The Next Generation: African-Led Development

CorpsAfrica Prospectus
The Next Generation: African-Led Development

By training highly educated young Africans to help local communities identify and solve their own challenges, CorpsAfrica is shifting Africa’s development sector from reliance on external aid to empowering and strengthening its most valuable asset: its people.

Inspired by the Peace Corps model, CorpsAfrica Volunteers are trained and posted to live in remote villages for up to one year to facilitate small-scale, high-impact projects that are identified by local people. To date, CorpsAfrica has hosted hundreds of Volunteers in Morocco, Senegal, Malawi, and Rwanda, who have completed over 500 projects, including:

- Building wells, schools, roads, and irrigation systems;
- Establishing literacy programs; and
- Supporting vegetable and livestock farms.

Origin Story

CorpsAfrica was founded in 2011 by Liz Fanning, a former Peace Corps Volunteer, who created the opportunity to turn over community development efforts to local changemakers. During her service, Liz was approached by young Moroccans who wanted to be Peace Corps Volunteers so they could help people in their own country, but she had to tell them it was only for Americans.

Liz started CorpsAfrica to celebrate and build on the enormous success of the Peace Corps by offering a similarly transformative experience to young Africans, giving them the chance they deserve to be a part of the solution and to find their place in the world.
CorpsAfrica Volunteers prioritize community engagement to build resilience so local people are better prepared to weather crises, recover from setbacks, and thrive. Through their service, the Volunteers also undergo a transformative experience that helps to shape their view of the world and prepare them for personal and professional success.

CorpsAfrica’s goal is to expand to all 54 of Africa’s countries in the next ten years. The team is seeking supporters to invest in new country launches, expand existing programming and numbers of Volunteers, and build a reserve fund to sustain the effort for years to come.

Solving the Employment Gap through Community-Led Development

With 60 percent of the continent’s population under the age of 24 (200 million people), Africa has the youngest population in the world. This age group also represents 60 percent of all of Africa’s unemployed. The good news is that growing numbers of educated young Africans represent a tremendous amount of untapped potential. While foreigners have traditionally dominated Africa’s development sector, it is Africans that are best positioned to facilitate economic growth, support local leadership, and cultivate African philanthropy to break cycles of poverty, youth unemployment, and aid dependency across the continent.
CorpsAfrica solves these challenges by offering young Africans the opportunity to apply their education, build their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and venture beyond their comfort zones to learn about their countries and about themselves. By living within the communities they serve—as the local people do—CorpsAfrica Volunteers gain skills, humility, understanding, patience, and the understanding of poverty that only comes from living it.

Through their service, CorpsAfrica Volunteers engage communities to implement and manage their own development projects. This improves the local knowledge base and independence of communities while building the Volunteer’s foundation for a successful and purposeful career. The CorpsAfrica model is centered around values that promote local ownership:

- Locals helping locals: Young Africans can be part of the solution for their own countries.
- Collaboration: Prioritizing opportunities to collaborate with a wide range of development partners promotes efficiency, transparency, and accountability.
- Listening and capacity building: Development efforts are most effective when they are “demand driven,” giving community members the opportunity to identify problems and to take the lead in solving them.
- Monitoring and evaluation: Volunteers are taught how to facilitate a needs assessment in local communities and measure impact and sustainability.
- Failing forward: It is critical to demonstrate successes as well as failures to development partners, communities, and other stakeholders. Learning from unsuccessful projects and sharing those lessons turns the effort into a success and helps take the stigma out of failure.

Profile of a Volunteer
- Critical thinker
- Problem solver
- Adventurous
- Learner
- Listener
- Humble
- Understanding
- Patient
CorpsAfrica’s Model

CorpsAfrica builds power within Africa by cultivating African leaders and empowering local communities to drive change in their own lives.

CorpsAfrica prepares young, educated Africans to become humble, empathetic, effective leaders. At the start of their program, Volunteers participate in intensive experiential training programs that equip them with the tools and skills needed to facilitate community-led problem-solving, including Human-Centered Design and Asset-Based Community Development methods.

Volunteers go to their communities with no agenda—having all the tools necessary to facilitate a range of projects, but no expectation of what project they will implement. Their most important role is that of listener. They gain the community’s trust and understanding by engaging people in conversations and facilitating community meetings to identify and address changing and complex local needs in education, health, small business development, urban planning and infrastructure, agriculture, the environment, and more.

Volunteers ask these fundamental questions:

• What are the causes and consequences of poverty in this community?
• What does a better quality of life look like for community members?
• What project will most efficiently and effectively help them get there?
To begin a project, community members must commit their time and energy, plus a financial investment (a minimum of ten percent of the total cost in cash). They must also commit to sustain and build on it in the long term. This community ownership of projects ultimately creates lasting and sustainable change.

The small, community-led projects facilitated by Volunteers directly contribute to job creation. In the most recent cohort, projects facilitated by Volunteers created an estimated 1,500 jobs for community members. Almost 200 of these jobs are full-time (over 20 hours per week), and over 500 are long-term, lasting more than six months. As community members learn how to organize their efforts and use their existing assets, they are able to take charge of the CorpsAfrica projects and continue them beyond the initial investment. The communities themselves are recognizing this benefit, as over 99 percent of communities request more Volunteers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, CorpsAfrica’s model of Volunteers living in communities, listening, and being flexible and adaptable enabled them to be a critical part of the emergency response efforts for some of the most disconnected, remote villages in Africa. When the pandemic emerged as a crisis in March 2020, Volunteers had been living in these communities for several months and had built a strong foundation of trust and understanding. Because the CorpsAfrica model was already centered around resilience and preparedness, the essence of Volunteers’ efforts was the same, but they quickly focused on crisis response. Because of their efforts, 294,040 people received 23,705 face masks, 13,310 bars of soap, 1,591 bottles of hand sanitizer, 5,204 bottles of bleach, 522 handwashing stations, 1,136 pairs of gloves, 278 pairs of goggles, 2,340 sets of reusable protective clothing, 2,399 kitchen gardens, 1,017 latrines, and six megaphones for sharing information about COVID-19.
The CorpsAfrica program not only impacts local communities, but also the Volunteers themselves. They develop the professional and interpersonal skills necessary to face their own struggles with a new sense of confidence and resourcefulness that will benefit them long after their service is complete. A majority of alumni seek employment with NGOs or find another service opportunity. Sixty percent of CorpsAfrica alumni are employed within a month of completing their service, significantly higher than their college-educated peers.

The Next Generation: Africa-Led Development through Civic Leadership

After launching successful programs in Morocco, Senegal, Malawi, and Rwanda, CorpsAfrica is working to expand the program to other African countries, with the goal of operating in all 54 African nations—with an average of 250 Volunteers in each country—within ten years. That would be 13,500 Volunteers per year across Africa, a mix of people serving in their own country and in other African countries. Each Volunteer will live in a high-poverty community and have the opportunity to positively impact the lives of hundreds—perhaps thousands—of people, and return home to embark on a successful, purposeful career.
Here are some important ways you can support CorpsAfrica:

Opportunity 1: New Country Launch ($1,000,000)

Help launch CorpsAfrica in a new African country and sustain it for two years, including the following:

- Critical staff, including a Country Director and Deputy Director to oversee operations in that country and a Volunteer Liaison to support the Volunteers;
- Direct Volunteer support, including monthly stipends, training, project support, and travel expenses (additional support for Exchange Volunteers traveling from other countries);
- Sector-specific initiatives, including new efforts to focus on climate change and promote inclusion of women and girls;
- Human-Centered Design Training Centers, expansion of monitoring and evaluation, and other special projects, and;
- Outreach, education, equipment, and programmatic support.

“I want to be a part of changing lives and equipping people to care for themselves. CorpsAfrica does that in very specific ways. I’m partnering with an organization where I see people in villages, and Volunteers who help them, positively impacted every month, year after year.”

—Monthly Donor
Opportunity 2: Support Ongoing Work

**Sponsor Volunteers**

The average cost of a Volunteer’s service is $10,000, including their training, stipend, projects, travel, equipment, and the cost of their project. $15,000 would support an Exchange Volunteer (a Volunteer coming from a different country), since they require additional travel support, language training, visa expenses, etc.

**Community Projects**

Volunteers can submit additional proposals to a special fund set aside for projects. These projects spark new investment and are matched ten percent by the communities to ensure local ownership and sustainability. You can support a specific project or contribute to the general project fund and let our trained staff determine the projects with the greatest need and highest chance of success.

**Special Projects**

CorpsAfrica is currently pursuing various special initiatives, including:

- CorpsAfrica Green, which focuses on climate change, and CorpsAfrica Pink, which promotes the inclusion of women and girls. Funding to support these initiatives would provide additional training to Volunteers, so they can empower the local people at their sites and bring additional resources in these critical areas which impact all projects.

- Junior CorpsAfrica introduces middle school students in capital cities to CorpsAfrica Volunteers and helps them discover the amazing world of volunteer service from a young age.

- The Alumni Association, which provides ongoing professional development and support to former Volunteers after they complete their service.

If you would like to support any of these initiatives, please contact info@corpsafrica.org.
Opportunity 3: Contribute an Unrestricted Gift Where It is Needed Most

An unrestricted gift supports all of the work CorpsAfrica does, including the overhead and operating expenses that are essential to success. These flexible gifts provide the staff, administration, training, evaluation, safety and security, and other support to ensure the success of the Volunteers.

Until our goal of one-third of annual operating expenses is realized, CorpsAfrica will direct ten percent of all donations to a dedicated “reserve fund” in order to protect the organization against unexpected circumstances. Although CorpsAfrica’s model allowed Volunteers to quickly react to COVID-19 without disrupting regular projects, the pandemic showed us how quickly the global situation can change. A robust reserve fund is essential for the functioning of an organization by ensuring the ability to pay staff, fund projects, and support Volunteers.

Your support of general expenses allows CorpsAfrica to build a more robust program over the long term. You can contribute in multiple ways:

- Monthly support
- Planned giving
- Online donations
- Securities donations
- Combined Federal campaigns
The CorpsAfrica model brings lasting change to the Volunteers and the communities they serve.

By training Volunteers on Human-Centered Design and Asset-Based Community Development, CorpsAfrica serves as a model of the shift toward economic prosperity, community-led development, and local philanthropy that will break cycles of poverty, youth unemployment, and aid dependency across the continent. With your support, CorpsAfrica will continue using its proven strategy to foster African-led development and community-driven change.

"CorpsAfrica is a great opportunity for the young people to help their own home communities as well as fellow African country communities. It thereby helps in facilitating and assessing community needs and helps in finding solutions that help both a volunteer to gain skills and knowledge through participating in all sorts of community engagement. It also motivates the community in finding their own solutions to the challenges by using the local available resources, including the human resource. It is a great move of sharing cultural backgrounds, meeting new friends, and, of course, having fun through its exchange program."

—Assiatu Pongolani, Malawi Group 1 and Senegal Group 2