



# Peace Volunteering Network



# 2023 Annual Report

# Introduction

The 2023 Annual Report of Peace Volunteering Network (PVN) reflects a year of significant achievements and impactful initiatives undertaken by the organization. This report provides a detailed overview of PVN's activities throughout the year, showcasing organisation's commitment to advancing mission and values.

Throughout 2023, PVN embarked on various projects and events that not only reinforced our core principles but also propelled us closer to realizing our strategic goals. The report is readily available on our official website, ensuring transparency and accessibility for all individuals eager to delve deeper into PVN's endeavors and contributions.



# Table of Contents

Introduction **2**

---

About PVN **4**

---

New Changes **6**

---

PROJECTS **7**

---

International Volunteers **19**

---

Donors **21**

---

# About PVN

Peace Volunteering Network is an organization that promotes and supports democracy, human rights, youth empowerment and activism, active participation, inclusion, and peace education. PVN was established on January 28 January 2005 as a non-governmental and non-profit organization. PVN is active at local, national, regional, and international levels.

PVN has a sustainable network with civil society organizations around the world, and trustworthy local and national partners, where we have a good environment to learn together, share, support, and provide expertise in the field needed. PVN is a branch of Service Civil International (worldwide organizations promoting the culture of peace and human rights), UNITED for Intercultural Actions, member of Albanian Youth Congress, ECHOLISE

During these 20 years of existence, we strongly support the local youth organizations, local governments, and community development in Albania, by using and bringing the international and regional experiences/practices where we are active due to the wide networks.

## Values

PVN is guided in all activities by its core values



**Transparency**



**Integrity**



**Human Rights**



**Inclusion**



**Tolerance &  
Acceptance**



**Dialogue**

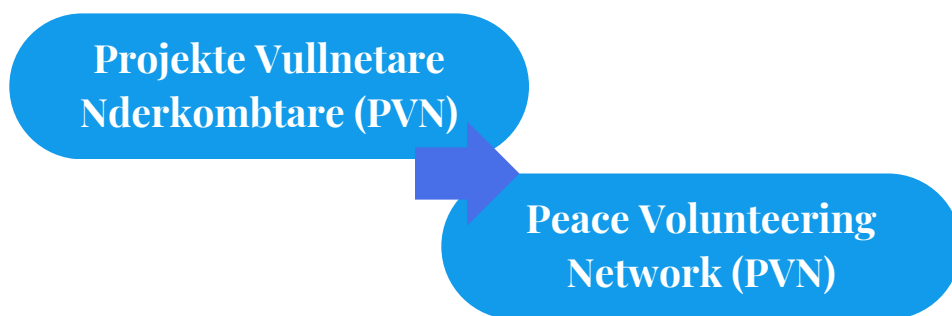
# Objectives

The work to accomplish our mission is guided by 11 objectives listed as below.



# New Changes

## New Name



In 2023 PVN changed its name into Peace Volunteering Network/ PVN . The new name reflects PVNs evolving identity and its commitment to advancing (1) Peace and Intercultural Dialogue, (2) Human Rights and Democracy, (3) Volunteerism, (4) Youth Empowerment and (5) Sustainable Development.

The acronym of the organization will remain the same PVN as well as our commitment to support the above areas, remain unchanged

## New Office

### Established office in Kristiansand, Norway

In November 2023, PVN opened a branch in Kristiansand, Norway. It keeps the same values, aims and objectives. It has a board from diverse Norwegian backgrounds, and in the long-term perspective, it will be the secretariat of the European Network



# PROJECTS



# 1. Promoting Civic Oversight and Youth Inclusion in Local Government

For 3 years this project has contributed towards reducing corruption at the local self-government level in Albania through improving municipal transparency and accountability due to strengthened civic monitoring capacities. The project is building sustainable capacities of youth CSOs, youth, media, and other civic stakeholders to understand the right of access to information and sustain their proactive watchdog role against corruption at the local level. These actors are serving as resource centers for transparency and accountability at the local level. In framework of this projects we have implemented the activities as below:

## 1.1 Training with Municipalities Employees:



PVN organized a 3-day training session for coordinators of the right to information from 20 targeted municipalities in 2023. The training aimed to enhance their capacities, share experiences, discuss challenges, and explore opportunities to improve the implementation of the Right to Information Law. This initiative directly impacted the transparency levels of the municipalities, as the participants were pivotal actors in this field. The training elevated their knowledge base and equipped them with specific skills on providing information, updating communication channels, and enhancing citizen engagement.

## 1.2 Training with 20 Local CSOs, civic activists and media

A 3 day training successfully increased the capacity of local media, local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), civil activists, and citizens, strengthening their ability to ensure the effective implementation of the law on the right to information and public consultations at the local level.

Participants gained a comprehensive understanding of the law on the right to information and public consultations. The training sessions covered various aspects of transparency and accountability, equipping participants with the necessary legal knowledge. These stakeholders now serve as effective instruments to exert pressure on local self-government units for greater accountability, fostering competition among them and improving overall performance.





### 1.3 Publishing Monitoring Report on Local Government Transparency

Trained local coordinators representing 20 distinct local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and local media outlets diligently monitored the transparency practices across 20 municipalities. The monitoring process adhered to a meticulously structured methodology crafted by PVN's experts in the field. This report serves as a comprehensive document accessible to all stakeholders seeking insights into transparency levels, accompanied by recommendations tailored to enhance information dissemination for respective institutions and better serve their constituents.

Link: <https://pvnalbania.org/publication/>

### 1.4 Community Dialogue Meetings

After the monitoring process of this project, 20 Community Dialogue Meetings were conducted with key local stakeholders from the 20 target municipalities in order to present them with monitoring findings as well as creating a space for discussion between all stakeholders to exchange their ideas and experiences connected to transparency of local government.

Stakeholders provided feedback and insights which was instrumental in refining the reports and ensuring they were backed by evidence-based information.



## 2. “Consortium between local governments and civil society for sustainable democracy and volunteering:

In September 2021 PVN did launch the “Consortium between local governments and civil society for sustainable democracy and local volunteering”, a consortium which aims to create a sustainable volunteering environment as an important aspect of active participation, engagement and social cohesion. In the 12 months pilot period Municipalities have a volunteer coordinator/and/or department (depending on size of municipality); have the matric, some of them budget volunteering, hosting international volunteers, ready to have quality labels from the European Solidarity Corps program.



After the pilot stage, the consortium was expanded to include 20 municipalities and around 30 civil society organizations, and universities of Albania with the perspective of becoming a regional network of stakeholders. A key achievement of the previous initiative was developing Local Volunteering Action plans, having a coordinator for volunteering in the municipalities; being part of mobilities at international level etc. Additionally, through the Consortium Parliamentarian and Governments visits : PVN has organized 4 study visits in Norway with Deputies of the Parliaments ( April 2024) Mayers, Deputy Mayors, staff of the municipality, and representatives of civil society organisations in 2022 and 2023 where have been discussed suitable collaboration and democracy.



### 3. Inclusive Decisions

The aim of the project is to reduce inequalities and social exclusion of visually impaired young people (VIP) through their participation in community life through online and physical methods to improve their relations with local and international institutions and prevent negative phenomena. They connect with the local government, bring main challenges to them and jointly plan inclusive policies and actions.



This project is in partnership with organisations from Romania, Albania and Corosao. In each country there are organized a series of meetings with young people, the municipality of Lushnja ( as the main partner in Albania, and as one of the Consortium members for Democracy and Volunteering”; civil society sector, and youth centre etc, to address youth issues and lobby for inclusive youth policies. In addition, there are organised study visits in Brussels, Corosao and Rumania to share the positive models and enhance collaboration between youth and governments.

The needs gathered in each country and the recommendations are addressed and presented in the European Commission offices in Brussels by young people themselves.

### 4. International Volunteering in the Municipality of Lushnja

On the framework of suitable collaborations with the municipalities and on the framework of the Consortium “ Municipality - Civil Society for Democracy and Volunteering”, PVN has coordinated 2 international volunteers from France to contribute at the municipality of Lushnje, in the community level, schools and youth sector.

Volunteers have made a great impact at the community level, supported the municipality in daily youth activities and developed their capacities under the supervision and constant support of the municipality.



# 5. Country Needs Assessment to Identify key needs for prevention of Violent Extremism repatriation and Rehabilitation

Supported by GCERF September 2023 - February 2024

## 3.1 National report and case study

This national study was finalised in a national report, and a case study draws final findings and recommendations for the "Country Needs Assessment for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Repatriation and Rehabilitation in Albania" project. Needs and challenges are identified through a range of activities that led to the report from a triangulation of experience, and empirical and normative data. The majority of findings are based on interviews and focus groups with institutions and professionals, as well as from the survey with the community members.

This the first report mapping the needs and challenges at the national level, mapping key institutions and stakeholders and addressing a long list of recommendations.

The study provided a detailed overview of needs, challenges, and opportunities, as well as a list of recommendations for key actors in policy-making, strengthening mechanisms, capacity building, intersectoral cooperation, preventing violent extremism in Albania, and rehabilitation and reintegration processes.

The study was conducted by 6 international and national experts of the field, in close collaboration and contribution of CVE Center in Albania.

The national report is available under request to GCERF

## 3.2 Final conference on Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Albania

PVN conducted a workshop to present the findings of the National Study on "Country needs assessment to identify key needs for Prevention of Violent Extremism, Repatriation and Rehabilitation in Albania"

The workshop generated ideas and initiatives related to long-term processes, envisioning the engagement of all stakeholders in this field.

Workshop participants engaged in fruitful discussions and collaborative efforts to identify key priorities in preventing violent extremism, as well as strategies for rehabilitation and reintegration in Albania. With key actors from various institutions and organizations, an open space for dialogue and idea exchange was created, fostering a collective approach to addressing these urgent challenges. The conference gathered representatives from the police prison, prohibition, civil society, media, embassies etc.



## 6. ICON - Capacity building for the International Voluntary Services ( IVS) movement in impact assessment, communication, and Community Building.

This project is focused to increase the quality, impact and reach of the volunteering activities (incl. their inclusivity and environmental sustainability) through increasing the organisations' capacity in impact assessment, outside communication and community building.

Its results is ensuring long-term sustainability of the activities by setting up a new strategic approach for effective gain and use of financial and human resources and strengthening international cooperation and transfer of experience to other organisations working with international volunteering.

The project is a consortium between PVN Albania, CCIVS, Inex Chack Repoblik and GAIA Kosoco and will be implemented until December 2025.



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## 7. ECHO III: for memory's sake”



ECHO III: for memory's sake” was an arts and heritage project that aims to bring together artists working in the fields of theatre, music, visual arts, and literature in order to explore tradition and culture through the themes of marriage, arranged marriages and nuclear families in the Balkan context. Specifically, the aim is to explore gender roles and norms through history and how all of the above affect young people and artists living in Europe. ECHO III explores how the Balkan cultures integrate and diverge from each other, our similarities and our differences, to put together a puzzle of our collective experiences. How does the new generation understand the concept of marriage? What does it mean to be bound together for life with someone you met once? Are there any remains of the traditions of our ancestors in how we choose partners? Where were women positioned in such a context? Is marriage just an economic proposition, just a prospect of prosperity, a way out of poverty, salvation from criticism and ridicule and gossip? We are interested in the concept of virginity; a woman's most treasured possession, how people used to celebrate a woman's "pureness" by displaying blood-stained sheets as a trophy, a relieving breath for the parents of the daughter and a security stamp for marriage bliss.

The project had 4 art residencies in Albania, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria; and a Traveling art caravan with performances of 4 artistic types in the 4 countries.

## 8. You (th) decide

The project's achieved to enhance youth engagement and activism in local government and community, as well as to assist young people in establishing connections and raising awareness of local authorities and local youth civil society actors in order to engage young people in decision-making and develop more inclusive youth policies.



The project's main activities were:

- A capacity-building training for 20 young people, youth workers, and municipal youth department staff on youth engagement in decision-making organized in Dures, Albania ;
- Dissemination of the "Have Your Say" manual and the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life to local government and civil society sectors, with a view to encouraging its use in the development of youth policies.
- Knowledge transfer through peer-to-peer workshops and one online campaign organized by young people and youth workers who participated in the training course
- Creation and distribution of a simplified guidebook in Albanian about youth participation in decision making at local level, in albanian language in hard copy and online version

## 9. Democracy Week, Norway 2023

In May 2024, PVN organized and participated in Democracy Week in Norway, which had 2 main pillars and collaborations.

1. Visit the democracy events of Democracy Week for 27 youth workers, municipal representatives and organisations from the Balkan countries. As well as meetings with the Minispliaty of Kristiansand, Youth Centers and Civil society organisations
2. Meetings and roundtables with the Director of the Center for Preventing Violent Extremism in Albania, Mr. Denion Meidani, Country Director of Terrdes Home Albania.

The meetings have been organized with the main stakeholders of preventing radicalization: antiterror, police, municipality, schools, civil society, and researchers. There were discovered models and discussed what could be adapted for the Albanian context.



The main achievements of the study visit are:

- Understanding the international event in Kristiansand on how to improve democracy. Understanding and learning from the Norwegian model on the culture of democracy, collaboration among stakeholders
- Support youth workers to develop quality activities, based on values like equality, equity, inclusion, access to education and culture, democracy, and human rights, including VIPs in these activities, in order to increase their mobility, employability and sense of entrepreneurial initiatives, capacitating in this way their independent living.
- Networking with public institutions, organizations and leaders across Europe.



## 10. Youth forum Lushnje

The Youth Thematic Forum aimed to support and empower young people in Lushnje Municipality to influence the improvement and strengthening of democratic processes through inclusiveness as well as the connection between youth and local government



The project addresses the low engagement of young people in local decision-making processes, and the lack of systemic cooperation between young people, local government and the community. On the one hand, there is a need for young people to make an impact on their peers, institutions and the community. On the other hand, there is a need for the municipality to include talented young people who contribute to improving youth infrastructure and addressing community issues from a bottom-up perspective. These needs are addressed by empowering both parties: youth and local government, creating synergies and solid cooperation.

The project gives importance to facilitating the process of dialogue between young people and institutions, capacity building, and engaging young people directly in concrete activities with peers and the community, as a way to practice the skills acquired, but also to bring them closer to the community and raise awareness in the society about the importance of the binom Youth - Local Governance.

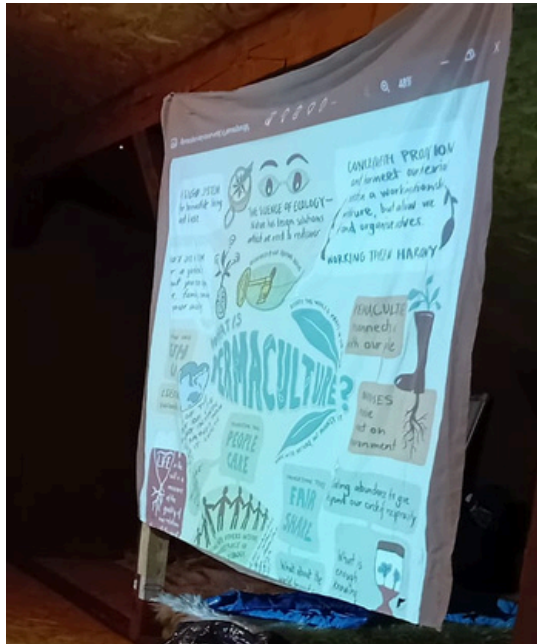
## 11. Journey to the Core

The scope of the project was to provide participants with the tools, knowledge and stimulation to assist them in the journey to their own core. Through this process, the participants were encouraged to realize the importance of community, personal development, healthy lifestyle, and environmental protection

28 participants from Belgium, Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Spain, Italy, Latvia, and Greece followed the "trip" of personal development and environmental protection practices.

During the study visit there were organized meetings and visits in different organizations: During the trip to Kosovo Boževce eco-village, GAIA Kosovo organisation, participants got to know more about the concepts of permaculture, values and principles of natural building, they experienced the wild natural living.





Also there are done visits in an agroturistic place, Mrizi I Zanave where participants took the connect of agrotourism tasted local fresh food, after that we did visit of PVN Albania and Qendra EDEN/ EDEN Center organisation which work in the field of voluntarism and environmental protection. Are shared the insights in couples with people who we trust. Communication isn't just words; it's the bridge connecting souls. It's in these conversations that we find strength, resilience, and a shared vision for a brighter future.

## 12. Find your balance

The project “ Find your balance” aimed at empowering youth workers on keeping a well balanced life through building capacities, exchange of knowledge/experience, developing skills on the topic, in order to give a positive impact in their local communities and to young people.

This project aimed:

- To give different kind of methodologies in building a balanced life among youth workers through participation of trainers and specialists in several areas
- To spread knowledge, awareness and build capacities among youth workers about healthy lifestyle, inspiration for future cooperation, and impact on our communities at local, national and international level
- To give the needed tools to youth workers/professionals in healthy lifestyle field
- To promote and develop Erasmus values, respect, awareness, and empathy.
- To develop team knowledge, learn alternative - creative-nature based methods, creation of connections, and work together with the local community.



The main activity was a international training course organised in Albania 22-29 June about Healthy Lifestyle. This activity was attended by 28 participants from 8 different countries of Europe. The participants were youth workers or volunteers coming from different backgrounds (rural / urban areas, economical/non-economical obstacles, participants who were interested or had already some experience in the topic, some of them were professional in the topic who did organise some workshops)

There were 5 trainers who had been participating in previous projects of Erasmus plus, who followed the process of the project since the writing phase.



### 13. Annual workshops and events in schools and universities

Annual workshops and events in schools and universities: PVN organizes non-formal educational training and seminars on human rights, conferences, awareness-raising campaigns, researches, manuals/brochures, and work camps at local and international levels. Since 2010, annually we organized around 150 capacity building training /seminars/workshops with local organizations, municipalities, teachers, students of the schools and universities on human rights and democracy.

### International Volunteers at PVN

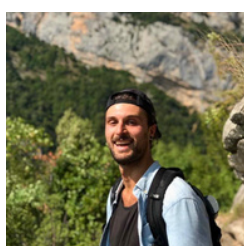
**Sarah Mounier:  
Volunteer from  
Service Civique,  
France**



**Victor Limonier,  
Service Civique  
program, from  
France.**



**Bert T'Siobbel,  
European Service  
Volunteer from  
Belgium**



# International Volunteers at PVN

**Martina Ciechanovska, ESC volunteer , from Poland.**



**Anatole Dimroci, ESC volunteer , from France**

**Melissa Lastrade, program Service Civique , from France**



**Lucille Gueiffier, program Service Civique, from France**

**Emma Mezzana, program Service Civique from France.**



International volunteers has been working in community centers where youth and children with fewer opportunities receive services and integration activities; promoting volunteering

PVN actively keeps sending European Solidarity Corps volunteers towards different European countries.

Thus in 2023 PVN sent:

- Mikel Dauti went to Hamburg, Germany and he worked with children and young people in a youth center.
- Stenaldo Mëhilli was based in Bone, Germany and served as Placement Officer for SCI Germany.
- Nurjona Nurja was placed in Andalucia, Spain and she was involved in different processes within the organization.
- Kiara Cikollari was placed in Rome, Italy and worked in a residential care home for people with disabilities.
- Besa Disha is currently serving with SCI Catalunya in Barcelona as a Placement Officer; she fulfilled other tasks too according to the need of the organization.
- Erma Xhameta and Amikeda Cenaj served as short-term ESC volunteers in Rome, with SCI Italy where they were engaged in the "NO BORDER FEST" project, a two day long festival consisting of discussions, music and cultural events dedicated to the thematic of migration, freedom of movement and resistance against any type of racism.

## Donors

Thanks to the support of donors and partners we made it possible to organize the majority of the activities. The donors who supported the projects during 2023 are the National Endowment for Democracy, European Youth Foundation/Council of Europe; European Commission, Erasmus Plus Program, United Nations Development Programme Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), The Coordination Center for Countering Violent Extremism-Albania (CVE).



A huge contribution is given by partners, institutions (such as the Municipality of Tirana, Municipalities part of the Consortium, High Schools, Libraries in Tirana, Volunteers, etc, who gave their time, energy, and other in-kind contributions to our annual projects.