Mission: To build one 3-unit modern classroom and sustain it for generations of middle schoolers from over 200 households in my community in Kolinvai Ghana.

Need: Kolinvai is one of the impoverished rural villages in North-East Ghana. The village is far behind in terms of development. There is no running water, no paved roads, no stable infrastructure for schools, and the main occupation is peasant farming. Women still walk over six miles to fetch water. The village is rooted in traditions, one being that women belong in the kitchen. This belief has drawn the progress of education backward and increased poverty in the community. In addition to the rigid traditions and poverty, the lack of infrastructures makes it difficult for children to go to school, especially females. There is only one middle school in Kolinvai serving over 200 households. The school is constructed with mud and has cracks all over it. The current building is at a risk of collapsing and poses a threat to the safety and peace of the students, teachers, and the community. Last summer I visited home and had the privilege to talk to the students and the head teacher at the Kolinvai Junior High School (J.H.S). They expressed that they lacked several resources such as reading materials, teaching materials, chairs, and computers. But their deeper concern was the danger that the school building poses to their lives. Hence, many youths moved to cities at a young age to access education. These children stay with strangers or relatives they barely know, and some face child labor abuse and sexual harassment causing students to drop out of school and return to their parents. There is a high need to construct a school building that will offer a safe and stable school for generations of children in Kolinvai, increase the kids' access to education, and prevent them from moving to cities at an incredibly young age as well as lower the numbers of middle school dropouts.

Background: I grew up in Kolinvai, but I moved to another city for middle school. I graduated high school at the top of my graduation class and won a scholarship to study in the USA. Although I moved to the USA, I stay connected to my community. I am enthusiastic about the improvement of my community through education. I earned honors A.S in biological sciences at Montgomery College (MC) and transferred to Smith College to complete my B.A. In a team of four students, I executed a one-year project on the UN sustainable goals; Good Health and Well-Being at MC that provided health webinars and covid response packages to students. As a house coordinator at Smith, I lead students in organizing and participating in house meetings and campus events. In summer 2022, I donated school supplies, food supplies, as well as sanitary products to Kolinvai J.H.S using funds I raised from GoFundMe. My plan is to bridge these projects together and start a non-profit organization after graduation. As the first woman in my community to attain a bachelor’s degree, I want to develop my community by providing access to education. Also, my family lives in the community and are well-positioned to support me in this project. The chief of the community has pledged the support of the community to building the school. The head teacher at the school has agreed to partner and to support me as needed. With the support from the community, the school, and my ten-member project management committee that I have put in place, this project can be completed successfully. Kolinvai J.H.S has government employees, teachers, and a head teacher who manage the day-to-day activities of the school. This project is going to donate a building to support the already established school system to continue to exist. The building would be maintained by the head teacher and the parent-teacher committee. The good quality materials that I plan to use will ensure that the structure will have low maintenance needs over an extensive period of time. Having an infrastructure would allow for students to continue to access education in the school for generations. The teachers are paid by the government of Ghana. This building would support long-term education of youth in the community by providing a safe yet motivating space for learning. I am in contact with all the teachers in the school, and we plan to motivate the children to pursue higher education. Also, as the first female to attain higher education in my community, completing this project would serve as a motivation for the kids to pursue education because it would show them the innovation that education can bring into their lives. This structure would lay a foundation in which I will establish a non-profit organization later to financially support the education of the kids in my community and provide mentorship.
Objective: I am applying for Davis Project for Peace Funds to build one 3-unit classroom to replace the current 3-unit classroom that is on the verge of collapsing to provide a safe and stable school building for generations of middle schoolers and to increase access to education in Kolinvai Ghana. Each classroom will be about 30 by 30 feet to accommodate about 20 to 30 students per class. To me, peace means the absence of physical and psychological war. The safety of the children in the school are at risk and they are at a war in their minds being scared and terrified. Having a solid structure that is safe for their learning will contribute to their peace by making them feel safe in the environment.

I have three phases for this project. Phase one is already underway and includes the acquisition of funding, setting up a project management committee of ten members, securing all partnerships, designing the building plan, and finding suppliers for all building materials. The project management committee will support me in the process of researching and finding good experts; carpenters, builders, engineers, and architects. The committee would also manage the day-to-day process of the project. I will lead the committee and hold zoom meetings as well as communicate via emails, WhatsApp, direct calls etc. Phase two will mark the beginning of the building process. I will be on-site to purchase materials and to start the building process. I plan to be on site for six weeks during which I want to finish the building. In terms of delay, I would have to return to the USA for work, and my brother Abdulai Abuba will lead the project on-site and report back to me. The community will come together and support the building experts to start laying the foundation and construction of the building. All houses in my community are built through communal labor which is a cultural way of doing things in my community. I do not have to look for individual volunteers. The chief of the community would announce the building project at a community gathering and the community would come together to help build the school for their children's education with the guidance of the experts. This is a long-standing tradition in my community. The current structure in Kolinvai J.H.S was built by the community. It is collapsing because of the poor building materials that were used due to lack of funds. During the communal labor, food is provided for the builders which will be cooked in my parents’ house by the women in Kolinvai. My parent’s house is near the school so the builders can easily walk there for meals. My family will provide food using the project funds. In phase three, it would be roofed, plastered, and ready for use. The whole community will be brought together to celebrate the end of the project with words of encouragement for parents to enroll all their children to school, especially females who are usually left at home to be caretakers. I plan to be on-site in July to August. During this time, I will talk with the parent-teacher committee of the Kolinvai J.H.S to ensure they continue to maintain the building. The committee will ensure the sustainability of the building by doing routine maintenance. I will keep in touch with the committee for updates as well as check the building whenever I visit home. I will also request yearly enrollment and graduation reports from the headteacher and find ways to improve records.

Timeline: I plan to complete the project within 3 months starting in June to August. A building expert estimated that six weeks is enough time to finish the structure if all materials are available as well as the workforce. I have put in place a ten-member project management committee. Kofi Nnamba, an architect, has surveyed the plot and will start drawing a building plan in March when the funds are secured. From mid-March to Mid-June. I will hire building experts, inform the community and the school about funds, and alert local news about the project. I will also find all major suppliers of building materials, draw the building plan, get my tickets ready for travel, and find brick suppliers. I will graduate in May. I might be a full-time employee of a company hence, I plan to be on-site for six weeks which I think would be enough to start and finish the physical structure. Between June and August, I will buy the building materials, which I must be on-site for, and lay the building foundation with all my workforces from the community and the building experts. I plan to be on-site from July 10 to August 21, 2023. The school will be fully built from beginning to end during this period. I have time till the end of August to make room for delays and unexpected events. In terms of setbacks, my team is aware of the challenges that we might face ahead of time and would adjust time and resources to meet our goal. The building will be constructed by experts, communal labor, and the teachers from the school.