

A TOWERING TASK: THE STORY OF THE PEACE CORPS

Discussion Guide

- Has the Peace Corps outlived its usefulness, or why might we need it now more than ever?
 - 60s idealism, cultural imperialism, Cold War
 - America's current role in the world community and the need to reach out at a time of global problems
 - Peace Corps' role as a people-to-people organization that transcends politics
- What place do you see for the Peace Corps in how you define your US citizenship?
- How do you define global citizenship and how does the Peace Corps figure into that?
- What has the history of the Peace Corps taught us in how the agency has to adapt to current times?
- Should the Peace Corps be more of a development agency or more of a cultural exchange program (goal 1 vs 2 and 3)? How can it effectively straddle both?
- In which countries should the Peace Corps be? (only where invited, but should development level play a role? Should country politics play a role - i.e. current exit from China?)
- How can the Peace Corps function if subsumed in State Department or other government agency?
- Should the Peace Corps be larger or not? (Numbers game vs impact)
- What is the role of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs)? What might their responsibilities be?
- What role have Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) played in the education / empowerment of women and girls - in countries and in the US? What role is there for RPCVs?
- What role have PCVs played in mitigating climate change, public health, other global problems? What role is there for RPCVs?
- What role have PCVs played in peace building? What role is there for RPCVs?
- How should evacuated and returned PCVs be involved with domestic efforts (i.e.: during a pandemic or natural disaster)? (Look at Hurricane Katrina and Covid Pandemic examples!)
- Rebuilding: How do you envision the Peace Corps returning from total evacuation into this post-Covid world? It will take a few years to return to pre-Covid numbers of volunteers. Is this a time to redefine the Peace Corps? If yes, in what way?

Helpful Resources

- www.peacecorps.gov
- www.rpcv.org
- www.peacecorpsworldwide.org
- www.peacecorpsonline.org
- <https://www.archives.gov/research/foreign-policy/related-records/rg-490>
- <https://blogs.library.american.edu/pcca/>
- <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/peace-corps>