



Peace Corps Ghana and GapBuster Ghana Collaboration Opportunity

Project Name: Building Scholars for the Future through STEAM

Area of Interest: *Education, and Specific Concentration STEAM Education, Positive Youth Development, Leadership Development, and Community Service*

Through supplemental education, enrichment programs and leadership development training, GapBuster Ghana in partnership with Ministry of Education develops well-rounded individuals positioned to excel in academic, social and professional environments. Together, we enable students to meet their full potential in spite of socio-economic disadvantages through programs that will engage them academically and intellectually beyond the school day. Education is a proven factor in combating poverty, and it is our mission to cultivate the talents and leadership abilities of youths so they can effect change both within themselves and their communities. Our motto is “Educate, Elevate and Empower,” to inspire youth to be future leaders through the power of education and training.

Assignment

The GapBuster Ghana Positive Youth Development Program, currently being implemented in schools and communities, offers a unique opportunity for dedicated volunteers to serve as caring mentors for young individuals. These volunteers play a pivotal role in helping young people acquire new skills in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), fostering their leadership abilities, equipping them with essential life skills, and instilling a sense of community service. The ultimate goal is to guide these young minds towards becoming self-reliant, productive, and socially responsible members of society.

Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) collaborate closely with GapBuster Ghana's office to bring positive youth development initiatives to life. These initiatives aim to educate students in STEAM subjects, enhance their social skills, and empower them to be catalysts for positive change in the future. GapBuster, Inc. will provide all the necessary educational and STEAM resources, as well as housing support.

The roles and responsibilities of PCVs within this program are multifaceted and include:



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- 1. Facilitating the Establishment of Gavel Clubs:** PCVs assist in forming Gavel clubs within schools and communities where they are stationed. These clubs serve as platforms for developing effective communication and leadership skills among young participants.
- 2. Capacity Building:** PCVs contribute to the growth and sustainability of local adult volunteers and club leaders, ensuring the long-term success of the program.
- 3. Organizing STEAM Teams:** PCVs play an instrumental role in organizing STEAM teams, fostering healthy competition, and overseeing various educational programs that encourage innovation and engineering concepts.
- 4. Teaching Record-Keeping:** PCVs emphasize the importance of maintaining accurate records and documentation, instilling good organizational practices among the youth.
- 5. Collaboration:** PCVs work in close collaboration with other stakeholders, including school teachers and Extension Officers of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), to create a seamless learning environment.
- 6. Training GapBuster Ghana Staff:** PCVs provide training to GapBuster Ghana staff in schools and communities, particularly focusing on First Lego League, VEX Robotics, and Remote Control Car racing/engineering concepts.
- 7. Developing and Maintaining Projects:** PCVs are responsible for developing and managing school and community projects, adhering to GapBuster Student Service Learning curriculum guidelines, which include "The Seven Best Practices."
- 8. Entrepreneurship Education:** PCVs teach GapBuster Ghana students the fundamentals of starting a business, fostering an entrepreneurial spirit among the youth.
- 9. Debate Team Formation:** PCVs assist GapBuster Ghana students in creating debate teams to enhance their public speaking and critical thinking skills.
- 10. STEM Activities:** PCVs provide STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education to GapBuster Ghana students using TechBridge Girls curriculum.
- 11. Monitoring and Evaluation:** PCVs closely monitor the progress of GapBuster Ghana teams and their activities, ensuring that the program's objectives are met.
- 12. Library Development:** PCVs will assist with GapBuster Ghana's Adopt a Library project.
- 13. Information Technology Centers:** PCVs will contribute to the growth of GapBuster Ghana's ICT (Information and Communication Technology) centers by conducting thorough needs assessments and evaluations.



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14. Bathroom Projects: PCVs will play a pivotal role in expanding GapBuster Ghana's sanitation initiatives by conducting comprehensive needs assessments and evaluations for the construction of new bathroom facilities.

By fulfilling these roles and responsibilities, PCVs contribute significantly to the development and empowerment of young individuals, paving the way for them to become responsible and capable adults poised to make positive contributions to their communities and society at large.

Background

GapBuster Ghana's comprehensive program is closely aligned with the strategic plan of the Ministry of Education, addressing key areas such as Academic Excellence, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education, building a high-performing workforce, fostering a safe and supportive environment, promoting family and community engagement, and enhancing organizational effectiveness. Our primary focus is on empowering the girl child and addressing community needs, especially in the context of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

GapBuster Ghana operates as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and is an integral branch of GapBuster, Inc., a United States-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. GapBuster, Inc., founded in 1999, has a distinguished history of serving over 25,000 individuals worldwide. Our mission is to empower communities through education and workforce development, with a particular emphasis on closing the achievement gap among students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

In 2017, GapBuster, Inc. expanded its reach to Ghana, introducing the "Building Scholars for the Future" (BSF) program. This initiative, known as "BSF," encompasses international studies, entrepreneurship, and a comprehensive Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) curriculum. GapBuster Ghana partners with government public schools, currently engaging over 400 students from P6 to Junior High School (JHS) 3, specifically at Effiduase Methodist, New Juaben North Primary/JHS1 – JHS3. Our vision includes creating a magnet/gifted program at the Senior High School (SHS) level, catering to up to 120 students. This program will ensure continuity for participants and provide opportunities for other students



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who do not attend Effiduase Methodist to partake in GapBuster Ghana's specialty programs during their SHS years. The selection process for this program will be based on a computerized lottery system, with students needing to meet pre-qualifying criteria based on their JHS3 final exam scores.

In 2018, GapBuster Ghana initiated its STEM program in collaboration with Effiduase Methodist School Complex. We enlisted the expertise of a professor from All Nations University to implement the STEM curriculum and hired dedicated Ghana Senior High School teachers for core subject instruction (Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, and History) for JHS students. Additionally, JHS teachers were recruited to instruct P6 students in Mathematics and Language Arts. Since its inception, the STEM program has made remarkable progress, with the school achieving its first District STEM competition win in over 30 years. Enrollment has also surged, from 136 to a current enrollment of 409.

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, GapBuster leveraged technology to facilitate cross-cultural programs between students from the United States and Ghana. During the summer of 2021, GapBuster hosted a successful two-week online Math summer camp, with American teachers serving as instructors.

Over the past 23 years, GapBuster has evolved to offer a diverse range of services, positively impacting over 25,000 individuals in Montgomery and Prince George's County, Maryland, as well as underserved communities in California, Delaware, and parts of Africa, including South Africa, Ethiopia, and Ghana. Our programs inspire young people to explore STEM careers and prepare them for transformative roles in Ghana and beyond. Participants gain hands-on experience in STEAM fields and develop business plans to cultivate their enterprises. By strengthening their STEAM and entrepreneurial skills, GapBuster Ghana positions youth as leaders within their communities, fostering self-sufficiency and promoting local youth-led businesses.



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Our objectives are closely aligned with the Peace Corps Education frameworks being implemented by Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) in their respective communities, with a particular emphasis on the following:

- Improving student confidence, motivation, and leadership through extracurricular activities within the Education Project Framework.
- Increase local students' English language competency and conversational skills
- Share resources and develop teaching materials with local teachers
- Become involved in community and school-based projects
- Work in after-school programs, youth clubs, and library development
- Organize teacher associations or training seminars

In light of these synergies, it is evident that collaboration between GapBuster Ghana and the Peace Corps is not only feasible but highly beneficial. Such cooperation would enable both organizations to work effectively with young people and teachers in community schools, fostering personal and educational development while making a positive impact in the communities we serve.

Contact Information

The Executive Director

GapBuster Ghana

Koforidua E/R

Email: admin@gapbusterinc.org

Tel: +1240-678-5480 WhatsApp

Regions and districts project works in.

EASTERN:

New Juaben North, New Juaben South, Suhum, and Askorie

NORTHERN:

Paga Traditional Area