

2016 Peace Corps Albania



Annual Report



Peace Corps Albania

Rr. Besnik Sykja, Godina 2,
Hyrja 1 P.O.Box 8180, Tirana, Albania

Phone: (355) 4 2365 033
email: info@al.peacecorps.gov
[www .peacecorps.gov/albania/](http://www.peacecorps.gov/albania/)
[www .facebook.com/albania.peacecorps](https://www.facebook.com/albania.peacecorps)



Contact Us:

Building Bridges of Friendship Since 1992

During 2016 volunteers from three groups served to communities across Albania



Albania Group 19



Albania Group 18



Albania Group 17



Message from Honorable Donald Lu, US Ambassador to Albania

Dear reader,

I am pleased to offer our warmest congratulations to the Peace Corps Albania Program on the occasion of its 20th anniversary. *Edhe një qind!*


The Peace Corps Program in Albania has had a proud history of partnership with the Albanian school system, with civil society organizations and now municipal governments throughout the country.

As I travel in Albania, I am constantly moved by the stories that I hear from our Peace Corps volunteers. Sometimes, these stories are about the lives of young people they have touched, but more often it is about acts of kindness and hospitality offered to them by the everyday Albanians that they meet. This is a country famous for its hospitality and the Peace Corps program has benefited from this legendary *mikpritje* for nearly a quarter of a century.

When I was a Peace Corps volunteer some 29 years ago, my favorite memories were of the people that I met. As an American, there are very few ways that you can live in other countries in small towns and villages. I firmly believe that the Peace Corps Program helps Americans to be better global citizens and understand the world in ways you can only learn by being part of a community in another country.

Thank you to all Albanians for hosting our Peace Corps volunteers. We look forward to many more years of friendship and partnership.

Sincerely,



Donald Lu



Message from Kate Becker, Peace Corps Country Director

Greetings,

Peace Corps Albania has had a significant history and proud tradition of service in Albania. I am humbled as the incoming Country Director in 2016 to join the talented Peace Corps Staff and to work side by side with the 100 individuals serving as Peace Corps Volunteers throughout this country. American Peace Corps Volunteers work hand in hand with their Albanian partners in schools, organizations, and communities across the country, as well as with host families, counterparts and kids. Together we work to have a sustainable impact and to foster individual growth and development while strengthening organizational capacities.

This year I was awed by the range, depth and breadth of the impact of the Volunteers and their Albanian Counterparts. There are countless personal relationships between Peace Corps Volunteers and the kids and adults with which they live and work that will have untold outcomes. There are the projects such as the dental clinic founded by Kevin Bawden and Viktor Gjoka in Reps, the founding of Girl Scouts in Albania by Michelle Killingsworth, Hilary Richardson, and Iva Sinani, to Kampi Pa Emer founded by Joe Deschenes and Alba Mana (Deschenes) in Librazhd and in its ninth year and going strong. The collective impact of all of the work is significant and important.

We thank all of you that give so generously of yourselves, your time and talent to support local development and make our American Volunteers feel so welcomed and at home in your country. We are proud to be Peace Corps in Albania.

In service,


Kate M. Becker

Peace Corps Mission and Goals

President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961 to foster a better understanding between and promote friendship among Americans and people of other countries. The three goals of Peace Corps:

- 1 To help the people of interested countries in meeting their needs for trained men and women.
2. To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
3. To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

Peace Corps changes lives—both the lives of people in communities around the world and the volunteer's life. Peace Corps Volunteers have demonstrated their commitment to grassroots development by working with and living amongst local people of countries served in order to achieve the agency's Mission to promote world peace and friendship.

Since 1961, over 225,000 Americans have served in the Peace Corps in 141 countries.

Since 1992, 746 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in Albania.



Peace Corps in Albania

In 1991, the Albanian government invited the US to establish a Peace Corps program. The first group of volunteers arrived in Albania in 1992 committed to teaching English in secondary schools and universities. During our first five years through 1997, 166 Peace Corps Volunteers had served throughout Albania. The US evacuated all Peace Corps volunteers in 1997 due to concerns related to the civil unrest the country was experiencing at that time.

In 2002 the Albanian government requested that the US reestablish the Peace Corps program.

Since September 2003, 580 Volunteers have come to work with local governments, NGOs, schools and health institutions in three project areas: Community and Organizational Development, Health Education and English Teaching.

The Peace Corps program is here at the invitation of the Albanian government and operates according to an agreement between the United States and Albania that recognizes the importance of developing mutually advantageous relationships and cooperation.

Projects

- Teaching English as a Foreign Language
- Community Organizational Development
- Health Education

Cross - sector proram priority

- Let girls learn

Our Partners

Peace Corps Albania operates in Albania under a memorandum of understanding with the government of Albania.

Important partners include:

- Ministry of Education and Sport
- Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Urban Development
- Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship
- United States Agency for International Development
- US Embassy and American Corners
- United Nations Albania
- United Nations Population Fund



- Planning and Local Governance Project
- Regional Directorates of Education
- Offices of Education
- Institute of Education Development
- English Language Teachers Association
- University of Tirana, English Department
- Institute of Public Health
- Directorates of Public Health
- Albanian Red Cross
- Chamber of Commerce, Vlorë
- Regional Directorate of National Culture - Gjirokastër
- Regional Directorates of State Social Services of Berat and Durrës
- 15 Municipalities including:
Kruje, Kuçovë, Berat, Fier, Shijak, Kavaje, Elbasan, Malesi e Madhe, Vau i Dejës, Ersekë, Lushnjë, Korçë, Mirditë and Roskovec;
- Partner NGOs including:
Agropuka, World Vision, Food Bank, Youth in Free Enterprise, Lerda, Regional Development Agency Korçë, Epoka e Re, Gjirokastër Foundation, ARKA Center Shkodër, Mary Ward Loreto, Youth Center Vlorë, the VET Clinic in Shkodër, World Connect, Darien Book Aid, Friends of Albania, Water Charity, Sidi Education. World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

Our Volunteers

2016 Statistics

In Total	149 Volunteers served across the country.
By Program	73: English Education 48: Community and Organizational Development 28: Health Education
By Gender	74: female 75: male
By Age	62%: between 23 to 29 years old 18%: between 30 to 39 years old 20%: between 40 to 73 years old
By U.S. State	In 2016, Volunteers represented 33 of the 50 United States with the highest numbers of Volunteers coming from: 21% from California 7% from New York 5% from Florida 5% from Texas

Our Staff



The Peace Corps Albania team consists of dedicated American and Albanian staff who support the Volunteers as they meet their service goals. Pictured above are the year-round, full-time Peace Corps Albania staff.



Every year we hire on temporary basis 20 team members, who play a critical role in the Pre-Service training of the volunteers



English Education



Write On! Contest, Lushnje, 2016

2016 Achievements

Peace Corps is excited to partner with the Ministry of Education and Sports to promote English education throughout the country.

Our volunteers are placed in education institutions as below:

- 5 in Universities
- 4 in professional schools
- 25 in High Schools
- 15 in Nine Year Schools
- 4 in United Schools

Goal 1: Improve Teaching

650 teachers

Worked side by side with Volunteers co-developing lesson plans and resources for use in class. As a result, teachers increased their English proficiency while gaining confidence and being introduced to new instructional methods and practices.

Goal 2: Increase Student Success

5648 students

demonstrated improved English proficiency based on classroom and/or extracurricular activity content (such as camps, clubs, sports, contests, debates, and shows)

Goal 3: Strengthen School and Community

470 stakeholders

increased their participation in activities that support their school or enhance student English learning, or demonstrated improved skills as a result of personal and/or professional development.



Students celebrate the Day of Languages, Orikum 2016.



Community & Organizational Development

In the community & organizational development program volunteers are working with their host agencies on such issues as urban planning, economic development, tourism development, organizational development, strategic planning, information management, community mobilization and outreach, and promotion of citizen involvement in community decision-making.



Baking/Female Entrepreneurship Program.
Kuçove, 2016



Outdoor Ambassador Shijak Club repaints benches.
Shijak, 2016

2016 Achievements

Goal 1. Organizational Development

235 Local
government
Units and Non
Governmental
Organizations:

have improved their planning processes in: vision and mission statements, strategic plan, operational plan, Monitoring & Evaluation plan, or involvement of stakeholders.

83 Non
Governmental
Organizations
municipalities,
and businesses:

have improved their internal management in areas such as: human resource policies and procedures, information sharing and transparency, time management, or participatory decision making.

301 Local
Municipalities,
Non Governmental
Organizations,
and community
groups:

have improved their project design, management processes and practices, and provide evidence of increased satisfaction on the part of citizens.

251 Non
Governmental
Organizations:

improved public image and promotions of historic, cultural and touristic areas through increased number of visitors, increased accessibility to information and services provided.

Goal 2. Civil Society Building

1614 individuals:

trained around the country in leadership.

260 individuals:

trained in employability, entrepreneurship, Information and Communication Technology in order to increase the potential of youth in the labor market.

1531 youth:

trained on volunteerism and community service oriented activities and engaged.

2500 youth:

trained in community- benefiting activities

1092 individuals:

trained in advocacy and increased the involvement of 657 youth in planning or implementing an advocacy activity or campaign for children/women/ minority and disability rights in their communities

Health Education

Volunteers are assigned to a community in which they co-teach Health Education at a 9-grade and/or high school in which they address life skills and reproductive health issues.



Community Health Fair in Pukë region, 2016



Maternal Health Trainings in Fier region, 2016

2016 Achievements

Goal 1: Sexual and Reproductive Health

1485 youth in Albania have increased knowledge and social skills to avoid early or unplanned pregnancies and maintain their reproductive health.

367 teachers, psychologists and other health care providers have improved skills to design and deliver age appropriate content on sexual and reproductive health education and promotion of healthy lifestyles.

Goal 2: Healthy Lifestyles and Life skills

5056 youth (5th to 12th grade) demonstrated improvement in one or more key life skills including positive self-esteem effective communication, ability to set goals, think critically and adopt strategies to support their emotional and physical health.

4520 youth have adopted healthy behaviors related to sexual activity, physical activity, alcohol consumption, and substance use.

2125 youth promoted life skills and healthy behaviors through after school activities peer education and leadership techniques



Cross - Sector Programming Priority

Girls Lead our World under Let Girls Learn Initiative



Girls Lead Our World camp Kuçovë, 2016

2016 Achievements

Across Albania Volunteers and Albanian Counterparts led camps designed specifically for young women to explore diverse topics such as leadership, teamwork, communication, the environment, domestic violence, sexual and reproductive health, and personal empowerment.



WASH Project/School Bathroom Refurbishment, Elbasan, 2016

Camp participants go on to lead civic engagement events and train other young women in their communities.



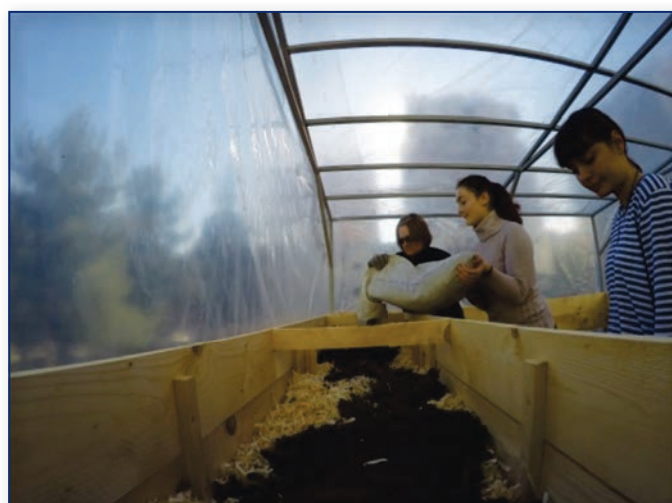
First time GLOW camp in Roskovec, Roskovec, 2016

The gender - focused cross sector priority is included in the three Peace Corps programs: English Education, Community Organizational Development, and Health Education. Let Girls Learn has provided resources for Volunteers and their counterparts as well as training opportunities.

Small Grants



Brest cancer awareness training, in Librazhd, 2016



SPA-funded Green Roof Project, in Tirana, 2016



SPA-funded Baking/Female Entrepreneurship Program, Kuçovë, 2016

2016 Achievements

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, USAID/Albania provided PC Albania with funds under SPA Participating Agency Program Agreement (PAPA) between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States Peace Corps.

The Let Girls Learn initiative and Peace Corps Partnership program also provided funding for grants.

Small Projects Assistance

\$ 40,033

7 projects

3 trainings

in funding for SPA was granted to 7 projects in 7 communities. were implemented focused on Project Design and Management were conducted for Volunteers and their Albanian counterparts.

Peace Corps Partnership Program

Over \$12,000

3 projects

was granted for PC Partnership Program were designed and implemented in Durrës, Berat and Korçë.

Let Girls Learn

Over \$25,200

12 projects

was granted for Let Girls Learn Projects for 12 projects implemented in 12 cities.

were designed and implemented.



Sharing American Culture



Fier English Corner on Halloween Day

American Traditions

Volunteers throughout the country are sharing their traditions with Albanians.

Highlight: The Fier-English Corner troop of ten kids learned about Halloween (photo) and were inspired by the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday - everyone shared what they were most thankful for and then added feathers to a drawing of big Thanksgiving turkey. The troop also played some games and made some sweet “turkeys” out of Oreo cookies, candy corn and pretzels.



Libohovë School Holds Spelling Contest

American Competitions

English Spelling Bee Competitions. Eleven Peace Corps Volunteers have introduced the American

“Spelling Bee” to 200 students in three communities across the country.

Many students also participated in a writing competition called “Write On!”

Sharing American Culture



Albania Introduced to a Minneapolis school 2016

Albanian Stories

Peace Corps Volunteers are linking classrooms and students in Albania to classrooms and students in the US.

Highlight: A Peace Corps Albania Volunteer visiting her home in Minneapolis, Minnesota took a bit of Albania with her! The Volunteer visited an Elementary School in Minneapolis and talked with the kids about Albanian traditions and celebrations, listened to traditional music, displayed the Albanian flag, examined Albanian money (everyone got a 1 Lek coin to keep), and she even taught them to circle dance!

Peace Corps Albania Initiatives



Peace Corps Albania Volunteers and their Counterparts, Spring 2016.

Initiatives to Improve Volunteer Support

All Volunteer Conference: For the first time, all of the Volunteers gathered together for an ½ day. Kevin McLaughlin, Chief of Party for the Planning Local Government Project facilitated a discussion with Bruna Kondi from Tirana, Romina Hasanaj from Librazhd and Altin Veshti from Tirana, who reflected on the personal impact of the relationships they had with Peace Corps Volunteers who served in years prior. Volunteers also heard from Tirana Mayor Erion Veliaj about his personal journey, his commitment to service and volunteerism, and his vision for the city of Tirana.

Sustainable Development: In 2016, the staff put a focus on the sustainable development and worked to deepen their impact by ensuring the collaboration of Peace Corps Volunteers with Albanian Counterparts.

Improved policies: The Peace Corps Albania Service Handbook went through a major revision 2016. This resulted from the collaboration of the Albania Volunteer Advisory Committee and Staff members. In order to make it more clear and easier to read and understand about 25% of the policies that were in the April 2015 version were dropped, decreasing the overall size of the



Volunteer and Staff Development

Peace Corps Albania Training for Peace Corps Volunteers

Peace Corps Volunteers undergo an extensive training process that begins upon arrival and continues throughout their service. In 2016, Peace Corps Volunteers participated in the following trainings:

- Orientation session - 3 days
- Pre-Service Training - 3 weeks
- In-Service Training - 2 days
- Mid Service Training - 16 hours
- Project Design Management Workshop - 3 days
- All Volunteer Conference - 1 day
- Peer Support Network training - 2 days
- Language Volunteer refresher training - 3+ days.
- Close of Service Conference - 2 days

Peace Corps Counterpart Training

In 2016, Albanian professionals who serve as Counterparts to our Volunteers participated in 10 days of training including:

- Project Design Management Training - 3 days
- Counterparts Workshops - 2 days
- Girls Scouts Training of Trainers - 4 days

Professional Development for Peace Corps Staff

In 2016, eight Peace Corps Albania Staff members participated in 328 hours of training in Washington, DC, Nepal, Cambodia, Georgia and Thailand focusing on training related to:

- Medical, health and emotional well-being; for 120 hours
- Safety and Security - 80 hours
- Cross-cultural - 40 hours
- Small grants management - 48 hours
- Gender and employability training of trainers - 40 hours



Project Design & Management Training, Tirana



Volunteer Michael delivering a presentation



Peace Corps Counterpart Training in Durrës



Peace Corps Albania staff members Training, Cambodia 2016

Girl Scouts of Albania



First Girl Scouts event in Orikum, 2016



World Association of Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from Head Office in London visit Albania, 2016

Two former Girl Scouts serving in Peace Corps Albania as Community Organizational Development volunteers, Hilary and Michelle, began researching how they could launch a successful Girl Scouts chapter in Albania. The Volunteers connected with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) and have worked to build a sustainable new initiative in Albania.

In August, Peace Corps Albania hosted three members from the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. The training was for 12 Peace Corps Volunteers and 26 counterparts was designed to train the group to launch Girl Scouts of Albania. The training focused on educating participants on the Girl Scouts philosophy including traditions, songs, and practices. The training introduced participants to the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts' Social Entrepreneurship curriculum. This curriculum will be used over the next 6 months in ten different cities all over Albania. Another great component of the training was an outdoor activity to bring about the scouting spirit. Participants learned

how to build fires and to pitch tents. At the conclusion of the training, the groups returned to their communities with action plans and resources to begin their troop activities.

15 troops were set up in 15 communities throughout Albania for girls from 10 to 14 years old. Two-hundred girls from Korca, Shkodra, Fier, Rrëshen, Peshkopi, Vlorë, Peqin, Berat and Kuçovë are actively participating.

Six Girl Scouts leaders from around the country have stepped forward to lead the Girl Scouts in Albania. Alke-ta (Keti) Lamani Dhimitri, Elsa Rafaeli, Kaltra Toska, Lusi-ana (Lusi) Mailaj, Manjola Gega, and, Marsela Saqellari are in the process of registering the organization with the Government of Albania and pursuing international membership with WAGGGS. Inspired by Peace Corps Volunteers, the Girl Scouts of Albania will be fully sustained under the leadership of passionate and talented women from across this country.

We are so proud of all of our champions!

Summer Camps & After School Clubs



Keeping the streets clean, Orikum, Vlore 2016

In 2016 Peace Corps in Albania sought to refocus Volunteer Secondary projects on low-cost, high-impact, replicable, locally-held summer camps and afterschool clubs. Beginning in Pre-Service Training for group 19 Volunteers, the Tirana Office began the strategy of “Life Skills and Leadership Camps to Clubs” as the Let Girls Learn anchor activity, integrating components into each project framework.

This year 46 sites across Albania have held camps with over 400 youth, on a wide range of activities including: Outdoor Ambassador, Technovation Challenge, English club, GLOW club, Book club, Model United Nations, Kampi pa Emer, Team building activities, Helping with English, Young Artist Club, Bike Club and Find the Meaning Club, Running Club, Debate Club, Outdoor Ambassadors and the Creative and Critical Thinking for Young Adults Club.

Ripples of Impact

Five years of “Health Fairs”

In 2012 the Health Volunteers of Peace Corps Albania, along with the Ministry of Health started Health Fairs that five years later are still occurring annually. To date, Health fairs are organized in 51 communities.

In cooperation with the local authorities such as the Departments of Public Health and schools across the country, Peace Corps Volunteers are part of the organizing committees that set up health fairs at town centers with individual booths focusing on specific health related issues. Health personnel from nearby areas usually join the Health Fair.

Booths included in the Fairs cover topics on Alcohol, Drugs, and Smoking; Road Safety; Sexual Transmitted Infections; Human Trafficking; Gender Equality and Gender Violence; Mental Health; Reproductive Health and Family Planning; Tuberculosis; Nutrition; BMI-Body Mass Index and Hypertension, and Oral Hygiene. Representatives at the Health Fair also provide children with free eye and vision care.

The communities show much interest and are eager to hear recommendations, advice and tips from health professionals. Health Fairs are organized in many towns of Albania including communities without Peace Corps Volunteers. This is a good sign of our program sustainability. Since the first time the health fair was initiated by Peace Corps Volunteers, it has now become a yearly tradition.



Health Fair, Puka, 2016



Ripples of Impact

Eight years of Kampi Pa Emer “Camp No Name”

Camp No Name came to be in 2008 when then Peace Corps volunteer Joseph Deschenes along with Librazhd resident Alba Mana decided to have a week long camp for the Roma children living around Librazhd’s train station.

Kampi Pa Emer began with four counselors and 20 kids and has grown to a camp for 70 kids managed by 12 counselors! The camp promotes “tolerance and personal growth in all campers and their families regardless of ethnicity.”

Each year Kampi Pa Emer aims to create an inclusive environment where Roma and Albanian children can learn and grow together. The days are filled with laughter and smiles as children practice yoga, Frisbee, and arts and crafts. At the end of each day children would all come

together to dance to traditional Albanian songs.

In recent years Kampi Pa Emer has also begun to focus on dental hygiene of its campers with the support of Zamir Alliu, a local dentist. After breakfast all campers join together to brush their teeth and learn new tips on how to maintain a bright smile.

Kampi Pa Emer, was a good omen for Joseph and Alba as they later got married.

Two young girls who started as campers engaging with Kampi Pa Emer every summer have grown up to be counselors and are the “big sisters” of their community. These two young women are part of the reason the camp remains alive and well every year.

Full of fun, sun, and shiny teeth, Kampi may now be over until next summer, but its spirit of positivism remains throughout the year!



Camp “No Name”, Librazhd, 2016

Website Developed for Delvinë



Delvinë is a small town located in southern Albania, 16 kilometers northeast of Saranda. The picturesque community however is often only passed through by tourists and locals on their way to the beaches of Saranda and Ksamil or the archeological site of Butrint.

In the spring of 2016, a new website was launched to bring more traffic to Delvinë to enjoy its rich history and natural beauty. In preparation for the summer tourist boom in nearby Saranda, the local Peace Corps Volunteer and local counterpart created the website that

highlights the many options for visiting historic monuments and hiking in Delvine.

The English Education Volunteer Catherine Tuttle and her counterpart Marjo Kanina had developed the project idea in a January 2016 Peace Corps' Project Design Management Conference, which teaches valuable project management skills. The PDM Training is funded by USAID in Albania.

To view the website, click here: <http://delvine.my-free.website>



Spotlight Story: Empowering through Hi-Tech

Tirana girls compete in Technovation Challenge



In Albania, girls are usually known for being well-performing students but IT education is still a challenge. Some Albanian girls have smartphones and many have Facebook accounts but access to resources in many parts of the country is difficult.

This is the first year Peace Corps Volunteers have introduced Technovation and technology clubs to Albanian girls.

For 12 weeks, two teams of Tirana girls, worked with a Peace Corps Volunteer and a Volunteer from the US Embassy participating in the Technovation Challenge, an international competition that encourages girls to learn more about technology. During this 12-week period, the girls worked on developing smartphone applications and created a business plan describing how they would like to launch their application as a business.

The five-member high school team developed an app that provides mental health resources for teenagers

across Albania. The app provides information in Albanian about common mental health issues and provides contact information and directions for mental health resources available around Albania.

The middle school team, consisting of four members, looked at tourism and Albania's beaches. Using data from the Ministry of the Environment, they created an app that lets users search for beaches near different Albanian cities and provides water quality information along with details about the amenities available at each beach.

All of the 50 girls from 10 teams in ten communities throughout the country reported that it was a good learning experience. Some of them indicated they would be interested in pursuing technology related work and that it was empowering to understand more about how technology works.

Spotlight Story: Health Education Volunteers

Veterinary project in Shkodër



Peace Corps volunteer Jessica Skelton coordinated and a vet clinic with dozens of community and Peace Corps Volunteers. Some Volunteers traveled the city of Shkoder picking up stray animals and transporting them to the temporary clinic. Other Volunteers managed the operation within the building as the vets worked in several make-shift operating rooms. In 2016, 217 cats and dogs were vaccinated and neutered by six visiting Vets from the US and other countries through the World Vet

Organization in Shkoder.

Planning for next year, Jessica is focused on the sustainability of the project. She contacted the Dean of Faculty of Medical Veterinary with the Agricultural University of Tirana to learn how the clinic could be a requirement (a practicum) for the students within the Veterinary Sciences department at the University. Initial plans were set up in 2016 to build on the success in 2017.



Spotlight Story: A school based Activity Success

Write On! Competition held in Albania



Write On Students in Belsh



Write On Students in Bicaj, Kukës



Write On Students in Pukë



Write On Students in Lushnje

This spring, approximately 1,000 students ranging from 6th grade to university in 23 communities across Albania competed in Write On! Albania's creative writing competition. The competition took place after weeks of students working with their local English teachers and Peace Corps Volunteers in writing clubs and workshops.

Write On! is an international Peace Corps youth development initiative, which works to promote critical thinking and creativity in English classrooms. The competition

stresses "thinking outside the box" over grammar, and in this year's competition, students were asked to write responses to various prompts that forced them to consider life from a different perspective, including from the viewpoint of the opposite gender. These talented students showed their creativity by responding to specially chosen prompts for their learning level.

Congratulations for all the students who participated and to the English teachers and Volunteers who inspire them daily!

Spotlight Story: Building Community Cohesion



Water project in Vehçan is one of the 10 projects, implemented throughout the Country in 2016



The village of Vehçan in central Albania is a remote village with few resources. This tiny community sits perched atop a hill above a steep and treacherous dirt road. The village itself has only a school and two tiny coffee shops.

After a visit to the school Kyle Moyes' attention was immediately drawn to the state of the bathrooms. There was no running water for children to wash their hands. The single defunct Turkish toilet was broken and unusable. Children, did not have a place to use the bathroom at their school and were forced to use the outdoors.

It took time to make substantial progress. As the saying goes in Albania, "avash avash" (slowly, slowly), and such was the nature of this project. The Volunteer spent several afternoons going to village to have coffee with the director and teachers at the school. Getting to know the needs and personalities of the community was the most important aspect of this project.

Four months of community meetings led by Kyle and his counterpart, Shpetim, provided opportunities to learn the concerns of the community. Kyle together with support from parents, local nurses, local Red Cross, Di-

rectorate of Public Health Librazhd and the community organized a health fair which focused on: maintaining a clean bathroom, hand washing, teeth brushing, and eating healthy.

With the inspiration following the Health Fair, the community worked to apply for funds to build a new bathroom. A grant was awarded, the new bathroom supplies were instantly purchased and after two weeks the entire reconstruction was finished. Installed were: new pipes to transport clean running water, brand new toilets, doors, tiles, sinks, and mirrors. The new bathrooms are now the nicest rooms in the school and give young girls and boys the opportunities they never had before. Students can now wash their hands and girls no longer have to miss several days of school every month because of the indoor bathroom and hygienic conditions.

The community is incredibly thankful to Water Charity, Peace Corps and Let Girls Learn for supporting this opportunity. This was a true work of community collaboration that has now empowered a new generation of young girls and boys.



Volunteers & staff who worked in Albania during 2016

Group 17 Volunteers

Allyson Stanford
Annsleigh Carter
Benjamin Dempe
Bonnie Scott
Charles McGee
Charles Peterson
Colby Kiener
Corbin Kappler
David Turner
Emily Fesette
Erich Klothén
Ezra Monasebian
Gene Kim
Graham Anderson
Jaclyn Boroff
Jefferson Speer
Jermanne Perry
Jessica Asmus
Jon Breen
Jonathan Ayres
Karla Yates
Katie Littlejohn
Kelsey Draughton
Kevin Bawden
Kristopher Parker
Laura Hobbs
Lauren Alpert
Lucy Hamer
Martin Fankhanel
Meredith Porter
Michael Keevican
Monika Dunbar
Olivia Grajeda
Paulina Flores
Quinn Hargitai
Sho Tsubakiyama
Stacey Weidemann
Stephen Coryelle
Teresa Anderson
Thomas Pyke
William Dunbar
Zachary Blehm

Group 18 Volunteers

Ada Tran
Adam Poeschl
Adrian Horner
Alexandra Schwier
Alison Bregstein
Alison Lozano
Alyssa Harn
Barbara Richardson
Bonnie Rico
Brian Bond
Catherine Tuttle
Christopher Vasquez
Cristin Bleess
Daniel Volkman
Debra Thomas
Diane Coon
Erik Clark
Francis Gavalier
Gabriel Naranjo
Grace Beah
Hilary Richardson
Jacob Farris
Jacqueline Labrador
Jesse Corfield
Jessica Williams
Joanne Luongo
John Jaques
Joseph Parks
Julianne Scherer
Justin VanLeeuwen
Kyle Moyer
Md Ashique
Megan Hamilton
Michael Pugh
Michael Winans
Michelle Killingsworth
Miles Killingsworth
Mitesh Patel
Nathan Boles
Nicole Martin
Paul Shawkat
Pier Vernaza Varner
Polly Smith
Randolph Kent
Ronald Lozano
Sarah Senior
Silke Martin
Suzanne Weiss
Thomas Cartaxo
Walter Johnson
William Burchell
William Hunter
William Martin
Zachary James

Group 19 Volunteers

Alexandria Luu
Amy Jacobi
Angela Battisti
Anthony Baker
Barbara Grant
Berta Schweinberger
Brenna Moran
Brittney Mancini
Christine Torres
Christopher Klimovitz
Daniel Morton
Dara Schmitt
Dylan Saucedo
Elizabeth Quimby
Eric Williams
Gillian Richter
Jay Cederholm
Jessica Skelton
Jill Pearson
John Clark
Jordan Arvayo
Joseph Otterbine
Judith Glenn
Julia Gross
Julian Griffée
Julio Lamas
Keith Jacobi
Kelly Ancharski
Keyania Campbell
Lily Madeira
Margret Chu
Marilyn Matt
Mary Surgi
Megan Duffy
Melanie Tafejian
Michael McLemore
Michael Richter
Michelle Johnson
Miguel Ramos
Mike Bailey
Oliver Powell
Olivia Hanning
Rachel Kennedy
Ranya Agcaoili
Raymond Edmondson
Sarah Oswald
Steven Hurtado
Timothy Carroll
Tina Racha
Vincenzo Tanza
Zachary Burdeau
Zygmunt Czykieta

Peace Corps Albania Full Time Staff Members

Agim Dyrmishi
Alsida Myrtaj
Anida Tulo
Arben Cako
Arben Loci
Ardiana Brajha
Besa Arapi
Cale Wagner
Darina Kaltani
Diana Djaloshi
Dritan Gjoshi
Dritan Kamberi
Elsona Cupi
Gentian Leka
Ilir Memlikaj
Ilir Ziu
Iris Dollia
Iva Sinani
Jason Kane
Kate Becker
Kenneth Johnson
Marjeta Zavalani
Marsela Loci
Mira Luca
Mirela Tahiraj
Monika Mukja
Poleta Luka
Rudina Lubonja
Ylli Cupi

Peace Corps Albania Temporary Staff Members

Ali Gjiriti
Altina Peshkatari
Ana Harja
Besmira Rrumbullaku
Brunilda Peqini
Diamanta Vito
Elona Kafexhiu (Pajova)
Elvana Stambolli
Erion Kumuria
Ervin Bebeti
Esmeralda Dogani
Imelda Celibashi
Ina Tollumi
Ledion Veshi
Marsida Rrupulli
Ornela Bardhi
Vjollca Merdani
Ymer Leksi
Zamir Mero
Zerina Zeneli