

Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro

2022 – 2023 REPORT

**From Legacy to
Launch: Celebrating 30
Years in Albania and
First Year of Service in
Montenegro**



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Message from U.S. Chargé d'Affaires to Albania, David Wisner

Dear Friends,

I extend my heartfelt thanks for the over 30 years of selfless effort by Peace Corps Volunteers, host agencies, host families, and host communities in Albania.

As we turn the page on the global pandemic, I am deeply impressed by the resilience, dedication, and adaptability demonstrated by the Peace Corps Volunteers and their communities. Their commitment to fostering cross-cultural understanding and promoting education has not only enriched the lives of Albanian students, teachers, and communities but has also strengthened the enduring bond between our two nations. The Peace Corps Volunteers have played important roles as English Teachers, Youth Health and Well-being educators in schools, and Organizational Development experts with local government and civil society Albanian partners. Their many contributions have left a lasting impact on the educational, health, and organizational landscapes of Albania.

The inspiring results of the cooperation between our Volunteers and Albanian partners, students, and communities underscore the spirit of peace, friendship and collaboration that lies at the heart of the Peace Corps mission. The dedication and warmth demonstrated by the Peace Corps' Albanian counterparts are profoundly appreciated. Their commitment to the ideals of peace, understanding, and cultural exchange has been instrumental in fostering an environment where the real power of people-to-people engagement can flourish.



Message from U.S. Chargé d'Affaires to Albania, David Wisner

A special note of gratitude goes to the Albanian host families who have graciously opened their doors to our Volunteers. Your hospitality and support have not only provided a home away from home but have also created the foundation for lasting connections between our cultures. Your generosity is a shining example of the goodwill that exists between the Albanian people and the Peace Corps community.

To our dedicated Peace Corps Volunteers, I extend my sincerest appreciation. Your commitment to sharing not only the richness of U.S. culture but also your genuine eagerness to learn about and embrace Albanian culture marks all who meet you.

I want to express my hearty congratulations to all involved in making the Peace Corps program in Albania a resounding success. I look forward to witnessing the continued impact and growth of the Peace Corps here and thank you for your dedication to the ideals of peace, friendship, understanding, and cultural exchange.

Sincerely,

David G. Wisner



It is with great pleasure that I reflect on the achievements and milestones of the past year, particularly considering it marks the first year ever that the United States' Peace Corps has welcomed American citizens as Volunteers to serve across Montenegro. Furthermore, it is a year of immense significance as the Volunteers returned to Montenegro following the global pandemic.

As the United States Ambassador to Montenegro, I am honored to witness the positive impact of the Peace Corps Volunteers and their counterparts during their first year of service in co-teaching English across Montenegro. Their dedication and commitment demonstrated during this inaugural year have been remarkable. Their efforts have contributed to the educational landscape of Montenegro and enriched the connections between our two nations. Teaching English in Montenegrin schools is a vital endeavor, one that goes beyond the transfer of language skills. It is a bridge that connects our cultures, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation. Our Volunteers' unwavering commitment to service is a testament to the partnership between the United States and Montenegro.

With humility and passion, the Peace Corps Volunteers and their counterparts have successfully transferred essential skills to students. The exchange of knowledge between them has been a two-way street, with our Volunteers gaining valuable cultural insights. This reciprocal cultural exchange has not only broadened their perspectives but has also served as another bridge. This time connecting the hearts and minds of Americans and Montenegrins, leaving a mark on the lives of both the Volunteers and the communities they serve. I want to express my gratitude to the Peace Corps Volunteers for their passion, resilience, and cultural sensitivity. Additionally, I extend my appreciation to the Peace Corps staff and their interlocutors at the Ministry of Education for their tireless efforts in advising and guiding the Volunteers and their communities throughout this transformative experience.

A portrait of a woman with short, wavy brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark blue jacket over a blue patterned top and a pearl necklace. The background features the stars and stripes of the American flag.

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I also would like to express my deepest appreciation to the communities and host families who have warmly welcomed our Volunteers into their homes. Your generosity and hospitality have played a pivotal role in creating a supportive environment for the Volunteers to thrive, ensuring a successful integration into Montenegrin communities.

The partnership between Americans and Montenegrins, as exemplified by the Peace Corps Volunteers and their co-teachers, host schools, and host families is truly inspiring. It is a shining example of what can be achieved when people from different backgrounds come together with a shared purpose and a commitment to making a positive impact on peace and friendship in the world.

This year marked the beginning of a new chapter for the Peace Corps in Montenegro, and it also set the stage for future collaboration and success. I am excited that a new group of Volunteers be sworn in soon to begin service in even more communities in Montenegro. The bonds forged and lessons learned during this inaugural year will undoubtedly pave the way for an even more impactful, robust, and mutually beneficial partnership in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Judy Rising Reinke

Message from U.S. Ambassador to Montenegro, Judy Rising Reinke



Dear Friends, Partners, and Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that I report on the achievements and successes of the past year in Montenegro, a country that has welcomed our Volunteers with open arms and hospitality. The partnership between Americans and Montenegrins, as exemplified by the Peace Corps Volunteers and their co-teachers, host schools, and host families is truly inspiring. It is a shining example of what can be achieved when people from different backgrounds come together with a shared purpose and a commitment to making a positive impact on peace and friendship in the world.

This year marked the beginning of a new chapter for the Peace Corps in Montenegro, and it also set the stage for future collaboration and success. I am excited that a new group of Volunteers be sworn in soon to begin service in even more communities in Montenegro. The bonds forged and lessons learned during this inaugural year will undoubtedly pave the way for an even more impactful, robust, and mutually beneficial partnership in the years to come.

Sincerely,
Judy Rising Reinke

Message From Country Director, Megan Wilson

Dear Friends of Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro,

I am happy to present to you Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro's Annual Report for the year 2022-2023. This year's report covers a wide array of topics from the return of Volunteers to the introduction of new Volunteer cohorts, to impressive projects across our four sectors, to innovative service models, and the shared experiences between our Volunteers and the communities they serve.

As we reflect on the accomplishments, challenges, and the unwavering dedication of our Peace Corps Volunteers and local partners, I recognize that it has been a truly remarkable time. A pivotal achievement that stands out to me is the historic return of our Volunteers in September 2022, following the pandemic-induced evacuation. The resilience and commitment displayed by our PCVs and their communities during this time has been nothing short of inspiring. Building on this achievement, we welcomed a new cohort in October 2023, reinforcing the enduring spirit of service that defines Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro.



Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro Country Director Megan Wilson and Minister of Education, Sport and Youth of Albania Evis Kushi, in 2022

Message From Country Director, Megan Wilson

In December 2023, we joyfully marked the first year of Peace Corps service in communities in Montenegro alongside our partners, witnessing the positive impact of co-teaching English in schools and offering enriching after-school activities to children. The Peace Corps magic is present and resonating with people across Montenegro. For this I am deeply thankful and look forward to all we will do together to expand this magic around Montenegro over the coming years. I am also proud that we are celebrating over three decades of Peace Corps service to Albania this last year. Our Volunteers and their counterparts have made invaluable contributions to the sectors of English teaching, health education, and organizational development in schools, communities, youth organizations, civil society entities, and municipalities since the early nineties. The impact of these contributions is evident in my conversations with people across the country from Tirana to the many villages where volunteers have served over the last 30 years.

I extend a heartfelt thank you to our Peace Corps Volunteers whose dedication and passion continues to be the driving force behind the magic of Peace Corps. Your unwavering commitment to fostering positive change has not gone unnoticed. Equally deserving of appreciation are our local counterparts, work colleagues, students, and youth who collaborate with joy and pleasure with PCAM Volunteers. I extend my deepest gratitude to the host communities and host families who have opened their hearts and homes to our Volunteers. Your support system and hospitality create an environment where our Volunteers can thrive and make lasting contributions. Of course, none of this would be possible without our host-country's governments.



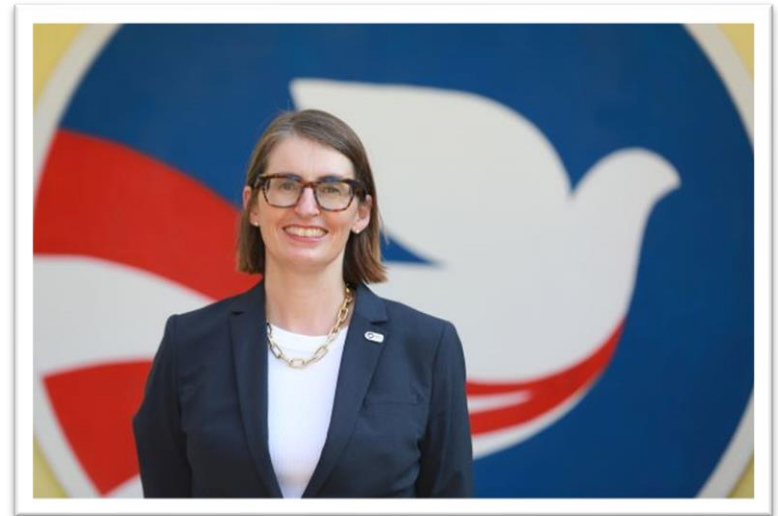
Message From Country Director, Megan Wilson

As such, I send a special note of appreciation to the Ministries of Education in Albania and Montenegro for their continued partnership.

I also extend my gratitude to all our PCAM staff members whose tireless efforts behind the scenes have been instrumental in guiding and advising our Volunteers and ensuring that they are healthy and safe so that they can effectively serve alongside their communities. The synergy between our PCVs, PC staff, host families, government, and local partners is a testament to the effectiveness of collective action.

The richness of Peace Corps service is marked by the impact our Volunteers and counterparts make in communities, the cultural exchange they experience, and the lasting relationships they forge. Together, we celebrate not only the accomplishments of the past year but also the enduring legacy of peace and friendship that is cultivated through the tireless dedication of our Peace Corps community which transcends time and place.

With Deep Gratitude, Margaret Wilson



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 235,000 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.

Since September 2003, Volunteers have worked with local governments, NGOs, schools, and health institutions in three project areas:

- English education
- Health, now with a focus on Youth Health & well-being
- Organizational development

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

Since September 1992, over 900 Volunteers have served in Albania.



Peace Corps in Montenegro

The Peace Corps signed a Bilateral Agreement in 2019 with the Government of Montenegro establishing a program in the country. The first group of Volunteer Trainees arrived in January 2020 to begin their 10-week Pre-Service Training. The group was evacuated in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic prior to arriving in their host communities.

Following significant preparations, Volunteers returned to Montenegro in the fall of 2022, and after a successful training, began Peace Corps service in Montenegrin communities for the first time. This return marked a symbolic triumph over the challenges of the previous two and a half years, and their presence not only rejuvenated the Peace Corps mission but also offered a powerful testament to the commitment to cross-cultural exchange and community development.

In the Fall of 2023, an additional group of Volunteer Trainees arrived in Montenegro, beginning their service as Volunteers in December 2023. All 11 Volunteers currently in Montenegrin communities serve in the field of English Education, co-teaching alongside Montenegrin counterparts.

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



Historic return of Volunteers in 2022 and the new cohort of 2023



First group of Volunteers returned in 2022 following the Pandemic.



They were followed by another group of 42 Volunteers who arrived in 2023, in which 35 of them would serve in Albania and 7 in Montenegro.

In 2022, a historic moment unfolded as Peace Corps Volunteers returned to Albania and Montenegro after a prolonged hiatus due to the global pandemic. The journey back was the culmination of extensive preparations by Peace Corps staff, who meticulously navigated the complex challenges posed by the pandemic, ensuring the safety and well-being of Volunteers and host communities alike. The return of Volunteers served as a testament to the unwavering commitment of the Peace Corps to fostering peace and cooperation across the globe.

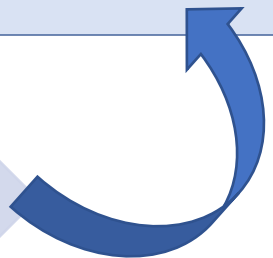
In 2023, a new chapter in the Peace Corps legacy commenced with the arrival of a fresh cohort of eager trainees. These individuals embarked on their transformative journey, full of enthusiasm and dedication, to serve in various host communities. Their arrival marked a promising start to a new era of volunteerism, cultural immersion, and international cooperation, as they prepared to take on the challenges and responsibilities of Peace Corps service with the same fervor and commitment as their predecessors, carrying forward the organization's mission of promoting peace and understanding.

17

Volunteers
return to
service in
Albania and
Montenegro
in 2022

42

new Trainees arrive
from the U.S. in 2023
to join service in
Albania and
Montenegro



Introducing Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro Volunteers

Peace Corps volunteers come from all corners of the United States to create grassroots-level change in Albania and Montenegro. Volunteers share their hometown values and perspectives with the host communities in which they serve—an intercultural exchange that leaves a legacy of peace and friendship.



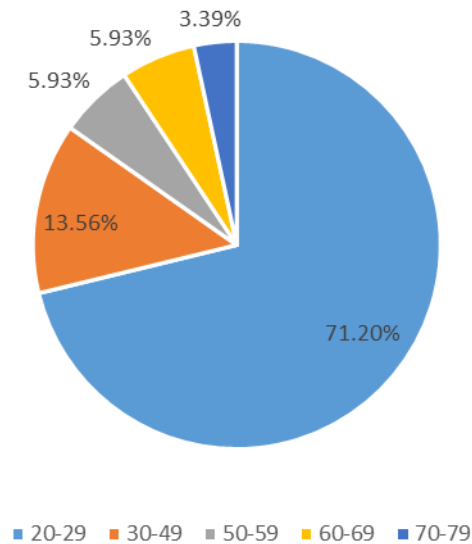
“This feedback of yours makes me say please stay with us forever.

I’m impressed!!
Thank you,
thank you!!!”

– a student
after receiving
feedback from a
PCV teacher

Introducing Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro Volunteers

AGE WHEN ARRIVED IN ALBANIA AND MONTENEGRO



"He is not just a teacher, he is a beacon of kindness, generosity, and professionalism. His well-behaved and smart approach to teaching creates a positive atmosphere in our classroom. His generosity extends beyond our curriculum, he generally cares about our wellbeing and growth."

a Counterpart about a Volunteer

1

Volunteer joined
P.C. immediately after
becoming a
U.S. citizen

3

PCVs have previously
served in the Peace Corps!

EDUCATION



Volunteers harness the power of youth, creating the leaders of tomorrow, by strategically partnering with local counterparts

Peace Corps Volunteers are instrumental in harnessing the potential of local Albanian and Montenegrin youth, fostering the emergence of the dynamic youth leaders of tomorrow. Their dedication and tireless efforts empower young individuals in these regions to unlock their full potential, equipping them with essential skills, knowledge, a sense of purpose, and promote a sense of responsibility towards their communities. By fostering cross-cultural understanding and facilitating sustainable development, these Volunteers serve as catalysts for positive change, empowering local youth to become the driving force behind their nations' progress.



Moreover, Peace Corps Volunteers are not solitary actors; they strategically collaborate with local partners in Albania and Montenegro, forging connections that extend the reach and impact of their initiatives. This harmonious partnership strengthens the foundation of community-driven development, ensuring that the change initiated today will resonate for generations to come. As the world continues to evolve, these dedicated Volunteers serve as a beacon of hope, uniting diverse cultures and equipping the youth with the skills and inspiration to emerge as the visionary leaders of a brighter, more united future.



Peace Corps Volunteer teachers, Maria in Albania and Patti in Montenegro, serve alongside their local colleagues in Primary and High Schools, co-teaching English classes.

Volunteer Development starts with their arrival and continues throughout service

Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro offers its Volunteers a comprehensive training program designed to equip individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to serve in diverse communities around both countries. This training encompasses various elements, beginning with intensive language training, which enables Volunteers to effectively communicate with the local population and foster strong relationships. Technical training focuses on the specific skills and expertise required for each volunteer's assigned role, ensuring they can make a meaningful impact in their project areas. Intercultural competence training is a fundamental component, promoting a deep understanding of the host country's culture and customs. Furthermore, diversity, equity, and inclusion training emphasizes the importance of respecting and valuing differences, creating a more inclusive and harmonious Volunteer experience. Health and wellness training keeps volunteers physically and mentally prepared for the unique challenges of their service, while safety and security training equips them with the tools to effectively navigate potential risks and emergencies. Together, these elements of Peace Corps training provide a holistic foundation for successful service and contribute to the organization's mission of promoting peace and cooperation across borders. Volunteer training offers a multifaceted learning experience that not only prepares Volunteers for their service but also helps them grow as individuals.



Hours of training provided by Peace Corps to its Trainees and Volunteers during their time in Albania and Montenegro. Peace Corps provides training in a foreign language, technical skills, and cross-cultural understanding.

PC Trainees during Pre-service training (PST). During PST, a cooperation and support relationship is formed between staff and Volunteers, an approach which accompanies them throughout their service.

Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro at end of 2023



- 58 PCVs
 - 11 Montenegro
 - 47 Albania
- 4 sectors
 - English education in Albania
 - English education in Montenegro
 - Health education
 - Organizational development
- 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 wellbeing issues, English acquisition and strengthening schools, tourism development, and project sustainability through local buy-in and ownership.



2023 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.

Community and 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.

Example Volunteer Activity:

OD PCV, Rakesh, together with counterparts from his partner NGO "Roma Gate for Integration" organization work to provide supplemental education and life skills training and mentorship to instill confidence and inspiration in Roma children. This support was aimed at empowering these children to complete their education through High School, something that rarely happens within their community. In this regard, they supported 27 Roma children with weekly supplemental education classes, life skills training and character development. At the same time, Rakesh and his partners are establishing a "Big Brother, Big Sister" program to engage 27 local High School students who will be trained as mentors and matched with each Roma child. This project worked to engage the whole community by working closely with parents to empower them to support their children's education.



14 Volunteers serving in this sector in 2022/2023

17 Community Organizations supported by Volunteers to expand opportunities for civic engagement

168 Participants in volunteering activities co-organized by Volunteers and their counterparts

58 Projects implemented by OD Volunteers and Counterparts

PCAM Project: Youth Health and Wellbeing

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.

Volunteer Activity: *Raising awareness on Global Health Days*

Throughout the school year, Health Education Volunteers coordinated to organize awareness raising activities on Global Health days, such as World Epilepsy Day, Mental Health Day, Food Safety day, etc. Volunteers collaborated with their school-based counterparts and the local health providers to co-facilitate curricular and extra-curricular classes and activities to provide evidence-based health information through interactive techniques. These awareness raising and health training activities supported students to lead healthier and more empowered lives.



Global Mental Health Day

- 17** Volunteers serving in this sector in 2022/2023
- 63** School staff guided in using innovative techniques to co-facilitate gender equitable health and life skills curriculum
- 877** Participants reached in individual or small group trainings on Youth Health and Wellbeing

PCAM Project: TEFL in Albania

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

The TEFL program in Albania seeks to improve student and teacher English proficiency, increase the capacity of teachers to use general and English teaching skills, and increase community members' ability to support student learning. Volunteers in Albania co-teach alongside Albanian teachers and co-develop extracurricular activities and projects aimed at providing local youth with leadership and life skills.

Volunteer Activity: *Theater Camp*

In addition to co-teaching in class, TEFL Volunteers often partner with counterparts to carry youth development activities combined with advanced English language skill development. PCV Andrew noticed the interest of his students in acting, after which he leveraged his writing skills, and together with his two counterparts, developed a plan for a theater camp. One of his counterparts was so excited that she even participated as a student.

As a result, 16 participants learned skills such as the grammar of acting and writing for the stage. Furthermore, given the combination of English language proficiency and emotional intelligence required to act, participants gained necessary confidence in English communication, which was an invaluable experience. When asked what could be done better next time, they all asked unanimously to have a longer camp, as they not only learned unique skills in English, but they also had a lot of fun.



A student performing

16 Volunteers serving in this sector from Dec 2 2022– Dec 15, 2023

89 Youth who participated in youth development activities co-organized by Volunteers and local counterparts

489 Students in Volunteer classrooms who demonstrated achievement in English.

PCAM Project: TEFL in Montenegro

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

The TEFL program, through the work of Volunteers placed in schools around Montenegro to serve as co-teachers, seeks to improve student proficiency in English, increase the capacity of teachers to use general and English teaching skills, and increase the English proficiency of English teachers. Volunteers in Montenegro also support the need for extracurricular activities and projects aimed at providing local youth with leadership and life skills.

Example Volunteer Activity: *English Language Club*

Peace Corps Volunteer Patti and counterparts Dana and Adnan established an English club for her community's children and adults. When speaking of the idea, Patti said: "In mid-July, we rolled up our sleeves and grabbed buckets, brushes, and disinfectant to prep a weary and unused former kafana (café) into a bright and airy meeting space for kids and adults. We wanted to offer a place for local children and adults to be able to express themselves in English through art, music, film, and conversation." The club offered three distinct sessions for three distinct audiences. One session was dedicated to elementary school learners ages 6-12; while a second timeslot to students ages 13-16, and the third group was comprised of adults trying to learn the language for the first time. The club was so popular it restarted in the first school semester of 2023.



Each Club member drew an individual brick representing their unique personality

11 Volunteers serving in this sector in 2022/2023

88 Youth who participated in youth development activities co-organized by Volunteers and local counterparts

1003 Students in Volunteer classrooms who demonstrated achievement in English.

Sharing American Culture and Traditions

Peace Corps Volunteers in Albania and Montenegro actively engage in sharing American culture through a variety of impactful initiatives. They organize cultural exchange events, such as language clubs, where they introduce aspects of the language, traditions, and daily life to local communities. Volunteers often collaborate with local schools to conduct interactive lessons about American history, literature, and customs, providing a firsthand experience of the diversity of American culture. Additionally, community projects, like organizing conversations about films, discussion forums, or music events featuring American artists, serve as effective platforms for cultural exchange.

PCV teachers contribute to cultural exchange through educational events like the Spelling Bees, providing a fun and educational platform for students to engage with the English language. These events not only enhance language skills but also introduce students to a slice of American educational traditions. Special celebrations, such as Independence Day or Thanksgiving, are marked with community gatherings, potlucks, and activities that allow locals to experience and appreciate American traditions. Through these initiatives, Volunteers contribute to fostering mutual understanding, building bridges between cultures, and creating lasting connections between the people of Albania, Montenegro, and the United States.

Since their return, the Peace Corps trainees have made it a tradition to organize a **Thanksgiving potluck** with their local Albanian partners during their training period. This event shares American culture through the lens of a cherished tradition, fostering a sense of unity and understanding. The potluck not only showcased diverse American dishes but also provided an opportunity for open dialogue, where Volunteers and their Albanian counterparts exchanged stories, perspectives, and culinary experiences. Through this collaborative effort, cultural boundaries were bridged, relationships strengthened, and a deeper appreciation for each other's traditions emerge.



Invitation Banner to the Thanksgiving celebration

Sharing Albanian and Montenegrin Culture



Peace Corps Albania ✓

8.7K followers • 35 following

Posts About Photos Videos

Intro

Life is calling. How far will you go? For information on Peace Corps Albania visit <http://albania.pe>

Page · Government organization



Peace Corps Albania

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🇹🇷 🇷🇸 🇮🇹 🇸🇰 🇦🇱 🇸🇮 🇪🇺 FIRST PRACTICUM DAYS WITH THE PEACE CORPS – WHERE PASSION MEETS PRACTICE!

🇹🇷 🇷🇸 🇮🇹 🇸🇰 🇦🇱 🇸🇮 🇪🇺 Our trainees, equipped with the skills of English teaching, health education, and organizational development, are seizing the opportunity to put their knowledge into action. From classrooms to communities, they're diving into their first practicum days with passion



Peace Corps in Montenegro

567 followers • 25 following

Posts About Photos Videos

Intro

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Peace Corps in Montenegro

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🇹🇷 🇷🇸 🇮🇹 🇸🇰 🇦🇱 🇸🇮 🇪🇺 PRVI DANI PRAKTIKUMA U MIROVNOM KORPUSU – GDJE SE STRAST ZA NASTAVOM SRJEĆE SA PRAKSOM!

🇹🇷 🇷🇸 🇮🇹 🇸🇰 🇦🇱 🇸🇮 🇪🇺 Naši polaznici, obučeni potrebnim znanjem neophodnim za podučavanje engleskog jezika, koriste priliku da naučeno pretvore u djelo. Od učionice do zajednice, oni započinju svoje prve dane praktikuma sa strastvu i svrhom. Spremnosti su da ostave značajan tra

The Peace Corps effectively shares Albanian and Montenegrin culture with Americans by leveraging social media platforms and encouraging returned Volunteers to continue promoting cultural exchange, even after their service concludes. Peace Corps Volunteers actively use social media to amplify and share their life and service stories, providing glimpses into the rich tapestry of Albanian culture. Through blogs, posts, and multimedia content, Volunteers share their experiences, fostering a deeper understanding of the local customs, traditions, and daily life in both countries.

Additionally, when Volunteers return home, they often engage in activities such as community presentations, cultural workshops, and storytelling sessions to share their experiences from service with fellow Americans. By incorporating elements of Albanian and Montenegrin culture into these activities, they contribute to a broader appreciation of global diversity. Through these ongoing efforts, Peace Corps Volunteers continue to embody the ideals of the Peace Corps, serving as cultural ambassadors and fostering cross-cultural understanding between Albania and Montenegro, and the United States.

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 is currently open to any Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV). Virtual Service Pilot Participants (VSPPs) are private citizens who donate their time and voluntary services to the agency to engage virtually five to fifteen 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 12 Virtual Service engagements alongside local partner organizations in both countries, all of which have already been completed or are ongoing. 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 12 RPCVs 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.



Albania Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Brad speaking with university students in Tirana

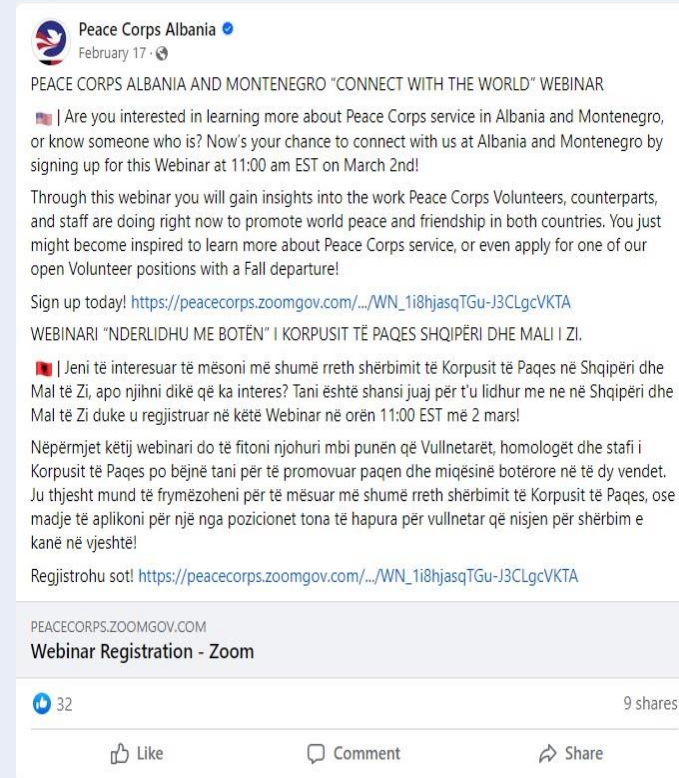
12 Virtual Service engagements in Albania and Montenegro since the beginning of the pilot with schools, higher education institutions, NGOs, and governmental agencies

Innovative Service Models & Reimagined Service -Supporting Volunteer Recruitment-

The Need: In response to the growing demand for dedicated individuals to contribute to community development, Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro recognized the imperative to bolster our volunteer force. Addressing this need, Post embarked on a proactive recruitment effort, engaging in diverse activities to attract potential volunteers.

Activities: One significant initiative involved the orchestration of a webinar elucidating the transformative experience of serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) in Albania and Montenegro. Aligned with the global Serve Boldly campaign initiated by the Peace Corps HQ, the webinar aimed to inspire prospective volunteers to embrace the challenges and rewards of international service. Simultaneously, our Post intensified its outreach efforts by fostering connections with PC Albania and Montenegro RPCVs and networks of social media followers through various channels, including social media platforms. By disseminating Volunteer recruitment language and appeals, the Peace Corps sought to cast a wide net and resonate with individuals passionate about making a positive impact. This multifaceted approach extended beyond physical borders, as the organization actively encouraged Virtual Service participation, fostering a sense of global community while serving the unique needs of local communities in Albania and Montenegro.

Impact: The culmination of these efforts is anticipated to have had a profound impact on the recruitment landscape, and it ensured that our Post received a robust and diverse group of Volunteer Trainees committed to advancing the Peace Corps mission in the region.



Connect with Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro, was one of the Post's initiatives to support the Volunteer recruitment effort

Innovative Service Models & Reimagined Service

-Service Improvement Committee-

Service Improvement Committee

In April 2023, PCAM was happy to relaunch the Volunteer Advisory Committee under the name of the Service Improvement Committee. It was great to have one volunteer from each sector be elected to join. Thanks to PCVs Katie, Sebastian, Angela and Maria for their engagement and interest! The purpose of the Albania and Montenegro Service Improvement Committee is to:

- Offer a space for dialogue between staff and Volunteers that focuses on shared goals rooted in Peace Corps' mission in Albania and Montenegro.
- Serve as a mechanism for mutual feedback and constructive engagement between Volunteers and staff to strengthen PCAM's programming, training, and operations in support of host communities.
- Be a mechanism for committee members to communicate, support and get buy-in from the Volunteer community for staff-led initiatives or policy changes.
- Provide a platform for staff to partner with Volunteers in supporting professional and effective service.



Service Improvement members and PCAM Leadership in 2023

Innovative Service Models & Reimagined Service -Peer Support Network-

Peer Support Network

PCAM was happy to relaunch the Peer Support Network in April 2023. The Peer Support Network (PSN) is a formalized peer support committee with the overarching goal to promote Volunteers' well-being and resilience during service. The PSN is comprised of Volunteers trained to provide peer support, to design and implement inclusive outreach, to refer Volunteers to appropriate resources, and to maintain sustainable programming. We are happy to have two volunteers from each country program as members. Thanks Aleksandra, Alex, Patti, and Sebastian for the dedication and commitment to supporting others! Thanks to the PC Medical Officers for working with the members to make PSN effective. The PSN seeks to promote Volunteer well-being and resilience by strengthening in-country support systems through private and empathic peer support, inclusive outreach to all Volunteers, referral to resources, and sustainable programming.



Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro PSN members 2022-2023

Innovative Service Models & Reimagined Service -Communications Work Group-

First ever Communications PCV – Staff Work Group

Empowering change through connectivity! In 2022 we launched the first-ever Staff and Volunteers Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro Communications Work Group. Together, we'll amplify our impact, share inspiring stories, and foster a stronger sense of community. 🤝

🌟 Exciting times ahead as we harness the power of connectivity to amplify our impact. Join us on our social media on our exciting journey, shaping narratives, fostering connections, and spreading the spirit of peace and unity! 🕊️



Discussions about facilitating the creation of the Annual Report take place during the Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro Communications Work Group.

Effective Administration Support for Peace Corps Operations

The Administration team within Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro plays a pivotal role in ensuring the smooth execution of our programs by providing comprehensive support to both staff and Volunteers. At the heart of their responsibilities is the meticulous management of the Cost-of-Living Allowance, to guarantee the financial well-being of our Volunteers. The team excels in coordinating logistics, including securing venues for training sessions and offering great support throughout the planning and execution phases. Their expertise extends to efficient transport coordination, enabling the smooth movement of personnel and resources.



During the time covered by this report, we are delighted to highlight the Administration team's instrumental role in the hiring process of new colleagues. Their coordination and management of various human resources aspects, including staff training programs, have contributed significantly to the well-functioning of PCAM and the overall well-being of our staff. The team's commitment to ongoing training initiatives ensures that our personnel are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the unique challenges of their roles. Beyond these specific roles, the Administration unit serves as the backbone of operational success, overseeing a number of functions that contribute to the overall effectiveness of Peace Corps initiatives. Their adept management of administrative tasks allows our staff and volunteers to focus on their primary objectives. The dedication and competence of the Administration team significantly contribute to the success and impact of Peace Corps efforts in the region.



Staff participates in ongoing training, but also in wellbeing activities during the year

We provide comprehensive medical services to our Volunteers

For Peace Corps Albania and Montenegro, the health and well-being of Peace Corps Volunteers serving in these host countries is of a paramount significance. The Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMOs) and local experts play a pivotal role in leading initiatives aimed at providing comprehensive medical services to our Volunteers. We take the health of our Volunteers with the utmost seriousness, recognizing that their physical and mental well-being is fundamental to their ability to contribute effectively to their communities.

To ensure the highest standards of medical care, our PCMOs have diligently collaborated with medical facilities and providers in Albania and Montenegro. Our dedicated team of doctors has personally visited and vetted hospitals, establishing strategic agreements to guarantee swift and efficient access to quality healthcare services for our Volunteers. This commitment underscores the Peace Corps' dedication to safeguarding the health of our Volunteers, enabling them to engage in their mission with confidence and resilience.



Peace Corps Volunteers Safety and Security and Empowering Staff with Safety and Security Expertise

Supporting the Safety and Security of Peace Corps Volunteers: The safety and security of our Volunteers are paramount, forming the bedrock of the Peace Corps mission in Albania and Montenegro. Recognizing the vital role of safety in Volunteer well-being, PCAM staff are dedicated to providing a secure environment through robust collaborations. Our approach involves close partnerships with local organizations, host country authorities, and communities. By working together with these stakeholders, we establish a network that not only identifies potential risks but also develops and implements effective strategies to mitigate them. This collaborative effort ensures that our Volunteers can focus on their mission, knowing they have a support system in place, fostering a sense of community resilience and shared responsibility for safety.



Empowering Staff with Safety and Security Expertise: At the core of our commitment to safety and security is the rigorous training provided to our staff members. Our comprehensive program equips staff with the knowledge and skills needed to respond effectively to a range of safety and security scenarios. Through simulations, workshops, and ongoing education, our staff members become adept at assessing and managing potential risks. This proactive approach not only strengthens our ability to prevent incidents but also enhances our response capabilities in unforeseen circumstances. The safety and well-being of our Volunteers depends on the competence of our staff, making this training program an indispensable component of our commitment to providing a secure environment for all Peace Corps participants in Albania and Montenegro.



Trainings are part of the staff's proactive approach to the creation of a safe service environment for PCVs.

Our Permanent Staff in 2023

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 also the management of the new opportunity to serve in Montenegro.

Agim Dyrmishi	Jelena Tripkovic
Arben Cako	Julian Pando
Arben Loci	Luka Bobicic
Ardijan Cobaj	Lumturi Piciri
Ardita Qosja	Marie
Artenca Collaku	Aughenbaugh
Benard Babaj	Marjeta Zavalani
Besa Arapi	Megan Wilson
Darina Kaltani	Milena Pejovic
Diana Djaloshi	Mira Luca
Dorontinë Berishaj	Mirela Tahiraj
Elsona Cupi	Monika Mukja
Florian Muhaj	Qazim Hoxha
Gentian Leka	Rikela Fusha
Geri Martiri	Sara Gaçe
Ilir Memlikaj	Suida Shima
Ilir Ziu	Tiana Covic
Iris Dollia	Ylli Cupi
Ivana Delibasic	
Jeffery Warner	



Staff members at teambuilding event during 2023

A Reimagined and Innovative Service - 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

Municipalities

We appreciate our partner municipalities across Albania

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

Regional and District Offices of Education

- Berat
- Durrës
- Fier
- Korçë
- Kukës
- Lezhë
- Lushnjë
- Mat
- Shkoder
- Skrapar
- Përmet

A Reimagined and Innovative Service - 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
- YEC
- 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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search for us via: [@peacecorpinmontenegro](https://www.instagram.com/peacecorpinmontenegro)