

# REPORT Balkans Peace Park

## Thethi 4<sup>th</sup> annual SUMMER PROGRAMME 2011



11<sup>th</sup> July – 20<sup>th</sup> August

### Co-ordinators

Chris Whichelo, 1st Module

Eralda Nikshiqi, 2<sup>nd</sup> Module

## **General Description**

Over the course of the 6 weeks student numbers varied between 25 - 40 attending from the village and surrounding area. The students were divided in 5 groups according to their age and also their English level.

Students were grouped as follows:

- Group 1: Very young (5 to 7 approx; Beginner level)
- Group 2: Young (8 to 12 approx; Beginner level)
- Group 3: Young (8 to 12 approx; Intermediate level)
- Group 4: Older (13 to 18 approx; Beginner level)
- Group 5: Older (13 to 18 approx; Intermediate level)

During the course of the second module, there were 5 international volunteers, 1 Albanian volunteer, 2 Albanian interpreters, 2 Albanian teachers and 2 Albanian logistics coordinators, one in Shkodra and one in Thethi.

Lessons were held from 09.00 to 11.00 with a 10 minute break in the middle. After the lesson, there was a staff meeting (averagely 20-30 minutes) during which the teachers shared with one-another what they covered in their daily lessons, how was it for the students, did they themselves enjoy it and any concerns they had for that day.

### **1. Curricular**

English teachers were assisted by Albanian interpreters. By teacher request there were also some grammar lessons usually in groups but sometimes also 1-1. Albanian teachers took the environmental classes for all the 5 groups. For one week there was also a Human Rights specialist focusing mainly on children's rights.

### **2. Extra-curricular**

There were also many extra-curricular activities such as: music, sports, clean-up days, preparation, painting. They were usually held after the lesson starting finished from 11.0-12.00.



## **Clean-up days**

Several clean-up days were organized. A major one involved all the children and the teachers of the school. On this day we had shorter lessons, starting. The children were divided in 3 groups and accompanied by 2-3 teachers they left in three different directions. The activity was rewarded with refreshments. As a lesson, rather than just a service for the community, the Albanian Environmental Awareness teacher spoke to them about the importance of keeping Thethi clean and also transmitting this to family members and tourists as well.

### **3. Comments, Conclusions and Future Planning**

The Programme was fully supported by the *Kryeplak* (village headman).

B3P paid for the installation of decent toilets, which benefited staff and children.

English classes were confined mainly to one room due to the corridor being full of building materials for the new pharmacy. The classroom was well equipped with resources and ideas for learning. Volunteers have inventoried available equipment for future years.

There was much continuity this year, with the return of Albanian teachers, interpreters, B3P co-ordinators as well as logistics and homestay organizers. One of the interpreters was a former B3P Summer Programme student.

The English level of the children of Thethi has improved in a distinctive way. This is not only something we have identified but a lot of people said that they have been impressed by the English level and the number of children who speak English in Thethi. It is very important and needs to be stressed that the Summer Programme is occupying the children of the village in a positive and forward-thinking way.

The focus on the environmental work and the opportunity for environmental lessons and activities is very important for the children themselves, their families and the development of tourism as well. The clean-up days and the preparation and posting of the “Keep Thethi Clean” signs have been some practical activities through which the children have not only learned

from but they have also had the chance to work together and understand the importance that it has in the long run.

During the course of this Summer Programme, there has been good collaboration and support between the teachers. Great team-spirit has accompanied the whole team during the course of the Summer Programme. The high level of flexibility and adaptability has contributed a lot to the relationship of all the people involved. International volunteers have enjoyed working with Albanian teachers. The community of Thethi year after year seems to be more supportive and positive towards the SP. The volunteers and the teachers are known to the community and respected by them. We were honoured to welcome Mrs Elizabeth Evans, Deputy British Ambassador, who distributed the certificates to the children at the graduation ceremony on August 20th. The event has been published on <http://www.ukinalbania.fco.gov.uk/>

For next year, we plan to extend to other areas of the Peace Park Region (potentially Valbona and Vermosh) and implement the same SP as in Thethi since this model has been successful there. One organization is already interested and wants to work with us and the respective communes and Education directorates very much like what we have done in Thethi and would like to see this work extended in other regions as well.

Thethi SP expects to focus particularly on practical activities, trainings and new initiatives involving young people and empowering the community. For the children of Thethi, English is now only necessary for the Young and Very Young students. However one of the most important contributions that B3P women volunteers make to the life of the valley has been to take up the invitation to enter the homes and to teach the women not only English, but also widening their knowledge of the world outside the confines of the valley and helping them to understand sustainable tourism needs.

## **Visitors**

During this Programme, there were many visitors interested in the Summer Programme. Some of them included: the Regional Education Director, *Ms. Artrida Ferketi*; the Prefect of Shkodra, *Mr. Maxhid Cungu*; the German Ambassador, *Ms. Carola Müller –Holtkemper*; the GIZ Albanian country director, *Mr. Ismail Beka*; *Mr. Niles Cole* from the American Embassy; *Ms. Cristine Costantini* and *Ms. Elizabeth Evans* from the British Embassy and several local, national and international TV stations, an dependent Austrian television

company filmed in the classroom, and a Swedish journalist. 18 Peace Corps Volunteers spent a whole school day with the children, (and have indicated a real interest in becoming involved in the future).

### **Special Circumstances**

The Programme was deeply affected by the sudden passing away of our volunteer, Rosemarie Clegg on July 10th, causing a week's delay in opening. Rosie touched everyone in a unique way. The response of the staff and villagers in holding the Programme together was magnificent. A special memorial mass was held in the village church. The Foreign and Commonwealth office were efficient in all they did. One cannot speak too highly of the time and sympathy given by the British Embassy in Tirane.