-privileged half of the world'.[69] The boundaries of this 'under-privileged half' were rarely defined. In the absence of precision, assumptions about which nations were 'developed' or 'underdeveloped' were carried over from the colonial period. Politicians and the media commonly reiterated colonial truisms and language. *The Times* reported that 'boy volunteers' worked 'among backward peoples' in 'backward communities in the under-developed territories of the Commonwealth'.[70] The MP Jo Grimond's 1962 contribution to a lengthy debate in the House of Commons (which resulted in greater government support for VSO) is typical in its lack of precision: he argued that 'the greatest and most urgent task of the Western world … is to provide the skills to assist these people to run their own countries'.[71] Grimond's failure to define who 'these people' were, where 'their own countries' were situated, or indeed which nations constituted 'the Western world' was so customary as to avoid comment. Yet it was laden with colonial-era presumptions about the nature and location of backwardness, now rephrased as underdevelopment. Moreover, his assumption that 'developed' nations were also 'Western' reflected the twin contexts of decolonization and the Cold War that framed international development during the 1950s and 1960s.[72]

Generalizations regarding the nature and location of development also underpinned VSO's selection polices. During the early years, VSO volunteers' personal characters were valued above technical skills. VSO's Executive Committee thought that 'their very youthfulness was their greatest asset', and therefore valued youth and good character above technical skills.[73] Technical qualifications or practical skills were secondary because, as Mora Dickson argued, in developing countries 'In essence the problems are, in fact, not so much of a technical nature, as of an attitude of mind.'[74] VSO's view fit the broader logic of modernization and development. The notion that 'economic progress will not occur unless the atmosphere is favourable to it' – and so to change economies you first had to change mindsets – had become accepted by the late 1950s.[75] It was imprinted in the global system of technical assistance implemented by multilateral agencies including the UNTAA and the Colombo Plan, as well as national bodies. Technical assistance and community development positioned Western modernity as the endpoint towards which all nations were developing, and made the eradication of traditional ways of life and 'irrational' attitudes (and the imposition of Western mindsets) the first step towards poverty eradication and economic take-off.

As David Webster has shown in his study of UN technical assistance, continuities from the age of colonialism to the age of development were deeply embedded in developmental concepts of tutelage and uplift.[76] The notion of a civilizing mission had become increasingly influential from the mid nineteenth century. Liberal colonial ideals and policies in the British, French, and Dutch empires were predicated, as Michael Barnett reminds us, on 'discourses of difference that created new forms of hierarchy', and that stated that 'the white Christian race had a responsibility to rescue the backward races from disease, destitution, and depravity'.[77]

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[69] Adams, *Voluntary Service Overseas*, p. 16.

[70] 'Boy volunteers return home: year spent among backward peoples', *The Times*, 29 September 1959.

[71] House of Commons Debates (Hansard), 12 December 1962, vol. 669, cc 423–81.

[72] For an authoritative account of the intersection of decolonization and the Cold War, see Westad, *Global Cold War*.

[73] VSO Company Archives, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, Box 31, Executive Committee Minutes, 30 May 1961.

[74] Dickson, *Chance to serve*, p. 70.

[75] Latham, *Modernization*; Ekbladh, *Great American mission*, esp. pp. 158–61.

[76] Webster, 'Development advisors', p. 250.

The fact that VSO sent eighteen-year-old school leavers, rather than trained graduates, articulated the assumption that young people from 'developed' nations such as Britain were capable of uplifting 'developing' ones simply by their presence, rather than by virtue of their knowledge or skills. A volunteer's charisma and presence were thought to be more important than their skills: as Sir John Maitland reported to the House of Commons, 'any good they do comes from their own personalities and principles'.[78] The outcomes were often quite dramatic. Reflecting on VSO's first ten years, Michael Adams located the 'archetypal VSO situation' in the experience of an eighteen year-old, recently graduated from a Yorkshire grammar school, who 'within a few weeks of her arrival' had taken charge 'as headmistress of a school of 250 pupils in the Solomon Islands'. Adams believed that this situation was 'ideal', and illustrated many similar situations 'where "qualifications" had little significance beside a willingness to tackle whatever came to hand'.[79]

Placing school leavers in positions of authority was a departure from colonial norms. Previously, teaching positions in Britain's dependent territories had required candidates holding a diploma and prior experience. However, colonial standards no longer applied once nations acquired independence, and from 1961 the Colonial Office helped Dickson find placements among newly independent nations. Officers knew that 'a new graduate is useless' for colonial vacancies, but suggested Nigeria, which had gained independence earlier that year, and so 'might welcome young graduates as teachers'.[80] This echoed a broader shift in Britain's relations with former colonies. Rather than a colonial obligation, contributions towards the welfare of former dependencies were now reconfigured as 'aid', which was voluntary and, as such, bore lower standards of responsibility.[81] 'Aid' also shifted responsibility onto the locals, and Dickson believed that the first task was to educate the 'natives' in responsible citizenship. As *The Times* reported, 'The real object is to strike sparks in the minds of the people where the attitude of mind is the real key to the problem of economic and political development.'[82]

Suspicion of Development Volunteering, first expressed by some Indonesian officials in response to VGS, grew as VSO expanded and the resonances with colonialism became more overt. In 1959, the governor of one recently independent nation 'wrote that he by no means relished the idea of British youth going out with a holier-than-thou attitude and preaching moral uplift to benighted natives'.[83] Sir Evelyn Hone, Governor of Northern Rhodesia, also worried about VSO teachers. 'African pupils tend to be rather critical these days of the abilities of their teachers', he wrote, and, as a result, 'it was found that [VSO volunteers] could be used only in sporting and extramural activities'.[84] Another administrator reported that sending volunteers to the Man O'War Bay training camp in Nigeria was 'a mistake … as there is some resentment at an 18 year old having authority over 30 year olds'.[85] Years later, Mora Dickson was still stung by early criticism levelled at her husband. Was the VSO concept not 'going against the whole stream of African and Asian nationalism? Were these newer countries not hell-bent on ridding themselves of white civil servants as quickly as possible? They certainly weren't inviting re-invasion by hordes of British students.'[86]

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[77] Michael Barnett, *Empire of humanity: a history of humanitarianism*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011, p. 62.
[78] House of Commons Debates (Hansard), 12 December 1962, vol. 669, cc 423–81.
[79] Adams, *Voluntary Service Overseas*, p. 79.
[80] TNA, CO 859/1445, Notes to file, 23 November 1960.
[81] Bailkin, *Afterlife of empire*. See also Andrew Jones, 'British humanitarian NGOs and the disaster relief industry, 1942–1985', PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2014; Keith Tester, 'Humanitarianism: the group charisma of postcolonial Britain', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 13, 4, 2010, pp. 375–89.
[82] 'A year in the Commonwealth for young volunteers', *The Times*, 1 December 1959, p. 4.
[83] *Ibid*.
[84] TNA, CO 859/1445, Sir Evelyn Hone to Carstairs, 8 October 1960.

Dickson did not entertain such criticism. Instead, he liked to quote letters praising volunteers and requesting more. In 1961, for example, he wrote 'If further evidence is needed that nothing patronizing is sensed by independent governments in the contribution that our young people can make, it is surely shown by a request just received by airmail from the Pakistan government, asking for volunteers to promote among their students in East Bengal … social service, youth work, etc.'[87] Dickson did receive such a request from Pakistan. However, it did not come from the Pakistan government but from the UK High Commission in Karachi. In fact, the request originated from the New Zealander Colonel Brown, Headmaster of Cadet College at Fazurhat in what was then East Pakistan, who requested four boys to help with teaching and to coach the rugby teams, as the 'the school is on the British model and as the authorities prefer British helpers'.[88] As previously shown, VSO preferred to work within established British networks, and often bypassed local opinion entirely. This sometimes resulted in a closed loop of positive feedback, encouraging Dickson, along with other senior figures, to aim for continuous growth during the 1960s.

Partly because of this positive feedback, the earliest VSOs were widely celebrated in Britain as 'the new heroes of a postimperial age'.[89] The fact that many volunteers were too young to be personally implicated in the colonial system was laden with significance. VSO insisted that young volunteers were able to meet Africans or Asians on a basis of equality. In Dickson's words, VSO represented 'a new kind of partnership, youth to youth, speaking a common language – if not of tongue, of feeling and aspiration'.[90] The paternalism in the assumption that the 'new' countries of Asia and Africa were in a similar developmental stage as British youths bypassed most Britons. Even as they perpetuated this paternalism, VSO was portrayed as 'a new conception of racial partnership'.[91]

The early pattern of VSO, as described here, altered significantly during the later 1960s. In March 1962, the VSO Executive Committee forced Alec Dickson's resignation from the organization he had founded. The crisis had been brought about by the Committee's doubts about Dickson's managerial capacity and the Colonial Office's distaste at his occasionally imprudent behaviour (Dickson was prone to outbursts when his requests were rejected).[92] VSO underwent significant changes following Dickson's departure. The newly formed Department of Technical Cooperation took over as the government body responsible for liaising with VSO, and its emphasis on technical aid led to VSO starting a graduate programme alongside its school-leaver programme.[93] VSO's graduate programme was brought together with other voluntary agencies under the Lockwood Committee, forming a larger British Volunteer Programme.[94] Despite a continuing sentimental attachment to the schoolboy scheme, the emphasis on deploying graduates with technical skills saw more graduates than school leavers deployed by the mid 1960s, and the school-leaver programme was abandoned altogether in 1974.[95]

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[85] TNA, CO 859/1445, D. M. Smith to Mr Windsor, 6 October 1960.

[86] Dickson, *Chance to serve*, pp. 93–4.

[87] Dickson, Thomas Holland Memorial Lecture.

[88] TNA, DO 163/22, T. Bambury, UK High Commission, Karachi to Mr Crook, 31 July 1961. Fazurhat is now known as Faujdarhat.

[89] Bailkin, *Afterlife of empire*, p. 55.

[90] Dickson, *Chance to serve*, p. 92.

[91] Dickson, *World elsewhere*, p. 13.

[92] VSO Company Archives, Box 31, Minutes of the Executive Committee, 1961–74, and VSO Council Minutes, 1961–65. For British government discussions of Dickson, see TNA, OD 10/3, C. N. F. Odgers note to file, 14 October 1961; TNA, OD 10/4, W. J. Smith to P. Rogers, 7 February 1962.

[93] TNA, OD 10/3, Voluntary Service Overseas Policy, Department of Technical Cooperation.

The Peace Corps and the global reach of Development Volunteering

Development Volunteering reached a new peak with the establishment of the United States Peace Corps in March 1961. The Peace Corps was a signature initiative of the Kennedy Administration. Its creation was foreshadowed in John F. Kennedy's inaugural address: 'To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe, struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves.'[96] Unlike VGS and VSO, which began as voluntary agencies before gaining funding from national technical aid budgets, it was a government programme from the start. Its importance was reflected in the speed with which it was launched: less than four months after the Peace Corps was established by Executive Order and placed under the directorship of John F. Kennedy's brother-in-law Sargent Shriver, the first group of 500 volunteers departed for postings in Colombia, Tanganyika, and the Philippines. By the end of the first year, almost 3,000 volunteers had been deployed or were in training, bound for twenty-eight countries. Within five years, the programme was sending 10,000 volunteers per year to dozens of nations in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.[97]

Both VGS and VSO influenced the creation of the United States Peace Corps. From 1957, Herb Feith worked on his PhD at Cornell University, where he wrote dozens of letters and met a range of influential Americans, urging them to follow where VGS had led. In a letter to the American Committee on Africa, to take just one example, he encouraged 'American-African parallels to the Australian-Indonesian Volunteer Graduate Scheme'.[98] Alec Dickson was also influential. He travelled to the United States to advise all three of the university teams researching Development Volunteering models under Kennedy's instructions, and many of his recommendations were eventually built into the Peace Corps model.

Nonetheless, Development Volunteering was soon recast as something distinctively American. Politicians, academics, and the media all claimed that the Peace Corps was a crystallization of the American spirit. The *New York Times* editorialized that 'the concept of a Peace Corps … is in harmony with the American dream'.[99] In a cover story, *Time* magazine branded the Peace Corps 'a US ideal abroad'.[100] Young & Rubicam, the Madison Avenue advertising agency that donated its services to the Peace Corps, emphasized the American spirit in advertising campaigns.[101] This story became dominant through sheer retelling. The *Atlantic Monthly* claimed that, in the Peace Corps, ‘qualities associated with the old-time American character have been showing up abroad, coming out of the shadows like exposed film dipped into a darkroom bath of developing fluid’.[102] Strikingly, this view extended beyond publicists to academics and experts. The famed anthropologist Margaret Mead thought that the Peace Corps was ‘extraordinarily American in its strengths and in its weaknesses’.[103] Lawrence Fuchs, a professor of American Studies, wrote a book titled *The Peace Corps and American national character*, in which he claimed that ‘The Peace Corps taught me more about American values and character and American government and politics than I had learned in ten years of teaching American Civilization and Politics at Harvard and Brandeis universities.’[104] Ignoring overseas antecedents, Fuchs claimed that the Peace Corps ‘was born out of America’s historic sense of mission to protect liberty at home and spread it abroad’.[105] He was not alone; references to overseas antecedents were obscured and the originality and newness of the Peace Corps routinely stressed. The *Complete Peace Corps guide*, to give just one more example, claimed it as ‘a new and inspiring approach to international relations’.[106]

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[94] London School of Economics archives, RVA Records, Box 40, Lockwood Committee Minutes, 1962–69.

[95] VSO Company Archives, Box 698, lists of volunteers, 1958–74; Box 699, Dick Bird to Brian Deer, 13 February 1998.

[96] John F. Kennedy, Inaugural address, 20 January 1961, https://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Research-Aids/Ready-Reference/JFK-Quotations/Inaugural-Address.aspx (consulted 21 October 2016).

[97] *Peace Corps: 5th annual report to congress*, Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 1966, p. 6.

[98] Herb Feith to American Committee on Africa, 23 April 1959, in Betty Feith, 'Putting in a stitch or two', p. 27.

[99] 'Two Peace Corps problems', *New York Times*, 11 March 1961, p. 20.

[100] *Time* magazine, 5 July 1963, cover.

[101] See Agnieszka Sobocinska, '"The most potent PR tool ever devised"? The United States Peace Corps in the early 1960s', in Michael Lawrence and Rachel Tavernor, eds., *Global humanitarianism and media culture*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, forthcoming 2017.

Like VGS and VSO before it, the Peace Corps portrayed Development Volunteering as an American innovation in the belief that this would improve America’s image abroad. The *New York Times* claimed that it was ‘one of the most remarkable projects ever undertaken by any nation’ and ‘a noble enterprise’.[107] More importantly, it editorialized, ‘one can hardly think of a better way of making friends’.[108] The goal of promoting a better understanding of the American people formed one of three official objectives of the Peace Corps (alongside the aim of improving American understanding of other peoples and of helping ‘the people of these countries meet their needs for trained manpower’).[109] Letters to Shriver eulogized that ‘America’s Peace Corps is … without doubt, the most potent public relations tool ever devised’, and that ‘for those parts of the world inflamed with anti-Americanism, America’s Peace Corps will be the salve and the counter-irritant to the infectious spread of the “ugly American”’.[110] The vast publicity machine at Peace Corps HQ in Washington, DC, regularly portrayed Peace Corps volunteers as the sum of all that was good in modern America; the media went on to dub them ‘the Beautiful Americans’.[111]

The Peace Corps’ success was viewed with considerable disquiet in Britain. As Alec Dickson’s wife reported, it ‘alternately depressed and exhilarated him. He saw the fruition of a vision that had once seemed unrealizable, but in a country other than his own.’[112] Official British responses were similarly marked by anxiety that, with the rise of the Peace Corps, ‘the opportunity for Britain to lead in this field was gone’.[113] In January 1961, the Welsh MP Eirene

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[102] NARA, RG 490, Peace Corps Public Relations Publications, 1961–93, Box 2, Hilda Cole Espy, ‘What you should know about the Peace Corps’, *Atlantic Monthly*, August 1962.

[103] Margaret Mead, Foreword to Robert B. Textor, ed. *Cultural frontiers of the Peace Corps*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966, p. vii.

[104] Fuchs, *Those peculiar Americans*, p. 4.

[105] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[106] Roy Hoopes, *The complete Peace Corps guide*, New York: The Dial Press, 1961, p. vii.

[107] ‘The “Peace Corps” starts’, *New York Times*, 2 March 1961, p. 26.

[108] ‘The Peace Corps’ first year’, *New York Times*, 25 June 1962.

[109] *1st Peace Corps report*, p. 5.

[110] NARA, RG 490, Radio and Television Files, 1980–82, Box 4, Michael Abbott to Sargent Shriver, undated [1962].

[111] Jim Hampton, ‘The beautiful American: a Peace Corps volunteer who couldn’t come home’, *National Observer*, 1 February 1971.

[112] Dickson, *Chance to serve*, p. 109.

[113] *Ibid.*, pp. 105–6.

White warned that the Peace Corps threatened an 'unflattering comparison … between the vigorous and youthful leadership given on the other side of the Atlantic and the rather effete gamesmanship that we have on this side'.[114] In March, the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, Lord Perth, called for 'appropriate publicity to be given to "Voluntary Service Overseas" as being the original concept which either actually inspired President Kennedy's Peace Corps or at any rate resembles it closely'. He recognized that 'it is not, of course, possible for the UK government as such to take credit for voluntary endeavour', but he wanted more people to know about VSO 'as part of the projection of Britain'.[115] That same month, *The Observer* ran a lengthy article under the headline 'Britain has its own "peace corps": pioneer of Kennedy's scheme'.[116]

But the horse had already bolted. In the House of Commons, the MP Reginald Prentice railed that 'this is typical of what happens in so many different fields. A good idea is started in Britain and is copied and developed on a bigger scale in America.' Like Eireen White, he feared that this pointed to a wider ineptitude, as 'we often lack the drive and the capacity to carry through our good ideas until they operate on a sufficiently big scale'.[117] This anxiety reveals the extent to which VSO had become a site for British national pride, and underlines the tension inherent in Development Volunteering's dual aims of assisting the developing world and helping improve the national image. The fear that American prestige supplanted British power in former colonies also shadowed these concerns. As Dickson wrote, 'What thoughts must possess an Englishman on hearing that Jamaica and North Borneo are now among those supplicating for the services of the Peace Corps?'[118]

While Britons worried about their shrinking sphere of influence, Americans were subject to their own domestic anxieties. The early 1960s engendered widespread soul-searching amid rising critiques of American mass culture. As Sargent Shriver put it, there was a 'widespread belief that many Americans have gone soft', and the concomitant doubt 'whether America is qualified to lead the free world'.[119] Unflattering contrasts between American softness and the determination of the Soviet Union figured in critiques of America's approach to international development and technical assistance.[120] The Peace Corps was presented as a corrective: as Shriver went on, 'the exciting thing about the Peace Corps is that we are finding the Americans who have the faith and the conviction'.[121] Popular interest in the Peace Corps, which was so great that the anthropologist Robert Textor diagnosed a 'Peace Corps mystique', was related to its promise to revitalize the American frontier spirit.[122] Others were enthusiastic about the Peace Corps because it promised to neutralize international condemnation of domestic race issues.[123]

Just as VSO was thought to negate charges of British colonialism, the Peace Corps was regarded as a salve to charges of American neo-colonialism. During the 1950s and 1960s,

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[114] Recounted in House of Commons Debates (Hansard), 9 March 1961, vol. 636, cc 679–82.
[115] TNA, CO 859/1445, O. H. Morris to Mr Wilshire, 27 March 1961.
[116] Robert Stephens, 'Britain has its own "peace corps": pioneer of Kennedy's scheme', *The Observer*, 5 March 1961.
[117] House of Commons Debates (Hansard), 12 December 1962, vol. 669, cc 423–81.
[118] Alec Dickson, 'A great voluntary movement', *The Guardian*, 29 January 1962.
[119] Sargent Shriver, 'Introduction', in Hoopes, *Complete Peace Corps guide*, p. 1.
[120] The most famous of these critiques was William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick, *The ugly American*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1958.
[121] Shriver, 'Introduction', p. 1.
[122] Textor, *Cultural frontiers*, p. 3.
[123] Cobbs Hoffman, *All you need*, p. 27.

European critiques of America's cultural hegemony were joined by increasingly vocal Third World opposition to its political and military incursions.[124] As the *New York Times* reported in early 1961, 'Native peoples in many areas have the idea that America is the inheritor of the colonial tradition, that Americans like to keep on a plane of superiority far from them.'[125] Shriver responded by claiming that 'The Peace Corps is concrete proof that Americans stand ready and eager to work and live on equal terms with peoples of all races, creeds and cultures.'[126] This aspect aroused the interest of academics and experts, as well as the enthusiasm of young people across the country. The renowned sociologist David Riesman maintained that 'These mostly young and well-educated Americans come with a certain humility and not with the cultural arrogance and superciliousness of many previous generations of conquerors, traders, missionaries and diplomats.'[127] He thought that 'the egalitarianism of the volunteers is perhaps the most revolutionary, if impalpable, value that they bring'.[128]

However, entangled with these declarations of egalitarianism were threads of Western cultural chauvinism. Like VSO, the Peace Corps articulated the assumption that people from the developed world should guide those from the developing world, not because they had technical expertise but simply because they were 'developed' in mindset and habits. Although the Peace Corps was targeted at graduates rather than school leavers, it prized amateurism and flexibility over technical expertise. The ideal Peace Corps volunteer was a recent graduate of the liberal arts, a twenty-something 'BA generalist' rather than a skilled professional (although many volunteers were older and some were experienced).[129] In the Peace Corps, development was rendered into a cultural mission as well as a technical one: as Sheyda Jahanbani has shown, the Peace Corps helped redefine poverty as 'an absence of "modernization"', and therefore as a problem of 'backward' habits of mind.[130] With the Peace Corps, modernizing the newly independent nations became an American cultural, as well as technical and economic, mission.[131]

The Peace Corps was eager to claim global leadership of Development Volunteering and worked hard to spread its model abroad. As early as 1961, Kennedy commissioned the Public Affairs Institute in Washington, DC, to model an 'International Peace Corps'.[132] In 1962, Shriver hosted an international conference to encourage Western governments to start their own Peace Corps programmes. Composed of forty-three nations and several international organizations, the Conference on Middle Level Manpower was, at the time, 'the largest high-level conference, outside the United Nations, ever devoted to any aspect of economic development'.[133] Shriver also began to lobby the United Nations towards the ultimate goal of a global volunteering scheme, which, like the 'Decade of Development', would bear the imprimatur of American leadership. Its own debt to Australian and British antecedents was forgotten; instead reports crowed that 'other nations are now emulating the Peace Corps idea'.[134] To some extent, this was true: demands for a 'local Peace Corps' were put to governments in many nations, including, somewhat ironically, Britain, Australia, and Canada.[135] Before long, the presence of a Development Volunteering programme came to be seen as a marker of a nation's development and status. Japan, which was eager to overcome its post-war ignominy and assert economic (and eventually political) leadership in Asia, instituted a Development Volunteering programme in 1965.[136]

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[124] Vijay Prashad, *The darker nations: a people's history of the Third World*, New York: W. W. Norton, 2007. See also Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American dream: American economic and cultural expansion, 1890–1945*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

[125] Gertrude Samuels, 'A force of youth as a force of peace', *New York Times*, 5 February 1961.

[126] Sargent Shriver, 'Introduction', in Glenn D. Kittler, *The Peace Corps*, New York: Paperback Library, 1963, p. 5.

[127] Foreword to Fuchs, *Those peculiar Americans*, p. xii.

[128] *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

[129] Schein, 'Lansdcape', p. 206.

[130] Jahanbani, 'Different kind', p. 21.

[131] See Ekbladh, *Great American mission*; Latham, *Modernization*.

[132] Samuel P. Hayes, *An international Peace Corps: the promise and problems*, Washington, DC: Public Affairs Institute, 1961.

[133] Sargent Shriver, cited in Francis W. Godwin, Richard N. Goodwin, and William F. Haddad, *The hidden force: a report of the international conference on middle level manpower, San Juan, Puerto Rico, October 10–12, 1962*, New York: Harper & Row, 1963, p. xii.

The Peace Corps had a truly global vision, which traced the boundaries of the United States' growing post-war power. Its spread was intimately connected to colonial legacies and the Cold War in the Third World.[137] The first group of volunteers were sent to nations with strong US ties through direct colonial legacy (the Philippines), an unequal power relationship (Colombia), or alliance with the colonial power (Tanganyika, still a British colony in 1961). By 1962, the Peace Corps had struck agreements with the governments of thirty-seven countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. The *1st Peace Corps report* was proud to note that 'both the so-called "neutralist" nations and those more commonly called our "allies" requested Volunteer programs', and often did so despite Communist agitation against the Peace Corps.[138] The number of volunteers on the ground, however, told a different story. Of the first deployment of 1,051 volunteers in 1961/62, only 77 served in firmly non-aligned nations (ones that had sent delegates to the 1961 Conference of Nonaligned Countries in Belgrade).[139] The vast majority served in nations with proven allegiances to the Western bloc, with the largest numbers posted to the Philippines, Colombia, and Malaya.[140]

The spread of Development Volunteering evoked strong responses across the developing world. Elizabeth Cobbs has argued that, 'as a foreign policy initiative, the Peace Corps was one of the most successful strategies for making friends for America in the Third World'. Her assessment is largely based on early Peace Corps volunteers' reports that people across Africa and Latin America referred to John F. Kennedy as 'the great one' and 'the friend of the colored man everywhere'.[141] Once we look beyond American sources, resistance to the Peace Corps becomes far more apparent. Some resulted from negative contacts with volunteers: most famously, in 1961 Nigerian activists demanded the expulsion of the Peace Corps after one volunteer's comments about Nigeria's 'squalor and absolutely primitive living conditions' made their way into the press. Initially written in a private postcard by the twenty-three-year-old volunteer Margery Michelmore, the comments had become public after she dropped the postcard on the way to the post office; in the ensuing furore, Nigerian critiques of the

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[134] Pauline Madow, ed., *The Peace Corps*, New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1964, p. 4.

[135] 'Letter to the editor: peace army', *The Times*, 7 March 1961; 'Australia's version of America's Peace Corps', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 March 1962; 'Letter to the editor: an Australian "Peace Corps"', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 March 1962; Ian Smillie, *The land of lost content: A history of CUSO*, Toronto: Deneau Publishers, 1985. See also 'Time for an Irish Peace Corps?', *The Furrow*, 25, 10, October 1974, pp. 549–55; 'West German Peace Corps: American pattern', *Times of India*, 26 June 1963.

[136] 'Japanese plan Peace Corps', *New York Times*, 28 April 1961.

[137] See Westad, *Global Cold War*.

[138] *1st Peace Corps report*, p. 32.

[139] In 1961/62, there were fifty-one volunteers in Ghana and twenty-six in India. A further forty-six volunteers served in Bolivia and forty-three in Brazil, which had sent observers but not delegates to the Belgrade Conference. See *1st Peace Corps report*, p. 77.

[140] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[141] Cobbs, 'Decolonization', p. 80.

Peace Corps as ‘a scheme designed to foster neo-colonialism’ received international press coverage.[142]

Although this was a minor incident, the critique was rooted in wider opposition to the international development system. The anti-colonial rhetoric of the nascent Third World bloc increasingly opposed Western aid, and criticism of the Peace Corps was folded into this broader critique.[143] The Third All-Africa People’s Conference, held in Cairo in March 1961, denounced the Peace Corps as a means for the ‘American Government to reconquer and economically dominate Africa’.[144] Similar sentiments were expressed in India, where the first group of Peace Corps volunteers arrived in December 1961. Although opposition was often linked to Communist activism, even conservative newspapers such as the *Times of India* retained a space for critical views. A letter published in March 1961 warned that the Peace Corps would be ill-prepared for the ‘sentiments and minds of the proud and sensitive people whom they propose to help’ and advised that ‘It is better to raise a Peace Corps in India, among the Indians themselves, than to import misinformed volunteers from foreign countries who will do more harm than good.’[145] Other critiques mocked the cultural chauvinism that they perceived in the Peace Corps’ ‘cultural shock’.[146]

Many Indonesians were also apprehensive about the Peace Corps. As we have seen, suspicion of Western paternalism and fear of neo-colonialism had accompanied the Australian VGS’s arrival in Indonesia in 1951. This grew during the 1950s, as Western development aid proved unable to prevent the Indonesian economy’s decline and Sukarno’s rhetoric about neo-colonialism became more strident. Following a personal visit by Sargent Shriver in 1962, Sukarno agreed to accept seventeen Peace Corps physical education instructors, largely because he wanted to improve the performance of Indonesian athletes in the Asian Games. However, the arrival of American volunteers was not well received in a climate of fierce nationalism and increasing Communist influence. The Indonesian Communist Party was a key source of opposition. *Harian Rakyat* (*The People’s Daily*) mounted a persistent campaign against the Peace Corps. It maintained that the Peace Corps was a front for SEATO militarism, claiming that the US Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, had admitted that the presence of Peace Corps teachers, doctors, and engineers ‘did not mean less than the presence of American troops’.[147] Alongside the charges of Cold War aggression, *Harian Rakyat* frequently denounced the Peace Corps as agents of neo-colonialism.[148] In the end, all Peace Corps volunteers were expelled from Indonesia in 1964, after less than two years of service.

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[142] ‘Postcard to friend reporting “primitive living” leads to protest by students’, *New York Times*, 16 October 1961; ‘Nigeria students urge deportation of American Peace Corps members’, *Washington Post*, 16 October 1961; ‘Editorial: growing pains’, *Washington Post*, 18 October 1961; ‘Editorial: that Peace Corps postcard’, *New York Times*, 20 October 1961.

[143] Prashad, *Darker nations*; Vijay Prashad, *The poorer nations: a possible history of the Global South*, London and New York: Verso, 2014.

[144] Jay Walz, ‘Africans oppose aid by the West’, *New York Times*, 1 April 1961.

[145] ‘Readers’ views: Peace Corps’, *Times of India*, 30 March 1961.

[146] Amrita Malik, ‘Alas for culture!’, *Times of India*, 8 February 1963. See also Schein, ‘Educating Americans’.

[147] ‘Dean Rusk mengatakan, “adanja didaerah perdjandjian itu guru^2, dokter^2 dan insinjur^2 Amerika artinja tidak kurang daripada adanja pasukan^2 Amerika” (Dean Rusk said “The presence of American teachers, doctors and engineers in Treaty areas does not mean less than the presence of American troops”)’: ‘Korps Perdamaian dan SEATO (Peace Corps and SEATO)’, *Harian Rakyat*, 10 September 1962.

[148] See, for example, ‘Tolak tjampur tangan “Korps Perdamaian” di Indonesia (Reject Peace Corps’ interference in Indonesia)’, *Harian Rakyat*, 15 September 1962; ‘Editorial: sekali lagi: “Korps Perdamaian” (Editorial: once again: Peace Corps)’, *Harian Rakyat*, 17 September 1962; ‘“Korps Perdamaian” udjud neo kolonial (Peace Corps’ neo-colonial intentions)’, *Harian Rakyat*, 9 October 1962; ‘Editorial: melawan “Peace Corps”

These were not isolated critiques. The Peace Corps came under growing suspicion as the United States increased military and political involvement in Latin America, Africa, and Asia during the 1960s. In 1969, a Chilean Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Deputies investigated claims that the Peace Corps was a front for American espionage. The same year, the Argentinean newspaper *Clarín* claimed that 'the Peace Corps is not a branch of the CIA, but rather its appendage'; the following year an Indian pamphlet denounced the Peace Corps as a puppet of the United States Information Service.[149] The chorus of condemnation of Development Volunteering grew as the Third World bloc coalesced into a political movement during the late 1960s and into the 1970s. Dependency theory mounted a strong critique of Western development assistance, and many intellectuals and politicians in the developing world saw no space between Development Volunteering programmes and official development assistance. However, by this time Development Volunteering was firmly established in the global system of international development. Even today, tens of thousands of young Westerners head to volunteer postings in developing nations every year.

Conclusion

The spread of Development Volunteering, from a small NGO in Australia to an organized charity in Britain and a government agency in the United States, challenges current understandings of the origins of development innovations. Historians of development have largely posited a top-down model, by which American politicians and academics fashioned a developmentalist paradigm that was adopted across the world. However, looking at the origins of Development Volunteering reveals a different story. A proposal suggested by an Indonesian student, and championed by a small group of non-elite Australians, spread through personal and institutional networks to influence the formation of NGOs in Canada and Britain and a government agency in the United States. Inverting both the top-down and the centre–periphery models, Development Volunteering presents a challenge to current accounts of the history of development.

Examining the early years of Development Volunteering also reveals the fluidity of the mixed economy of development during the 1950s and 1960s. Australia's VGS was a largely amateur organization mostly run by former volunteers, Britain's VSO was a registered charity with an executive committee, and the Peace Corps was a fully bureaucratized government agency. The viability of all three programmes depended on the enthusiasm of the public. Elites and ordinary people donated money to Development Volunteering organizations and, most importantly, young volunteers donated one or two years of their lives, often at significant personal and financial sacrifice. Development Volunteering cannot be categorized as either a state or non-state activity: rather, it was characterized by a fluid interrelationship between state, NGOs, and the ordinary public. Far from the 'triumph of the expert', it brought ordinary people into the sphere of international development from the early 1950s, spurring popular interest in 'underdeveloped' nations well before the Biafra crisis of the late 1960s and the Ethiopian famines of the 1980s.

(Editorial: against the Peace Corps)', *Harian Rakyat*, 26 April 1963; '"Peace Corps" harus dilawan karena masa lah prinsip (Peace Corps must be resisted on principle)', *Harian Rakyat*, 29 April 1963.

[149] Cited in L. Natarajan, *America's two pincers: under roof of USIS, what Peace Corps practices*, Lucknow: Saral Auto Press, 1970.

Once adopted, VGS, VSO, and the Peace Corps became sites for national pride, and international antecedents were concealed in pursuit of national interests. The jealousy with which each nation and programme guarded its claim to pioneering the Development Volunteering model reveals the extent to which it was rooted in global systems of power and influence at the intersection of decolonization and the Cold War, even as it claimed to transcend them with benign goodwill.

When we look beyond national frames, it becomes evident that Development Volunteering was a transnational phenomenon, with discursive and ideological consequences that were larger than the sum of individual programmes. The locations in which volunteers served were closely related to the dual contexts of decolonization and the Cold War. Australia's volunteer contingent worked in Indonesia, geographically its nearest Asian neighbour and one that recalled Australia's recent support for its independence. Australia's power was limited, and its attempts to move beyond Indonesia to Burma, Malaya, and India were unsuccessful. Britain made use of imperial networks to place volunteers across a larger swathe of Asia, Africa, and the West Indies. In the early years, volunteers were overwhelmingly posted to current dependencies and former colonies; moreover, they often worked for British colonial or expatriate staff or in Anglican schools.

But even VSO's reach paled next to that of the Peace Corps. In 1966, after only five years in operation, over 10,000 Peace Corps volunteers were placed in forty-six countries across Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.[150] This broad reach reflected the United States' growing power in the post-war period, and traced the boundaries of its influence in the Cold War. Throughout the 1960s, receiving nations were either part of the Western bloc or were formally unaligned: no volunteers were posted to China or Cuba, for example, and the shifting alliances of uncommitted nations such as Indonesia were reflected in decisions to accept and expel the Peace Corps. Moreover, America's power was also evident in the spread of the Peace Corps model across the 'developed' world. Shriver made an assiduous effort to build an international Peace Corps; by 1965, thirty nations had launched programmes 'modeled on the Peace Corps'.[151] Taken together, the extent (and limits) of Development Volunteering's spread reveals the boundaries of Western power during the 1950s and 1960s.

In addition to global politics, this spread was facilitated by shared assumptions about the nature and location of developed and underdeveloped nations. Although the Development Volunteering model proved malleable enough to reflect differing geopolitical contexts, the basic assumption – that young people from developed nations were capable of uplifting developing ones simply by their presence, rather than because of their technical skills – was held in common across all programmes. This assumption located Western society as the ultimate point of development, and was articulated by the placement of young and mostly inexperienced volunteers in positions of power and authority. Colonial legacies and generalizations, rather than technical definitions, shaped Western assumptions about levels of development, and these assumptions enabled the spread of Development Volunteering through both the developed and the underdeveloped worlds.

Development Volunteering's relationship to Western power and colonial legacies drew widespread opposition. Regular critiques revealed that many receiving nations were sensitive to the discursive and ideological nuances of VGS, VSO, and the Peace Corps. At home, young volunteers were regarded as noble altruists, but many groups in receiving nations criticized Development Volunteering as both a form of neo-colonialism and a cover for Western power. The Peace Corps in particular provided an outlet for political groups and ordinary people across the developing world to express their opposition to the coming global order. Some groups opposed the Peace Corps because they suspected that it was an instrument of US state power, while others resented the suggestion that they were 'primitive' enough to require instruction by Western youths. This reminds us that opposition groups and ordinary people sometimes disagreed with political agreements made at the national level. It also reveals that Development Volunteering, often regarded as a pure example of altruism and idealism, carries darker political and discursive undercurrents.

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[150] *Peace Corps: 5th annual report to Congress*, p. 6.
[151] *4th annual Peace Corps report*, Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 1965, p. 5.

As this article has demonstrated, Development Volunteering held multiple meanings, as discourses of development, colonialism, and control existed alongside those of youthful idealism and national benevolence. It contributes to our understanding of how ideas, information, and assumptions flowed between nations, how development was intertwined with national and bloc power, and how colonial modes of thought were translated into the putatively postcolonial lexicon of development.

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