

NIGERIA'S TECHNICAL AID CORPS (TAC) AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: OPPORTUNITIES, OBSTACLES, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS.

Isana, Nduonofit Okon Ph.D¹ & Ademeso, Tosin Success PhD²

¹ Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, University of Abuja, Nigeria

² Department of Public Administration, University of Abuja, Nigeria

*Corresponding Author: **Isana, Nduonofit Okon Ph.D**

Abstract

This study examines Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps (TAC) and its role in promoting cultural diplomacy in the Global South. Established in 1987, the TAC is a development cooperation programme that provides technical assistance and training to developing countries, primarily in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. Through a qualitative case study approach, this research investigates the opportunities and obstacles faced by the TAC in promoting cultural diplomacy, and explores future directions for the programme. The study reveals that the TAC has made significant contributions to cultural diplomacy in the Global South, fostering cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect among nations. However, the programme faces challenges such as inadequate funding, limited capacity, and bureaucratic hurdles. The study also identifies opportunities for the TAC to enhance its impact, including leveraging Nigeria's rich cultural heritage, strengthening partnerships with regional organizations, and adopting innovative approaches to development cooperation. The study concludes that the TAC has the potential to play a more significant role in promoting cultural diplomacy and development cooperation in the Global South, but requires strategic reforms and support to overcome existing challenges. The study recommends that the Nigerian government prioritize funding and capacity building for the TAC, and that the programme adopts a more proactive and innovative approach to cultural diplomacy. This research contributes to the literature on cultural diplomacy, development cooperation, and Nigeria's foreign

Article DNA

Article Type:

Original research article

DOI:

10.5281/zenodo.18008532

Article History:

Received: 09-12-2025

Accepted: 16-12-2025

Published: 21-12-2025

Keywords:

Technical Aid Corps, Cultural Diplomacy, Global South, Development Cooperation, Nigeria's Foreign Policy.

How to Cite

Isana, Nduonofit Okon , & Ademeso, Tosin Success . (2025). NIGERIA'S TECHNICAL AID CORPS (TAC) AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: OPPORTUNITIES, OBSTACLES, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS. *UAR Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (UARJMS)*, 1(10), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18008532>

License Information

Copyright © 2025 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

***Related declarations are provided in the final section of this article.*

policy, providing insights and recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars.

Introduction

Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps (TAC) initiative has emerged as a vital instrument of soft power diplomacy in the Global South. Established in 1987, TAC aims to provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to developing countries, particularly in Africa, the Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) regions. The programme grew out of Nigeria's post-independence belief in African and South-South solidarity and the need to coordinate scattered bilateral technical assistance into a single institutional vehicle. The scheme took institutional form under the Directorate of Technical Aid Corps within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the federal republic of Nigeria.

On attainment of independence from British colonial rule in 1960, Nigeria adopted an Afrocentric foreign policy that placed "Africa as the center-piece" of her foreign policy. This foreign policy initiative prioritized African unity, total liberation of the entire African continent from colonial rule, development and unity of the continent. In furtherance of this policy, the post-independence government of Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa established the ministry of foreign affairs and commonwealth relations. This foreign policy direction was most notably articulated by Nigeria's first Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, in his 1960 address to the United Nations General Assembly, where he emphasized Nigeria's responsibility to support African nations in their post-colonial journey toward self-reliance and solidarity. This commitment shaped the foundational tenets of Nigeria's external relations, and successive governments have operationalized this ideology through peacekeeping efforts, economic cooperation, and technical assistance initiatives (Gambari, 2009).

One of the most notable instruments of Nigeria's foreign policy was the establishment of the Technical Aid Corps (TAC) in 1987 under the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida. Conceived by the then Minister of External Affairs, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, the TAC aimed to actualize the South-South cooperation, through the exchange of knowledge, human resource, and technology. The scheme involves the deployment of Nigerian expertise in education, health, agriculture, engineering, and legal sectors to needy African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. Unlike Western-dominated aid models, TAC was grounded in the philosophy of South-South cooperation and mutual development, providing skilled Nigerian volunteers to countries with critical manpower shortages, often without demanding economic returns. From its

early years the TAC was modelled in part on foreign volunteer corps (for example the U.S. Peace Corps) but adapted to Nigeria's diplomatic priorities: responding to formal requests from recipient countries, sending qualified professionals on two-year volunteer tours, and concentrating on sectors where Nigeria had demonstrable human-resource strengths (education, health, agriculture, engineering, and public administration). Between 1987 and 2024, the programme experienced waves of expansion and contraction tied to Nigeria's domestic economic fortunes, changing foreign-policy emphasis, and institutional reforms. While the formal institutional anchor was consolidated in 1987 with the establishment of TAC, earlier bilateral cooperation and ad-hoc Nigerian technical assistance to African states can be traced to the late 1970s and early 1980s — reflecting the fact that TAC consolidated a pre-existing pattern of assistance rather than inventing it (Rotimi, 2021). This explains occasional references to bilateral agreements in the early 1980s that preceded the Directorate's statutory establishment.

Commencement of The Technical Aid Corp Programme

The scheme started with the deployment of one hundred and two (102) volunteers in 1987-1988, by General Ibrahim Babangida-led-military government. The first set of countries to benefit from TAC deployment in 1987 were Benin Republic, Zambia, and Ghana, among others (Lawal, 2019). By 2020, over 7,000 Nigerian professionals had been deployed to more than 40 countries in Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific, with specific examples including Benin Republic, Belize, Ethiopia, St Kitts and Nevis, Rwanda, Jamaica, Fiji, The Gambia, Grenada, Uganda, Guyana, Equatorial Guinea, Saint Lucia, and Ghana.

In the 1980s, Nigeria witnessed significant upheaval in the political and economic landscape. Internally, the country grappled with structural adjustment reforms imposed by international financial institutions, declining oil revenues, and military authoritarianism. Externally, Nigeria faced the challenge of redefining its role in a rapidly changing global order following the Cold War. It was in this climate that the TAC programme was conceived, not merely as a foreign aid strategy, but as an expression of Nigeria's intent to become a normative power within the Global South (Akinyemi, 2011). Beyond its technical and developmental contributions, the technical aid corps initiative can be described as a vital tool of soft power. Over the years, TAC has enabled Nigeria to project her values, identity, and worldview, thereby enhancing global perception and cooperation. In this context, TAC volunteers not only filled professional gaps but also acted as cultural ambassadors, transmitting Nigerian customs, languages, values, and perspectives to host communities. Whether through teaching in local schools, practicing medicine, or hosting cultural

events like Nigerian Independence Day celebrations, these volunteers influenced perceptions of Nigeria in ways that traditional diplomacy often cannot. The volunteers functioning as unofficial ambassadors, often introduced Nigerian customs, dress, music, religious pluralism, and indigenous knowledge systems into everyday encounters. Through these micro-interactions, the TAC facilitated what may be termed grassroots diplomacy, wherein cultural transfer occurred organically, extending far beyond the formal channels of embassy-based diplomacy. This subtle transmission of norms, ideas, and traditions is precisely what underpins the conceptual link between technical aid and cultural diplomacy. With Nigeria facing growing geopolitical competition in Africa and beyond, particularly from China, India, and other emerging powers, there is a renewed need to explore the soft power value of the TAC programme as part of the country's overall diplomatic strategy. This study provides a detailed historical and policy-based examination of how a seemingly technocratic initiative like TAC has metamorphosed into a vehicle for cultural exchange, national branding, and soft power projection, given the increasing global relevance of soft power and cultural narratives in shaping international relations in the 21st century.

Achievements.

Since its establishment in 1987, the Technical Aid Corps (TAC) scheme has emerged as a vital instrument of Nigeria's soft power diplomacy, enhancing the country's standing and impact in the Global South through various means. TAC has played a significant role in advancing Nigeria's soft power diplomacy through capacity building. The Technical Aid Corp programme has contributed to building the capacity of recipient countries, fostering economic growth and development (Adoghe, 2022). The Technical Aid Corp programme has succeeded to a large extent in Sharing Expertise and Know-How between Nigeria and beneficiary countries. The technical assistance provided by TAC to beneficiary African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries, helped in showcasing Nigeria's expertise and capabilities in various fields, such as medicine, engineering, law, and education. For example, early TAC engagement with The Gambia included teachers and agricultural extension officers who supported school systems and rural development projects. Newspaper and embassy reports from the 1980s–2010s cited Nigerian teachers embedded in Gambian secondary schools and technical institutes; these volunteers strengthened curriculum delivery and facilitated professional linkages between Nigerian and Gambian institutions. Such contributions enhanced bilateral goodwill and are cited locally as a positive element of Gambian–Nigerian relations (Ibrahim,2017). TAC Deployment to

Caribbean states like St Kitts & Nevis demonstrates the TAC's geographic reach beyond Africa. Nigerian volunteers provided expertise in education, administration and public services, producing concrete skill transfers. These interventions served as both technical aid and a way for Nigeria to cultivate a friendly balance in Commonwealth and multilateral settings where Caribbean states exert collective voice.

The technical aid corps programme also opened up new economic opportunities for Nigeria, strengthening trade and investment ties with partner countries. Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps (TAC) enhances the skills and knowledge of professionals from partner countries, fostering economic growth and development. The programme promotes cultural understanding and cooperation, strengthening diplomatic ties and economic relationships. TAC facilitates technical cooperation, enabling Nigeria to share its expertise and experience with recipient countries in the global south. TAC fosters strategic partnerships with international organizations, governments, and institutions, promoting economic collaboration and development. TAC showcases Nigeria's expertise and capabilities enhancing its global image and influence. By promoting economic diplomacy, TAC contributes to Nigeria's economic growth, regional integration, and global competitiveness.

Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps (TAC) also provided significant assistance in the health sector, deploying medical professionals to partner countries. Through the TAC programme, Nigeria successfully deployed doctors, nurses, and other healthcare specialists to needy countries. This has helped strengthen healthcare systems, improve healthcare delivery, and build capacity in recipient countries in the global south during the period of our study. Examples of TAC's health sector assistance include; the deployment of medical missions to countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia to provide healthcare services and train local healthcare workers. It also provided training and capacity-building programmes for healthcare professionals, enhancing their skills and knowledge. TAC has supported the construction and renovation of healthcare facilities, improving access to healthcare services. TAC's health sector assistance has contributed immensely to improved health outcomes, strengthened healthcare systems, and enhanced Nigeria's global health diplomacy.

As opined by Akadu (2020), TAC medical volunteers supplemented host-country health systems, and those placements carried symbolic weight in demonstrating Nigeria's commitment to regional health challenges

Since its inception in 1987, Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps programme has evolved from an instrument that consolidated ad-hoc assistance into a standing institutional initiative that channels Nigerian human capital to needy partner states. The TAC's dual identity—development assistance provider and instrument of cultural diplomacy—makes it strategically valuable to Nigeria's foreign policy

Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps (TAC) has, since its inception, functioned as a distinctive arm of Nigeria's cultural diplomacy. While its stated purpose is to provide technical assistance, its actual operations embed Nigerian professionals in the daily lives of citizens in recipient countries. This presence creates a platform where Nigeria's culture, values, and professional ethos are indirectly transmitted in their host countries. TAC volunteers serve as ambassadors of culture, not merely of skills. By teaching in schools, practicing in hospitals, or training in agriculture, TAC participants introduce aspects of Nigerian languages, food culture, music, dress, and even interpersonal cultural codes. Over time, these "silent cultural exports" shape the attitudes of host communities toward Nigerians, often generating goodwill that can be mobilized by Nigerian diplomacy.

Additionally, TAC demonstrates Nigeria's commitment to South-South solidarity, positioning cultural diplomacy within a broader Pan-African ethos. By offering skilled professionals without demanding payment, Nigeria projects an image of solidarity, generosity, and leadership that enhances its cultural influence across Africa and beyond.

Although TAC's official role is technical, the lived realities of volunteers promote Nigeria's cultural heritage in subtle but powerful ways. For instance, Nigerian teachers in countries such as The Gambia, Sierra Leone, and St Kitts & Nevis often bring Nigerian pedagogical traditions, literature, and even references to Nigerian history into their classrooms. This not only educates students but also indirectly showcases Nigeria's cultural and intellectual traditions. The TAC volunteers abroad routinely share Nigerian foods, proverbs, music, and storytelling traditions with local communities. Through church activities, community associations, and social events, they serve as cultural carriers, introducing host communities to Nigerian customs and values.

In health care and agricultural deployments, Nigerian methods and practices—rooted in indigenous knowledge systems as well as modern training—often blend into host-country operations. This introduces elements of Nigerian problem-solving, adaptability, and collective ethos into professional domains. In some host countries, TAC volunteers have organized

Nigerian Independence Day celebrations, cultural nights, and exhibitions. These events provide opportunities to present Nigeria's artistic heritage, including traditional dances, attire, music, and cuisine, thereby serving as soft cultural campaigns. Asiwaju (2019) has posited that through these pathways, TAC advances Nigeria's cultural visibility and contributes to shaping global understanding of Nigerian heritage as diverse, resilient, and influential.

The Technical aid corps initiative effectively strengthened Nigeria's soft power in the global south. Soft power is the ability to influence through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion. It is a key outcome of TAC operations. Nigeria's soft power assets include its population size, economic potential, Nollywood film industry, Afro-beat music, and vibrant cultural identity. TAC strategically complements these assets by creating direct interpersonal links. The technical aid corps initiative also assisted to a large extent in engendering positive perceptions of Nigerians by beneficiary countries. Host communities often view TAC volunteers as exemplars of Nigerian professionalism and kindness. This helped in countering negative stereotypes sometimes associated with Nigeria in global media. This reputational dividend strengthens Nigeria's cultural image abroad.

The TAC programme also fosters the spirit of oneness and trust building in sensitive sectors. It is a truism that volunteers' daily interactions with vulnerable populations, create an emotional bond that is far more persuasive than formal diplomatic communication. Such trust often spills over into wider acceptance of Nigerian policies and initiatives in those countries. Asiwaju (2010) has opined that the positive perception of Nigeria in countries such as Uganda, Sierra Leone, Gambian and the Caribbean's can be attributed to decades of interpersonal interactions facilitated by the technical aid corps initiative. This development deepened bond of friendship that extend beyond the duration of the programme. Many former beneficiaries of TAC instruction or mentorship later rise into positions of influence in their home countries. These alumni constitute an informal network of cultural and diplomatic allies who retain positive impressions of Nigeria (Ibrahim,2022). By embedding its citizens as trusted professionals abroad, Nigeria quietly embeds its culture, language, and worldview into the social fabric of recipient nations—thus strengthening its soft power influence in the long run.

Beyond cultural exchanges at the micro level, TAC also enhances Nigeria's bilateral and multilateral diplomacy. TAC deployments often precede or accompany bilateral agreements. For example, Nigeria's relationship with The Gambia and Sierra Leone has been deepened through decades of TAC volunteer service, reinforcing political and economic ties.

The Technical aid corps programme helped in affirming Nigeria as a regional power to be reckoned with in Africa. Nigeria's provision of technical assistance through TAC reinforces its claim to continental leadership in Africa. This explained the fact that beneficiary countries often support Nigeria's positions in regional forums in recognition of its generosity. TAC also boosts Nigeria's image in Commonwealth and ACP (African, Caribbean, and Pacific) frameworks. Deployments to Caribbean states like St Kitts & Nevis demonstrate Nigeria's willingness to engage in global South–South diplomacy beyond its immediate neighborhood. This strengthens Nigeria's diplomatic capital in multilateral negotiations. Nigeria's consistent technical support positions it as a moral authority in advocating for development cooperation, debt relief, and collective security in multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement. In effect, TAC provides Nigeria with a non-coercive lever of influence that extends beyond technical service into the realm of strategic diplomacy, helping to secure allies, votes, and goodwill at both bilateral and multilateral levels. The Technical Aid Corps has demonstrated that technical assistance is not merely economic but also cultural and diplomatic. By embedding professionals in host countries, TAC becomes a living channel for Nigeria's cultural diplomacy—showcasing Nigerian heritage, reinforcing soft power, and consolidating Nigeria's international position. While its contributions are sometimes under-quantified, the qualitative impacts on perception, trust, and goodwill are undeniable. Strengthening the programme through consistent funding, broader geographic outreach, and systematic integration of cultural diplomacy objectives would further enhance its impact on Nigeria's global influence.

Challenges

Though the Technical Aid Corps initiative has achieved remarkable successes since its inception in 1987, there are recurring operational constraints militating against attainment of its full potentials. Among these are; inconsistent funding, uneven monitoring of cultural-diplomacy outcomes, and occasional misalignment between volunteer skills and host-country needs, logistic challenges and insecurity.

One of the most persistent challenges facing the Technical Aid Corps (TAC) is chronic underfunding. Although the programme has a strategic role in Nigeria's cultural diplomacy, its budgetary allocations often fluctuate with changes in government priorities and the country's economic fortunes, particularly during periods of oil-price decline. Limited funding has affected the number of volunteers deployed, the duration of service, and the geographical spread of host

countries. In some years, recruitment drives have been suspended or scaled down due to lack of resources.

Volunteer welfare issues such as, delays in stipends, inadequate accommodation support, and limited insurance coverage have sometimes discouraged potential applicants and lowered morale among serving volunteers. Funding shortfalls undermine Nigeria's credibility, as interrupted or poorly resourced deployments weaken the country's image as a reliable partner. Without sustainable and predictable financing, the TAC risks being overshadowed by similar international volunteer programmes, such as, the U.S. Peace Corps or Japan International Cooperation Agency's JOCV).

Another major challenges confronting the Technical Aid Corp programme has been poor Administrative and Logistical Challenges The TAC's bureaucratic structure within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs often hampers efficiency. Slow recruitment processes: Lengthy screening, clearance, and orientation procedures have at times caused delays in meeting host-country requests. Communication lapses between the Directorate, Nigerian embassies, and host-country institutions have resulted in mismatched postings (volunteers placed in roles that do not align with their expertise). Visa delays, inadequate travel arrangements, and irregular monitoring visits make volunteers vulnerable and can erode Nigeria's diplomatic reputation. A more agile administrative framework, supported by technology, is essential to maximize TAC's diplomatic impact.

Operations of the TAC programme is also hindered by poor documentation. Although Nigerian professionals sent abroad interact with local populations daily through teaching, healthcare, legal practice, and community outreach, the implications of these engagements for cultural influence and image-building are rarely documented. Unlike formal embassies or cultural institutes, the TAC operates through informal, embedded channels of influence, which makes its cultural outcomes harder to quantify but no less important (Akadu, 2020). Moreover, the absence of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework within the TAC structure means that its contributions to Nigeria's global identity, especially in Africa and the Caribbean, are largely anecdotal. Without systematic data on how host countries perceive Nigerian culture, values, or diplomacy through the TAC initiative, it is difficult to determine whether the program is fulfilling its full potential as a soft power tool. This deficiency is particularly concerning in a global context where nations like China (through Confucius Institutes) and the United States

(through Fulbright programs) aggressively pursue cultural diplomacy as part of their strategic outreach.

In addition to the lack of cultural impact assessment, several operational and strategic challenges have undermined the TAC's effectiveness. These include chronic underfunding, irregular deployment cycles, inadequate support for volunteers, and limited institutional coordination with host countries. Volunteers have reported poor living conditions, lack of materials for teaching or medical care, and minimal post-deployment engagement. These deficiencies not only compromise the professional performance of volunteers but also limit their capacity to engage meaningfully in cultural exchange or represent Nigeria in a dignified manner.

Another critical problem is the weak alignment between TAC and Nigeria's broader foreign policy objectives. While TAC was intended as a strategic expression of Nigeria's Afrocentric diplomacy, successive governments have treated it more as a bureaucratic routine than a proactive soft power platform. This disconnect has resulted in missed opportunities for advancing Nigeria's leadership image in Africa and for consolidating diplomatic ties with beneficiary nations, especially as global competition for influence in Africa intensifies. Finally, domestic constraints such as high unemployment, insecurity, and budgetary shortfalls raise questions about the long-term sustainability and public support for the TAC program. Critics argue that deploying skilled professionals abroad while Nigerian institutions face brain drain and service delivery gaps reflects a misalignment of priorities. Proponents, however, argue that such international service enhances Nigeria's global reputation and provides volunteers with exposure and experience that can benefit the country upon their return.

Security concerns in some African states have disrupted TAC operations. Nigeria deploys volunteers to countries where political instability, conflict, or weak governance can endanger both volunteers and the programme's reputation. For instance, the lingering Ethiopian civil war has disrupted TAC operations in the country to a large extent (Ojugwu,2020). Deployment of TAC volunteers to countries experiencing coups, civil strife, or terrorism threats (e.g., parts of West and Central Africa) have raised concerns for volunteers' safety. Outbreaks such as Ebola (2014) and the COVID-19 pandemic (2020) significantly affected the safety of health-sector deployments. In cases of political turnover, new governments have sometimes deprioritized TAC placements, causing sudden disruptions. These risks complicate Nigeria's cultural diplomacy objectives, as a programme designed to foster goodwill can instead generate controversy if volunteer safety is compromised.

Another major weakness of TAC is the absence of systematic monitoring and evaluation (M&E). There is little quantitative data on how TAC deployments enhance cultural diplomacy. Most assessments rely on anecdotal evidence or diplomatic reports rather than standardized evaluations. Without rigorous monitoring, it is difficult to ensure that volunteers are optimally utilized or that host-country institutions gain sustained capacity. Lack of structured feedback from volunteers and host governments prevents institutional learning that could refine TAC's design. Developing a formal M&E framework would help Nigeria not only improve the programme's efficiency but also provide credible evidence of its cultural-diplomacy returns.

Future Directions

Despite its challenges, TAC retains strong potential to expand its cultural-diplomacy functions. Future reforms and opportunities can reposition the programme as a global leader in South–South cooperation.

Many African states continue to face shortages in skilled professionals, particularly in health and education. Nigeria can leverage this gap to enhance goodwill. TAC deployments to small island states (e.g., St Kitts & Nevis) have already expanded Nigeria's visibility in the Caribbean. Such engagements deepen South–South solidarity and increase Nigeria's multilateral clout in forums like the ACP and Commonwealth.

There's also great potential for TAC in Digital Cultural Diplomacy and Diaspora Engagement. The rise of digital tools provides TAC with new opportunities. Nigerian professionals can deliver online training, seminars, and cultural events, extending TAC's reach beyond physical deployments. Nigerian diaspora communities, particularly in Europe and North America, can serve as amplifiers of TAC's cultural diplomacy by supporting volunteers and promoting Nigerian heritage globally.

Nigeria's film industry—Nollywood—is one of the most powerful cultural exports in Africa and the Global South. Integrating Nollywood content into TAC programming (e.g., film screenings, cultural nights, collaborations with local film institutes) can reinforce Nigeria's cultural diplomacy. Nollywood's narratives, often rich in African values, language, and lifestyle, complement the face-to-face diplomacy of TAC volunteers, creating a multi-layered cultural imprint.

Sustainable funding through dedicated budget lines, international grants, and public–private partnerships.

Streamlining administration using digital recruitment platforms, fast-tracked clearance procedures, and embassy-level coordination.

Volunteer welfare improvements such as comprehensive insurance, timely stipends, and psychosocial support. Integration with Nigeria’s broader cultural diplomacy strategy, aligning TAC with Nollywood, Afrobeat, and creative industries. The Directorate of Technical Aid Corps (DTAC) requires enhanced autonomy within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to reduce bureaucratic delays. Professional training for staff in programme management, M&E, and cultural diplomacy. Collaboration with Nigerian universities to provide pre-deployment cultural-orientation training for volunteers. For sustainability, TAC should leverage partnerships, Multilateral partnerships: with ECOWAS, AU, UNDP, and WHO for joint deployments in critical sectors (e.g., health, climate adaptation). Private sector engagement, Nigerian banks, telecoms, and oil companies could co-sponsor deployments as part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and global branding.

The management of TAC should also explore international funding model. For example, tapping into South–South cooperation funds and development-assistance grants could provide additional financing streams.

The TAC programme faces clear constraints in financing, administration, security, and evaluation, but its potential as a tool of cultural diplomacy remains strong. By reforming its institutional structure, aligning it with Nigeria’s creative industries, and building digital and diaspora-based dimensions, TAC can transform from a traditional volunteer scheme into a dynamic instrument of 21st-century soft power. Its challenges are surmountable, and its prospects, if strategically harnessed, could reposition Nigeria as a global leader in South–South technical and cultural cooperation. Strengthening the programme’s monitoring & evaluation, institutionalizing cultural diplomacy outcomes in deployment planning, and ensuring sustained political and budgetary support would increase TAC’s impact in the coming decades.

Africa’s dependence on externally imposed development models emphasizes structural inequality, elite mismanagement, and weak institutions. The Technical Aid Corps programme highlights Nigeria’s attempt to reverse dependency by promoting South–South cooperation. TAC embodies an indigenous development strategy, exporting human capital rather than importing

foreign aid, thus driving for autonomous, internally driven African development rooted in solidarity and political self-reliance.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it can be submitted that, Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps (TAC) has emerged as a vital soft power tool in the Global South, promoting economic diplomacy, cultural exchange, and technical cooperation. Established in 1987, TAC has deployed skilled Nigerian professionals to African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries, enhancing Nigeria's global image and influence.

TAC has made significant contributions to Nigeria's soft power diplomacy, promoting the country's image, influence, and cooperation with other developing nations. Through its focus on capacity building, cultural exchange, and south-south cooperation, TAC has demonstrated its potential to enhance Nigeria's soft power and promote development in the Global South. However, the paper has also identified several challenges hindering TAC's effectiveness, including inadequate funding, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and limited institutional capacity. To address these challenges, this paper recommends that the Nigerian government prioritizes TAC's funding and resource allocation, streamlines its operational procedures, and strengthens its institutional capacity. Additionally, TAC should leverage technology and innovation to enhance its service delivery, expand its outreach, and improve its impact.

The paper concludes that TAC has the potential to be a game-changer for Nigeria's soft power diplomacy, but its success depends on addressing the identified obstacles and leveraging opportunities for growth and innovation. By doing so, TAC can continue to promote Nigeria's influence, image, and cooperation with other developing nations, contributing to the country's foreign policy objectives and development aspirations.

Ultimately, TAC's success depends on Nigeria's ability to harness its soft power resources, promote a positive image, and demonstrate its commitment to global development and cooperation. With the right strategies and support, TAC can play a significant role in shaping Nigeria's future as a leading player in the Global South.

Article Publication Details

This article is published in the **UAR Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (UARJMS)**, ISSN 3049-4346 (Online). In Volume 1 (2025), Issue 10 (December)

The journal is published and managed by **UAR Publisher**.

References

- Adoghe, E. (2022). *Foreign policy and sustainable development: A critical analysis*. Oxford University Press.
- Aina, D. (2020). Technical aid corps: Nigeria's soft diplomacy since 1987. [Source/URL missing].
- Aka, P. C. (2024). Technical Aid Corps (TAC). In *Human rights in Nigeria's external relations in the age of General Muhammadu Buhari and his successors: Loving the foreigner as yourself* (pp. 241–260).¹ Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Akadu, B. (2020). *Nigeria's foreign policy initiative, 1960–2020*. UCL Press.
- Ake, C. (1989). *The political economy of crisis and underdevelopment in Africa: Selected works of Claude Ake* (Vol. 1). Jad Publishers.
- Akinyemi, B. (1987). *The concert of medium powers*.² Nigeria Institute of International Affairs.
- Asiwaju, G. (2010). *International politics in the era of social media*. Oxford Clarendon.
- Ayinde, A. F. (2011). Technical cooperation and regional integration in Africa: A study of Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 13(8), 182–186.
- Chukwuemeka, E. J. (2025). Shifting from theory to practice: Effective instructional design and learning material production. *MSI Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (MSIJMR)*, 1(10), 1–26.
- Confidence, O. N., & Ogunnubi, O. (2018). Rethinking the role of Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps as soft power: Rough diamond or fools' gold. *African Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 7(2), 121–141.
- Cummings, M. C. (2003). *Cultural diplomacy and the United States government: A survey*. Center for Arts and Culture.
- Ebuk, L., & Bamijoko, O. (2016). The effective management of mathematics worktext: Sure remedy to students' performance in mathematics. *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(5).
- Ebuk, L. E. (2019). Teachers utilization of improvement teaching strategies for instructional delivery in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria. *Journal of Contemporary Education Research*, 14(8), 196–203.

Ebuk, L. E., & Abdullahi, A. A. (2019). Issues and prospects in the administration of e-learning in university education in 21st century Nigeria. *Journal of Resourcefulness and Distinction*, 17(1).

Ebuk, L. E., & Bankole, S. S. (2019). Principals' supervisory leadership strategies and teachers' job effectiveness in secondary schools in FCT, Abuja. *International Journal of Arts and Technology Education (IJATE)*, 11(1), 133.

Ebuk, L. E., & Abdullahi, A. A. (2023). School leaders incorporating lifelong learning programme into educational system for student's transformation: Challenges and the way forward. *International Journal of Educational Research and Library Science*, 12(8), 75–83.

Ebuk, L. E., & Chukwuemeka, E. J. (2025). E-governance and school administration: The future of educational leadership. *UAR Journal of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences*, 1(7).

Ebuk, L. E., Abdullahi, A. A., & Chukwuemeka, E. J. (2025). Assessing principals' involvement in youth ICT and entrepreneurial skill acquisition for job creation in public secondary schools, Gwagwalada, Abuja. *Nexus Global Research Journal of Multidisciplinary (NGRJM)*, 1(2), 66–75.

Gambari, A. (2009). *Rethinking Nigeria's foreign policy*. Chatam House.

Halidu, A., Ukhani, E. I., Kumapayi, S. B., & Ashimolowo, A. J. (2024). Nigeria Technical Aid Corps (TAC) and national interest, 1999–2023: An assessment. *Wukari International Studies Journal*, 8(5), 208–223. <https://wissjournals.com.ng/index.php/wiss/article/view/427>

Isana, N. O. (2021). Impact of Taiwan on industrial development in South Eastern Nigeria. *Lapai Journal of Humanities*, 12(2), 312–326.

Isana, N. O. (2023). Nigeria and Taiwan: The evolution and dynamics of a relationship; 1960–2020. *AWKA Journal of International Relations (AJIREL)*, 1(1).

Isana, N. O. (2023). Sowing seeds and knowledge as diplomatic tools: An appraisal of Taiwan's "Operation Vanguard" on agricultural development in Africa. *Lapai Journal of Humanities*, 14(2), 119–126.

Isana, N. O. (2024). Figures of endless controversies: Experiences, thoughts and forethoughts on national population censuses in Nigeria, 1962–2006. *NOUN International Journal of Political Science and International Relations (NIJPSIR)*, 1(2), 80–90.

- Isana, N. O. (2025). The impact of AI and automation policies on employee development: A thematic approach. *Current Journal of Applied Science and Technology*, 44(8), 81–97.
- Isana, N. O., Ademeso, T. S., & Maiyaki, B. (2025). Diaspora remittances and sustainable development in Nigeria: An empirical analysis, 2010–2024. *MSI Journal of Arts, Law and Justice (MSIJALJ)*, 2(11), 1–18.
- Lawal, A. (2019). *Nigeria and the world: Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps engagement in The Gambia, 1987–2012*. Africana Publishers.
- Nye, J. S., Jr., & Power, S. (2004). *The means to success in world politics*. Public Affairs.
- Ojukwu, E. C., & Enuka, C. (2020). Nigeria and African development agenda: The technical aid corps (TAC) initiative. *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*, 3(6).
- Webb, T. S. (2014). *Examining the geopolitics of aid in education: A comparison of the United States Peace Corps and the Nigeria Technical Aid Corps in Namibia* [Ed.D. dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.