



Newsletter of the Friends of Ghana

The Talking Drum

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Profile: Peter DiCampo (Ghana '06-'08), Documentary Photographer

Submitted by Ken Autrey



Peter DiCampo with young friend.

A year and a half out of Boston University, Peter DiCampo began working to combat the Guinea worm parasite in Wantugu, a village in Ghana's Northern Region. This Peace Corps assignment had no obvious connection with his degree in journalism and photography, but soon DiCampo found a way to use his previous training to address and document the Guinea worm problem.

In December 2006, only four months after his arrival in Ghana, he completed an audio slideshow illustrating

the severe water shortage during the dry season and how this contributes to the Guinea worm infestation. This became the first of a series of multimedia projects he based in Ghana or elsewhere in West Africa. (This and other projects by DiCampo may be found on his web site, www.peterdicampo.com).

DiCampo applied for the Peace Corps as a college senior and graduated in 2005. He soon lined up a series of internships, including stints with Newsday in New York, VII Photo in Paris, and the News Office at Harvard. A temporary position at The Telegraph in Nashua, NH unexpectedly led to a fulltime staff photography job.

Pleased to be employed so soon after graduation, he was tempted to forego the offer from Peace Corps. "I jumped at the newspaper job. I didn't think I could get it," he recalls. "But after a few months, I knew it wasn't what I wanted. Instead of shooting soccer games and town meetings, I wanted to be a documentary photographer." He decided the Peace Corps might open up that opportunity.

He was right. In the past several years, he has sold a series of slide and audio stories to clients such as TIME, The Christian

Science Monitor, and The Boston Globe. He has collected an impressive series of awards, including citations from Editor and Publisher and The New England Press Association. He has taken on assignments by Sightsavers International and has received a grant from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

DiCampo traces his interest in the Peace Corps back to his senior year in high school in Mendon, Massachusetts when the World Trade Center attacks led him to realize how little he knew about the rest of the world. When he enrolled at B.U. the following year, he resolved to learn more about Arab culture and eventually spent a semester abroad in Jordan.

He has been committed to volunteer work since serving in the Boy Scouts. He participated in volunteer projects in Boston sponsored by the campus Community Service Center. During spring break his senior year he took part in a volunteer cleanup project at a Georgia State Park.

DiCampo's interest in journalism and photography seemed to appear out of nowhere. "My dad was an accountant, and my mom stayed at home," he says. "I never took a high school art class and had no particular talent. People wonder where the artistic impulse came from. The same is true with my older brother, who wound up as a singer."

DiCampo traces his visual interests to a Barnes and Noble bookstore where he worked in high school. He discovered the National Geographic photo books and pored over them whenever



Women fetching water under a lingering harmattan sun pass through a children's soccer game in Wantugu, Ghana, December 21, 2006.



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Friends of Ghana (FoGh) access to the NPCA Database for the purpose of sharing the names and contact information of FoGh members. This exchange of data is essential for maintaining a complete, up-to-date database. The information shared include, but is not limited to: full name; country of service; dates of service; home mailing address; email address; phone number; and spouse/partner name. This information is not sold or transferred to any third party by FoGh and has been and will be used strictly for communication purposes with our members.

FoGh will use the shared information received from NPCA and our members for 1) Recruitment and retention of members to FoGh and NPCA; 2) Helping Ghana Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) to organize reunions of their Peace Corps groups; and 3) Assisting requestors to find Ghana RPCVs by sharing the requestor contact information with the Ghana RPCV (allowing the Ghana RPCV to decide whether to make contact with the requestor).

FoGh may be asked to provide the information in our database to NPCA. The use, by NPCA, of the information contained in our

Message from FOG President Frank Yates

Greetings to fellow Friends of Ghana members.

In the last issue I wrote about how the NPCA had launched a new social networking site at <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/>. I invited all of you to join to maintain contacts with other RPCVs who have common interests, such as country of service, geographic location, Peace Corps program, etc. The Friends of Ghana group on this site now has 53 members. To join the Friends of Ghana group on the Connected Peace Corps site, click on the blue link "Join Friends of Ghana" on the right side above the array of Members photos. If you haven't yet joined, you can show brief information about yourself in your profile, post text messages, photos, videos, blogs, and comments to other members. As more of our members join this site, we can provide lists by year of service to facilitate the organization of reunions. You can also "friend" individual members on the site. Click on the member's photo to go to the member's page, then click on the "Add as Friend" link on the left side under the member's photo on their page.

I am continuing to work with a recently returned PCV, Mary Jayne Cassidy on enhancements to the website. I have added more information to the Ghana music page http://www.friendsofghana.org/Friends_of_Ghana/Music.html. All of the music on the page is available on iTunes. One song in each album has a link to the album on iTunes where you can listen to a 30-second sample of the music and purchase the song or album, if you wish. The traditional Ghanaian music is listed at the top of the page with the red background, the highlife music is listed in the middle of the page with the yellow background, and the hiplife music is listed at the bottom of the page with the green background. Some of the artists also have music videos posted on YouTube. For those songs for which I have been able to find music videos, I have provided links to them on YouTube.

Please contact me with your ideas for how to make the website more relevant and useful to you in keeping in contact with what is happening in Ghana. As always, we are looking for pictures and articles from you on Ghana-related activities and trips. Send them in.

Congratulations to our Treasurer, Debby Prigal, on her May 9, 2009 marriage to Randy Rosenfeld.



Friends of Ghana Privacy Policy

Submitted by President Frank Yates

Anually, the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) provides

database will be governed by the same policy as FoGh. Members of FoGh have the opportunity to decline to have their data shared with NPCA. If you do not wish to have your data shared with NPCA, please email Ron Yamamoto at rkyamamoto@aol.com, or write Ron at 742 Arce Street, Watsonville, CA 95076 to opt out. ★

Friends of Ghana Online Newsletter

Submitted by Ken Autrey

Increasingly, we hope to rely on the online version of our newsletter to stay in touch with Friends of Ghana members. Newsletters will continue to be posted on our website: <http://www.friendsofghana.org>.

Our hope is that as many members as possible will agree to forego the printed newsletter in favor of the online version. There are several advantages of a web-based publication over a printed and mailed newsletter. It saves money that could better be spent supporting projects in Ghana, it provides more possibilities for photos and other graphics, it has the advantage of immediacy, and it is less cumbersome to produce and distribute. We will continue mailing newsletters to those who prefer this format. **But if you are willing instead to receive an e-mailed notice with a newsletter link, please e-mail Ron Yamamoto (rkyamamoto@aol.com) if you haven't already done so, and tell him to add you to that list.** ★

DiCampo: (Cont. from Page 1, Column 2)

he could. He says, "That planted a seed. I wanted to travel and become a photographer."

One of his earliest documentaries, "22 and Counting," is a poignant portrait of his friends as they complete college and begin to figure out what to do next. Introducing the project, DiCampo writes, "Very suddenly, we had a new freedom that came with new responsibilities, and we didn't know how to cope with either. I felt the same way as everyone else, so I picked up a camera." Like his other projects since then, this one combines vivid photos with DiCampo's precise but casual narrative voice, the visual and aural smoothly complementing one another.

In his Peace Corps training, which began in September 2006, the few assigned to the water and sanitation group were introduced to a comprehensive range of health issues. Jessica Hancock (profiled in the spring 2009 Talking Drum) helped with the training. "They tried to cover everything," he says. "There was no way to know exactly what we'd need." He remembers a degree of inefficiency in the program but admits, "Maybe that was part of the point. After all, on the job we would all be confronted with some inefficiency and needed to get used to it."

For his specific assignment, DiCampo had two requests, both of which were honored: that he be sent to a Muslim area and that he be given a definite job. He found the prospect of having to devise his own job daunting; fortunately, he had a specific assignment—to work with a team of Ghanaian health workers to treat for Guinea worm and educate the community in how to avoid it.

Although Guinea worm disease (dracunculiasis) has largely been eliminated around the world, it still occurs in five African countries. In recent years, Ghana has had more infections than any country except Sudan. The parasite is passed through contaminated water. Treatment involves gradually removing the female worm,



A young girl with Guinea worm disease is bandaged in a Guinea Worm Case Containment Center in Wantugu, Ghana, March 22, 2007. Guinea worm patients go through a daily bandaging routine that involves removing the bandage from the day before, tugging the worm a few millimeters a day to remove it, and then applying a new bandage. The girl resisted the painful process so violently that it took three adults to hold her down.

which emerges from a painful skin lesion a few centimeters each day, and regularly bandaging the area. Daily attention is necessary.

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DiCampo found his role in helping to organize treatment schedules and ensure that those who were infected were seen every day. Also, he realized that more extensive education was needed, so he visited schools to inform students about the problem, taking along quizzes on the disease. He hit upon the idea of giving out gummy worms for correct answers, so he had friends and family in



Children play in discarded groundnut plants after helping their families harvest on a farm outside Wantugu, Ghana, August 25, 2007.

the U.S. send him bags of these chewy confections. This turned out to be a huge motivator.

The Guinea worm problem increases during the dry season and abates during the rainy season when more uncontaminated sources of water become available. Thus, in the rainy season, DiCampo was able to carve out more time to work on documentaries. In addition to "The Dry Season," which tells the story of the Guinea worm cycle and the water shortage, he put together an audio slideshow, "Waiting for the Lights," which explains how Wantugu has had electrical lines since 2000 but still has no power, a situation villagers often blame on the district government, which they say makes improvements only in election years. This documentary shows the array of nighttime activities that go on in the village despite the lack of light.

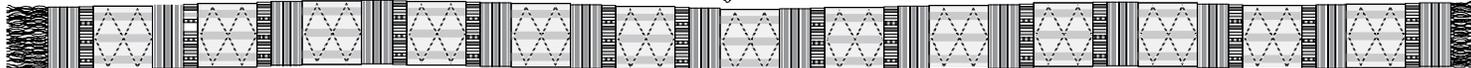
Since leaving the Peace Corps, DiCampo has taken on an ambitious agenda of projects. Last October, he accompanied Samia Nkrumah (daughter of Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah) during her successful campaign for a seat in the Ghanaian Parliament. Because she had been living in Italy, Italian journalists were pursuing the story. DiCampo had met some of them, and they invited him along, knowing his connection with Ghana. The result was an article for Christian Science



A young Tuareg girl watches the performance of Malian guitarist Vieux Farka Touré at the Festival Au Desert in Essakane, Mali, January 10th, 2009.

3 Monitor, and a photodocumentary for The National, an Abu Dabi **DiCampo:** Page 4, Column 1.

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DiCampo: (Cont. from Page 3, Column 2)

publication.

After Christmas, he flew to Mali to attend the Festival au Desert, an annual music gathering near Timbuctu. "It wasn't easy to get there," he recalls. "After connections in Accra, Conakry, and Bamako, I arrived in Timbuctu at 5 a.m. and promptly boarded an SUV for a grueling three-hour drive over sand dunes. But it was well worth it." The resulting three-minute report posted on TIME.com combines striking photos, snatches of Tuareg music, and DiCampo's narration.

DiCampo's current project, supported by a grant from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, focuses on kayayo women from northern Ghana, including some from Wantugu, where he lived. These are mostly young unmarried women who travel south to Kumasi or Accra to earn money as porters in the markets. The term, "kayayo," in fact, means "porter."

"I realized that photographing and writing about these women would be one way to address the economic disparity between north and south," DiCampo explains. "There are few jobs in the north, and this is one way for women to support their families or save money prior to getting married. It's difficult, but they tend to live together and look after one another."

He continues, "Men in the north often assume that the kayayo women become prostitutes, but this is true of only a minority. Most try to earn an honest living."

Relying on his knowledge of the Dagbani language, DiCampo found it easy to talk with the women but more difficult to gain their trust and photograph them. They were reluctant to allow photos of themselves at work. One day in Kumasi, something of a



Kayayo girls rush to follow an incoming car into Doctor Mensah station in Kumasi, Ghana. In Kumasi, the girls wait on nearly every street corner for cars to pass, and then follow them, hoping that the passengers will need them to carry their belongings.

breakthrough occurred. He explains, "The usual practice is for the women to run to an approaching car or truck, hoping to be hired to carry something. One day I ran to a car along with them, and my pants fell down. Of course they all laughed. They wouldn't let me forget it, but this was a great icebreaker."

Currently, while organizing his photos and observations, he's living in Des Moines, Iowa, where his girlfriend is in school.

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Information on the current status of the project is available on the Pulitzer web site: <http://pulitzercenter.org/showproject.cfm?id=93>.



Alietu, a girl in her early teens from Wa in the Upper West Region, peers out through the curtain of her sister's hairdressing shop in Kumasi, Ghana. Alietu has never been to school, and her father died when she was very young. Her older sister brought her to Kumasi, where she works as a Kayayo while learning hairdressing in her spare time. Her sister spent 7 years working as a Kayayo girl before she became a hairdresser.

He plans to return to northern Ghana in order to present his audio slideshow with Dagbani narration in conjunction with a film on the kayayo women made by Alicia Sully, a friend who is also a former Peace Corps volunteer. The idea will be to make the presentations villages at night and then, the following day, encourage discussion about this cultural phenomenon.

The kayayo project allowed him the luxury of extensive time with his subjects, and he realizes that this won't usually be possible. In contrast, he had only a few days for an assignment in Sierra Leone last November with Sightsavers International (a group that works to eliminate blindness and vision problems in developing countries). Nor will he usually have the luxury of knowing the local language.

The documentary photographer's usual plight is to move in and out rapidly, forming impressions quickly. DiCampo knows this is inevitable, if contrary to the Peace Corps ideal of settling in and getting to know a culture from the inside. Next month he'll be off again, this time to Guatemala for a one-week project on river blindness sponsored by The Carter Center, which has also provided funding to eliminate the Guinea worm problem.

Whatever the extent of the assignment, DiCampo says, "I need to always respect my subjects and realize the potential subjectivity in any story. For example, I could edit the kayayo story to be sad or not. I have to realize the power I have as a visual and verbal interpreter, and I have to try to tell a complete story, with all its complexities." ★

Rediscovery of Former PCV's Twi Dictionary

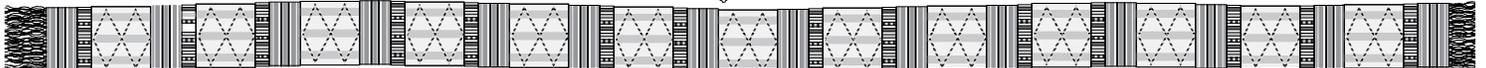
Submitted by Rudy Sovinee (Asanteman '70-'73)

Every PCV hopes to have left a mark for the good technically as well as socially. As noted below, my hopes may still prove true.

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Rediscovery: Page 5, Column 1.

Summer 2009





Rudy Sovinee

With any luck there will be a follow-up again in the near future--Ghana time.

I COSed from PC Ghana in October of 1973. My project for the last two of three years was to write an "English - Twi/ Twi - English Dictionary of Chemistry and Physics." The project was completed up to the point where it went to the State Publishing Corp in the Volta Region. There it met with resistance, and the project never made it to print. Now, 36 years later, that may be changing. Two

Ghanaian professors have claimed an interest in the manuscript. Recently, Frank Yates was instrumental in getting a hard copy to Legon, and he suggested Friends of Ghana may be interested in the story.

The project grew out of my fear of language learning, and over-compensation during my training in 1970. By the end of training I was quite conversant in Asante Twi, and within a few months at Kumasi's Asanteman Secondary School had extemporaneously done an after-school makeup chemistry lesson for one of my three classes in Twi. The test results were so markedly better for that class compared to the other two that I asked at a teacher conference why reference materials could not be made to supplement science learning in the native language. With that, my project was born.

I reported directly to the Bureau of Ghana Languages, a branch of the Ministry of Ed. For two years I would travel the first full week of each month from my post to Accra. There my writing was polished for spelling and grammar. At the end of my tour I also secured support in critical review by Ghanaian professors in the university science departments at Legon, Cape Coast and UST in Kumasi. What I left with them was a 200-page manuscript with 1,100 Twi definitions of English words, a glossary of Twi back to the English, and several appendices explaining why and when to adopt a Twi pronunciation of the English word.

The original manuscript as reviewed by the science professors and submitted to the printers seems to be missing. Too many people have come and gone at the bureau to hope for completion there. Then, surprisingly, I was tracked down by the embassy staff in Accra, due to word from my prior students who still told stories of me. As the following letters from a University of Ghana professor indicate, there may still be hope for results from my PC project:

4/8/08: My name is Professor Kofi Agyekum of the Department of Linguistics University of Ghana. I am an Asante from the Amansie District of Ashanti region. One of my areas in Linguistics is on terminology and in fact my Ph.D Thesis was on Akan terminology and Metalanguage. I have developed terms that will make it possible to teach the Akan language using Akan. I was so much happy to hear about what you did. Currently I am working on a project on Akan terminology and I find it very interesting to incorporate some of your work. I would be very grateful if I could lay hands on some of your earlier drafts. At any

rate I will check it up at the Bureau of Ghana languages but I am not sure whether I can lay hands on it. The reasons are just very simple. Bureau of Ghana languages has moved from its former place and it has also gone through various directors. Now that I have your e-mail, please let us work hand in hand to help Mother Ghana. I really appreciate what you were able to pursue more so as Peace Corp Volunteer. May God richly bless you. Thanks in advance. Prof. Kofi Agyekum

3/5/09: Hello, Rudy. Thank God I have been in touch with the Professor. He has confirmed that he has the manuscript. He has sent me a PDF copy of the manuscript. It is a 247 page. He put them into 6 files. It is only the first file which is 54 pages that has been corrupted. I have sent him another mail to find out if it would be possible for him to resend that to me. We may have to re-input it into the computer and review it. I am really impressed by what you were able to do at that time. May God richly bless you. Thanks Prof. Kofi Agyekum

After living in San Diego for many years and founding the "One World, Our World" program, I am now retired and adapting to my new home and language in northern Thailand. My e-mail address is rsovinee@1wow.org. ★

How to Retrieve Your PCV Medical Records

Peace Corps keeps a volunteer's medical records folder for 25 years from their COS date. This folder can contain some very interesting information, such as photos and letters that have been written to the Peace Corps about medical conditions.

Peace Corps should have medical folders for RPCVs whose COS date was in 1984 or after. RPCVs can have folders sent to them using the form letter below via mail or fax.

Date

Information-Release Coordinator

Office of Medical Services

The Peace Corps

1111 20th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20526

Telephone: 202.692.1553

Fax: 202.692.1549

Greetings -

Before it is destroyed, I would like to request that my Peace Corps service medical file be sent to me at the following address:

Name

Address

I was a Peace Corps volunteer in XXXXX from 19XX to 19XX. My COS Date was XXXX XX, 19XX. My SSN is XXX-XX-XXXX. My DOB is XXXX XX, 19XX.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXX

XXX-XXX-XXXX Home Phone

XXX-XXX-XXXX Cell Phone ★



Help Us Find New FOG Members!

(Pass this form on to any Ghana RPCVs you may know.)

Yes! Sign me up in the Friends of Ghana and the National Peace Corps Association

Membership:

- Regular: \$50 (\$35 for NPCA, \$15 for FOG)
 Add \$10 for overseas mail
 Special Donation to FOG \$ ____ NPCA \$ ____ (thank you!)

I want to help Friends of Ghana (please mark all that apply)

- Newsletter Membership Projects
 Fund Raising Special Events Big Mailings

Please make check payable to NPCA and mail to:

1900 L Street, N.W., Suite 404
Washington, DC 20036

NPCA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Membership dues and contributions may be tax deductible. Consult your tax advisor.

For FOG membership only, enclose a check for \$15 Payable to Friends of Ghana and mail to:

Debby Prigal, Treasurer
1625 Q St. NW, #207
Washington, DC 20009

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Country _____

Telephone (home) _____ (work) _____

Current Employer _____

Current Occupation _____

Country(ies) of Service _____ Dates _____

Volunteer Staff Assignment(s) _____

I only wish to join Friends of Ghana at this time.



The Talking Drum

Newsletter of the Friends of Ghana

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