

Corporate Social Responsibility

Booklet



During 2021, as the everyday operations started to adapt to the new normal, so did the social engagement of BALFIN Group. Its companies embraced internal values and applied them to their corporate responsibility pillars. All projects were built around Education, Health and Well-being, Environment and Poverty Alleviation.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN 2021

**≈14k**Beneficiaries
from BALFIN
Group CSR**51**Social projects
initiated or
supported**2**times more
projects YoY**+55**Partner
organizations and
institutions, incl.
Universities**6**Year-round initiatives
established with
prestigious
organizations



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

BALFIN Group plays its role to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals related to its fields of activity. Based on the profile of each of its companies and the characteristics of the communities where they operate, BALFIN Group adheres to the below sustainability goals:

Goal 1

No Poverty

Goal 2

Zero Hunger

Goal 3

Good Health and Well-Being

Goal 4

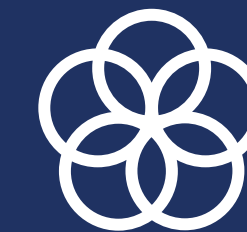
Quality Education

Goal 8

Decent Work and Economic Growth

Goal 15

Life on Land

Goal 17

Partnerships for the Goals

EDUCATION



Own education and didactic products for various age groups were coupled with infrastructure renovation, IT items and scholarships for university students to boost the education system. Green Coast has provided a new ICT lab to the school that accommodates all pupils of Palasa area, supported the kindergartens of Himara with all necessary didactic material, as well as has covered living expenses for three students that attend the Faculty of Economy in Tirana. Tirana Bank has provided heating appliances to the school in Ksamil. Jumbo in Albania and Kosovo has supported schools with electronic devices that are necessary for the teaching process, books, and stationery items.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ALBANIA, A PROGRAM DEDICATED TO THE STUDENT'S SUCCESS

B4Students is the umbrella engagement of BALFIN Group regarding education. It is built based on four main components and each of them addresses a need that has been perceived by the students themselves.

The ENTREPRENEURSHIP component contains a Business Idea Competition, to promote and support entrepreneurship ideas and initiatives among students. The winning applications receive a grant to start a business, preferential lending opportunities in Tirana Bank, opportunities for partnership with BALFIN Group and its companies, as well as training and advice from experts in the field.

The Business Challenge also belongs to the Entrepreneurship component and invites students to analyze a real business problem of partner companies with B4Students and suggest problem-solving strategies. Students who have provided the best analysis and strategy, will benefit from monetary reward, free subscription opportunities to an online course on international platforms, as well as opportunities to conduct professional internships at the companies involved.

The second component is that of SOCIAL CLUBS. B4Students, through Social Clubs, supports project proposals for activities that enrich students' life and at the same time are meant to have a positive impact on the community. They can be submitted by students and members of academic staff and the best proposals receive financial, technical, and/or logistical support to be implemented.



Study tour of Business Challenge Competition finalists



Finalists of Business Idea Competition

+1.4k

Students enrolled in B4Students

2

Winners of B4Students - Business Idea Competition out of 39 submissions

3

Winners of B4Students - Business Challenge Competition out of 133 submissions

2

Investments in improving infrastructure

70

Students selected for internship, out of 550 applications

+42K

Pageviews of B4Students

INTERNSHIP IS ONE OF THE MOST ACTIVE COMPONENTS OF B4STUDENTS

Professional **INTERNSHIPS** is the third component. B4Students creates the opportunity for students to become part of 3-month professional internships at companies of BALFIN Group. Students can apply to their preferred company and department according to their professional interest. The selected students are encouraged to work side by side with some of the best managers in Albania. At the end of the internship, students are evaluated for a probable performance-based employment.

The fourth component focuses on **STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS** in Albania. Through B4Students, public universities in the country benefit from infrastructure investments to improve the premises as well as the facilities needed for the academic process.

Interested students can register at the link:
<https://b4students.com/registration-form/>
and will receive the right information at the right time.



President of BALFIN Group, Samir Mane, during an event with interns



Internship is one of the most active components of B4Students

B4STUDENTS INAUGURATES THE SOCIAL CORNER AT THE SOCIAL SCIENCES FACULTY IN TIRANA

“

*Education is
promoted by THE
PRESIDENT OF
BALFIN GROUP*

”

The “Social Corner” was the best gift at the end of 2021 for the Faculty of Social Sciences in Tirana, supported by the B4Students program. Its dean inaugurated the new premises, together with representatives of B4Students and students of this faculty.

The need for a Social Corner was identified by the leaders of the institution, so that students would have a dedicated space to socialize and network with each other beyond classroom hours, as well as to carry out academic work in collaboration. Support of education is also promoted by the president of the BALFIN Group, Samir Mane, making it a key pillar of social responsibility for the Group.



The new Social Corner at the Faculty of Social Sciences

GREEN COAST EQUIPS THE SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTENS IN HIMARA

Students at the “Gjik Bixhili” school in Dhërmi now can learn about information technology topics in a new computer lab. Green Coast equipped the school laboratory with the right infrastructure, so that teachers can better deliver curriculum subjects.

Green Coast also met the needs of kindergartens in the Himara area, with didactic and entertaining products appropriate to age groups of about 160 attending children. As the company considers the local community as a partner in its daily activities, it will be a constant promoter of education in Himara.

160
attending children

GREEN COAST SUPPORTS EXCELLENT STUDENTS OF TOURISM

Green Coast is promoting young talents in tourism and hospitality by supporting them financially during their academic studies. The company cooperates with the Faculty of Economics, University of Tirana, to identify top master level students and cover their living expenses.

This initiative is set to become a tradition on part of Green Coast, making sure that the best students of today will most probably be the excellent professionals of tomorrow.

**GREEN
COAST**
scholarships



Green Coast contributes to school in Dhërmi

TIRANA BANK PROVIDES HEATING EQUIPMENT FOR PUPILS OF KSAMIL

All classrooms of “5 Deshmoret” school in Ksamil now are well-equipped against the cold weather. Tirana Bank provided heating equipment for the school, making sure that pupils enjoy the time they spent there.

540
pupils

Lila Canaj, Head of Retail Division, stated that Tirana Bank considers education to be a driving force for the society, and the contribution for the 540 pupils of this school is a good starting point for the inhabitants of Ksamil.

STUDENTS' HUB, FIRST STUDENTS EMPLOYED

Tirana Bank is always supportive of young people who aim to grow professionally and be part of the banking system. Under the motto “Learn by Doing”, 26 students had the opportunity to become part of the internship program “Tirana Bank Students Hub” throughout June-August 2021.

26
students

“Tirana Bank Students Hub” is a space dedicated to young people, who are offered a positive working environment, and mentoring by Tirana Bank professionals with extensive experience in the banking sector. The program, enabled in cooperation with various universities in the country, selected 26 students out of 52 interviewed through the panel of professionals of Tirana Bank, who evaluated the presentation of 3 retail products by the candidates. The students also participated in the competition of project ideas, where they completed the content creation of the career page on Tirana Bank’s website.



ENVIRONMENT

TEG

Be happy!

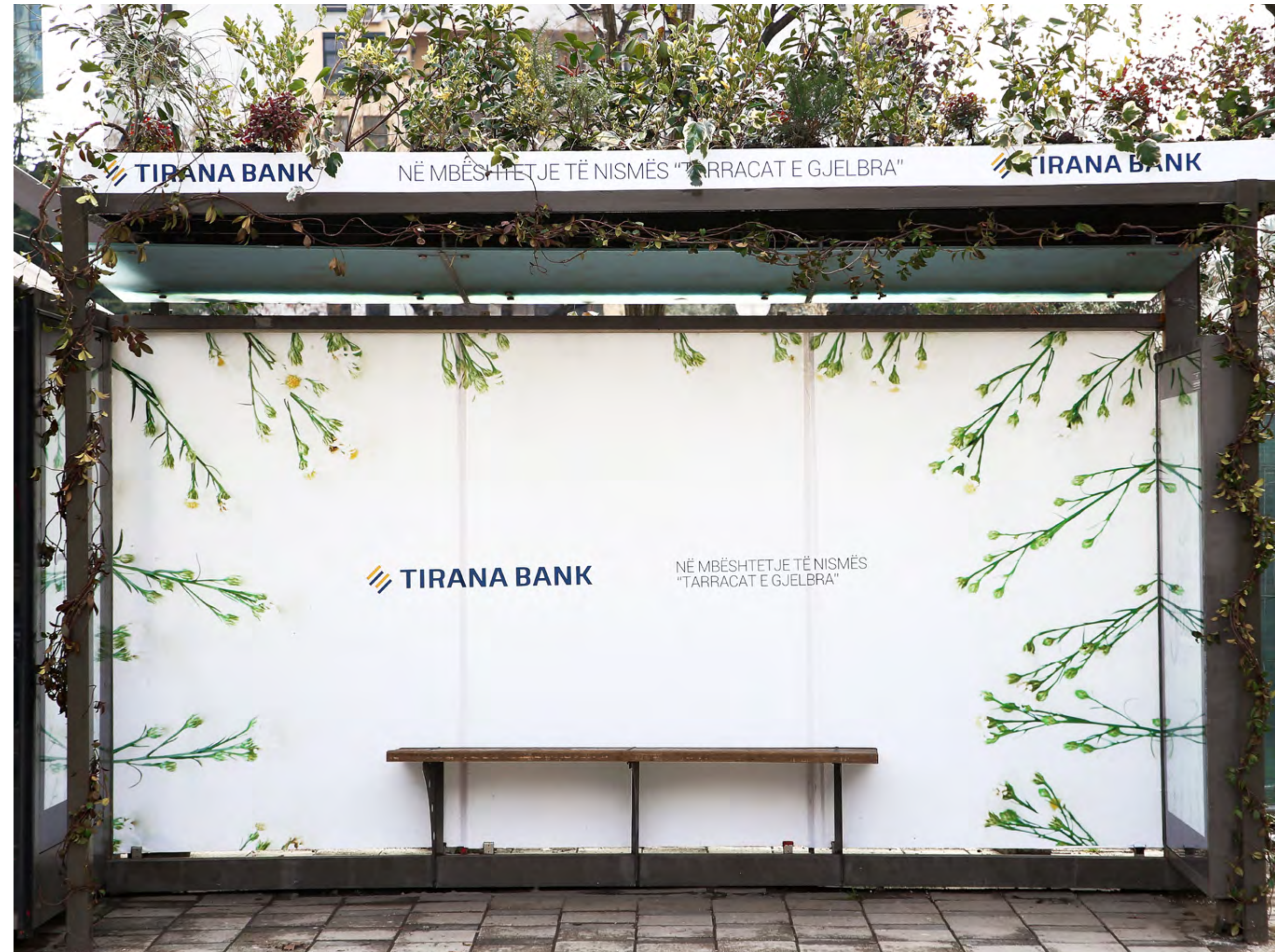
QTU
E GJITHA RRETHI JE **TIRANA BANK**

Tirana Bank has increased the green spaces in the capital with its innovative idea of turning the bus stations into little green islands. Yet the biggest contribution to the environment originates from within companies – TEG and QTU lead the practice of responsible waste management, recycling all their paper waste, using solar technology, and trying to reduce the overall consumption of natural resources.

GREEN TERRACES OF TIRANA

Over the years, Tirana Bank has undertaken various initiatives to protect the environment and make people aware of its importance. Last February, Tirana Bank inaugurated its latest project “Green Terraces”.

Small flowers were planted on the roof of the bus stations in Tirana, making these structures environment friendly and more comfortable for people. It is a symbolic contribution, that implies Tirana Bank’s **dedication to environment** and the values that govern its activity.



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



NEPTUN

SPAR

TEG
Be happy!

QTU
QATAR TRADING COMPANY

JUMBO

fga
FASHION GROUP ALBANIA

**SOS FSHATRAT
E FËMIJËVE
SHQIPËRI**

**SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
SKOPJE**

P E M A

**Down Syndrome
Albania**

**Jonathan Center
Qendra Jonathan**

Companies of BALFIN Group have reached thousands of people with their initiatives in the health and well-being pillar. Jumbo had its tenth anniversary in Albania and on that occasion, it “adopted” ten children of the **SOS Village Albania** for one year. All their needs are being met during the period - education and entertaining products, clothes, and other items. Neptun in Macedonia is already a long-term partner of the **SOS Village in Skopje** and employees in both companies enjoy the time they spend with the young inhabitants of these villages. Jumbo colleagues in Kosovo, Montenegro and Bosnia and Hercegovina, as well as those of Neptun Kosovo have equipped

several organizations with necessary items to provide care for children and young people.

On its fifteenth anniversary, QTU established an agreement with the **Down Syndrome Foundation Albania** to cover the expenses of specialized therapy for nine children. The other commercial center, TEG, has promoted a healthy lifestyle with bicycles for those that cannot afford one.

SPAR celebrated its fifth year of presence in Albania and its social engagement continues to grow stronger as well. Its long-term cooperation with food banks and donations from the proceedings of certain own products have become a tradition.



JUMBO ALBANIA SUPPORTS JONATHAN CENTER WITH SCHOOL AND THERAPY SUPPLIES

Jumbo has continuously promoted several initiatives that benefit certain groups of society, adhering to its pillars of corporate social responsibility. As October is the month of awareness about Down Syndrome, JUMBO equipped the Jonathan Center in Tirana with school supplies, toys, and specific items that are needed during therapies offered by the specialists to children and young people with this condition.

Representatives of JUMBO said that “they are happy to see that Jonathan Center now can offer qualitative sessions and cover the needs of all those that frequent it. We all need to show solidarity, both on individual and company level.”

**DOWN
SYNDROME**
Month of Awareness

BALFIN GROUP STANDS FOR INCLUSIVITY

BALFIN Group joined the “I fit in” project and employed persons of Down syndrome community, within the framework of this initiative launched by Jonathan Center, and supported by the United States Embassy in Tirana. The President of BALFIN Group, Samir Mane, stressed the importance of such examples for the business world.

The Jonathan Center treats about 140 children and young people with Down syndrome, from all over the country. Assessment and counseling, individual and group therapy, as well as inclusion in education and employment are the main services offered by its specialists.

The founder of this center, Oreada Kita, says that the partnership with BALFIN Group has had an impact on improving the quality of life for children and young people with Down syndrome, both in education and employment.

Samir Mane,
stressed the
importance of
such examples

partnership with
BALFIN Group



JUMBO KOSOVO IS WHERE THE CHILDREN ARE

Throughout the year, Jumbo Kosovo implemented seven projects that reached more than 700 children across the country. It cooperated with SOS Village Kosovo and the Autism Association and contributed to several kindergartens and schools. Jumbo Kosovo provided these institutions with books, school supplies, clothes, toys, and a multitude of everyday products that improve the services they offer to pupils and children with various needs.



JUMBO MONTENEGRO

Jumbo Montenegro focused its efforts to help the socially vulnerable children in the country. It enabled the Montenegro Kids organization to improve its operations thanks to a significant quantity of academic products, didactic items, and toys provided to them. The company also made its products available to other institutions that take care of children and try to integrate them in all aspects of life.

JUMBO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA SUPPORTS DOWN SYNDROME CENTER IN BANJA LUKA

In the framework of its social responsibility, Jumbo Bosnia and Herzegovina cooperated with the Down Syndrome Center (DSC) in Banja Luka through a mentorship program and an in-kind donation. DSC is active in the city of Banja Luka since 2005 and one of their main goals is to break down barriers and prejudices against people with Down Syndrome. The center works to provide integration and employment opportunities for its members.

Ten members of the Down Syndrome Center joined Jumbo employees in the Banja Luka store for one day. Every DSC member was paired with one Jumbo employee as a mentor, who was delighted to teach everyday skills and essentials in the workplace. DSC's young members learned how to stack products on shelves, work as cashiers, and help in the warehouse - all while socializing with their mentors. Jumbo's employees provided their full support to ensure the members had a pleasant and comfortable learning experience. As a closing activity, they selected various products such as stationery items, board games, and more, that will serve the therapeutical sessions at DSC, for Jumbo to donate.

JUMBO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA GIVING IN THE SPIRIT OF THE HOLIDAYS

On New Year's Eve, Employees of Jumbo Bosnia and Herzegovina spread some happiness to the community as they contacted the Rosales Center in Mostar. Los Rosales Center provides services that improve the educational process, rehabilitation, social integration of children and youth with disabilities, as well as the quality of life of children and their families. Its qualified staff conducts music therapy, corrective gymnastics, speech therapy treatment and hippo therapy to 135 children and young people.

135
children

Jumbo Bosnia and Herzegovina showed its support to Los Rosales Center with a generous contribution of toys and educational supplies that will facilitate the rehabilitation and socialization sessions of the children.



JUMBO Bosnia and Hercegovina supports Los Rosales center

A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE DECEMBER FOR JUMBO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

In a three-day tour, employees of Jumbo Bosnia and Herzegovina visited three institutions whose focus is supporting children.

The Vladimir Nazor Center in Sarajevo is specialized in upbringing, educating, and rehabilitating of people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities, currently taking care of 175 children and students aged 3 to 21 years. Jumbo Bosnia and Herzegovina came to their support with supplies that will assist educators in their daily work with children and students.

The Heart for Children with Cancer Association is a second home to the parents of children who are hospitalized and receiving treatment. 700m² of family suites, including facilities and a multifunctional game room offer family members the comfort they need at difficult times. The company was part of their Holiday Gift Packing project for all members of the association by contributing selected Jumbo items and helping with packaging.

The GFC Sarajevo Club is a futsal club that is providing free training for children of the SOS Villages. Jumbo Bosnia and Herzegovina provided sets of sports and training equipment for the club's young players.

175
children and students
aged 3 to 21 years old

NEPTUN KOSOVA PROVIDES LAPTOPS TO PEMA DAYCARE CENTER

Neptun Kosova donated laptops to two of the **Pema Day Care Centers** in Gjilan and Peja, so that their specialists can provide qualitative services to children even remotely. This center provides community-based social services for children with disabilities.

Since 2013, Pema has provided support to over 600 children from 3-18 years old in specialized day care centers in four municipalities of Kosovo – Prizren, Peja, Gjilan and Ferizaj – where children are taught necessary skills to facilitate their integration in the community.



Neptun Kosovo equips Pema daycare center with laptops

NEPTUN MACEDONIA IS THE NEW STRATEGIC PARTNER OF SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE FAMILY

Over the years, Neptun Macedonia has acquired the reputation of a company that provides products of the latest technology and highest quality, while caring for customers, environment, and society. Recently, it established a long-term cooperation with the SOS Children's Village in North Macedonia.

Strategic partner

In addition to support for the daily activities of the young inhabitants, **Neptun** will involve own employees in various events that benefit the **SOS Children's Village**.

CUSTOMERS OF NEPTUN MACEDONIA JOIN EFFORTS TO HELP SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

In the framework of the strategic partnership with the SOS Children's Village in Skopje, Neptun Macedonia launched the "Together, we donate more" campaign. It urged customers to join simply by making purchases in their 25 chain stores and 1% of the net worth of products sold during the campaign would be donated to SOS Children's Village. The public awareness raised the fund of 100,000 denars. The company itself donated a quantity of products that matched the value of 100,000 denars.

200,000 denars

All proceedings were used to accommodate the needs of children and teenagers cared for by this organization.



FASHION GROUP ALBANIA AND SPAR ALBANIA SUPPORT THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Fashion Group Albania, part of BALFIN Group, has long been known as a company committed to raising awareness about Down Syndrome, through implementing an employment program for people belonging to this community.

Ornela and Arjo were employed by Fashion Group Albania in December 2019 and quickly became familiar with the work environment and colleagues. The company drafted a special plan for them, also consulting family members.

This example was followed by SPAR Albania, which welcomed Adri and Kevin, its first employees from the Down Syndrome community, in the framework of the "I fit in" project organized by Jonathan Center in partnership with the Embassy of the United States of America in Tirana.

SPAR ALBANIA JOINS PINK OCTOBER

October is recognized as the Breast Cancer Awareness Month and SPAR Albania collaborated with a health clinic to become part of the activities that aim at raising awareness and taking specific measures to detect breast cancer as early as possible.

During this month, SPAR Albania facilitated a 50% discount for breast cancer screening test at the partner health clinic, to all its women customers who spent more than 2.000 ALL at any SPAR store in the country. This initiative was warmly received by the customers that considered it an opportunity to check their health and at the same time meeting their shopping needs.

QTU SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DOWN SYNDROME

Recognizing the needs of the Down Syndrome community in Albania, QTU becomes a long-term supporter of the Down Syndrome Albania Foundation, providing therapeutic services over 12 months for nine children treated at the service center.

THERAPEUTIC SERVICES FOR 12 MONTHS

Since 2014, the year when the foundation opened the doors of the service center which today numbers 45 children, BALFIN Group has always been present. Samir Mane, its President, expresses the certainty that such causes should receive more and more attention from the business world. BALFIN Group companies have supported various organizations in the field of health and social care and currently employ several people with disabilities.

POVERTY ALLEVIATION



 **TIRANA BANK**

SPAR 

QTU
E GJITHA RRETHI TËJË

FASHION GROUP ALBANIA
fga

Considering the very nature of a couple of sectors where companies of BALFIN Group are active, various groups of people in need have benefitted from in-kind donations. Tirana Bank has made possible a new house for two elder sisters in Shkodra. Jumbo in all countries has supported numerous organizations to meet their basic needs for everyday products. Fashion Group Albania has provided clothes to families all over the country, while QTU has helped a hundred kids start the academic year properly with school bags and products. SPAR makes sure year after year that food banks in Tirana have enough food and donates to charities part of the proceedings from SPAR branded water bottles.

BALFIN GROUP AND TIRANA BANK DONATE APARTMENT TO A FAMILY AFFECTED BY EARTHQUAKE

BALFIN Group and Tirana Bank have handed over the house keys to another family who was left homeless after the earthquake of November 2019. Rama family from Spiten of Lezha have returned to live under a safe shelter, just like ten other families who have previously received apartments from BALFIN Group.

1.2
million euro

Three days after the tragic earthquake of November 26, 2019, that hit Albania, the Board of Directors of BALFIN Group, with special attention from the President of the Group, Samir Mane, decided to donate 1.2 million Euros to help families most severely affected by the earthquake. Through direct cash donations to the respective state fund dedicated for this purpose and through donation of several apartments to the National Housing Authority, BALFIN Group tried to do its best to be close to the most affected and vulnerable communities and families.

TIRANA BANK GIVES THE ÇOKAJ SISTERS A NEW HOME

The Çokaj sisters lived in a ruined house in Grudë Fushë, Malësia e Madhe. The lack of minimum living conditions directly affected their deteriorating health. The complete economic incapability aggravated their situation and the sisters had not found a way out.

With the initiative of BALFIN Group's President, Samir Mane, the Çokaj family has now settled in an apartment in the city of Shkodra. The renovated house is located near the city hospital, so that the ladies can easily get the medical service that their condition requires. The donation was made possible by Tirana Bank, part of BALFIN Group.



New home for Çokaj family

Donations

EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT FOR CHILDREN BY JUMBO ALBANIA

“Study Corner” was one of the projects that found support from Jumbo Albania during the activity “Donor Circles” organized by Partners Albania. This was the second edition of this initiative by Partners Albania, which took place in June 2021 and at the same time the second time that the BALFIN Group was a participant.

The study corner is an initiative of the “Tek Ura” center, and it provides study facilities for children from families with unfavorable economic conditions. The activity of this center is focused on the area of Tufina in Tirana and exactly there, 14 families were supported by JUMBO. Their children can study at an age-appropriate corner, with the right teaching equipment, to prepare systematically for school.

“Small Steps” is a project of ARSIS, the Initiative for Social Change, that includes an open-air playground for children of Lanabregas community in Tirana. It was part of “Donor Circles” and aligned with the company’s focus on children and their well-being. This becomes even more relevant in the case of children that have no possibilities of entertainment at all, due to their families’ low income. The beneficiaries of this project are all children of the families that live in Lanabregas and surrounding areas.

FASHION GROUP ALBANIA DONATES OVER 5,000 CLOTHING ITEMS TO FAMILIES IN NEED

In cooperation with the Municipality of Tirana, Fashion Group Albania has donated clothes to families and people facing economic hardships. During a three-day marathon, employees of Fashion Group Albania helped the community centers of the municipality to distribute over 5,000 clothing items.

25.000
euro

Upon identifying many families in need, Fashion Group Albania handed over a quantity of clothing items totaling 25,000 Euros to the Municipality of Tirana, so that the latter could assign them to each family.

QTU DONATES BACKPACKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR 100 CHILDREN

QTU is a destination for the whole family, offering everyday products and options for each activity to all age groups. All children need to feel the joy of school, so QTU provided 100 children from families in need with necessary school items for a good start.

SPAR ALBANIA SUPPORTS BABIES' HOME IN DURRËS AND VLORA

SPAR Albania, since the beginning of its activity, has undertaken important initiatives to improve living conditions of various groups of society. As part of its ongoing community support program, SPAR Albania donated a year-long supply of diapers to the Babie's Home in Vlora and Durrës. This is the most crucial element for all children aged 0-5 years of these major institutions. In addition, employees of SPAR Albania prepared their own gifts for the children and shared some moments with them.



SPAR ALBANIA “IGNITES HOPE” WITH WORLD VISION AND FOOD BANK ALBANIA

The end-of-year holidays are a time of joy with relatives, and simultaneously a time when joy is shared with people in need. SPAR Albania joined World Vision Albania and Food Bank Albania in the initiative **“Light up hope”**. The project helped families in economic hardship in the suburbs of the country.

During the last days of December, SPAR Albania invited customers to donate food products as desired, when making purchases in SPAR stores in TEG and QTU shopping centers. The two organizations involved in the project distributed the collected food to the families in need in Dibër, Shkodër, Kurbin, Lezhë, Librazhd, Korçë, Tirana and Durrës.

SPAR ALBANIA DONATES FOR FAMILIES IN NEED OF STREHA CENTER

Spar Albania is supporting the Streha Center in Tirana throughout the year, with food provisions for all its residents and all persons that are part of its community. In addition, Spar employees visit Streha on New Year’s Eve and give presents to families in need.



EMPLOYEES OF NEPTUN ALBANIA WITH CHILDREN OF SHKODRA’S ORPHANAGE

June 1-st is a time when all children celebrate by having fun and receiving gifts from their loved ones but it is also a time when more than ever, we need to draw our attention to children deprived of parent’s gifts.

Sixteen children aged 8 months -7 years old, in the Orphanage of Shkodra received **clothes, toys, and books** in the framework of a voluntary initiative of the employees of Neptun Albania. They symbolically choose one of the children and prepare a personalized gift. Then those employees travelled to Shkodra to deliver the items themselves.

Such activities provide extra inspiration to employees and BALFIN Group welcomes and encourages such initiatives in all its companies.



Copyright © 2022 by BALFIN Group

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of BALFIN Group.