

Albania report 2

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Our second week in Albania took place in Vlora, under scorching temperatures. At first it was challenging as the atmosphere was different from Korca, but, eventually we got to know the members really well and we became very close.

Project 1: Football

We managed to gather 12 players for our football project including a professional goalkeeper. Despite an initial scare when it seemed that we would not be able to obtain a venue, we were able to secure one in the last minutes. We mixed the Albanian and UK players together, creating 2 teams. Half could not speak English but in the end this was not a problem at all. Everyone had fun and we made a lot of new friends.

Project 2: Volleyball

Vlora is famous for its beautiful beaches which attracts tourists from all over Europe. Combined with the perfect weather, we had a great opportunity to organise a volleyball project. As soon as we set up the net, a crowd immediately formed, asking if they could join in to play. It was very natural.

‘Winner-stays-on’ was the main rule and people began forming their own teams to challenge the winning team. Each team consisted of up to 6 players and the most of them had never known each other before. By the end of their game however, they were exchanging handshakes, hi-5s and hugs. Even for those who could not play, it was enjoying to watch and appreciate the aesthetics.

It is a very simple thing but these events testify that sports really is one of the easiest way to break down barriers and concepts people have about each other.



Service Project



Just like in Korca, we cleared up litter. The day of the project was a special occasion for the Albanian Orthodox, 'St. Mary's Easter Day'. Coincidentally, we did our project in a monastery village where many people go for pilgrimage. It was a holy place but even then it was not treated as so. Clearly, mindset is the problem. Hence, for a long-term impact, we got visitors to sign a pledge to protect the environment. Many people signed enthusiastically and even encouraged us in what we were doing.

Overall it was a successful week and we hope to do even better for next week when we go to Shkodra.