



**Peace
Corps**

NORTH MACEDONIA

Annual Report

2018





Peace Corps

Director's Message



Mark Hannafin
Country Director
Peace Corps North 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

2018 was a year of change, innovation and creating new partnerships as we continue to support Volunteers in the country. New Director of Programming and Training David Root joined us from Peace Corps headquarters and has invigorated the programming and training team. Director of Management and Operations Bina Sheladia joined us from Armenia and previous positions in headquarters as a desk officer and placement officer. In September, we welcomed the Mak 23 group of trainees and 48 new Volunteers were sworn-in for service.

Our partnership with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy brought Volunteers together with the Minister and other officials to share best practices of life in daily centers leading to new policy insights. We co-sponsored a Mayor's Forum with the Ministry of Local Government to highlight Volunteers' work with municipalities. 48 mayors attended and more applied for a Volunteer than in recent history. We invited Ministry of Education officials to visit an innovative Volunteer high school resource room and community service project. And we forged new partnerships with the Bureau for Development of Education, the National Examination Center and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office. A memorandum of understanding was signed with Rotary International to bring Volunteers and the 20 Rotary Clubs in North Macedonia together, and partnerships with the Red Cross and Scouts Association are blossoming and opening up new opportunities for sites and Volunteer engagement.

The stories and numbers inside this report paint a more vivid picture of what we are all accomplishing together. I hope you enjoy learning about the work we are doing at Peace Corps North Macedonia and how we all can contribute to the future of peace and friendship between our nations.

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-eight 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 235,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 141 countries, leaving a legacy of shared values, improved relations, and sustainable community-based development. In 2018, more than 7,300 Americans volunteered in 60 countries worldwide.

Peace Corps in North Macedonia

Peace Corps established its program in North Macedonia in 1996, following an invitation by the Government of North Macedonia. Since then, more than 800 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 North Macedonia-American friendship and of the commitment and dedication of Volunteers in the North Macedonia society, the President of North Macedonia previously awarded Peace Corps with the Order of Merit in 2011.



Group: MAK 1, 1996

In 2018 a total of 87 Volunteers served in one of two Peace Corps North Macedonia projects, English Education and Community Development, with a focus on youth and special needs.

While serving in North Macedonia, Volunteers immerse in local cultures, learn the local languages, and take an active part in social life. Upon arrival in North 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 North Macedonia in close collaboration with a variety of national and local stakeholders active in the fields of education, community development, youth and special needs.



In 2018 PC North Macedonia had 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, National Youth Council, Coalition of Youth Organizations SEGA and the Association of Rotary Clubs.

Group: MAK 23, 2018



PEACE CORPS AT A GLANCE 2018

Peace Corps

2

Projects of Peace Corps in North Macedonia: English Education and Community Development

51

Primary and high schools where Volunteers served

12

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

87

Peace Corps Volunteers served in North Macedonia

13

“Around the World” Summer Camps organized in rural communities

126

Civil society organizations that Volunteers worked with

23

Years of Peace Corps in North Macedonia

134

Teachers from primary and high Schools Volunteers collaborated with

39

Community projects provided through the Peace Corps small grant program

383

Individuals with special needs Volunteers worked with

45

Municipalities where Volunteers lived and served

460

Participants in “Around the World” Summer Camps

46

Teachers that worked with Volunteers on developing methodology for working with students with special needs

7635

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

48

Mayors attended the Peace Corps North Macedonia Mayors Forum

10881

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

2

Projects of Peace Corps

Community Development Project

The Community Development (CD) project in North Macedonia supports the communities and organizations of North Macedonia in effectively managing sustainable community development. In 2018, Peace Corps Volunteers worked closely with civil society organizations (CSOs), local municipalities and public institutions throughout the country.

Working with local partners, the CD project goals are to improve the contribution of organizations and community groups to address 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.

In 2018, Peace Corps in North Macedonia expanded its partnership network by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Association of Rotary Clubs. In addition, PC deepened its collaboration with the Association of Scouts strengthening further the areas of youth development, life skills development of young people; as well as, promotion of volunteering in local communities.



North Macedonia Community Development Volunteers and their local counterparts prioritized the following activities in 2018:

- 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 GLOW Clubs and Camps, Civil Leadership Programs, Model United Nations, and Spelling Bees.

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Projects of Peace Corps

Community Development Project — Special Needs

Peace Corps North Macedonia supports social inclusion efforts across the country, by focusing its work on improving the capacity of organizations/schools to improve the quality of life of individuals with special needs; and by strengthening the life skills and level of social inclusion for individuals with special needs. Volunteers work in collaboration with local staff Special educators and teachers to help develop trainings, tools, materials for working with beneficiaries with special needs including children and adults. Many of Volunteers support the local community project activities on raising awareness for inclusion of special needs population in the community.



Special Education Volunteers work in public schools, special schools, state daily centers for persons with special needs and Civil Society Organization run daily centers.

With support of local staff, Special Education Volunteers focused on the following activities:

- Development of lesson plans and resources for teaching;
- Co-teaching with special educators;
- Creating new teaching activities for life and vocational skills for people with special needs;
- Training staff on vocation skills, behavior management, assessment tools, working methodologies and resource development;
- Facilitating creative workshops with beneficiaries and staff.

Volunteers support work with children and adults with special needs in their worksites and along with their counterparts support community awareness activities.

2

Projects of Peace Corps

English Education Project

Peace Corps North Macedonia implements the English Education Development program in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science of North Macedonia, the Bureau for Developing Education and the National Examination Centre, as well as agencies and organizations dedicated to improving educational opportunities. In 2018, 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 and the Bureau for Development of Education, 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 the following activities:

- 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

23

Years of Peace Corps in North Macedonia

Visit by Peace Corps Director Jody Olsen

Peace Corps North Macedonia experienced many positive changes and events in 2018. As we enter our 23rd year, it gives us time to reflect on all the accomplishments and partnerships we have made. In April last year, we welcomed the new Peace Corps Director Jody Olsen and 17 Country Directors from this region to Skopje for an annual conference on sharing best practices. The conference was highlighted by visits to Volunteers in villages and towns where they are actively teaching English, working with special needs populations and building youth leadership through community development.



The trip to North Macedonia was Director Olsen's first official trip to a Peace Corps post in her official capacity. As Director she oversees 61 country programs and more than 6500 Volunteers in those countries working to bring the United States closer to the world. During the week, Director Olsen had a meeting with Prime Minister Zoran Zaev who gave thanks to Peace Corps for working in North Macedonia since 1996. He personally hosted several Volunteers while Mayor of Strumica and he recalled for Director Olsen his appreciation for the Volunteers' work in his former municipality and the friendships he had made with them over the years. Director Olsen visited several Volunteers throughout the countryside in cities and in villages such as

PCV Austin in Gorno Lipkovic outside of Radovich and PCV Emily in Rostushe inside beautiful Mavrovo park. She was highly impressed by the dedication of the Peace Corps staff and Volunteers. She commented that the Volunteers are integrating well, learning the language, making friends and making an impact. Once she returned back to Washington, Director Olsen referred to her trip to North Macedonia in several speeches about the resilience and effectiveness of Volunteers in the field. It was a great honor to have Director Olsen choose North Macedonia as her first trip overseas.

Enriching Lives through Intervention, Activity, and Inclusion - PCV Lauren Giles



The goal of this grant was to improve the quality of life and provide recreational opportunities for beneficiaries with special needs at a government run daily center. By purchasing equipment and supplies, children and adults were given access to music, art, and sports, as well as improved instruction and intervention.

This project is still on-going, but the results are observed daily through increased social skills from playing cooperative games and activities such as table tennis, football, boccia, and card games, and improved life and functional skills from the morning intervention binders and regular one-on-one instruction. The students have embraced this project, and show it when they are able to independently get, or ask for, the materials they need for an activity, or bring their intervention box to the teacher to let them know they're ready to work!

The community has been very supportive and receptive to this project, with a successful training for teenagers who volunteer at the center through the Red Cross, as well as them helping with art projects, games, and helping to create intervention materials.



Developing Student-Centered Activities in an English Resource Room - PCV Alexa Chamberlin

As part of this project, my counterparts and I created an English resource classroom by remodeling an empty storage closet. The goal of this project was to develop student-centered resources while creating a space that was engaging for the students. The teachers received an interactive board, books, and supplies for the classroom.

I facilitated two workshops, which included learning how to use the new technology and develop student-centered resources. My counterparts began developing games, group work projects, crafts to teach grammar and laminating the materials to use for future years. They developed resources that created an environment where the



students were leading the projects rather than the teachers. Throughout the school year, we started to see a change in our students. The students came to class more motivated, eager to participate and had better behavior in class. We believe this is due to the new activities and teaching the students with a hands-on approach.

My counterpart, Marina, facilitated the final workshop with the staff. She taught the staff how to develop their own student-centered resources and to develop their own smart board lessons. After the workshop, the staff began to use the new classroom and develop their own activities. The teachers believe this grant was successful and because of this, we are developing a second grant to create a more sustainable classroom library for the students.

Marina said this about the new classroom, “The English resource room was something new for the school, students and for my teaching. This was a positive change in the way I teach. I can rely on the resources we have in the classroom, which helped make my teaching more engaging and better to reach my students. I know we made a difference when I see my students coming in the classroom excited to see what they are going to learn. The students now have the opportunity to learn through technology, games and student-centered activities that were introduced by our Volunteer, Alexa.

Creating “A Better Tomorrow, Today” - PCV David Crand



I arrived in Resen in December 2018 as one of the 18 Community Development Volunteers working across the country. I was one of the few Volunteers that year who piloted the new Peace Corps approach of being a ‘Community-Based’ Volunteer, which means working with two or more primary worksites. My initial worksites composed of the local Red Cross branch in Resen and a youth development NGO ‘Akcija Plus’. Working with my counterparts, my initial task was to find out about the needs of local young people in Resen and assist my counterparts in the youth development efforts within the community.

Networking and creating new partnerships became another important aspect of my work. In spring of 2018, we began implementing “A Better Tomorrow, Today”, project aimed at raising awareness of diabetes and its prevention through healthy dietary and lifestyle choices. The project consists of a cookbook, written in the three locally spoken languages, a series of workshops and cooking classes, and a food festival. Approximately 100 youth and senior citizens attended the workshops and cooking classes, and cookbooks were distributed to over 500 community members. This project not only addresses an vital public health issue, but has brought together a wide array of community stakeholders, including two NGOs, Red Cross Resen and Action Plus Resen; along with, doctors, nutritionists, primary school teachers, and the Association of Pensioners. The project is a great example of how connecting and joining forces, the entire community can help raise awareness of an important issue and improve the lives of its citizens.

In addition to my two primary worksites, I am also active at the secondary school and a primary school in Resen, where I worked with teachers to develop the idea of a ‘Prespa Youth Club’. Together with the Red Cross youth volunteers, I helped organize the first Spelling Bee local qualifier at the primary school in the village of Podmocani. In my community I am assisting at the local Daily Center and I also have weekly English conversation hours with interested community members. The people I work with seem to appreciate my positive approach and are inspired to create a better tomorrow, today.

Mayors attended the PC North Macedonia Mayors Forum

In March 2018, Peace Corps North Macedonia organized the first Mayors Forum, an event that brought together around 50 Mayors and other local government representatives, as part of its promotion and site identification strategy. During the Mayors' Forum, Peace Corps North Macedonia shared its successes from the past period and officially launched the Call for Applications.



At the event, Mayors had an opportunity to hear from, and meet Volunteers, working in municipalities, schools and in the area of special needs. They also heard testimonies from Mayors and counterparts who work with Peace Corps Volunteers across the country.



During this forum, Peace Corps North Macedonia Country Director, Mark Hannafin, and US Ambassador, Jess Baily, gave an overview of the Peace Corps legacy in North Macedonia up to date. The Ministry of Local Self-Government, as one of Peace Corps North Macedonia's national partners, provided valuable support in organizing the Forum and Minister Suhejl Fazliu addressed the

participants expressing the Ministry's dedication to partner with Peace Corps and to be part of the cross-cultural and professional exchange between the two countries, especially at the local level. "Your experience is invaluable for us. We need your enthusiasm. Only with sharing of knowledge, experience, friendship and collaboration we can build joined values and to collaborate, be tolerant, be humane and above all responsible citizens who love their communities and their fellow citizens, regardless of their ethnic, religious, language or other type of belonging." – Minister Fazliu

Success Story - PCV Andrew Gardner

During my service, I've had a wonderful time teaching, interacting with, and getting to know the students at my school. The children of every grade come to school every day with an unfailingly bright outlook and excitement for learning that is truly uplifting. While our school does not have much, my counterpart and I have had a great deal of success making the most of limited supplies and materials available in our school during our lessons. While we have incorporated things such as song & dance, film, scavenger hunts, and card-making into our lessons, one thing our students consistently did not have access to was English literature. Each student has an English textbook, but that was it; our school has a small library, but it only contains Macedonian literature. No English children books for story time with younger grades, no English Young Adult Novels for our older kids. The only English our students had available to them was what they found in their textbooks and their phones, meaning they were missing out on a whole other world of English, a world that exists within books.



My counterpart and I, recognizing how much this was hampering our students, decided to do something about it. After a few months of writing various international book-aid organizations, we received two large book donations at our school in Jablanica. Once we obtained the books we built a bookcase, utilizing donated materials from the village, and a great deal of help from two brothers from the community. The bookcase was completed after a week of hard work and then placed in a pre-selected classroom in the school. Once we delivered the bookcase, our small, yet well-rounded English library was launched. Our students, utilizing a basic check-in, check-out system, have over 120 English books available to them on a daily basis now.

The library is open at set times each day, and our students are always eagerly waiting for their chance to return their finished book to take a new one. Students are encouraged to write a short review of what they've read, or deliver a short spoken synopsis if they prefer. This small selection of English books has allowed students the opportunity to practice their English outside of school independently, is broadening their horizons, and also helping develop and nurture their curiosity and creativity. Through teamwork, positive community collaboration, and a little hard work my counterpart and I have managed to bring a little more English into our student's lives.

PC Response Volunteer Brenda Foust

Besides the regular Peace Corps Volunteers that served in North Macedonia, in 2018 there was one Response Volunteer. The Peace Corps Response Program is a special initiative of the Peace Corps that helps meet host countries' demand for technical assistance in targeted areas of need. Response Volunteers have specialized skills and significant professional experience, and therefore act as technical consultants to provide incisive input and support on short-term high-impact projects.



Peace Corps North Macedonia recruited PC Response Volunteer Brenda Foust to serve as an Assessment Specialist at the National Examination Center (NEC) in North Macedonia,

focusing on specific improvements to the English Language Subject Examination of the State Matura. Brenda's engagement at the NEC was one year.

Brenda and her counterpart from NEC, Trajanka Avramoska, made significant work in the project for upgrading the quality of the English Language Exam of the Macedonian State Matura. Part of their work involved revising the exam and exam catalogue, strengthening the quality of exam content, preparation for a listening skills test, scoring and results analysis, proposed changes to processes and policies.



Testimonial by Blazhe Josifovski – counterpart of Volunteer

I have had the pleasure of working with a Peace Corps Volunteer over the past two years and it has been a truly collaborative relationship. Cameron Bertel arrived at our organization “Ajde Makedonija” with a determination and willingness to put the true Peace Corps spirit of service into action. The collaboration we have had has led to amazing success in developing and implementing a program diverting surplus food from landfills to be redistributed to food insecure citizens. Through Cameron’s dedication, we were able to secure a Peace Corps SPA grant to fund our food surplus redistribution web platform.



This platform has enabled Ajde Makedonija to reach thousands of food insecure people in Macedonia and provide them with over 65 tons of nutritious surplus foods. Through my time working with Cameron and Peace Corps, I have been inspired to embrace the optimistic and entrepreneurial spirit present in Peace Corps Volunteers such as Cameron. Experiences with him in the office have demonstrated to me the immense benefit of cross-cultural exchange that Peace Corps can offer. The lessons that Cameron and I have taught each other have left lasting impressions and will be carried on throughout our future careers. I am extremely appreciative for this experience.

Testimonial by Natasha Avramovska – Counterpart of Volunteer

Over the last 2 years, Dedo Iljo Malesevski, a primary school in Berovo with over 700 students, 107 employees and 7 satellite schools, has been fortunate in having hosted a Peace Corps TEFL Volunteer. Our lovely Volunteer has made such an amazing contribution to our staff, her work on the English Library Project, and her contributions made to eTwinning, HIPPO and SID have been invaluable. With her participation and cooperation with our teachers, we have grown as a progressive and international school.



Gabriela has been a boon to our students, with whom she works both in and out of the classroom. Her work with GLOW and YMLP (youth clubs/camps) has been great for our students. Allowing them to express and nurture their creativity, interests and knowledge, as well as be a positive influence on the community.

We are so happy that she has decided to prolong her stay for an extra year; we can't wait to see what is next on the

horizon and what more we can achieve. We look forward to our continued relationship with Peace Corps.

Success Story - PCV Erin Finnell

I work at a daily center that serves about twenty individuals with a range of disabilities. For many of my beneficiaries, going to the daily center is their only opportunity to receive some mental and social stimulation. For this reason, my counterpart and I are always thinking of new activities that will make their time at the daily center more worthwhile and enjoyable.

Recently, we have introduced cooking as an activity to do with the beneficiaries about twice a month. This has been a great way to incorporate Peace Corps' goals while also staying focused on mentally and socially stimulating the beneficiaries. My counterpart and I take the time to meet and discuss which recipe we will be following – it is always either a traditional Macedonian recipe or a food that is traditionally American.



The beneficiaries then sit around a table and take turns adding ingredients, mixing, and sneaking a few tastes. Now that cooking is becoming a more consistent activity, I am working to include all my beneficiaries regardless of their needs. This has become a way for me to model methods of inclusion and differentiation to my counterpart, as well as emphasizing the point that all people with disabilities deserve to be included.

Overall, cooking with my beneficiaries and my counterpart has been an opportunity to share something that I love doing. It has led to a mutual sharing of cultures, teaching the beneficiaries about order, numbers, and sharing, learning new ways to include everyone, and it ends with enjoying something delicious!



Peace
Corps

NORTH MACEDONIA

2018 in Numbers

87 Peace Corps Volunteers
served in North Macedonia



10,881

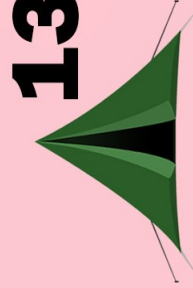
Students taught
by Volunteers



51

Schools where
volunteers served

Volunteers worked with
134
Teachers



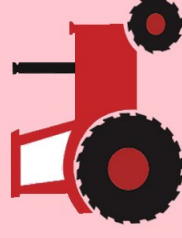
13 Around the World
Summer Camps
460
Participants

\$41,310

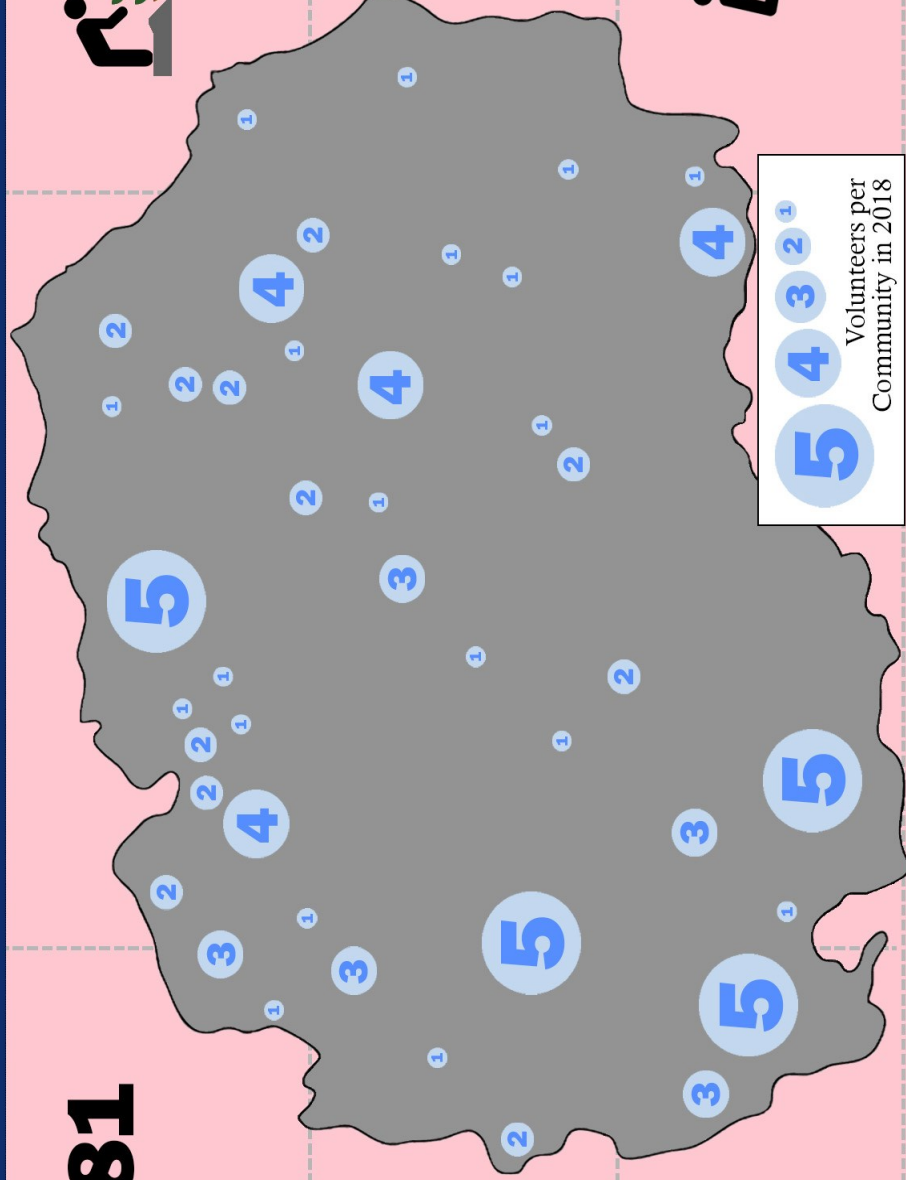
Raised as
Community
Contribution

\$57,029

Provided by
Peace Corps



23%
of Volunteers
living in rural
communities



7,635

Individuals participating
in community activities



383

Individuals with
Special Needs
Volunteers
worked with



126

Civil Society
Organizations
Volunteers
worked with