



## STUDENT DETAILS

University department / faculty:	<b>Christian Social Science</b>
Field of study:	<b>International Social Science</b>
Home university:	<b>Otto-von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg</b>
Nationality:	<b>Ghanian</b>
Duration of traineeship (from ...to...):	<b>September 2019 to october 2022</b>

## **TRAINEESHIP INSTITUTION**

Country: **Albania**

Name of traineeship institution: **Adventist Relief Agency**

Web page: **www.adraalbania.org**

Address: **Muhamet Gjollësja Nr. 4, PO BOX 2403  
1000 Tirana, Albania**

Contact person: **Kristi Qendro**

Telephone / E-Mail: **kristi.qendro@adra.al**

## **EXPERIENCE REPORT** (approx. 3 pages + more photos if applicable)

### **1) Traineeship institution**

*Please give a brief description of your host traineeship institution.*

ADRA is an international humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with many branches in the world. It is an International Non-Governmental Organization that is involved in the management and provision of disaster relief materials and engages in the provision of social intervention programs in places where these humanitarian services are needed. As an agency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (a Christian North America-based religious denomination), it operates an international system of hospitals, clinics, schools, universities and human service programs (Díaz et al, 2002, p.481). Even though the agency is part of the Adventist church, it has employees and volunteers from different religious and ethnic backgrounds who are working in various locations. There are about nineteen (19) million people in the world who directly or indirectly benefit from the operations of ADRA every year in the areas of food security, economic development, primary health, disaster response and basic education program (ADRA International, 200, p.3). Furthermore, the beneficiaries of the humanitarian projects of the agency are not only restricted to Christians or Adventists but all individuals irrespective of their race, religion or political ideologies.

As a Christian organization, ADRA is guided by Christian religious principles in its operation. However, it does not use its provision of charity services as bait to convert beneficiaries to join the church.

The agency has a humanitarian and development philosophy of service rooted in the belief system of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, the mission statement of the agency and its annual report seems to support the claim that its purpose is not to engage in proselytism. The agency's high degree of administration and financial independence from the church also seems to support this claim ((Díaz et al, 2002, p.481).

The operations of the agency are funded by both the church and other donors. Some branches of the agency engage in social enterprise to fund the running of their offices. Also, the agency independently applies for funds from international and national donors for humanitarian projects. Some of this process is done competitively and ADRA competes with other NGOs to win these funds for projects. This goes a long way to show the extent of independence the agency has from the church. For example, the agency's total support revenue that came from the church in 1999 was seven percent (ADRA International, 200).

ADRA Albania like every ADRA branch in the world is part of the ADRA International network and is based in Albania. It started operating in the country in 1993 but got registered as an NGO in the year 2000. The agency is part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Albania and much of its philosophy is rooted in the tenets of the church. However, it is largely independent in its operations and since it is registered under Albanian law, the agency's activities must conform to the Albanian regulations on the operations of NGOs. Even though the agency gets support from the church and ADRA International, most of the agency's operations are sponsored by international donors like the European Union through competitive biddings. The agency currently owns its office building located at Rruga Muhamet Gjollësja, pranë kopshtit nr.11, kati 5, Tirana, Albania and other assets such as a kindergarten school facility.

Although ADRA Albania is responsible for the total area of Albania, it mainly operates in the north of Trina specifically the communities under the Kruja district. These communities consist mainly of Roma and Egyptian

inhabitants who are considered poor or vulnerable to poverty with many social issues. The focus area of the agency is in the area of education and currently has many programs and projects running which are centered on ensuring that all children are enrolled in school and given a good education. In addition, the agency is proactive in ensuring social justice is given to children (especially girls) and the underprivileged in Albanian society. It does this by collaborating with other NGOs who share a similar vision with them and work together with them. Furthermore, the local authorities such as the Kruja municipal authority and the ministry of education of Albania are the key partners of the agency in their fight against social injustice and the provision of humanitarian services. The agency's work positively impacts children and families, social businesses, emergency response, health, community empowerment and education/youth activism.

## 2) Searching for a traineeship

*How did you find your traineeship? Are there any recommendable links or other helpful tips you would like to share?*

i found it through my professor.

## 3) Preparation

*How did you prepare for your traineeship in terms of language, intercultural, professional and organisational aspects? Are there any recommendable links or other helpful tips you would like to share?*

The journey to my internship in Albania started when I had approval from ADRA (Adventist Relief Agency) Albania to be accepted as an intern in their organization. I had no idea what to expect from the country because I had not then researched about it. I started reading and watching videos on Albania especially Tirana (the capital city and my place of residence) to know more about the culture of the place and prepare for the journey. I had some expectations when I had the green light to move to Albania for my internship. I sought counsel from some past students of Friendsau International Social Science class who had been to Albania as part of their project and evaluation management class in the same institution (ADRA Albania) where I was about to have my internship. Thankfully, I had a lot of advice about the country which included where to get certain items for a cheaper cost, transportation tips and recreational places to visit. This information got me more prepared before I embarked on my internship journey.

## 4) Accommodation

*How did you find your accommodation? Are there any recommendable links or other helpful tips you would like to share?*

I discussed my accommodation with my mentor and fortunately for me, the parents of the country director had an empty one room apartment available for me. that was where i stayed until i completed my internship

## 5) Traineeship

*Please describe the tasks and / or the projects carried out during your traineeship. In which way were you mentored and integrated? How were the working conditions? Did you have especially positive or negative experiences?*

My first day at work began with familiarizing myself with the work of the Agency, particularly in the office. I was met by the program director (Kristi Qendro) who welcomed me and introduced me to the other staff and showed me around. She oriented me about the activities of the agency and gave me documents on the rules and regulations that I needed to abide by as a staff member of the agency and in Albania as a country. The staff welcomed me nicely and assured me of their support during my stay here. I later in the day had a meeting with the country director Altin Rexhepi in his office where he briefed me about the work of the organization and what is expected of me as an intern in the office. He continued to advise me on how to cope with the culture of the country and avoid troubles. I later went to get a sim card with the help of Diljana (account manager) and that got me set for the day. The first week during my internship time in Albania was not that stressful but with a lot of assurances that my time in Albania will be great.

The first task that was given to me as an intern was to compile the reports on projects that were done in the previous year and publish them on the agency's website. Some of these reports were interim whilst others were full covering ongoing and finished projects that were or are being undertaken by the organization. Reports on projects such as Return To Thrive I and Every child Everywhere In school were given to me to publish on the ADRA Albania website. My job was to read the full report and summarize them into about five hundred words for the website publication. The summarized report should be simplified and devoid of many technical terms to enable readers and visitors of the website to easily understand these projects. In total, four reports were given to me which I summarized and rewrote to suit public consumption. Also, since the English language is not the official language in Albania, my strong knowledge of the English language made it easier for me to do this task and my mentor was pleased with my work. My first month in Albania was entirely used to work at the office which helped me to familiarize myself with the agency's work culture and establish a good relationship with my co-workers.

My second month was used to visit the project sites of the agency which are in the Kruje municipality. Some of the locations are Fushe and Thumane which are about 50km from the capital Tirana. The communities are mainly inhabited by poor or vulnerable people who are migrants and identify themselves as Romans or Egyptians. ADRA Albania projects in these communities are generally to improve schooling and education (especially the girl child) among the children. I was taken to these communities to witness how projects are carried out by the agency and the challenges they face. Most of the projects were being sponsored by donors such as the European Union and others by the internally generated funds from ADRA Albania. During one of my visitations, I met field officers from my agency having their weekly durbar with the beneficiaries of the project (Everyone Everywhere In School). I joined them as a guest and observed how these meetings are done. Even though I did not understand the language, I could see how these beneficiaries were attentive to the speakers of the meeting and contributed to the discussions. It was later explained to me by my mentor that it was an evaluation meeting to assess the progress of an ongoing project

Another place of visit was the kindergarten facility owned by ADRA Albania which is located in the center of Tirana. The agency operates this facility for both profit and humanitarian purposes. The majority of the children who attend the kindergarten are from the city of Tirana and school fees are taken from them. Others are admitted for free based on conditions such as being an orphan and are supported to be further their education after they complete kindergarten. The kindergarten is managed by staff from the agency with the majority of its workers being volunteers from both Albania and foreign countries. I met a lady who teaches the English language and she encouraged me to visit the school from time to time and help in the teaching of the language which I did. The kids were friendly but intrigued by my skin color and will come to me for conversations. For some of them, it was their first time having an audience with an African person like me and I was happy to use my visit to expose to these children the diversity of cultures and people in the world.

The main duties that I was given to perform during my internship time in the agency were in the area of administration, project proposal and report writing. Due to my inability to speak the native language, my mentor made me do more office duties. She thought it wise to use my strengths in English language knowledge and writing skills to execute all the paperwork duties in the office. This was very helpful because the official communication between the agency and their international donors is in English which was not the official language of Albania. I worked on writing three project proposals such as the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation Abuse (PSEA) project which was sponsored by ADRA International. This project was to create awareness to the people of the communities where ADRA operates about what constitutes sexual abuse and how to report ADRA aid workers and other humanitarian workers when such abuse happens. The other two projects were: Every child Everywhere In school II and the Covid awareness project. These were projects that were mainly prepared by me with the help of other staff in the agency.

Last but not the least, I worked in all the departments of the agency from time to time to acquaint myself properly with their work. I helped Diljana (the account manager) in the preparation of the reports on the accounts of the projects. The account section is very important in every project that is undertaken because donors need an accurate report to evaluate the "value for money" given for projects. I helped the account manager in the preparation of financial reports on ongoing projects by writing explanations on expenditure figures with guidance from her. Diljana also helped me in the preparation of the expenditure budget for all the project proposals that I prepared. At the program office, which is headed by my mentor, I helped in writing correspondences, project proposals, project reports and management of the social media handles. Furthermore, I helped the logistics manager to organize and purchase items needed by the office and project sites.

Lastly, I worked with the project officers on the field in the execution of projects such as distributing educational items.

**6) Acquired qualifications**

*Which qualifications and skills could you acquire or improve during your traineeship?*

working as team member, the skill of applying for grants for projects, project administration and learning how to speak the Albanian Language were some of the skills i acquired

**7) Country-specific features**

*Are there any specific traineeship regulations in the target country that affected you as an Erasmus trainee (e.g. France: housing allowance, convention de stage? If yes, which ones? Are there any recommendable links or other helpful tips you would like to share?*

no

**8) Visa, residence and work permit (only for international students)**

*Which prearrangements had to be made in terms of visa, residence and work permit? Are there any recommendable links or other helpful tips you would like to share?*

my residence permit was enough to do my internship but only for 128 days but i had the option of renewal by visiting a neighbouring country and re-entering the country which was what i did. The process of acquiring a residence permit was cumbersome so i was advised to do re-entry from a neighbouring country.

**9) Other**

*Is there anything else you want to let other students know?*

the Balakan countries are fun to live in

**10) Conclusion**

*What is the conclusion drawn after your traineeship experience abroad?*

my ten months stay in Albania has changed my view on how social institutions in Europe operate. Eventhough cost of living was a bit high, the funds from Erasmus helped me to concentrate and work effeciently without the need to worry about survival. As an African, I witnessed a different dimension of how social services are provided to prevent or manage disasters. Also, all my co-workers with the exception of the country Director were females and it was my first time working in such environment. I learnt how to relate to my co-workers and how to relate with female co-workers.

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**Declaration of consent**

I hereby agree to the publication of this report on the website of the Leonardo Office Saxony-Anhalt.

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Acceptable file formats: [.doc], [.docx], [.rtf], [.odt].