



**Peace
Corps**
MACEDONIA



Annual Report 2017



Peace Corps

Director's Message



Mark Hannafin
Country Director
Peace Corps Macedonia
(RPCV Kyrgyzstan, 1993-1995)

"For every young American who participates in the Peace Corps - who works in a foreign land - will know that he or she is sharing in the great common task of bringing to man that decent way of life which is the foundation of freedom and a condition of peace."

— John F. Kennedy

Peace Corps Macedonia is entering its 22nd year having accomplished some very impressive milestones in 2017. The 79 women and men who served during the course of 2017 brought skills, knowledge, education, and experience to their service from the United States. They pledged to work in their communities on clubs, in schools, with municipalities, and for NGOs as Volunteers. They became steeped in linguistic and cultural knowhow of Macedonia.

We re-focused Peace Corps on working with the most marginalized areas of society: special needs populations, rural communities, and young people. 25% of the Volunteers worked in rural villages. Volunteers maintained 79 clubs in their communities. 6200 children and young people were taught by Peace Corps Volunteers. We are also working towards making our partnerships more sustainable, for example The Model United Nations program, first started with Peace Corps Volunteers years ago, was officially transferred to our nationwide youth network partner, SEGA. Additionally each year a third-year Volunteer is assigned to the YMCA Bitola to assist with the coordination of the GLOW and YMLP camps for youth.

We are extremely proud to once again work closely with the Government of Macedonia in the areas of Special Needs, TEFL education, and community development. Our partnerships with the Ministries of Labor and Social Policy, Education and Science, and Local Self-Government are taking off with joint action plans, site visits, and consultative meetings on grants and site identification for future Volunteers. Each day we are grateful for the hospitality that the Government, civil society, municipalities, and each and every one of the remarkable families that hosts a Volunteer.

I hope you enjoy learning about the work we are doing at Peace Corps Macedonia. We can all do amazing things together for the future of Macedonia.

Peace Corps Overview

In 1961, United States President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps to promote world peace and friendship by challenging Americans to live and work in developing countries. More than fifty-five years have passed since the Peace Corps was established, but the mission and role of the Peace Corps has withstood the test of time. The three goals of the Peace Corps remain as important today as they were at our founding:



Goal 1: To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.

Goal 2: To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.

Goal 3: To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

Since 1961, more than 220,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 141 countries, leaving a legacy of shared values, improved relations, and sustainable community-based development. In 2017, more than 7,300 Americans volunteered in 60 countries worldwide.

Peace Corps in Macedonia



Peace Corps established its program in Macedonia in 1996, following an invitation by the Macedonian government. Since then, more than 750 Volunteers have worked with schools, local municipalities, civil society organizations, and public institutions to meet the diverse needs of communities throughout the country. As an acknowledgment of the importance of Peace Corps in improving the Macedonia-American friendship and of the commitment and dedication of Volunteers in the Macedonia society, the President of Macedonia

previously awarded Peace Corps with the Order of Merit in 2011.

In 2017, a total of 79 Volunteers served in one of two Peace Corps Macedonia projects, English Education and Community Development, with a special focus on youth and special needs.

While serving in Macedonia, Volunteers immerse in local cultures, learn the local languages, and take an active part in social life. Upon arrival in Macedonia, Volunteers undergo extensive language, cultural, and technical training. To further their integration in the local communities, Volunteers live with local host families, both during the initial training and for between six to 24 months of their service. Peace Corps implements its program in Macedonia in close collaboration with a variety of national and local stakeholders active in the fields of education, community development, youth, and special needs.

PC Macedonia has active memoranda of understanding with the following national partners: Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Local Self Government, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Agency for Youth and Sports, Red Cross of the Republic of Macedonia, National Youth Council of Macedonia and Coalition of Youth Organizations SEGA.





PEACE CORPS AT A GLANCE 2017

Peace Corps

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5

"Around the World" Summer Camps organized in rural communities

7

Memoranda of Understanding with stakeholders

10

Volunteers who served in organizations and institutions for people with special needs

22

Years of Peace Corps in Macedonia

35

Primary and high schools where Volunteers served

36

Community projects provided through the Peace Corps small grant program

43

Municipalities where Volunteers lived and served

79

Peace Corps Volunteers served in Macedonia

83

Teachers from primary and high Schools Volunteer worked with

92

Civil society organizations that Volunteers worked with

151

Teachers from primary and high Schools Volunteers collaborated with

150

Individuals with special needs Volunteers worked with

500

Youth actively engaged in YMLP and GLOW clubs in their communities

6200

Students from primary and high schools taught by Volunteers in classroom setting

10000

Individuals, mostly youth, participating in activities for community engagement, service learning and life skills

Community Development Project

The Community Development (CD) project in Macedonia supports Macedonian communities and organizations in effectively managing sustainable community development. In 2017, Peace Corps Volunteers worked closely with civil society organizations (CSOs), local municipalities and public institutions throughout the country.

In 2017, Peace Corps in Macedonia further strengthened its efforts in the areas of youth work and special needs, while also promoting grass-roots community development. In the field of youth, Volunteers co-organized activities and events in collaboration with grass-roots youth organizations and local youth councils. Peace Corps Macedonia expanded its involvement in the field of special needs, partnering with daily centers, schools for students with special needs, and CSOs working with people with disabilities.

Working with local partners, the CD project goals are to improve the contribution of organizations and community groups to community-identified needs; increase community engagement of youth and develop their skills as individuals and active citizens; and strengthen the capacities of organizations to improve quality of life for people with disabilities.

Community Development Volunteers and their local counterparts prioritized the following activities in 2017:

- Supporting organizations in community needs assessment and building strategic partnerships for addressing them
- Improving organizations' staff capacities in areas relevant for their organizational development
- Training community members in community engagement and life skills, inclusion and rising awareness of people with disabilities
- Co-facilitating and co-organizing activities for life skills development of young people, including YMLP and GLOB Clubs and Camps, Civil Leadership Pro-grams, Model of United Nations and Spelling Bees



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Projects of Peace Corps

English Education Project

Peace Corps Macedonia implements the English Education Development program in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science in Macedonia, as well as agencies and organizations dedicated to improving educational opportunities. In 2017, Volunteers worked in primary and secondary public schools around the country, with an emphasis on rural and marginalized communities. Volunteers assisted English teachers in the classroom by introducing student-centered classroom methodologies, new approaches in classroom management and assisting with multilevel classrooms.



The English Education program goals are to: improve teaching in the schools, increase student success in English language learning, and improve the school community. At the request of the Ministry of Education and Science, Peace Corps provided a series of trainings to local teachers on how to work with students with special needs in English classrooms.

Peace Corps Volunteers and their local teacher counterparts prioritized these activities in 2017:

- Co-teaching with the English teachers in the classroom
- Introducing student-centered teaching methodologies in the classroom
- Developing resources for the classroom;
- Supporting teachers in developing Special Needs Methodology
- Teaching English outside of classroom, in clubs and other extracurricular activities
- Assisting schools with project activities

Success Story

I volunteer in a special needs classroom that has students with varying disabilities who are in third to ninth grade. Since arriving at site, my counterpart and I have worked together to find what the special needs classroom would benefit from most while I am a Volunteer. Due to having such a variety of learners in one classroom my counterpart and I decided that I would focus on creating educational resources for the classroom.



Throughout the year that I have been in the classroom I have worked with my counterpart to learn what subjects are normally covered for different grade levels. By knowing this I have been able to create folders for specific subjects, such as Macedonian language, that contain additional supplementary resources for my counterpart to use. These supplementary resources have included handwriting sheets, educational games suited to subjects, and math practice sheets to name a few. I have also started to create resources for students with autism.

The resources I have created for the classroom have been made from easily accessible materials in Macedonia. A lot of the resources are made from recyclable materials such as toilet paper rolls, cardboard boxes, coffee cans, old books and even containers for medicine. This has helped use recognize that materials we normally would have thrown away can be upcycled into resources for our classroom.

Besides creating educational resources, my counterpart and I have also started implementing differentiated instruction in the classroom. Creating differentiated educational resources to teach and assess has improved the learning outcomes of students. My counterpart has said the educational and differentiated resources have made teaching and learning easier because she can individualize a topic to a student's particular learning style with resources already available.

Success Story

Dana's school in Shtip in eastern Macedonia has celebrations during class and with the local community for Macedonian and Eastern Orthodox holidays like Easter or April 1. Despite the school's ethnic makeup and prominent Roma population, not enough attention is paid to Romani or Muslim holidays. Because of this, Dana and her counterpart Gordana wanted to provide an opportunity for their Roma students to celebrate their culture.



They organized a week of lessons and extracurricular activities which focused on International Romani Day on April 8. Fourth and fifth grade students shared their culture with their peers through their music and symbols, while Dana and Gordana taught an English lesson around the Romani flag, using the symbols and colors to practice describing in English. At the end of the week, all the fourth and fifth graders were invited to a celebration, where the students made the Romani flag out of recycled materials, played games, listened to music and ate chocolate at the local American Corner. At the end of the week, their flag was displayed in the school, and the students were encouraged to celebrate and be thankful for their Roma friends on April 8 in recognition of International Romani Day.



"It was a great event for our students to be able to learn from each other and discuss about traditional Romani customs and events. I was so pleased to see the coexistence and teamwork of our students." said Gordana.

Training and Direction for Families of Children with Special Needs



Noemi and her counterpart organized a series of workshops for parents of children with special needs and created a manual for parents in both Macedonian and Albanian languages. Building on the services that Lastovica already provided, the organization also added monthly consultation hours and trainings for parents.

The workshops were organized as part of a two-day weekend training called “Help, Support, and Directions for Families of Children with Special Needs.” During the events, parents received information on the social, educational, and health care benefits that they are entitled to in the Republic of Macedonia. The workshops were held in Gostivar, Shtip, and Skopje and they were free of charge for up to 50 parents of children with special needs from the surrounding communities.

To be inclusive of all of the major language groups in Macedonia, the trainings were held in both Macedonian and Albanian and the manuals were also provided in both languages. A copy of the manual was given to all of the parents who attended the workshops, while an electronic version of the manuals was uploaded to Lastovica’s webpage and shared through social media.

The workshops sparked lively discussions and a lot of fruitful dialogue between special educators and parents. The project proved so successful that parents in Skopje have continued meeting on a monthly basis for resource and information sharing.

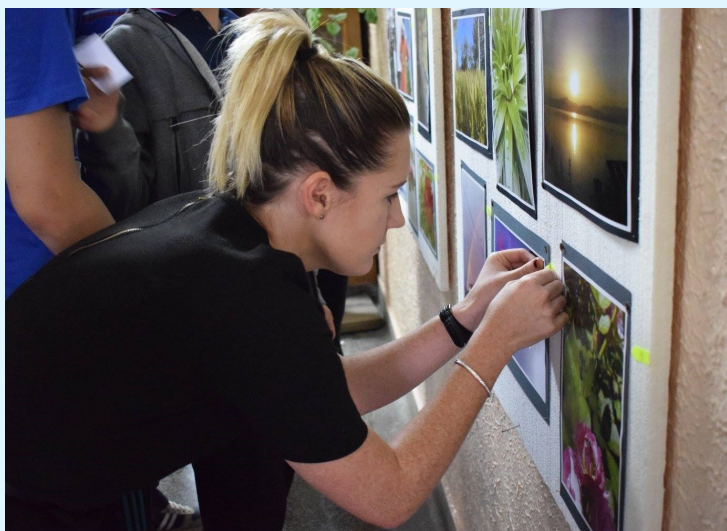


Women in Journalism, Media and Communications

The goal of this grant was to encourage young women to pursue jobs in journalism, media, and communications. Through weekly meetings, trainings, and the purchase of equipment, young women in the eastern Macedonian town of Vinica gained hands-on experience in print and broadcast journalism.

As a result of this project, young women in Vinica gained valuable and marketable skills in photography, digital

communications, and media. In addition to learning how to create and sustain a newspaper club, they learned how to operate DSLR camera equipment and acquired basic editing and web design skills. They also received leadership training and explored the work of famous female photographers.



Overall, the community was very receptive to this project. The school photography exhibition featuring photographs taken by the students was covered by the local news and participants received a lot of positive feedback from community members.



Success Story



Since he arrived in Kriva Palanka in December 2016, PCV Kyle has been leading and developing a public health and after school program for over 200 young people, boys and girls aged 6-17. The “athletes” (as they’re called as members of Team Kriva Palanka project), participated in weekly athletic trainings designed to help them grow as healthy, active citizens and community leaders who are prepared to develop themselves and their community. In sports terms, Team Kriva Palanka prepares young

people to win in sports and in life by providing them with the skills and experience to do so.

Team Kriva Palanka gives its athletes a platform to actively participate in their mental and physical development. In addition to weekly athletic trainings that develop athleticism, coordination and hip health, all athletes have participated in skill development trainings in topics such as basic personal health and hygiene, teamwork and adversity, to more advanced concepts such as women’s empowerment through sports, democracy, and environmentalism. When presented through sports, these skills and concepts are proven to speed up learning processes and their application to other aspects of the athletes’ lives.

Team Kriva Palanka earned support from the Peace Corps Macedonia Small Grants Program in January 2018. The project further expanded the ongoing work and aimed at improving physical health of participating athletes by 50% through measurable testing and monitoring of hip mobility, flexibility, stability, strength and explosiveness; as well as at preparing local sports club coaches to take over the entire program by June 1. All trainings were filmed by sports club coaches, and posted on YouTube and Facebook.

Funding was used to purchase basic athletic training and sports equipment and to organize two female development camps led by Macedonian professional athletes (karate and basketball), which included 100 female athletes ages 6-17.



Testimonial by Besnik Selimi – Counterpart of Volunteer

The collaboration between our Peace Corps Volunteer and the community has been a very great experience. There are numerous benefits from working with a Peace Corps Volunteer. Some of those include listening to and communicating with a native English speaker, discovering a different perspective on teaching and working with students, and learning about a different culture and educational system. Additionally, the community outside of school benefits from Peace Corps Volunteers who engage with the local youth on various activities such as English courses and sports clubs.



Through my experience of working with a PC Volunteer I have noticed an increase in students' grades in English language, as well as more focus and concentration during lessons. The students collaborate more and feel more confident to move around the classroom, answer questions and find solutions. Using a student-centered approach I discovered that students are much more interested in interactive activities and games on grammar and communication than in teacher centered approach.

Through the use of IT technology, our PC volunteer Laura has given presentations about American culture and holidays. In this way, students learned about how holidays are celebrated in another country. The National Essay Competition and Spelling Bee provided additional insights into English language and motivated our students to compete with students from other schools.

In conclusion, working with Peace Corps Volunteer isn't just about teaching English language together, but also about giving students hope and motivation to make a change by making better choices in life. Peace Corps truly brings hope and peace.

Testimonial by Snezhana Saramandova – counterpart of Volunteer

Have you ever wondered why people volunteer? What's their benefit? Why would they leave their work, homes and families and travel all the way from America to Macedonia to volunteer in some NGO or municipality? My answer to all of these questions is: the rewarding experiences a person gets from the work while being able to enjoy the results.

Apollonia Foundation is a small but active non-profit organization that operates in the past 10 years in South-East Macedonia. Our organization has had the pleasure of collaborating with a number of Peace Corps volunteers in the past 9 years.



Some of the projects that we worked on with our PCVs in the past include: field work with children in environmental program called Nature Day, plastic recycling, setting-up a sensory room for children with special needs, opening volunteer resource center for youth, writing and managing grants, initiating a vocational program for paper recycling at daily center for children with special needs, capacity building activities with staff and other community members, movie nights for youth, English classes, clean ups, environmental conferences, and many other events.

But the main benefit from this collaboration cannot be measured with the projects that Volunteers started. I have personally received friends for life, and I have gained great satisfaction from the joined work, and from my personal and professional growth.



Thanks to the work with volunteers my English got better, I became more organized, and I learned a lot about project design and management, grant writing, researching and networking, and all of that in the best way possible – through learning by doing. Each of the volunteers we have worked with has left a personal mark, a fingerprint, and has had a significant role in shaping and developing Apollonia Foundation.

500

Youth engaged in YMLP and GLOW clubs



The mission of the GLOW and YMLP Youth Development Program is to develop the potential found in the young women and men of Macedonia by providing them with the skills and knowledge necessary to become active leaders in their communities. This is realized through experiential education at 2 camps and many clubs around Macedonia that celebrate diversity, build academic and social competencies, and promote English language literacy. One focus of the GLOW and YMLP Youth Development Program is building a passion for volunteering and service in local youth.

At camp, campers learned how to serve their communities through two new camp events: the Service Simulation, and the camp service project. Through these events campers build their awareness of ways they can volunteer in their communities, learn how to identify community needs, and learn how to leverage resources to meet those community needs.

After the end of Camp GLOW and YMLP Camp comes the best part of the year – forming GLOW and YMLP clubs and implementing community service projects in home communities of camp alumni. The GLOW and YMLP Youth Fund by YMCA Bitola provides opportunities for GLOW and YMLP Clubs throughout the country to implement skills they've learned in service. In the first ever round of grant applications, seven GLOW and YMLP clubs were awarded the grant based on their project proposals, written by youth leaders, in the areas of environment, civic engagement and the arts. Each of the projects were completed for under 100 USD.

One example of a youth fund service project was the one implemented by the Ohrid GLOW/YMLP Club, which held an Electronics Recycling Event at SOSU Ss. Cyril and Methodius High School. With the help of the school director and staff, and a Skopje-based recycling company, the Club collected a lot of IT equipment and sent it to Skopje for environmentally safe recycling. Their club leader Filip, who attended YMLP camp in 2017 said "What I liked the most about our service project was the fact that we inspired a large amount of people in our school to volunteer and help us properly get rid of (recycle) all of our broken electronic gear. After our project, the members felt very accomplished, relieved and happy because we made a lot of free space now when all of the broken electronics were gone. The help from the school, the students, the recycling team from Skopje and the members made me very proud and happy."

10000

Individuals participating in community activities

Traveling camps

In towns and villages across Macedonia last summer, students received the opportunity to travel “around the world” during the 2017 Around the World camps. In both July and August, Peace Corps Volunteers coordinated and hosted this program as a series of five week-long day camps at their sites. Local students, primarily from ages 8 to 12, attended these popular summer activities with a lot of enthusiasm. Camps were hosted at schools in villages with populations as small as 250 and towns as large as 36,000, in communities consisting of Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Roma, and other ethnic groups.



Each day at camp, campers learned about the cultures and traditions of a different country in a student-centered environment. The countries chosen for the 2017 camps were India, Peru, the United States, Egypt, and New Zealand. Activity-based lessons included international sports, games, art, and music. The goals of the Around the World day camps were to improve English language skills and to increase cultural awareness of the campers and their community. The first goal was accomplished by use of English-language instruction supplemented by local languages as needed. Increase of awareness of cultural diversity was seen in camper’s curiosity and demonstrated knowledge of new places and aspects of their cultures.

Around the World camps were an excellent opportunity to engage young people in educational settings which were unlike traditional classrooms. Overall, PCVs and local collaborators noted how camps increased the personal and social growth of campers in how they interacted with their peers throughout the period of camp. Campers got involved with the fun and physical activity with daily planned sports, such as learning the traditional Māori “haka” dance and war cry for New Zealand. They gained a sense of achievement and creative self-expression through singing and completion of crafts, such as decorating a “sistrum” - a kind of ancient Egyptian instrument. Campers achieved positive social interactions through group work, song and sport in a structured environment, with engaging participation facilitated through camp counselors.

10000

Individuals participating in community activities

TechUp Program

The TechUP program was created by a Peace Corps Volunteer in the western city of Gostivar, but for the last two academic semesters it has been offered in Macedonia's second largest city, Bitola. TechUP is a hands-on capacity building program which provides high school students curriculum and practicum in computer programming.

In the beginner class in Bitola, 10 students learned the basics of HTML and CSS through interactive instruction and practice in a computer lab (provided by the American Corner Bitola). In the Intermediate course, 6 students gained real world experience by creating basic websites for local community organizations such as a forum for single parents and a group dedicated to providing specialized education materials to teachers.

The group met after students' regular high school classes and also on Saturdays. The fact that students were dedicated to giving up their valuable free time is a testament to the curriculum's ability to keep their attention. The group has learned not only programming skills, but also how to work in a team, how to work with clients' needs, and the responsibility of delivering a finished product. While a PCV brought the program to Bitola, the important aspect is that the program functioned with very little support from him. TechUP is taught by a local instructor, to local young people, and provides free websites (created during the Intermediate class) for local organizations. This creates ownership and sustainability so the program may survive after the volunteer's service has ended.



10000

Individuals participating in community activities

MUN transfer to SEGA

As part of an ongoing programmatic effort to localize Peace Corps legacy projects to indigenous, sustainable organizations, in September 2017, Peace Corps Macedonia officially transferred Macedonia Model United Nations (MMUN) to a local partner, the Coalition of Youth Organizations (SEGA) a nation-wide network of NGOs working on youth development. In the past six years, SEGA has worked with Peace Corps Volunteers to implement the MMUN project on a national level, reaching out to over 500 youth to be trained and exercise the Model UN simulation, building skills in research,



debate, public speaking, problem-solving and English language. With each MMUN event, Peace Corps Volunteers were also increasing SEGA's staff know-how and capacity to implement the project independently in programming and logistics. In 2017, with assistance from a Peace Corps Volunteer, SEGA devised a way to raise funds for the event through a "pay to play" fee structure, thus eliminating the need for external grants and providing financial sustainability.



The value of the MMUN is so high to students, parents and teachers that it attracted over 70 participants nationwide despite requiring payment. As part of the handover to sustainability, the Peace Corps Volunteer together with colleagues at SEGA created a Model UN Manual, which serves as a programmatic, administrative and logistical guideline for starting and implementing similar Model UN projects in other countries.



PEACE CORPS in Macedonia

in 2017



79

Peace Corps
Volunteers

92

Civil Society
Organization
Partners



500



Youth in YMLP and
GLOW Clubs



Volunteers
Extended Their
Service for a
Third Year

10,000



Participants in
Community Activities



35

Primary and High Schools
Where Volunteers Served



73

Clubs Led by Volunteers
Around Macedonia

22

Years in
Macedonia

Municipalities Where PC Small
Grants Were Implemented

26



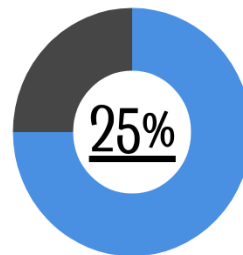
\$73,165

Provided to Community
Projects Through the PC
Small Grants Program

6,200

Students Taught by
Volunteers

Serving Peace Corps
Volunteers per Region



Of All
Volunteers
Served in
Rural Areas

72%

Of All Volunteers Chose to Live
with Their Host Families
During Their Entire Service

