



**Peace
Corps**
ALBANIA AND
MONTENEGRO

Annual Report

Reflections on Partnerships and
Impact in 2025

One Post, Two Countries:
A year of service and cooperation



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Dear Friends,

It is a privilege to recognize the outstanding work of Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro in advancing partnership, education, and community development. Peace Corps Volunteers have served in communities throughout Montenegro, working side by side with local institutions and teachers to strengthen capacity and promote opportunity.

Through their dedication, Volunteers help promote American English, support teacher training, and expand access to quality education for young people. Their presence deepens mutual understanding between our two countries and strengthens the people-to-people ties that remain at the heart of our bilateral relationship.

As Montenegro advances on its Euro-Atlantic path, the Peace Corps remains a trusted partner for all citizens of Montenegro. I commend the Volunteers, staff, and host families whose commitment to service reflects the very best of our shared values.

Congratulations to Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro on the 2025 Annual Report!

Sincerely, Michael C. Keays

Chargé d’Affaires

Message from U.S. Chargé d’Affaires, to Montenegro, Michael Keays



Dear Friends,

In 2026, as we celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Peace Corps and the 250th anniversary of the United States, Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro stands as a vibrant example of the enduring partnership between our nations. Peace Corps volunteers personify the fundamental truth that America is a country whose people are generous and whose leaders prioritize Americans' core interests while working with other nations.

In 2025, our Volunteers worked hand-in-hand with local communities, schools, and civil society organizations by driving progress, sparking innovation, and sharing values. The stories in this report, whether in classrooms, youth centers, or community projects, showcase the real, lasting change that comes from working together.

As Albania continues to strengthen its democratic institutions, Peace Corps remains at the heart of these efforts, empowering individuals and communities from the ground up. These milestones remind us of the power of service and the shared values that unite us. I am deeply grateful to our dedicated Volunteers, staff, and Albanian partners for their unwavering commitment. Together, we are not just achieving goals. We are shaping a brighter future.

Thank you for your partnership,

Nancy VanHorn
Chargé d'Affaires

Message from U.S. Chargé d'Affaires, to Albania Nancy VanHorn



Greetings From Country Director: Megan Wilson

Dear Friends,

2025 has been a year of partnership and impact. Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro is unique in its ability to leverage the strengths and the cooperation in both host countries. We are not two separate posts—we are one: **Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro. One post, two countries.**

This annual report highlights the impact we have achieved together. Yet the most powerful part of this impact lies in the connections forged between our Volunteers and the communities they serve. These relationships reflect our shared commitment to service and collaboration as we tackle challenges together.

In Albania and Montenegro, Peace Corps Volunteers serve as vital links, fostering local solutions to development needs while building lasting friendships. They work alongside community members to improve welfare and health, adapt to changing environments, and promote grassroots development. This year, our Volunteers continued the Peace Corps tradition of focusing on education and youth empowerment—creating leadership opportunities and expanding prospects for the next generation of changemakers. Our work spans **Organizational Development, English Education, Health and Youth Well-being in Albania, and English Education in Montenegro.**

Message From Country Director

In 2025, we proudly celebrated the **second post-pandemic cohort completing two years of service**. I especially acknowledge the dedication of our Volunteers in Montenegro, whose efforts have laid a strong foundation for future service and ensured that our legacy of partnership continues to thrive. We were also thrilled to see **four Volunteers from the first post-pandemic cohort complete their extended service**. Their decision to stay longer reflects the transformative impact of their experiences and the power of service.

The impact of **our Volunteers in Montenegro** continues to be significant. During 2025, 12 Peace Corps Volunteers worked closely with local youth, and teachers organizing extracurricular English clubs, tutoring sessions, and camps that engaged 382 students. In their classrooms, 2,486 students demonstrated measurable achievement in English language skills, reinforcing education as a cornerstone of the Peace Corps' mission. As global connectivity grows, the demand for English proficiency remains high, and our Volunteers are helping meet that need. We also collaborate with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Innovation to identify Volunteer sites and ensure our efforts align with the priorities and needs of the host country.

Our impact in Albania during 2025 reflects the strength of collaboration and commitment to community development. In the area of organizational development, 27 Volunteers partnered with local counterparts to support 78 community organizations, co-organizing 397 activities that fostered civic engagement and leadership, reaching 3,190 participants across communities. In youth health and well-being, 27 Volunteers worked alongside 270 school staff members to implement innovative, health and life skills curricula, engaging 4,355 participants through individual and small group trainings. Our English education program also thrived, with 29 Volunteers empowering 303 teachers and co-teaching English to 6,597 students in classrooms, clubs, camps, and extracurricular activities, while 1,351 youth participated in enriching development activities. These efforts underscore our shared commitment to education, health, and civic engagement as pillars of sustainable progress in Albania.



Message From Country Director



I extend heartfelt gratitude to the community partners, teachers, parents, students, and host families who collaborated with our Volunteers in 2025. This work would not have been possible without the support of our host governments—particularly the **Ministry of Education in Albania** and the **Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation in Montenegro**. Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro remains committed to being responsive and accountable to community partners, strengthening youth engagement, and maintaining the critical infrastructure necessary to support Volunteer service in health, security, and technical assistance.

In 2025, we welcomed a new Director of Programming and Training, **James Ayers**, who brings a wealth of development experience and regional knowledge, including time as a Peace Corps Volunteer. We also wish the very best to colleagues who moved or will move on to continue their journey elsewhere, including **Melanie Ingalls** and **Marie Aughenbaugh**. Your Service is valued and appreciated!

Since November 2020, I have had the honor and privilege of serving as Country Director for this unique two-country post. These years have been filled with transition, transformation, challenge, and inspiration. Over 100 Volunteers have returned to service post-COVID, working in rural communities across Albania and Montenegro with the support of many.

Message From Country Director

Together, we have accomplished so much, and I am deeply proud of our Volunteers, their communities, our staff, and our partners.

In 2026, I will transition out of the Country Director role, confident that I leave Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro in a strong position—with dedicated staff, inspiring volunteers, and committed communities and partners. I look forward to seeing all that lies ahead.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our shared mission to bring world peace and friendship closer to reality.

With Deep Appreciation,



Megan Wilson
Country Director



Peace Corps Mission and Goals

In 1961, U.S. President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps to foster a better understanding between, and to promote friendship among, Americans and people of other countries.

The Peace Corps mission is to promote world peace and friendship by fulfilling three goals:

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—the lives of people in communities around the world and the lives of Volunteers.

- More than 240,000 Americans have served in the Peace Corps in 142 countries.



Peace Corps in Albania

In 1991, the Albanian government invited the Peace Corps to establish a program in the country. The first group of Volunteers arrived in 1992 to spend two years teaching English in secondary schools and universities. From 1993 to 1996, four additional groups of Volunteers arrived to teach English, support the development of small businesses, or support the management of agriculture and forests. Peace Corps closed its Albania program in 1997 due to political unrest and concerns about the safety of Volunteers.

The Albanian government invited Peace Corps to re-establish a program in 2002 and participated in an assessment conducted by Peace Corps. Based on this assessment, Peace Corps staff returned in March 2003 to set up an office and re-establish programs. Volunteers work with local governments, NGOs, schools, and health institutions in three project areas:

- English Education
- Youth Health & Well-being
- Organizational Development

The Peace Corps program in Albania operates according to an agreement between the United States and Albania that recognizes the importance of developing mutually advantageous relationships and cooperation. Throughout the years, Peace Corps has deeply appreciated the cooperation and warmth of the Albanian people. This partnership is vital for fostering educational and developmental initiatives and for building friendships and understanding between cultures. Since September 1992, over 1000 Volunteers have served in Albania.



Peace Corps in Montenegro

In 2019, the Peace Corps signed a Bilateral Agreement with the Government of Montenegro, paving the way for a program in the country. The first group of Volunteer Trainees arrived in January 2020 to begin their 10-week Pre-Service Training. Unfortunately, this group was evacuated in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, before they could reach their host communities.

After extensive preparations, Volunteers returned to Montenegro in the fall of 2022. Following a successful training period, they began their service in Montenegrin communities for the first time. This return represented a significant triumph over the challenges faced in the preceding two and a half years, revitalizing the Peace Corps mission and underscoring a strong commitment to cross-cultural exchange and community development. Since the return to service three groups of volunteers have served in Montenegrin communities. In December 2025, there were 11 volunteers serving.

The Peace Corps program in Montenegro is established at the invitation of the Montenegrin government and operates under an agreement that emphasizes the importance of fostering mutually beneficial relationships and cooperation. We look forward to welcoming a new group of Volunteers in January 2026 and are excited to expand our efforts into new communities, further enriching our impact and strengthening our partnership.

Service in 2025

- 79 Peace Corps Volunteers in:
 - 11 Montenegro
 - 68 Albania
- 4 sectors:
 - English Education in Albania
 - English Education in Montenegro
 - Health and Youth Well-being in Albania
 - Organizational Development in Albania
- Continuing to partner with schools, municipalities, ministries, and NGOs—and shifting to assignments in smaller communities that have fewer resources.
- Increased emphasis on youth health and well-being issues, English acquisition and strengthening schools, tourism development, and project sustainability through local buy-in and ownership.





Peace Corps
ALBANIA AND
MONTENEGRO





Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro (PCAM): A Unique Two-Country Post



Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro operates as a fully integrated post serving two distinct countries under one unified structure. Volunteers train together during Pre-Service Training (PST), In-Service Training (IST), and Mid-Service Training (MST), and complete their service at the Completion of Service (COS) conference. This integrated model ensures consistency in preparation and support while fostering collaboration across borders.

Although all staff provide support to Volunteers in both countries, teams tailor approaches to meet the unique cultural, linguistic, and educational contexts of Albania and Montenegro. Each country maintains separate program agreements and communication channels, reflecting their distinct identities while benefiting from shared resources and expertise.



Two country post model benefits explained



An Innovative Model



This model delivers efficiency and impact. By combining operations, Peace Corps maximizes resources, reduces costs, and achieves a higher Volunteer-to-staff ratio. The result: greater reach and deeper engagement in communities across both nations.

PCAM Supports in-need communities

Our approach to Volunteer placement is need-based and guided by the Peace Corps philosophy: to serve communities that lack resources or are underserved. The goal is to equip local members with skills that foster sustainable development, such as project design and management, youth leadership, life skills, English language proficiency, and well-being.

Additionally, Peace Corps explicitly aligns its programs with the national priorities of its host countries. All initiatives are developed in collaboration with host-country partners and local communities to ensure that Volunteer efforts address locally defined needs and create lasting impact.



Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro operates throughout both countries, placing Volunteers in schools, municipalities, NGOs, and other local government institutions. In 2025, PCAM expanded its outreach by engaging with several new small communities. Using a “hub-and-spoke” model, Volunteers serving in smaller towns or villages periodically collaborate on regional initiatives, leveraging resources available in larger neighboring areas.



Volunteer training throughout their service

Peace Corps Volunteers in Albania and Montenegro begin their service with a comprehensive Orientation and Pre-Service Training (PST), typically lasting 10–12 weeks. This immersive program—led by host-country staff and current Volunteers—builds technical expertise, cultural competency, and language skills. Trainees live with host families, participate in community-based projects, and must meet competency benchmarks in areas such as health, safety, intercultural communication, and local language proficiency before being sworn in.

Training continues throughout their two-year commitment. Volunteers return from their sites for in-service workshops, conferences, and online courses available through platforms like LearningSpace. These sessions deepen language ability, promote well-being, reinforce safety protocols, and enhance technical skills—all while enabling Volunteers to share field experiences and learn from peers.

A cornerstone of our training model is the Project Design and Management curriculum, which brings together Volunteers and community members to collaboratively develop and implement sustainable initiatives. These participatory workshops build local capacity and ensure projects align with community needs, reinforcing mutual ownership and lasting impact.



Volunteers live with host families

Living with Host Families: A Gateway to Integration

Peace Corps Volunteers in Albania and Montenegro typically live with host families during **pre-service training** and for at least **six months** in their assigned communities. In some cases, Volunteers transition to independent housing later in their service. While independent living offers flexibility, living with host families is highly valued because it accelerates cultural integration and language learning, and provides a deeper understanding of local traditions and daily life.

Host families offer Volunteers a unique window into community norms, family roles, and social customs—insights that are essential for effective service. This arrangement fosters trust and connection, helping Volunteers build relationships beyond their workplace and become part of the community. It also enhances safety and provides a strong support system during the adjustment period. For Volunteers, host families are more than just a place to stay—they are cultural guides and sources of personal support. Sharing meals, participating in family activities, and observing traditions firsthand allow Volunteers to experience the richness of Albanian and Montenegrin life in ways that independent housing cannot fully replicate. These relationships often become lifelong bonds, reinforcing the Peace Corps mission of promoting cross-cultural understanding.



A Volunteer with Host Mother

2025 Goals by Sector

Health Education

- 1. Increase the knowledge and skills of children and youth** to improve their health and well-being through health and life skills education.
- 2. Increase the capacity of school-based staff** to provide health and life skills education.
- 3. Develop and increase collaboration** with service providers and community partners to effectively support health and well-being of children and youth.

Organizational Development

- 1. Strengthen the capacity** of organizations to improve the services to their constituents.
- 2. Strengthen the capacity** of organizations to offer professional development and civic engagement opportunities for community members.

English Education

- 1. Increase teacher English proficiency** and capacity to use general English and gender-equitable teaching practices.
- 2. Increase student achievement** in English and strengthen life skills.
- 3. Increase the ability of community members** to support students' access to learning.

PCAM Projects: Organizational Development (OD)

Project Goal: Empowered Albanian communities, organizations, and individuals will effectively manage community development.

PCAM's Organizational Development project seeks to strengthen organizational capacity at the local level by assigning Volunteers to work in governmental agencies and NGOs. Volunteers promote asset-based approaches to community development, civil society engagement, good governance and networking among stakeholders.

Success Story: Kukës Half Marathon

Together with his organization, *Center for Youth Progress* in Kukës, PCV Benjamin organized the first-ever Half Marathon in the city. The event aimed to showcase the cultural, touristic, and historical values of the Kukës region and position this region on Albania's sports tourism map.

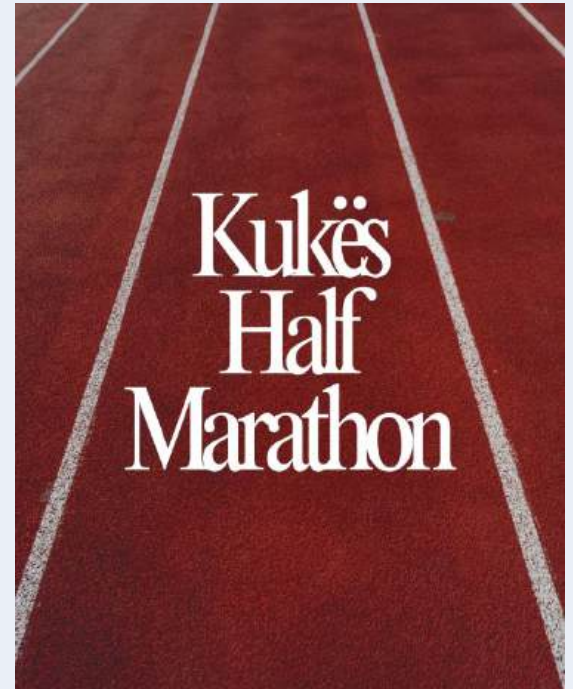
The Half Marathon also promoted healthy living and brought together youth not only from Kukës but from other regions across Albania. Its motto was:

"Every step is history, every runner is an inspiration."

More than 70 volunteers, led by PCV Benjamin and his counterparts, contributed to organizing this landmark event. Due to its success, the Half Marathon is planned to become an annual tradition.

Impact

This initiative fostered a sustainable and inclusive community model, enhancing tourism potential, strengthening community bonds, and improving the quality of life for Kukës residents.



- 27** Volunteers served in this sector in 2025
- 78** Community Organizations supported by Volunteers to expand opportunities for civic engagement
- 3,190** Participants in activities co-organized by Volunteers and their counterparts
- 397** Activities implemented by OD Volunteers and Counterparts

PCAM Project: Youth Health and well-being

Project Goal: School children and youth are informed and empowered to lead a healthy life and effectively transition to productive and engaged adults.

By placing Volunteers *in schools to work alongside Albanian teachers and community counterparts*, the Health Education project seeks to increase the knowledge and skills of children and youth to improve their health and well-being, increase the capacity of school-based staff to provide health and life skills education, and increase collaboration with service providers and community partners.

Impact : By the end of the school year, Health Education PCVs contributed improving knowledge and skills of 1,056 children, youth and community members on healthy eating, importance of physical activity and environmental awareness. 3,378 children, youth and community members demonstrated improvement of health and well-being through health education.

Success Story: Creating a dynamic, inclusive and educational environment and integrating technology effectively into teaching and learning practices. - From Classical to Modern Learning "Get Digitized" project. PCV Adrell and her counterpart trained teachers and students by incorporating technology in lessons for all subjects which will further enhance the learning experience for students.

Activities

Through the PDM training organized by PCAM, Adrell and her Counterparts worked together to finalize the project proposal for the technology room. Their work in establishing the technology room of the school and supporting teachers has sparked renewed enthusiasm among students, many of whom are now exploring digital skills for the first time. These contributions are helping to build stronger foundations for learning and a brighter future across the communities we serve.



PCAM Project: English Education in Albania

Project Goal: Develop teaching and learning capacities in English language in Albanian students and teachers.

The English Education program in Albania aims to enhance English language proficiency among students and teachers, strengthen educators' skills in both general pedagogy and English instruction, and empower school community members to actively support student learning.

Model European Union – Developing Leadership and Language Skills

In May 2025, English Education Volunteers, in collaboration with Albanian teachers, organized the Model European Union (MEU) Final Conference following several months of preparation by MEU clubs across the country.

The event engaged 106 students from 11 schools, representing 14 EU member states and a Press Corps, in three simulated EU committee debates. Participants discussed priority EU issues, negotiated resolutions, and practiced public speaking and teamwork in a dynamic environment.

This initiative not only deepened students' understanding of the European Union and its decision-making processes but also fostered essential skills such as leadership, critical thinking, and advanced English language proficiency. For English teachers, the MEU served as a valuable tool to support language development through experiential learning.



English teacher Rexhina and Volunteer Robert empower readers with more books in the school's reading corner

29 Volunteers serving in the English Education sector in 2025

303 Teachers supported inside the class and externally via trainings and conferences

1,351 Youth who participated in youth development activities co-organized by Volunteers and local counterparts

6,597 Students were co-taught English in classrooms and clubs, camps or extracurricular activities

PCAM Project: TEFL in Montenegro

Project Goal: Develop teaching and learning capacities in English language in Montenegrin teachers and students.

The TEFL program places Volunteers in schools across Montenegro to work as co-teachers alongside local English language teachers, with the goal of enhancing students' English proficiency and creating dynamic, engaging learning environments. Beyond classroom support, Volunteers also organize extracurricular activities and community projects that give local youth opportunities to develop leadership and life skills.

Success Story - English language learning beyond the walls of the classroom

Beginning service together in April of 2025, Peace Corps Volunteer Kara and her counterpart Slavka enthusiastically explore ways to bring English language use to life in the classroom, among teachers and in the community. The desire to improve on language and communication skills is not limited to students in the classroom. Parents who practice English language model for their students the importance of second language fluency. Teachers of all subjects model courage when speaking English especially when it is not in their field or their strength. Professionals from the community asking for opportunities to practice English verifies the need to improve language fluency skills in the spirit of prosperity for all Montenegrins.

With widespread interest in English language proficiency, Kara and Slavka answer the call by leading five English Clubs including one at their school for their own students, one in the community open for all students, two options for teachers during the workday and one evening class for adults in the community at large. All clubs focus on normalizing errors when speaking, building confidence to try, creativity in how to express ideas, exploring nonverbal communication, and listening to each other without judgment. All are welcome to join.



Kara teaching at her club

11 Volunteers serving in this sector in 2025

382 Students attending extracurricular English clubs, tutoring sessions, and/or camps

2,486 Students in Volunteer classrooms who demonstrated achievement in English

WriteOn! International Creative Writing Contest

In addition to direct support to teachers and students in classes, English Education Volunteers implement activities that empower and inspire students' creativity and teach critical thinking skills. This year, after the leadership of English Education Volunteers, 1,045 students from 21 communities practiced writing skills, got inspired to be creative and competed with their peers in Albania and beyond. For English teachers, this was an opportunity to develop the English language skills of their students through thought-provoking ways not often included in the curriculum, and what is more, WriteOn! provided students with an outlet for freedom of expression and an incentive for further English language development.

In FY 2025, Albania took over the role of the International WriteOn! organizer. 111 national winners from Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Armenia and Georgia participated in the international competition in which 10 of the winners were from Albania and Montenegro. Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro is very proud of this project and is planning on extending it to more communities and countries.



1,045 students participated

21 communities participated

111 National winners from Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Armenia and Georgia

PCAM PCV's Summer Camps

During the summer months, PCAM Volunteers actively engage in creative activities with children and youth. A key feature of these efforts is the Summer Camps, which involve careful planning, collaboration and implementation with various community stakeholders.

Success Story: Girls Leading Our World with Code (GLOW Code) summer camps entered their third year in 2025. A two-week program where girls learn about coding while developing their leadership skills, the camps provide a fun and engaging environment for participants to build a strong foundation of positive values.

This year, GLOW Code launched two new initiatives:

GLOW Code+ is a one-week advanced curriculum designed to further develop the technical and leadership skills of our alumni. Participants were introduced to JavaScript, and reinforced their understanding of HTML and CSS.

GLOW Code Connect sought to further the capacities of the camp's Tech Instructors, connecting them with ICT professional mentors from Europe and the United States. Mentors working at firms like Microsoft, HP, Lime Micromobility, and Clay offered remote leadership and professional development to our instructors.

Topics covered during the camps included:

Introduction to leadership and coding, communication and teamwork.

Product design through city planning.

Creating positive relationships and setting SMART goals.

Developing soft skills such as public speaking and effective communication.



11 Regions/cities across Albania

146 Students engaged in camps

29 Jr. Instructors

17 Tech Instructors

28 GLOW Code+ campers

4 GLOW Code+ camps hosted

Sustainability and Local Partnership

Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro prioritizes sustainability by fostering strong local partnerships and empowering communities to lead development initiatives. Our model ensures that Volunteer efforts translate into long-term impact through collaboration, capacity building, and shared ownership.

Collaboration with Local Organizations and Stakeholders

We work closely with national and regional institutions, including the Ministries of Education of Albania and Montenegro, Regional Education Offices, and English Language Teachers' Associations. Partnerships extend to municipalities, civil society organizations, and youth councils, creating a broad network of support for community-driven projects.

Local Training Handovers

Scaling impact means training future trainers. A prime example is the GLOW CODE program, where former participants of Volunteer co-led coding camps now return as instructors, multiplying the reach of digital literacy initiatives.

100% of Volunteer activities are co-led with local counterparts.

Community Empowerment through Training

Peace Corps invests in strengthening local capacity through targeted training programs:

Host Family Trainings enhance cultural exchange and community integration.

Counterpart Conferences equip local partners with tools for effective collaboration.'

Project Design and Management (PDM) workshops are open to local organizations, enabling them to design and implement sustainable projects.

By embedding knowledge and leadership within communities, Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro ensures that initiatives continue to thrive beyond Volunteer service. This approach reflects our commitment to locally defined priorities, shared responsibility, and lasting impact.



Our People – Volunteers in their own words

Sarah’s story: “Never Too Late To Serve”

When Sarah T. applied to the Peace Corps at age 68, she questioned whether she could handle the challenges of service. But her lifelong “people first” philosophy—treating everyone with kindness, empathy, and respect—guided her decision. Encouraged by her family and reassured that the Peace Corps values the experience older adults bring, Sarah submitted her application and began a new chapter of purpose.

Today, Sarah teaches English in a rural mountain town in Montenegro. She has discovered a love for teaching and built strong connections with students and colleagues. From expanding a school thespian club to organizing an arts fair and running a summer English program, Sarah has contributed in meaningful ways. Yet, for her, success isn’t measured by accomplishments—it’s about relationships.

During training, we were told, ‘If you start with relationships, the rest will come.’ For me, that is an extension of my long-held ‘people first’ philosophy,” Sarah says. Her experience proves that service knows no age limit. Through connection and cultural exchange, Sarah has found what she was searching for: *purpose, community, and the joy of making a difference.*



Peace Corps Volunteer Sarah During a summer camp and her Swearing In ceremony .



Our People – Counterpart Hike tells her story of her work with Peace Corps Volunteer Abigail

My collaboration with the Peace Corps was a completely new experience for me and, like any new beginning, it initially came with certain fears and uncertainties. I clearly remember my first meeting with Abigail and the nervousness that was evident in my expression. I wondered whether I would succeed and whether this experience would strengthen my teaching practices or add to my insecurities. These questions were answered rather quickly. From the very first stages of working and adapting with Abi, I realized that everything would be far easier and more pleasant than I had anticipated. I consider myself fortunate to have worked alongside such a positive, dedicated, and warm individual. Our teaching responsibilities and daily challenges were handled naturally, and throughout the entire period, we supported and complemented one another. I believe that my empathy and Abi's adaptability were two key qualities that contributed significantly to our successful collaboration.

Although the two years passed quickly, what matters most is that during this time we not only exchanged ideas, traditions, and experiences, but also developed a more effective teaching approach that will continue to benefit our students — particularly through continuous communication in English during lessons, which they greatly enjoy, as well as the noticeable improvement in their speaking and pronunciation skills.

I could speak at length about this unforgettable and highly meaningful experience. For all of this, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Ardita and Agim from the Peace Corps, who consistently offered support and motivation throughout our collaboration.

Thank you sincerely.

Teacher Hike



Teachers Abigail and Hike effectively cooperated in 2025

Our People – Staff stories of transformation: “When we found ourselves in others”

In 2025, one of our committed staff members, Ilir Ziu, shared a deeply personal reflection in his blog post “When We Found Ourselves in Others” on the Peace Corps website.

Initially contemplating emigration, Ilir discovered renewed purpose upon joining the Peace Corps staff. He credits Volunteers’ commitment for restoring hope, transforming him from someone searching abroad into one who builds a brighter future at home.



Ilir during PST

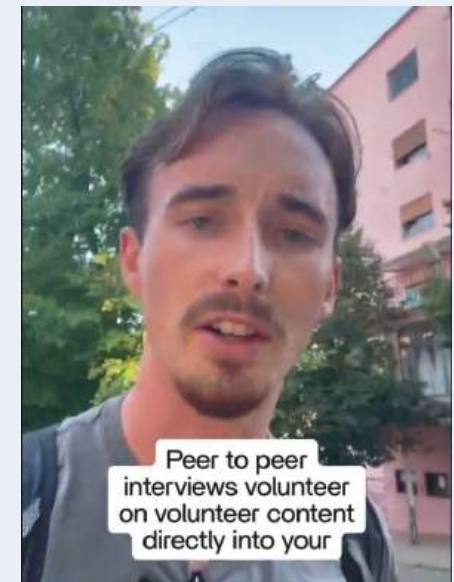
Ilir’s story reminds us that the Peace Corps mission doesn’t impact only communities, it also transforms those who serve. Today, Ilir proudly works to strengthen partnerships and foster understanding, proving that service creates lasting change on every level.

Innovative Service Models & Reimagined Service: -Expanding Volunteer Recruitment-

Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro strengthened its recruitment efforts in 2025 by leveraging the voices and experiences of current and returned Volunteers. Through the Brand Ambassador initiative, Volunteers from both Albania and Montenegro programs actively engaged with prospective applicants, sharing authentic stories of service and impact. These firsthand accounts provided valuable insights into life as a Volunteer and inspired interest among individuals seeking meaningful opportunities to contribute to community development.

To complement these efforts, the post enhanced its outreach strategy through targeted social media messaging. By using tailored messaging and interactive content, Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro increased engagement with potential applicants across digital platforms. This approach not only broadened visibility but also fostered direct connections with audiences interested in volunteering, ensuring that recruitment aligns with the organization's mission and the needs of host communities.

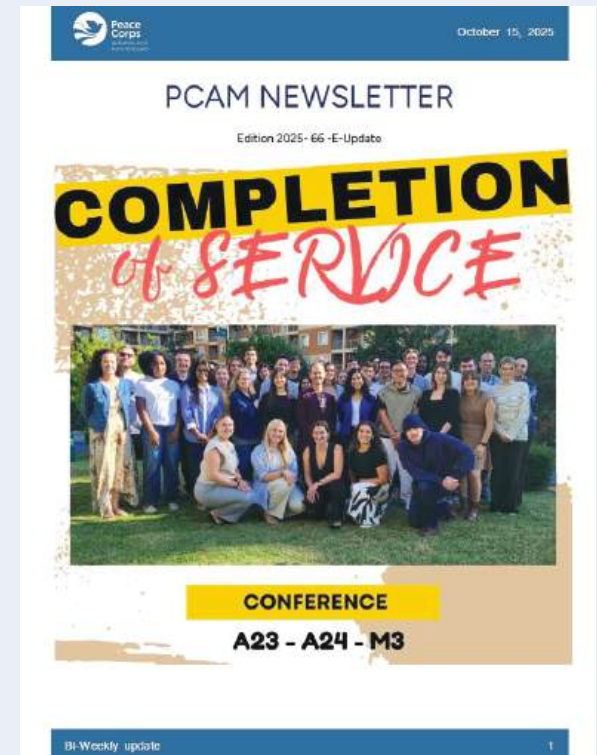
The Peer-to-Peer interviews created by Volunteers in 2025, described service in Albania and Montenegro and answered questions directly by Volunteers themselves



Innovative Service Models & Reimagined Service: Bi-Weekly Newsletter as a tool of Volunteer support

Enhanced Communication for Volunteers Support

In 2025, Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro leveraged our bi-weekly newsletter directly to all Volunteers and staff as a key communication channel to strengthen connections with Volunteers across both countries. This initiative by providing regular updates to volunteers timely support, and clear visibility into PCAM activities. The newsletter serves as a platform for sharing important announcements, resources, and opportunities, fostering a sense of belonging and collaboration. By maintaining consistent communication, Peace Corps reinforces its commitment to Volunteer well-being and program success.



The bi-weekly newsletter is emailed to the Volunteers

- 20** Newsletters strengthened transparency, supported Volunteer success, and reinforced the collaborative spirit between staff and Volunteers.
- 400** pages of photos, stories, and updates covering a wide range of topics: safety and health, program highlights, administrative notices, cultural insights, funding opportunities, and Volunteer achievements.

Innovative Service Models & Reimagined Service: -Virtual Service-

Virtual Service Initiative:

The Peace Corps launched the Virtual Service Pilot (VSP) in 2020 as an innovative way to continue to deliver on the PC mission and goals during the COVID-19 pandemic. VSP was designed to test the feasibility of virtual engagement and was at first open to any Returned Peace Corps Volunteer. Since recently, Virtual Service engagements are open to all U.S. citizens who wish to donate their voluntary services. Virtual Service Pilot Participants (VSPPs) are private citizens who donate their time and voluntary services to the agency to engage virtually 5 to 15 hours per week in three- to six-month long engagements with community partners.

Virtual Service in Albania and Montenegro:

Since the beginning of the Virtual Service Pilot in 2020, Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro has co-developed 13 Virtual Service engagements alongside local partner organizations in both countries. These engagements have allowed PCAM to establish partnerships, support current partners, and support partner organizations located in Tirana or Podgorica, where PCVs are not able to serve.

The 13 individuals who have dedicated their time to serve virtually have contributed to activities related to curriculum development, English language acquisition, leadership development, fundraising, and much more. As of January 2024, three Virtual Service Engagements are ongoing.



Virtual service opportunities

- 12 Virtual Service engagements in Albania and Montenegro since the beginning of the pilot with schools, higher education institutions, NGOs, and governmental agencies
- 1 Virtual Service engagement was part of our program in Montenegro during 2025

Effective Administrative Support for Peace Corps Operations

Behind the Scenes: Supporting Volunteer Service

The success of Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro depends not only on the dedication of Volunteers but also on the robust support provided by our Management and Operations team. This team ensures that many aspects, from transportation of team members to financial management, are handled with precision and care, allowing Volunteers to focus on their mission.

Our administrative and logistics staff work tirelessly to ensure safe housing, arrange reliable transportation, and manage procurement for essential resources. The finance team ensures compliance with U.S. and host-country regulations, providing transparent and efficient financial oversight. These efforts guarantee that operations run smoothly and that Volunteers have the tools they need to thrive in their communities.

Beyond these, the team maintains strong partnerships with local vendors, service providers, and government agencies. Management and Operations create a foundation of trust and reliability. Their work may be behind the scenes, but it is central to the Peace Corps mission – enabling Volunteers to serve effectively and safely across Albania and Montenegro.



Volunteers and Staff participate in ongoing training, but also in well-being activities during the year

Prioritizing Volunteer Health and Well-Being

The health, safety, and well-being of our Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do. Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro provides comprehensive medical support throughout the entire service period, ensuring that Volunteers can focus on their mission with confidence and peace of mind. From the moment they arrive, Volunteers receive thorough health and safety training during Pre-Service Training, covering preventive care, nutrition, mental health, and emergency procedures.

Our dedicated medical team offers **24/7 access to care**, routine health check-ups, and emergency response services. Volunteers are equipped with medical kits, supported through regular consultations, and have access to local and regional healthcare providers when needed. Mental health resources and counseling are also available, recognizing that emotional well-being is as important as physical health.



By prioritizing proactive care and rapid response, Peace Corps ensures that Volunteers remain healthy, safe, and supported throughout their service. This commitment reflects our core belief: when Volunteers feel secure and cared for, they can fully engage with their communities and make a lasting impact.

Supporting PCVs Safety and Security

The Safety and Security Team consistently prioritizes the well-being of Volunteers and Trainees by providing comprehensive, ongoing support throughout their service. The team ensures Volunteers receive 24/7 support for any safety or security concerns, offering immediate guidance and intervention during emergencies such as natural disasters, civil unrest, or other security incidents. It maintains critical systems so that Volunteers can rely on timely communication and support at all times. In addition to supporting Volunteers directly, the Safety and Security Team also cooperates with local authorities to ensure Volunteers' safety and maintain secure environments within host communities

To strengthen preparedness, the team delivers safety training throughout the two-year service period to help prepare our Volunteers to respond to emergencies. Regular risk assessments, including housing evaluations during site preparation, are conducted to mitigate risk. Additionally, proactive safety alerts are disseminated when needed to Volunteers reinforce situational awareness.



Safety and Security team delivering trainings to Volunteers

Volunteers exchange skills & knowledge with community members

Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro empowers Volunteers to create meaningful impact by providing tools, resources, and communication channels that strengthen partnerships and reinforce development goals. We also support them through storytelling and shared best practices, to engage effectively with local stakeholders and demonstrate the value of collaboration.

Volunteer Story: A Community-Designed Sports Hub

In Albania, students, teachers, and community members teamed up with Peace Corps Volunteer Jay to transform their school into an active hub for sports and after-school activities.

With a community-designed grant, where Peace Corps Volunteer Jay helped gather the resources, the school gained new sports equipment that revitalized Physical Education classes from kindergarten through 9th grade and energized the entire village. Students are now leading teams, learning cooperation, and discovering new passions, while teachers strengthened their skills in planning and project management. The school has even begun hosting community events and dreams of expanding into inter-school tournaments. This locally led project shows how small investments can spark long-lasting change.



This cooperation revitalized Physical Education classes and energized the entire community

Volunteers share American Culture and Traditions

GRATITUDE IN THE CLASSROOM

Peace Corps Volunteer Rylie brought a bit of Thanksgiving spirit to her Albanian classroom!

Together with her students, they created hand turkeys and shared what they're grateful for, and why. A simple, heartfelt activity that sparked meaningful dialogue and cultural exchange.



SPELLING BEE

Peace Corps Volunteers Katerina and CJ teamed up with local teachers to host a regional Spelling Bee, bringing students together to celebrate learning and love for language.

With cheering classmates and proud parents, the energy was incredible, as students showcased their hard work with confidence. Big cheers to all who participated and made it a day to remember! ❤️ 🍌



Such activities contribute to strengthening cultural exchange and community bonds.

Volunteers immerse themselves in Local Life and Culture

Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro supports Volunteers in amplifying host country voices and fostering mutual respect through locally driven initiatives. By sharing impact stories, we highlight collaboration with communities and promote a better understanding of the other peoples on the part of Americans.

Redefining Success in Kukës

When a Peace Corps Volunteer first arrived in Kukës, northern Albania, early projects struggled to gain traction. Attempts to launch an English course and a Model EU club faded, prompting reflection on what true success means in community development.

A Community Idea Sparks Change

The turning point came when local leaders proposed organizing a half marathon to promote tourism in the region. The Volunteer shifted from leading projects to supporting a community-led vision. Working alongside the Municipality, local NGOs, schools, and businesses, the event grew into a major collaboration involving nearly 100 local volunteers.

Impact Beyond the Finish Line

The Kukës Half Marathon attracted 200 runners from six countries, generated over 400,000 social media views, and drew national media attention. The celebration ended with a traditional Vallja e Kukësit dance under the marathon banner—a powerful symbol of unity and cultural pride. This story illustrates how listening and partnership create lasting impact.



Our Permanent Staff in 2025

Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro is proud to have a dedicated staff comprised of Americans, Albanians, and Montenegrins, comprising some of the best talent in the two countries we serve. The team is focused on helping our Volunteers to achieve their greatest potential during their service. They are passionate about their work and about making a difference for children, communities, and people throughout Albania and Montenegro. This is the team that is responsible for the good work we have achieved in Albania since 1992, and the management of the new opportunity to serve in Montenegro.

Admir Gjoni
Agim Dyrmishi
Arben Cako
Arben Loci
Ardita Qosja
Artenca Collaku
Benard Babaj
Besa Arapi
Darina Kaltani
Diana Djaloshi
Dorontinë Berishaj
Elsona Tuncer
Florian Muhaj
Geri Martiri
Ilir Memlikaj
Ilir Ziu
Iris Dollia
Ivana Rackovic
James Ayres
Jelena Tripkovic

Julian Pando
Luka Bobicic
Lumturi Piciri
Marie Aughenbaugh
Marjeta Zavalani
Megan Wilson
Milena Pejovic
Mira Luca
Mirela Tahiraj
Monika Mukja
Qazim Hoxha
Suida Shima
Tiana Covic
Ylli Cupi



Staff members at teambuilding event in April 2025

PCAM's Partner Organizations

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

- Agro-Puka
- Albanian Local Capacity Development Foundation
- American Councils
- ARKA Center—Shkodër
- CSDC Durrës
- Darien Book Aid
- English Language Teachers Association
- English Speaking Union
- Foundation Food Bank Albania
- Friends of Albania
- Junior Achievement of Albania
- Mary Ward Loreto
- Children are the future (CAF Albania)
- Albanian Consumer Center (ACC)
- New Bridges
- Qendra Marredhenie
- Regional Development Agency—Korçë
- Sidi Education
- Terre des Hommes
- Touristic Dibra
- Water Charity
- World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
- World Connect
- World Vision
- Youth Center—Vlorë
- Youth in Free Enterprise

Government and Independent Organizations

- Albanian Ministry of Education and Sports
- Montenegrin Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation
- ASCAP (Quality Ensuring Agency for Pre-University Education - Albania)
- DPAP (General Directorate of Pre-University Education - Albania)
- Regional Education Directorate for North, Albania
- Health for All Project - Albania
- Association of Paraplegics of Montenegro
- Albanian institute of Public Health
- Forum MNE
- English Learning Teachers Association of Montenegro
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro
- Ministry of Interior of Montenegro
- United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) in Albania and in Montenegro
- United Nations Population Fund
- United States Agency for International Development
- United States Embassies in Albania and in Montenegro and American Corners
- University of Shkodër, English Department
- University of Tirana, English Department

Municipalities & Schools

We appreciate our partner municipalities & schools
across Albania & Montenegro.

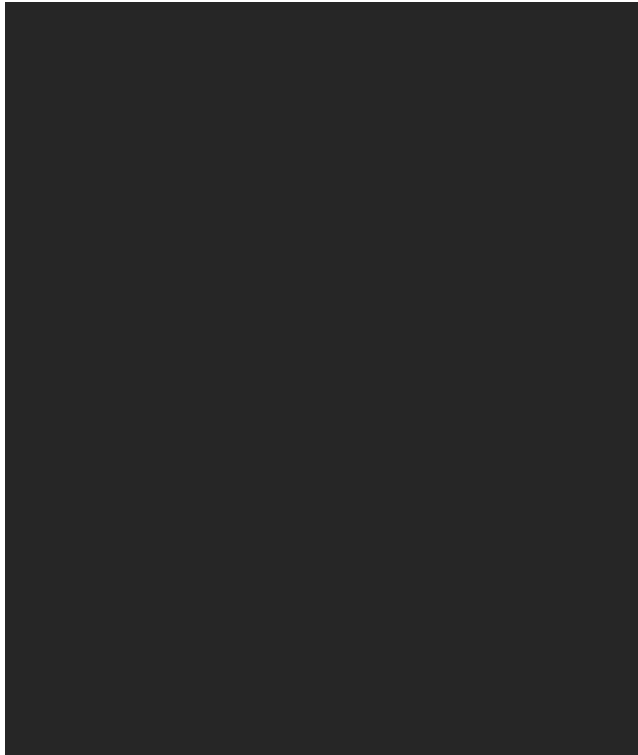
PCAM's Partner Organizations

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

- New Epoch Center
- Environmental Center for Studies and Implementation
- SOS Village of Children - Tiranë and Shkodër
- Another Vision
- Open Gov Hub Albania
- Leadership Development Association Balkan
- Psycho-Social Center "Vatra"
- Regional Development Agency
- Argonaut - Tepelenë
- Social Inclusion for Development
- Youth Movement Center
- The International Association for Solidarity
- Youth of Ura
- Community Center Nish Tulla
- Liberi di Viaggiare – Udhëtimi i Lirë
- With a community for a change
- Roma Gate for Integration







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