

ASSOCIATION "KALMĀRS"

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BALVI MUNICIPALITY

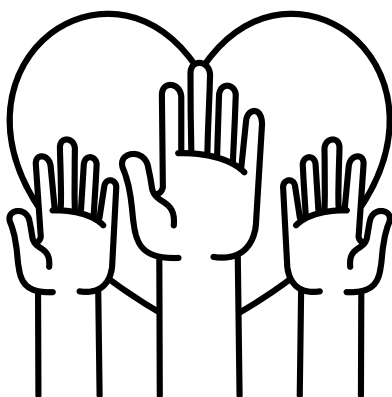
"BE THE OPPORTUNITY"



VOLUNTEER IN LATVIA



SEPTEMBER 2024 | JUNE 2025 | 290 DAYS | 2 TRAVEL DAYS



Volunteering in Latvia

Volunteering is an opportunity to become a local community member in a new country, leaving a positive impact on those around You! So why not come to Latvia, and leave an important impact in a rural municipality, called Balvi!

Yes, this is Your chance to be an opportunity for kids and young people in Balvi municipality, who can learn from you and teach you new things, as well as dive into the youth field, guided by Your professional colleagues and mentors, who will always be there for You!



About us

A small introduction

COORDINATOR

We, the association/NGO "Kalmārs", have been active in our community as an organization since 2013 and through this time have gained experience in different project implementations. We are the voice of youth in North Latgale, so our main focus is on the youth, as well with fewer opportunities, and as a result, the topics on which we focus are diverse, ranging from self-development to environmental issues, democratic principles, and debates with politicians!

Till now, we have had three long-term volunteer projects, hosted seven people, and have been through as well the the pandemic, so we have learned how to handle risks and celebrate our team's success! Next projects are short term team volunteering this Summer and our first mobility project for youth workers, to share our knowledge and peer to peer learning methods!

By the way, our team has a lot of volunteers, even our project manager is volunteering! And yes, we encourage our youngsters to be part of our team, so together we have a stronger voice and can implement different activities and create opportunities!

HOSTS

Balvi municipality's Children and Youth Center is the main host where you will be able to implement all the crazy good ideas as well as be a part of a creative team implementing different events, activities, workshops, lessons, etc.

The youth center has smaller centers in our municipality: Viļaka youth house, "Saulesziņš" in Semenova and Rugāju jauniešu centrs, it means that you won't get bored, because half the week you will be working in Balvi and the other half in smaller youth centers, where you can meet all the amazing kids and youngsters in the rural area! As well, the youth centers will organize school visits and meetings, so you can better introduce yourself to young people who will later come to the centers as well!

Balvi Youth Center also has interest groups in which you can participate: modern dance groups; ABC life skills; hands-on creativity; language lessons; technical lessons for working with 3D printer; singing groups; and even a room with drums to have some loud music!

Also, youth centers love to cooperate with other organizations, so there are a lot of opportunities for you, to implement your own small projects during your volunteer time!

VOLUNTEERING



General info

You will work with children and youth in the Balvi municipality (youth centers, schools, kinder gardens and other places where there is an interest in collaboration) - organizing various workshops, activities, language lessons, quizzes, culture events, sharing hobbies, and using various non-formal methods; learning about Latvian culture, activities, and methods from youth and center workers; and participating in already existing activities.

Living

The living will be in Balvi, in the Balvi State Gymnasium dormitory, in a separate room just for you. The facility has WCs, showers, Wi-Fi, laundry, a kitchen, and a living room with a TV—everything you need for a comfortable stay! There is a gym and a swimming pool nearby; work is a 17-minute walk away, and the bus station is a 10-minute walk away. The nearest store is a 2-minute walk away.



Numbers

The work week is 5 days and is 6-8 hours a day, including meetings with the mentor/supervisor, Latvian language learning, evaluation of the week, and main work with the kids and youth.

Pocket money: 5 eur/day

Food money: 6 eur/day

Travel expenses: 180-530 eur, depending on distance

P.S. Living (accommodation, SIM card with internet), and Transport for work- project budget





Work with children

1. Organizing different work-shops and activities
2. Working together with stuff in already existing activities
3. Organizing different events for children
4. Using non-formal methods while working with children
5. Making decorations for events
6. Bringing new methods/ideas
7. Teaching languages

Work with youth

1. Sharing your culture by organizing cultural events
2. Teaching languages: English and other languages you know
3. Actively participating in youth center activities or other activities for youth
4. Bringing in new methods and possibilities to diversify youth free-time spending
5. Organizing sports events and events outside
6. Organizing workshops, gatherings, game nights etc.
7. Assisting youth in opening up and organizing their initiative activities.



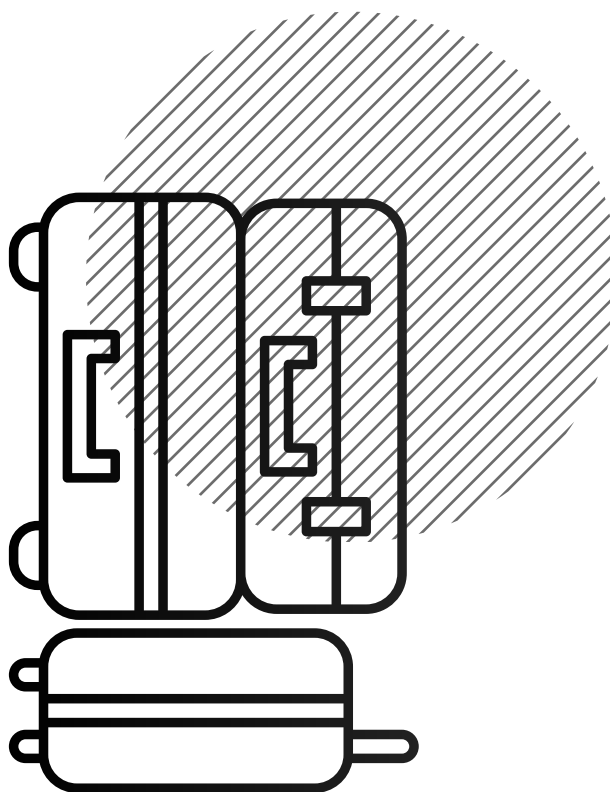
Work with us

1. Learning Latvian culture and language
2. Sharing culture with co-workers and youngsters
3. Taking part in the organization of municipality events
4. Taking part in volunteer events
5. Taking part in training courses, organized by the national agency
6. Weekly submitting evaluation of the project and skills gained during the week
7. Writing articles in English about the experience of volunteer work on a regular basis (at least once a month) and sharing them with organizations
8. Taking the initiative and preparing self-initiative activities
9. At least once a month, organize a bigger event on different topics you like (environment, politics, democracy, self-growth, opportunities, etc.)
10. Being ready to put your hand in event preparation activities (cooking, decorating, making posters, shopping etc.)



Expectations

Are we on the same page?



F R O M U S

- Having the opportunity to organize different events, workshops, sports activities, etc.
- Having the necessary tools for work (computer, internet, work space, etc.)
- Having a supervisor, technical mentors, mentor - for a helpful hand whenever it is needed
- Having open minded colleagues who are willing to share their knowledge
- Having a once-in-a-lifetime experience
- Getting the Youthpass for the nice CV review
- Having the opportunity to really get to know Latvia (language, culture, food, traditions etc.)
- Having offers for outside work activities (gym, swimming pool, music/sports groups, folk dances etc.)
- Having the opportunity to grow by being a part of trainings, seminars, and other events
- Having a real experience as a volunteer in youth work
- Attending different interest groups as a participant and as a volunteer
- Having a direct experience and impact on children and youth throughout the Balvi municipality (19 parishes and two towns)
- Meeting open-minded youth;
- Involving into organization of different youth events for Balvi and Vilaka municipality outside the youth centers
- Learning new non-formal methods
- Having a voice as important as other coworkers' voices

F R O M Y O U

- Positive attitude and an open mind
- Flexibility and being okay with things we cannot control (for example- weather)
- Passion for working with children and youth
- Being ready to participate in and organize different events, workshops, and activities
- Being able to communicate in English
- Organizing national evenings and language lessons
- Writing short articles about the experience and sharing them with all project organizations
- Organizing free time spending activities for youth (board games, competitions etc)
- Willingness to work in small towns or villages and travel by bus
- Willing to learn about Latvian culture and language
- Participation in local activities and possibilities
- Understanding the importance of non-formal learning and implementing it in activities
- Willing to organize regular self-initiative activities
- Being accountable for what you say and do



WEATHER IN LATVIA

GOING TROUGH SEASONS

Latvia is a country, where You can experience all four seasons: summer, spring, fall and winter.

The temperature through all year can be from -30°C to +30°C (mostly the big minuses are for couple weeks).

Weather is changing quite fast, so it is good to be prepared for that.

The Summer is nice and warm, but it can be as well rainy, the temperatures are between 16-18 °C to 26-28 °C.

The Fall starts to be more rainy and windy and the temperature starts to fall down, and it is normal to have snow storms in November.

The Winter usually starts in January, and gets really cold in the end of January/start of February (this year we had -30 °C some days as well, but it stayed for 2-3week -25 °C), December is an interesting month, sometimes it is a lot of snow, sometimes it is muddy.

The Spring at the start is cold, march is muddy and it is still snowing, temperature can be from -10 °C to +5 °C, the April is as well changing, windy and may is nice, gets warmer, more sun.

CLOTHES

Clothes for cold weather: warm jacket, hat, gloves, scarf, warm boots.

Clothes for rainy weather: waterproof shoes, water impervious jacket (or at least jacket what won't be wet after 10 minutes in rain), umbrella, rain coat.

Clothes for warm weather: shorts, t-shirts, swimming suit, flip-flops.

Everyday clothes: jeans, shirt, cardigan, sweater etc.

Sports clothes;

Going out clothes (concerts, events etc.).



LIFE IN LATVIA

FOOD

In summer time there are different veggies: potatoes, carrots, cabbages, gourds, tomatoes, onions, beets, cucumbers, peas etc.; as well there are different fruits: strawberries, blackberries, black and red currants, cherries, blueberries etc.;

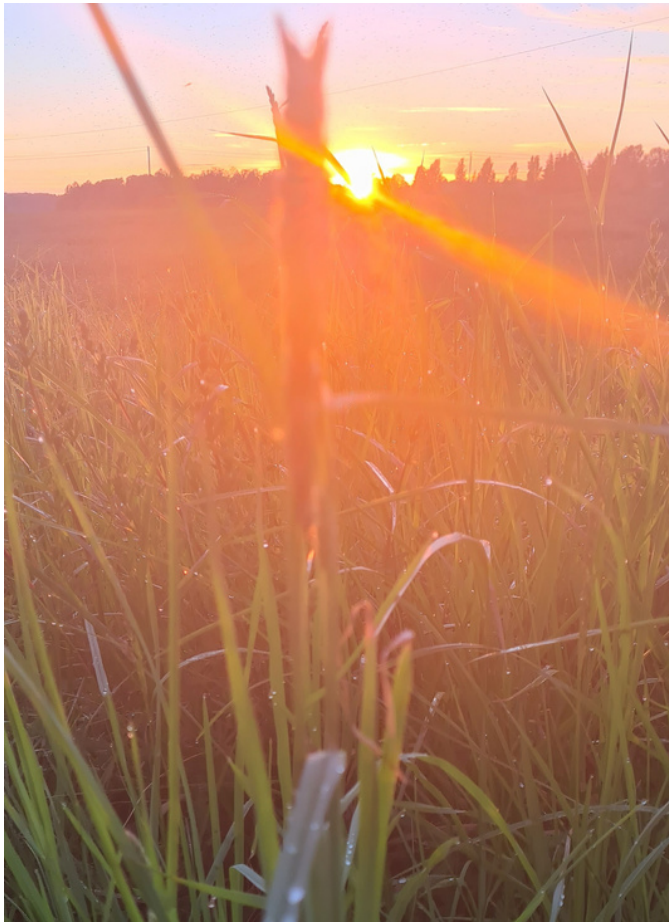
In fall we have apples, plums, pears, raspberries, mushrooms, wild berries etc.

All year around there is access to different kind of meat: pork, chicken, beef etc. and dairy products: cheese, yogurt, cream, cottage cheese etc;

For winter time there is canned food from veggies, juices, syrups, jams etc., in shops there are imported vegetables and fruits.

GOOD TO KNOW

Plug: 220W
Driving: right side
Money: euro
Shops: cash or credit card
[Balvi municipality tourism](#)
Useful for moving around: www.1188.lv
Official language: Latvian
Part of European Union & NATO
[Dormitory \(separate room\)](#)
[Balvi municipality web page](#)
[Latvia travel](#)
[Labs of Latvia](#)
[Weather forecast in Latvia](#)



BALVI MUNICIPALITY

Balvi municipality is an important center of Northern Latgale, which was established in 2021 as a result of the reform. The municipality comprises the town of Balvi and Vileka and 19 parishes- Baltinava, Balvi , Bērzkalnes, Bērzpils, Briežuciems, Krišjāņi, Kubuli, Kuprava, Lazdukalns, Lazduleja, Medneva, Rugaji, Susaji, Šķilbēni, Tilža , Vectilža, Vecumi, Viksna and Žīguri .

The unique image of the region is created by the waters of rivers and lakes, the beauty of unspoiled nature, the rich cultural and historical heritage of the Latgalians and, of course, the hard-working and kind people of the region.

The total area of the territory of Balvi Municipality is 1868.29 km².

Population of Balvi municipality - 19 955 (PMLP data 2021-10-14).

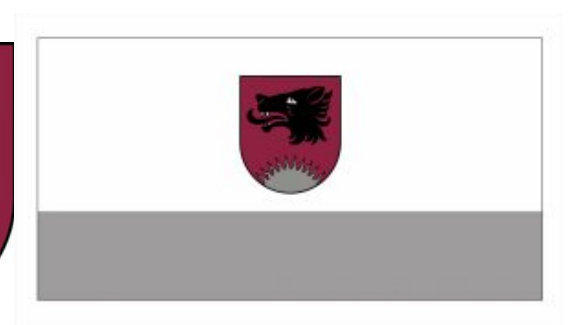
The municipality is located in the north-east of Latvia, bordering the municipalities of Aluksne, Gulbene, Rzekne, Ludza and Madona.

The Balvi municipality identifies itself as an important centre of Northern Latgale, where modern cultural and ethnographic traditions are nurtured.

The vision of the development of the cultural sphere of Balvi region is: Balvi region - the bearer and preserver of the cultural heritage of Northern Latgale.

Coat of arms: Black wolf's head and rising silver sun on purple red background.

Flag: The light white stripe symbolizes the white soul and spiritual values. The silver-coloured band symbolizes - "earthly" values, silver "mirrors".





Are you the one we are looking for?

We are looking for volunteers from 18-30 years, from the European Union who are good with kids and youngsters, ages 13-19 (main target group), who have a good attitude, are flexible, understand the concept of non-formal education, and are motivated to organize different activities as well as learn about Latvia!

LOOK INTO OUR SOCIAL MEDIA:

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BNBJC/](https://www.facebook.com/BNBJC/)

[HTTPS://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/BNBJC_DINAMITS_/](https://www.instagram.com/BNBJC_DINAMITS_/)

T H E T E A M



SANTA ŠMITE
PROJECT MANAGER

SUPERVISOR OF THE PROJECT



AGNESE PUĻČA
CHAIRMAN

TECHNICAL SUPPORT/MENTOR



GUNITA MINCĀNE
YOUTH WORKER

DAILY SUPPORT/MENTOR

What do the previous volunteers think?



MAIKE FROM GERMANY | VOLUNTEERING 2018 SEPTEMBER-2019 JUNE

"WHEN I WAS A VOLUNTEER IN BALVI AND VIĻĀKA, I DID NOT ONLY GET TO WORK WITH LOVELY PEOPLE BUT I ALSO HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE LATVIAN CULTURE AND BECOME PART OF AN AMAZING COMMUNITY. I FELT VERY WELCOMED INTO THIS COUNTRY I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT BEFORE AND FELL IN LOVE WITH IT! MY WORK AS A VOLUNTEER WAS DIVERSE AND I WAS GIVEN A LOT OF ROOM FOR EXPLORING PROJECTS I WAS INTERESTED IN. OUTSIDE OF MY WORK I HAD THE CHANCE TO LEARN A LOT ABOUT LATVIA'S RICH CULTURE AND EXPLORE THIS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY! MY TIME AS A VOLUNTEER IN BALVI AND VIĻĀKA IS A MEMORY I WILL CHERISH FOREVER - AS IT WAS A YEAR FULL OF LEARNINGS, LOVELY PEOPLE, AND GREAT EXPERIENCES."

BEQA FROM GERMANY | VOLUNTEERING 2018 SEPTEMBER-2019 JUNE

MY NAME IS BEKA, I'M FROM GEORGIA AND AROUND 4 YEARS AGO I TOOK PART IN A LONG-TERM EVS PROGRAM "SHARE THE OPPORTUNITIES" IN LATVIA, IN A SMALL, BEAUTIFUL TOWN NAMED BALVI. I SPENT ALMOST A YEAR THERE AS A VOLUNTEER IN THE LOCAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH CENTER AND ALSO AT THE SCHOOL OF THE NEARBY TOWN OF VIĻĀKA. I CAN SAFELY SAY IT WAS THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME IN MY LIFE - FULL OF BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES. I HAVE TO START FROM MY COLLEAGUES - THE PEOPLE WHO I WORKED WITH. SINCE DAY 1 OF MY ARRIVAL IN LATVIA THEY WERE SO WELCOMING, CARING AND HELPFUL THAT I HAVEN'T FELT FOR A SECOND I WAS A FOREIGNER. SPECIAL MENTION TO SANTA - MY PROJECT MANAGER. SHE WAS SO HELPFUL AND ATTENTIVE DURING MY WHOLE STAY THERE THAT I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO REPAY HER FOR THAT - BRILLIANT PERSON AND GREAT PROFESSIONAL AS WELL. GENERALLY THE PEOPLE IN LATVIA ARE VERY FRIENDLY AND POLITE, MY INTERACTION WITH THE LOCAL PEOPLE WAS ALWAYS POSITIVE. MANY OF THEM SPEAK ENGLISH WELL SO IF YOU NEED TO ASK FOR DIRECTIONS DON'T HESITATE - THEY WILL HELP YOU.

THE TOWN OF BALVI IS RELATIVELY SMALL, BUT IT HAS EVERYTHING YOU NEED: MULTIPLE LARGE SUPERMARKETS, HIGHLY DEVELOPED TRANSPORT SYSTEM, WELL-MAINTAINED ROADS - EVERYTHING YOU MAY NEED FOR DAILY LIFE. IT'S A BEAUTIFUL TOWN, GENERALLY EVERY VILLAGE, TOWN AND CITY IN LATVIA IS BEAUTIFUL - IN SUMMER EVERYTHING IS GREEN AND FLOWERS ARE BLOOMING, IN WINTER EVERYTHING IS COVERED IN SNOW - FOR THE SNOW LOVERS LIKE ME THE WHOLE COUNTRY IS A HEAVEN.

I WISH EVERYONE WHO WILL TAKE PART IN THE FUTURE PROJECTS THE BEST OF LUCK AND I'M SURE YOU'LL GREATLY ENJOY THE TIME YOU SPEND THERE.



HELENA FROM NORWAY | VOLUNTEERING 2020 SEPTEMBER-JANUARY

"AFTER 5 MONTHS IN LATVIA I AM STUCK WITH A LOT OF DIFFERENT IMPRESSIONS, EXPERIENCES, NEW KNOWLEDGE AND NICE MEMORIES. FROM LIVING IN THE RURAL PARTS OF A COUNTRY AND HOW THAT CAN BE CHALLENGING. YOUR IMPULSES AREN'T ALWAYS STIMULATED IN THE SAME WAYS AS IF ONE LIVES IN THE CITY. I THINK THAT'S ONE OF THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCES I HAVE FELT FROM LIVING IN BERGEN, NORWAY TO BALVI, LATVIA. IN MANY WAYS I TRULY LIKE IT. ONE HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO LAND MORE ON THE GROUND. HAVING TO GET CREATIVE IN THINGS TO DO.

I HAVE PROMISED MYSELF TO VISIT LATVIA AGAIN. THERE IS MORE TO SEE AND EXPERIENCE AND LOVELY PEOPLE TO VISIT. I HAVE COME TO REALLY LIKE LATVIA, THE COUNTRY AND THE STRONGHEARTED PEOPLE IN IT."



ALICHAN FROM TURKEY| VOLUNTEERING 2020 FEBRUARY-JUNE

" I CAN'T EXPLAIN MY FEELINGS ONLY WITH A FEW SENTENCES IN REGARDS TO VOLUNTEERING PROJECT AS PREVIOUS VOLUNTEER IN BALVI, LATVIA. ALTHOUGH WE CONFRONTED WITH COVID PERIOD AS LONG AS I STAYED IN BALVI, LATVIA BUT THANKS TO MY COLLEAGUES&FRIENDS WE WERE ABLE TO USE THIS NEGATIVE PERIOD IN FAVOUR OF US. I LEARNED HOW I COULD THINK POSITIVELY AND HOW I COULD BECOME MORE POSITIVE AGAINST FACING WITH UNEXPECTED SITUATIONS. IT WAS SO ADORABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEW CULTURE OF LATVIA. ESPECIALLY IF YOU WANT TO FEEL REAL NATURE OF THE UNIVERSE. UNFORTUNATELY MY AGE BECAME OLDER TO ATTEND THIS VOLUNTEERING PROJECT AGAIN, BUT IF ANYONE HOLDS THIS OPPORTUNITY IN THE HANDS, I HIGHLY RECOMMEND TO JOIN IN."



MARK FROM ALBANIA| VOLUNTEERING 2020 SEPTEMBER-2021 JUNE

"WHEN I DECIDED TO BE PART OF THE PROJECT, I HAD MY OWN EXPECTATIONS. I DIDN'T KNOW IF I WOULD MAKE IT OR IF I WOULD HAVE THE RIGHT SUPPORT. BUT THE MOMENT I ARRIVED AT THE AIRPORT AND WAS WELCOMED BY THE COORDINATOR AND MENTOR, I REALIZED THAT I WOULD NOT ONLY ACHIEVE MY GOALS BUT ALSO MUCH MORE THAN THAT. WHILE CARRYING OUT THE PLANNED ACTIVITIES ALONG THE WAY, I MET INTERESTING PEOPLE, SOME OF THEM I BECAME FRIENDS WITH AND OTHERS REMAIN IN MY MIND AS PEOPLE WITH INTERESTING STORIES AND PEOPLE FROM WHOM I LEARNED A LOT. THE SUPPORT I RECEIVED INCREASED MY CONFIDENCE AND BROUGHT BACK THE INSPIRATION THAT HAD BEEN MISSING FOR A WHILE. THROUGH THE PROJECT, I LEARNED A NEW INTERESTING AND BEAUTIFUL CULTURE. IN ALBANIA, WE HAVE A QUOTE THAT IF SOMEONE OPENS THE DOOR OF HIS HOUSE, HE HAS HONORED YOU AND FOR THIS REASON IT SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN. I WILL NOT FORGET THOSE WHO OPENED THE DOOR FOR ME, NOR THOSE WITH WHOM I WORKED FOR A CONSIDERABLE TIME. BOTH THE EXPERIENCE IN LATVIA AND THE PEOPLE, TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS WILL REMAIN AS ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ADVENTURES I'VE HAD. I KNOW FOR SURE THAT ONE DAY I WILL RETURN THERE BECAUSE THE ORGANIZING TEAM, THE PEOPLE, THE TRADITIONS, THE CUSTOMS, THE DIFFERENT HOLIDAYS, THE PLACES HAVE REMAINED IN MY HEART AND MIND."



ALEXANDER FROM GEORGIA| VOLUNTEERING 2021 SEPTEMBER- 2022 JUNE

"LATVIAN JOURNEY TURNED OUT TO BE EVEN A LOT MORE EXCITING AND FILLED WITH SURPRISES THAN I HAVE EXPECTED. IT OPENED DOORS FOR ME AND MADE MY FUTURE BRIGHTER. IT TRULY WAS THE GREATEST EXPERIENCE I HAVE EVER HAD IN MY LIFE."





**Only a life lived for others
is worth living.**

ALBERT EINSTEIN

