

# Peace Corps Albania

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



148	Peace Corps Volunteers
<u>+ 68</u>	Communities
22,842	Albanian Served

# Message from U.S. Chargé d’Affaires, a.i Leyla Moses-Ones

Dear Volunteers, Albanian citizens, and Peace Corps staff:

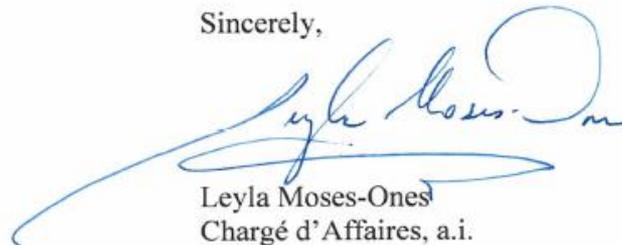
Throughout Albania, there are committed mayors, school directors, NGO leaders, parents, teachers, and civic leaders who work hard every day to make their communities stronger, more livable, and more prosperous. They embody the principle that, every day, small changes can lead to large impacts. These committed grassroots leaders are often working side by side with equally passionate Peace Corps Volunteers, who are providing technical assistance and building on the strengths that already exist in their respective communities. I witnessed the power of these fruitful capacity-building partnerships last year.

In the fall of 2018, I had the opportunity to visit the Peace Corps office when the U.S. Embassy was hosting a visit with then-Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Millard. During this dynamic event, we met with three Peace Corps Volunteers, several impressive Albanian community leaders, and a handful of brilliant young women who are Girl Scouts. Seeing first-hand the work the Volunteers and Albanian community leaders were doing to build the confidence, courage, and character of Albanian youth was impressive and inspiring. This was only one example of what has occurred in 68 communities across Albania, impacting 22,842 individuals.

Empowered leaders inspire and energize others to action -- and the momentum of this motivational force continues to “pay it forward.” Bearing witness to this should make all of us excited about the continuing growth of this incredible country.

Congratulations to all who have contributed to the impressive work reflected in this annual report.

Sincerely,



Leyla Moses-Ones  
Chargé d’Affaires, a.i.



# Message from Country Director Kate Becker

Greetings:

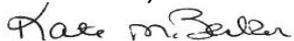
Peace Corps is proud to serve in Albania and we are pleased to share with you our 2018 Annual Report.

This Annual Report summarizes our work in 2018, sharing important numbers, quotes, and stories that weave together like a traditional Albanian rug. Teaching English and Health in and outside of the classroom, trainings on business and leadership, trail projects, physical and sport activities, tourism programs, Girl Scout troops, tree plantings, Write On competitions, Model United Nations, painting murals, creating libraries, building bathrooms, and leading summer camps are some examples of the work our Volunteers and Counterparts are doing. We also recognize that it just begins to tell our story and does not entirely capture our full impact.

The personal friendships and global understanding through the collaborative sharing of our respective cultures is the other part of the story of our work that is much harder to tell. Together, the US and Albania are breaking barriers, building love, respect, and trust. This is perhaps where the true impact of Peace Corps in Albania can best be understood.

The data, stories, and quotes found in this Annual Report reflect the talent and energy of the Peace Corps Volunteer, the Albanian Counterparts, their work agencies, the Peace Corps staff, the youth, and the communities who are striving to have an impact here in Albania. Bravo to each of you who have given your time to make our Albania the best Albania it can be.

In service,



Kate M. Becker

Peace Corps Albania Country Director



# Peace Corps Mission and Goals

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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 230,000 Americans have served in the Peace Corps in 141 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 because of 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, the first Peace Corps staff members arrived 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 education
- Community and organization 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, 871 Volunteers have worked in Albania.





# Introducing Peace Corps Albania Volunteers



Peace Corps volunteers come from all corners of the United States to create grassroots-level change in Albania. 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.

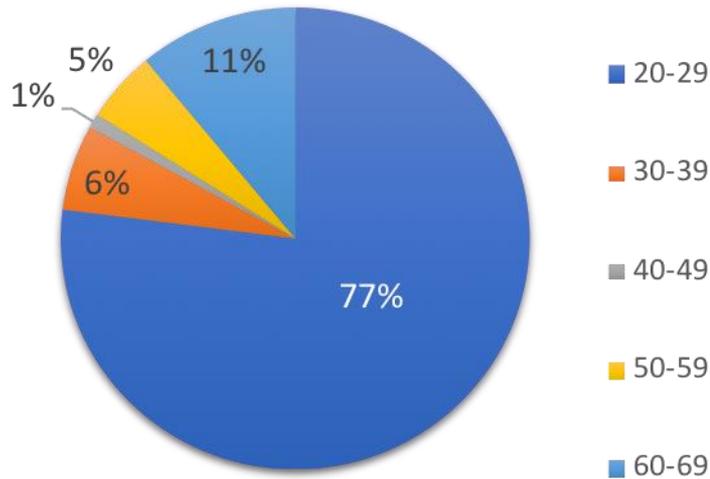


*“Our PCV Nic is a really nice guy. He has helped us a lot. He built a new library for our school. He helped us with many activities in our school and he helped us getting better with English too. He has been nice to all of us. He has been a good friend.”*

*Ervin,  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Student,  
Krume*

# Introducing Peace Corps Albania Volunteers

## AGE WHEN ARRIVED IN ALBANIA



*“Peace Corps heart and soul are its volunteers. It's so impressive that volunteers are so unique and different from each other, yet so similar in sharing their culture and devotion to the communities they serve.”*

*Sara worked with 2 PCVs in Permet, Barb and Laurelin.*

**2**

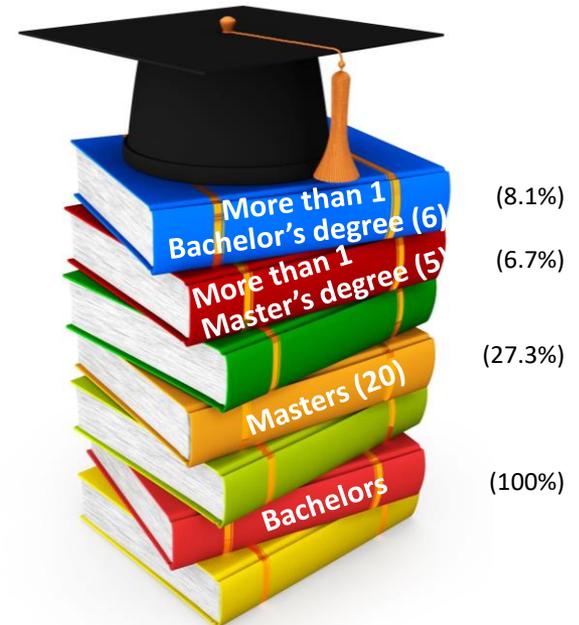
Volunteers became U.S. citizens in order to join the Peace Corps

**3**

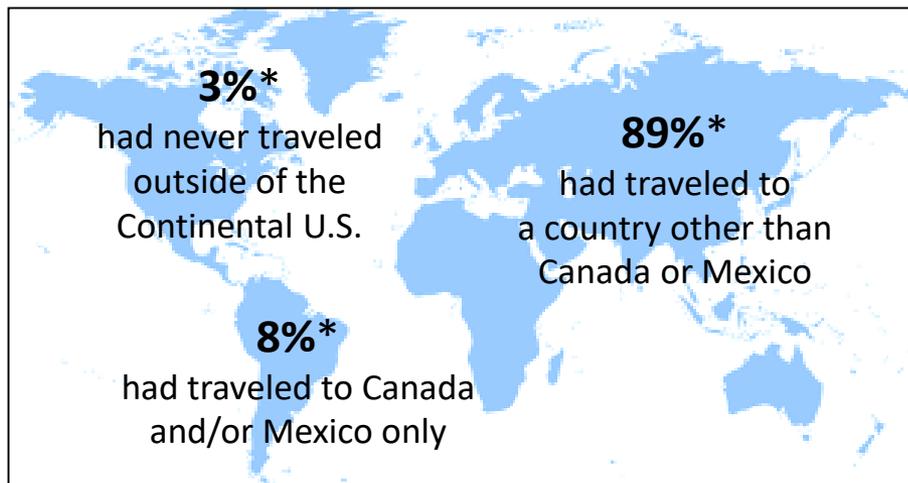
PCVs had served as a PCV before!

Mary Lou Surgi, Malaysia, 1978-1980  
Marilyn Matt, Armenia, 2008-2010  
Mike Bailey, China, 2013-2015

## EDUCATION



# Introducing Peace Corps Albania Volunteers



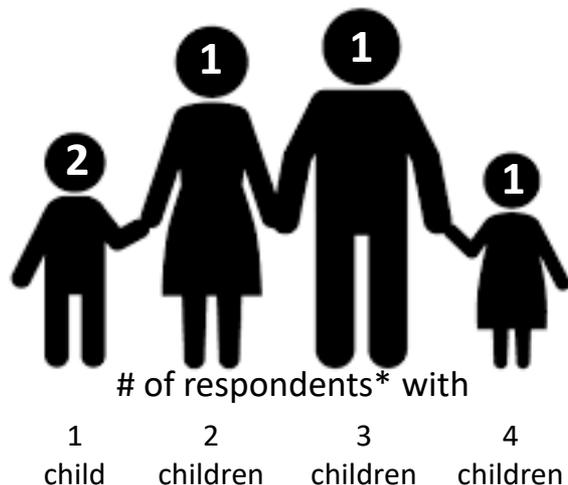
## Languages

English was not the native language of **7%** of respondents\*

**47%** of respondents\* speak 1 other language besides English and Albanian

**8** respondents\* speak 2 additional languages

**1** respondent\* speaks 3 additional languages



### # of respondents\* whose family member was or is a PCV

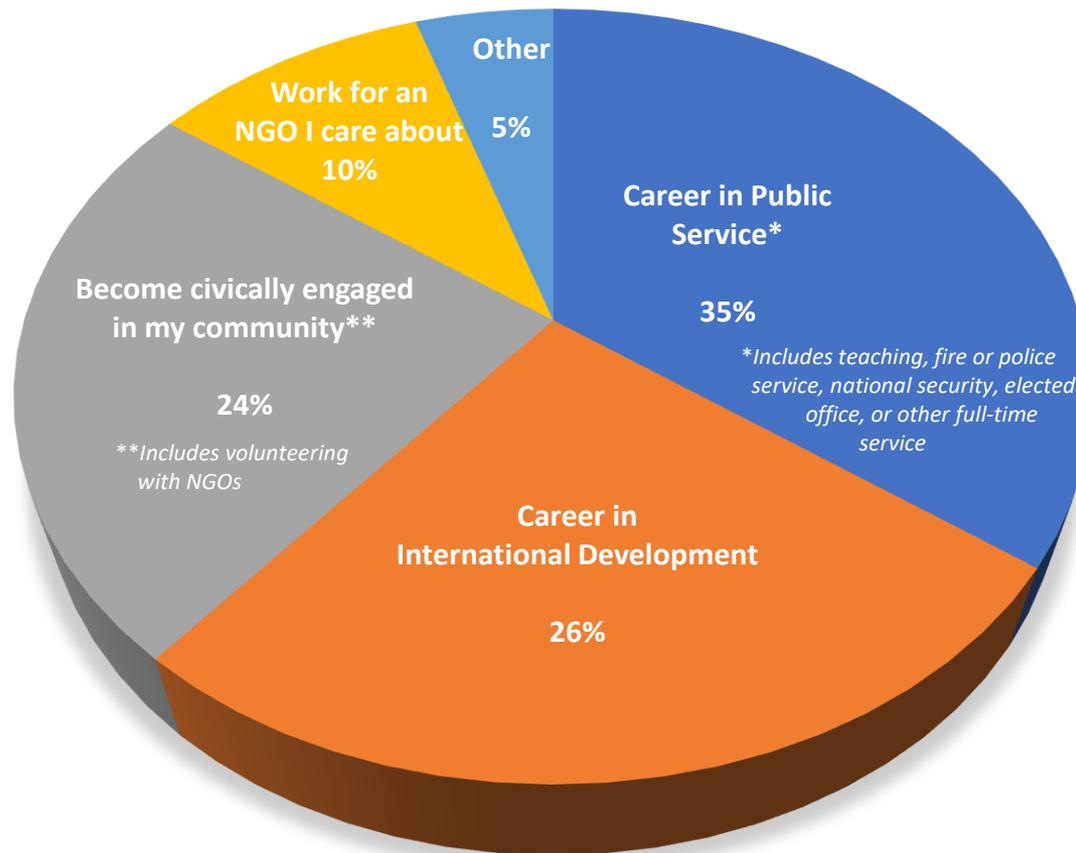
• Parent	1
• Child	1
• Sibling	1
• Cousin	1
• Friend or close colleague	26

\*Refers to an online survey of PCVs who worked in Albania in 2018, of which 50% completed the survey.

# Introducing Peace Corps Albania Volunteers



Following their  
Peace Corps  
service, how do  
Volunteers  
plan to carry  
Peace Corps  
ideals in their life?



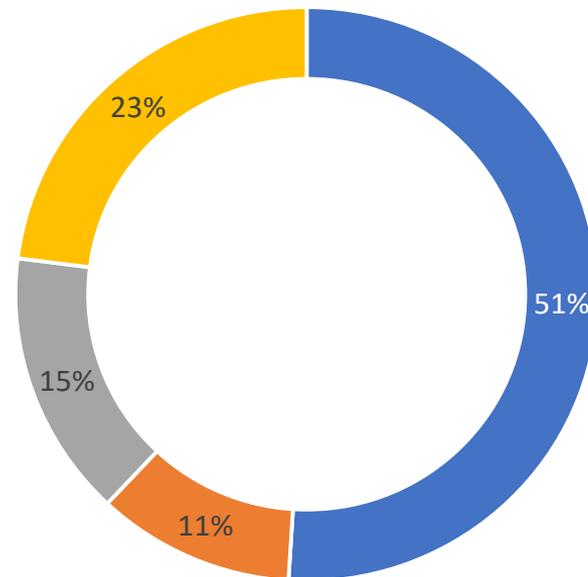
*"In the short time I have spent living in my Peace Corps site, I have built numerous close relationships that I will cherish for the rest of my life."*

PCV Kellen,  
Berat Area

# Introducing Peace Corps Albania Volunteers



In addition to sharing the culture of Albania through stories, how do Volunteers plan to share Albania with Americans back home?



- Share Albanian music, movies, and culture with friends, family
- Write blogs or articles about Albania
- Join Friends of Albania or other RPCV groups
- Other, including hosting discussions in schools and events centered around Albanian holidays

*“My host family has stood by my side over the last two years, experiencing all the highs and lows with me. Without their unwavering support, I would not be where I am now. They are no longer my “host” family - they’re just my family.”*

*PCV Malia Bilisht*

# 2018 Goals by Sector



## Health Education

### 1: Sexual and Reproductive Health

Youth will adopt behaviors and practices that contribute to improved sexual and reproductive health.

### 2: Healthy Lifestyles and Life Skills

Youth will develop the life skills necessary to make responsible and healthy decisions and take actions that positively impact their lives and the lives of those around them.



## English Education

### 1: Improve Teaching

English teachers and instructors will improve their English language proficiency, teaching methods, and resource development skills.

### 2: Increase Student Success

Students will improve their English proficiency, communication, and life skills through English instruction in the classroom or through extracurricular activities.

## Community and Organization Development

### 1: Organization Development

Local organizations and community groups will strengthen their management/operational and organizational skills and processes.

### 2: Civil Society Building

Individuals will increase their capacity to participate in local civil society and community development.

### 3: Strengthen School and Community

Teachers, school staff and administrators, and members of the broader community will strengthen collaboration and be more active participants and leaders of their school community.

# Students and Municipality Beautify Local Lake and Create Gardens

Project Highlight



**Community & Organization Development**—In 2018, Peace Corps Volunteer Ackeem and his colleagues from the municipality implemented a project that facilitated an unconventional collaboration opportunity between the youth of his town and the local municipality.

**Activities**—Youth from all 14 schools in the town worked with the municipality to beautify the local lake and create garden spaces.

**Impact**—This project provided a voice for the youth in the community, and will promote future youth investment in the city. Furthermore, the municipality had the opportunity and promoted a more inclusive environment for transparency.



*PCV Ackeem (middle)  
with youth from his community and  
a municipality colleague during the project.*

5,210

Individuals, members of local organizations or communities were trained in organization development (planning, internal management, project design management, communication) and civil society building (leadership, professional skills, service learning and volunteerism, and advocacy skills).

# American Library Opens at Local High School



**English Education**— Jordan is a Peace Corps Volunteer who works as an English teacher in his town’s high school. He, his students, and teacher colleagues wanted to transform a big storage room into a school library. With the help of teachers and the school director, Jordan mobilized students as well as the community to assemble tools and paint to set the stage for the project to start.

**Activities**—After more than a year, Jordan unveiled the “American Library” in his school, in time for a new school year to begin. More than 500 books in English were provided from multiple organizations, including those donated and shipped to Albania from people in the United States.

**Impact**— Students are able to check out books of all language levels at their leisure. The refurbished room that was not in use before is now a functional library space, spreading American culture.



*Books from the “American Library” at PCV Jordan’s school in his host Albanian city.*

**798** Teachers engaged in co-teaching and planning, in creating resources, resource rooms and libraries.

**7,288** Students learned English in the classroom and increased their participation in extracurricular activities.

**662** Community members engaged in activities and projects, in professional and personal development.

# Village School Wins 1<sup>st</sup>-Place in a Recycling Competition



**Health Education**—Laura, a Peace Corps Volunteer health educator in a small village in northern Albania, worked with school teachers and students to implement a recycling competition called ‘Zero Waste.’ She helped students win 1<sup>st</sup>-place for the first time in this regional competition.

**Activities**—Laura and her students at the school worked hard on this project. All were determined in their work; the teachers were passionate and supportive of the project and the students' efforts. Laura said, “I’m so proud of my school and the work we accomplished!”

**Impact**—This event opened the way for an Environmental Education campaign for the students of the school. The students had fun creating useful and interesting things from items that normally get discarded.



*Students from Volunteer Laura’s school showcase toys and decorations made of waste material.*

# 2018 Highlights



## ALL-VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE

The conference, attended by all Volunteers working in Albania, provided useful information about the impacts of volunteer work around the country.

Many guests who care about service and volunteerism were invited, including Tirana Mayor Erion Veliaj; writers and NGO cofounders, Elizabeth Gowing and Robert Wilton; Brunilda Kuqi, the American culture professor of the University of Tirana; and writer Vera Bekteshi, who shared the story of her life, including deportation as well as explaining how she dealt with this difficult period in Albanian history.



*"We are very grateful to Katie, because she has given a priceless contribution for our organization, and we have been lucky to have had such a person, part of our team."*



## SERVICE PROJECT

Peace Corps Albania, along with the Tirana Parks Department and Albanian youth, conducted a service project in Tirana's Lake Park.



## OPEN HOUSE

Peace Corps Albania hosted an open house with Peace Corps partners.

After 20 years of working in Albania, Peace Corps has many friends and partners across this country.

Peace Corps Volunteers cannot do the work they do without community partners.

Peace Corps Albania was pleased to have many of its partners visit its offices for the first time.



*PCV Katie's Counterpart, Fatmira, Director of Roma Gate for Integration NGO.*

# Peace Corps Albania shares Volunteers stories on Facebook and Instagram



- In 2018, we reached a milestone, of having 6000 followers in our Facebook account.
- We posted 150 times in 2018.
- We are reaching a population in Albania that is active, and quick to mobilize around a cause like volunteerism.
- We engage potential Peace Corps Volunteers in America who share our ideals of world peace and friendship.

<https://www.facebook.com/albania.peacecorps>



- In 2018 Peace Corps Albania opened an Instagram account.
- By using the power of pictures to communicate we are putting a face to our organization, and are also helping young Instagrammers finding our message.
- Our Instagram is growing fast and has reached 810 followers in just 10 months

[@peacecorpsalbania](https://www.instagram.com/peacecorpsalbania)

# 2018 Small Grants Programs



Peace Corps



USAID  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP)

PCPP connects volunteers and their communities with the private sector in the U.S. and around the world to fund community-initiated and led projects.

**\$18,500**

Awarded to Peace Corps Albania in 2018,  
funding 7 projects in 7 communities

## Friends of Albania (FOA)

FOA is an organization created by returned Peace Corps Volunteers. Now, FOA is providing assistance to community self-help, development, and educational projects in Albania through small grants to current Peace Corps volunteers working with local organizations. ***Since it's beginning, FOA has awarded more than \$10,000 of grants to Albania PCVs and counterparts.*** In 2018, 16 projects were funded in 16 communities across Albania.

## Small Projects Assistance (SPA)

### Overview

**190**

Total projects funded and implemented in Albania since program inception in 2004

**\$2,000–\$4,000**

Range of funding available per project through SPA grants

**25%**

Amount of matching funds required as the community's contribution

### In 2018

**\$27,649**

Amount provided by USAID/Albania for SPA grants

**10**

Small-scale community projects funded

**3**

Project design and management workshops funded for PCVs and counterparts

*"USAID/Albania is proud to partner with Peace Corps/Albania to support grassroots community development activities making tremendous impacts with minimal financial commitments."*

*Mikaela,  
Director  
USAID Albania*

# 2018 Partner Organizations



## Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

- Agro-Puka
- American Councils
- ARKA Center—Shkodër
- CSDC Durrës
- Darien Book Aid
- English Language Teachers Association
- ESU – English Speaking Union
- New Bridges
- Food Bank
- Friends of Albania
- Albanian Local Capacity Development Foundation
- Mary Ward Loreto
- Regional Development Agency—Korçë
- Sidi Education
- Terre des Hommes
- Water Charity
- World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
- World Connect
- World Vision
- Youth Center—Vlorë
- Youth in Free Enterprise
- Youth of Ura
- Touristic Dibra

## Government and Independent Organizations

- Albanian Red Cross
- Chamber of Commerce—Vlorë
- Directorates of Public Health
- Institute of Education Development
- Institute of Public Health
- Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth
- Ministry of Health and Social Protection
- Planning and Local Governance Project
- Regional Development Agencies of Vlorë, Korçë, and Tiranë
- Regional Directorate of National Culture—Gjirokaštër
- Regional Directorates of State Social Services—Berat
- Regional Directorates of State Social Services—Durrës
- United Nations Albania
- United Nations Population Fund
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- United States Embassy and American Corners
- University of Tirana, English Department

## Municipalities

- |           |                 |               |
|-----------|-----------------|---------------|
| • Berat   | • Kuçovë        | • Gjirokaštër |
| • Elbasan | • Lushnje       | • Bulqizë     |
| • Ersekë  | • Ura Vajgurore | • Librazhd    |
| • Fier    | • Mirditë       | • Klos        |
| • Kavajë  | • Roskovec      | • Përmet      |
| • Korçë   | • Shijak        |               |
| • Krujë   | • Fushë Arrëz   |               |

## Regional and District Offices of Education

- |           |               |                   |
|-----------|---------------|-------------------|
| • Berat   | • Gjirokaštër | • Tiranë City     |
| • Diber   | • Korçë       | • Tiranë District |
| • Durrës  | • Kukës       | • Vlorë           |
| • Elbasan | • Lezhë       |                   |
| • Fier    | • Shkoder     |                   |

# Our Full-Time Staff in 2018

Peace Corps Albania is proud to have a dedicated staff comprised of Americans and Albanians. Together, they support our volunteers every day of the year to help them meet their service goals. In 2018, our staff remained professional and positive during the Pre-Service Trainings for new volunteers, a resourceful site development campaign, the close of service process for the group of volunteers who completed their work and implementing new policies that required additional work—all on top of their regular responsibilities. Their efforts make Peace Corps Albania the successful post that it is.



Agim Dyrmishi  
Alsida Myrtaj  
Anida Tulo  
Arben Cako  
Arben Loci  
Ardiana Brahja  
Besa Arapi  
Carmen Sheehan  
Darina Kaltani  
Diana Djaloshi  
Dritan Gjoshi  
Dritan Kamberi  
Elsona Cupi  
Gentian Leka  
Gentian Mano  
Ilir Memlikaj  
Ilir Ziu  
Iris Dollia  
Iva Sinani

Kate Becker  
Kyle Olsen  
Lumturi Piciri  
Marie Aughenbaugh  
Marjeta Zavalani  
Marsela Loci  
Mira Luca  
Mirela Tahiraj  
Monika Mukja  
Poleta Luka  
Ylli Cupi



# Our Pre-Service Training Staff in 2018

Each year, Peace Corps Albania hires 18 temporary staff to play a crucial role in Pre-Service Training (PST) of our new volunteers. These individuals are as dedicated to the ideals and mission of Peace Corps as our Regular staff. They are part of our family and every year, when PST concludes, it is difficult to tell them goodbye. They teach our volunteers a new language, they keep us safe, healthy, and organized. Peace Corps Albania is what it is today thanks to their efforts.



Ali Gjiriti  
Alketa Canka  
Besarta Stafa  
Besmira Rrumbullaku  
Bruna Çoku  
Denisa Panxhi  
Eglantina Reka  
Elona Pajova  
Erion Kumuria  
Ervin Bebeti  
Imelda Celibashi  
Ledion Veshi  
Sara Gaçe  
Vjollca Merdani  
Xheni Hatillari  
Ymer Leksi  
Zamir Mero  
Zerina Zeneli



Peace Corps Albania  
Rr. Besnik Sykja, Godina 2  
Hyrja 1, P.O. Box 8180  
Tirana, Albania

Phone: +355 42 365 5033

Email: [AL-information@peacecorps.gov](mailto:AL-information@peacecorps.gov)

Website:  
[peacecorps.gov/albania/](http://peacecorps.gov/albania/)

Facebook:  
[facebook.com/albania.peacecorps](https://facebook.com/albania.peacecorps)

Instagram:  
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