



Introduction

Welcome to the new Peace Corps Macedonia E-Newsletter! Four times a year, Peace Corps Macedonia is pleased to send you updates on the events, trainings and work that Volunteers are doing in Macedonia in their communities. Peace Corps supports sustainable community development in Macedonia by providing American Volunteers to work alongside Macedonia schools, organizations and municipalities. At the moment, almost 100 Volunteers are working daily with their local counterparts by teaching English language, planning community events, organizing youth clubs and supporting individuals with special needs.

As stated by John F Kennedy when he founded the Peace Corps in 1961, we strive to send skilled Volunteers to places where those skills are most needed. Each Peace Corps Volunteer serves for 27 months, including a rigorous, 10-week, pre-service language and cultural training to prepare them for life in Macedonia. They live with host families in the communities where they work and build peace and friendship through intercultural dialogue. We are happy to share the extraordinary work of our Volunteers and Staff with you.

Site Application Launch: Mayors' Forum



**OPEN CALL FOR
APPLICATIONS**

On March 14th, Peace Corps gathered more than 50 mayors and municipal leaders together for the launch of our annual site application process. Mayors heard from PCVs and counterparts (including other mayors!) about the projects and opportunities that Volunteers bring to local communities. US Ambassador Jess Baily spoke about the impact over 736 Volunteers have had over 22 years in Macedonia and the benefits of bringing a Volunteer to work in municipalities. Sites can be schools, non-governmental organizations, daily centers, municipalities or other local organizations that believe having a Volunteer will enhance their work. A Volunteer serves for two years and in return we ask for a warm and caring homestay and a host organization with meaningful work for the Volunteer. If you believe your organization could benefit from hosting an United States Peace Corps Volunteer, take a look at our application forms in English/Macedonian/Albanian on our website: <https://www.peacecorps.gov/macedonia/ask-for-a-volunteer/>

News: Peace Corps Macedonia Zero Waste Mid Service Conference



From 6th until 9th of February, Peace Corps Macedonia hosted its annual Mid Service Conference for second year Volunteers. The event brought together the 21st group of Peace Corps Macedonia Volunteers, who started their service in December 2016, and their local counterparts from schools, daily centers, municipalities and NGOs. During the four-day conference, the participants had an

opportunity to share best practices, improve their technical skills in various areas, and plan their further collaboration.

This also marked the first Peace Corps Macedonia Zero Waste event! At a zero waste event, organizers emphasize reusable, recyclable, or compostable materials in order to minimize landfill-bound waste from the event. 100 Volunteers, counterparts and staff participated in making it a success by diverting an estimated 93% of waste from landfills and saving money in the process! Peace Corps intends to make this the new normal for trainings. Big thanks to PCV Cameron Bertel and his environmental organization Ajde Makedonija for helping Peace Corps be more green and showcasing how an event like this can be produced.

Activities: Community Youth Clubs



During their service, many of the Peace Corps Volunteers in Macedonia establish youth clubs in their communities. These clubs follow non-formal, educational programs aimed at strengthening life skills and increasing community engagement of young people.

Currently, there are more than 30 YMLP (Young Men's Leadership Project) clubs, GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) clubs, English Clubs, Theatre Clubs, and Dance Clubs throughout Macedonia led by Volunteers. All clubs are co-led in partnership with Macedonia schools and local organizations. The YMLP and GLOW clubs are implemented as part of the joint program of YMCA Bitola and Peace Corps.

Project: Maria and Association Women's Forum - Tetovo



Through the project 'Empowering Women as Rights-Holders in the Tetovo Region', the Women's Forum in Tetovo (WF) helped empower 9 women from nearby rural villages to be leaders in their community as Women's Forum Ambassadors. The women attended training workshops on gender equality, women's rights, domestic violence, and life skills. As Ambassadors, the women act as confidantes for other women in the rural communities and provide them with contacts for counseling and other social services.

For many of the women at the rural community workshops, it was their first time thinking about gender equality, taking leadership roles, and presenting information to a large group of their peers.

The activities within this project were funded through the Small Project Assistance Program (SPA) implemented through a joint collaboration between USAID and Peace Corps.

Why I asked for a Peace Corps Volunteer: Sonja Madzoska (PS Braka Miladinovci – Struga)

As a special educator from Braka Miladinovci Public School, I have been working with Peace Corps Volunteers since 2013. Currently,

my work is aimed at the special classrooms within our school that are meant for students with special needs.

Our volunteer Kim has been working with school staff on building empathy among students and providing space for interaction with students with special needs within the school community. Also, together we have been focused on raising awareness for students with special needs across the local community.

Do you want to know what the most important part of my job is? The emotional connection and inclusion of these kids. For this reason I love having Kim and Peace Corps be a part of my school.

Volunteers Learning the Local Languages

During language week, held every year in Peace Corps Macedonia in February, Peace Corps Volunteers submit poetry in the form of haikus or short poems in either Macedonian or Albanian to demonstrate their use of the local language. Here are some of this year's highlights:

Полноќна врева
од среќни минувачи--
приспивна песна
(Сидни Лазарус)

Një mal me specë
në kuti mbajnë shpresën për
një dimër të ri
(Bonnie Smith)

Volunteer Corner

“What I wish Americans knew about Macedonia is how little possessions are seen to define a person’s character.”

– Macedonia Peace Corps Volunteer William Bridgeford III

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