

*A Tribute to
Coleman Agyepong*



Trent-in-Ghana

April 2026

In Praise and Deep Appreciation

It is hard to imagine Trent in Ghana (TIG) without your presence and enormous contributions. For thirty years you played a central role in the program, you saved many students after their often frustrating first months in Accra, you provided them with their first genuine field research training, and you inspired them to pursue further research. It was always the Trip to the North in November that newly motivated and energized students. It is no accident that the majority of TIG students conducted their placements in the North and with organizations usually recommended by Coleman.

Coleman is a master of pedagogy, blending experiential and text-based learning; he enabled students to get the most out of their placements. While not intrusive, Coleman was always there to offer guidance, solace, access to health care and assistance for countless other contingencies. I don't know how any of us, students, faculty or administrators would have held up without Coleman.

Perhaps most important to me is the friendship that I established with Coleman. From my first day in Tamale, Coleman had my back. We bonded over a paper I delivered about a subject that had impacted him personally. I was lucky to count Coleman as an intellectual interlocutor, in Ghana and Canada; I was most fortunate to enjoy Coleman and Mary's gracious hospitality and excellent cooking and am particularly privileged to have maintained an ongoing friendship with Coleman for twenty-five years. My admiration for his generosity, wisdom and kindness have no bounds.

While I am sad to see Trent in Ghana wrap up, the programme has provided hundreds of students with a profound and unique education. The one constant in Trent if Ghana since the outset has been Coleman. I wish him all the best and look forward to many more years of friendship.

Jackie Solway





Dear Coleman, Mmabia, big bro,

A watershed moment has arrived; a moment of sadness to see the end of something so special, but also a moment of reflection on almost 30 years of the Trent in Ghana program – of your amazing impact on the learning of cadre upon cadre of Ghanaian and Canadian TiG graduates. I was luckily amongst this group, in the very first batch! Since then we have become friends, colleagues, and even brothers. You were my best man at my wedding, we have written together, researched together, taught together and worked together. And it all began with this wonderful program, and the part you played in making it special.

Trent in Ghana has been so lucky to have you guide this program for so many years, and there are countless young, and now middle age folks in Ghana and Canada that, just like me from that day in Doku, owe so much to you in learning to listen to local knowledge, and find ways to open up spaces for people to be the authors of their own destiny.

Your friend and junior Mmabia,

Jon Langdon

I share here a poem I wrote at the end of my time in Ghana as a Trent student, a poem partially inspired by the Baobab tree we saw in Doku on that very first transact walk/**Jon**

The Closing Remarks of a Delinquent (Ghana, 1998)

Excuse me,

do you think we could all gather
under the Baobab

for a picture?

a picture of all that I want

to remember;

a picture of people whose faces

are already etched in my mind
as individuals

but not as a group;

let's call it a group picture then, ok?

It's just over there, the tree;

you can't quite see it from here

(the other trees are in the way)

but it's there; I believe it stands just there.

Could I just get a picture of all of you

under its shade

under its twisty

windy

deeply chaotic

branches?

under its solid

mysterious

deeply calming

trunk?

Could I just capture for a moment

the way your smiles make me smile too

the way you pose for the camera makes you feel right there

the way the wind in the branches produces ripples of light across

your faces?

Could I just ask you,

my friends

to step over there so that

when I am too far away to ask

I can pull this now tattered picture

from the envelope I keep it in

so I can again return to the moment

I said

"Excuse me,

do you think we could all gather

under the Baobab

for a picture?



Colie - I am truly honoured to call you my friend. You are a person of great integrity, committed to exposing injustice and fighting for a better world. You have imparted these values to generations of TIG students who emphasise the impact you have had on their lives. We are indeed fortunate to have had you as a colleague for 25+ years and to have benefitted from your wisdom, knowledge and legendary hospitality (together with Mary). Your legacy with TIG alumni will be long-lasting and deep. We are deeply grateful for all you have done. I know we will stay in touch. **Paul Shaffer**



My teacher, my co-worker, my mentor, and my friend for over 20 years! It'd be hard to imagine my experience in Ghana without your support and guidance. I will forever be changed by our long conversations (over the best mangoes I've ever had before or since) about community, mutual aid, unity and radical empathy. A hearty cheers to you, Coley! **Elissa Janca**

I can't believe it's been 10 years since I came to Ghana, and to Tamale specifically. I learned so much from your course. That first field work experience researching the LEAP program has stuck with me and still informs how I do participatory work now. Thank you for all that you taught me and all the many other TIG students. I wish you all the best! **Claire Perttula**

Thank you so much Coleman for your enthusiasm, your encouragement, and your support! I really appreciate your care, kindness, and mentorship. **Lauren MacLachlan**

Mr. Coleman, I want to begin by saying thank you for all your time and dedication to the TIG program. You are someone I look up too and I'm grateful for your wisdom, knowledge, laughter and care during and beyond my time during the program. Most importantly I want to share my deepest gratitude for you by sharing your family with me in Bolgatanga. Without you and the host family, my experience wouldn't be the same. I'm grateful for the family I've gained and I'll never forget that. Stay in touch Mr. Coleman and thank you from the bottom of my heart. **Paige B.**

Your mentorship and advice will always be a part of the foundation of my career in international development. Thank you for all your contributions to the TIG program, I know everyone in our batch considered you the best instructor without a doubt, and the experience would not have been the same without your involvement. **David Anderson**

Coleman, you have had such a big impact on all your students. I feel lucky to have benefited from your teaching. My experience with you in Ghana has stayed with me a long time and I'm happy to say I've applied those learnings in both life and work. Thank you for sharing your wisdom with us. **Rob Sangster-Poole**

Prof. Coleman, thank you so much for all the amazing work you did to teach and support myself and all of the other students who participated in the Trent-In-Ghana program. Your encouragement and support, not only then, but through your emails in the years following, encouraged me to complete a Masters degree and work towards a career in International Affairs. I wish you all the best and hope our paths cross again! **Andrea Korsch**



Trent-in-Ghana