

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

January - June 2022 Booklet



EDUCATION

modernizing teaching in schools, improving academic life of students and empowering academic institutions



ENVIRONMENT

reducing carbon footprint and improving the environment



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

promoting healthier conditions of living, especially for those that are disadvantaged



POVERTY ALLEVIATION

providing food, clothing, and other useful items to categories of people in need.

A new year is bound to start with optimism and so did 2022 for the companies of BALFIN Group. New cooperation opportunities are in place, to explore new ground and use fresh resources.

BALFIN Group re-affirmed its commitment to take bigger and faster steps to empower women in the workplace and community upon becoming a signatory of Women's Empowerment Principles on International Day of Women.

Edlira Muka, CEO of BALFIN Group, stated that BALFIN Group is creating a working environment where all individuals can express the best of their abilities, encouraging women's empowerment across organization and taking care that their contribution is duly recognized. Corporate governance practices of BALFIN Group are based on international standards and governed by own values, so that they guarantee fairness and sustainability in all actions.



Edlira Muka, CEO of BALFIN Group, and Michele Ribotta, UN Women Representative to Albania, during signing of WEPs



As the war in Ukraine startled the world, BALFIN Group joined brands and organizations coming to the aid of the population affected by the conflict. Its companies, in the seven countries where they operate, mobilized and assembled contribution for the citizens of Ukraine. Fashion Group Albania, Jumbo, and SPAR Albania responded to the call of the Ukrainian Embassy in Tirana for donations in accordance with the provided list of necessary, essential items such as sanitary products, clothing, first-aid kits.



On a more daily basis, companies and industries have each done their part during the first six months of 2022, and the following pages provide the proof.



BALFIN Group to the aid of Ukraine's people



BALFIN Group to the aid of Ukraine's people

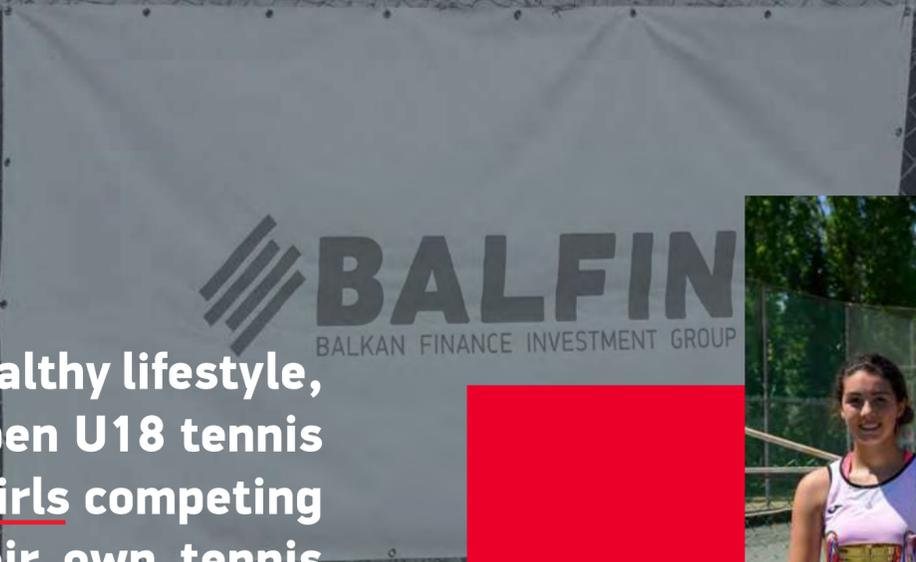


BALFIN Group to the aid of Ukraine's people



As a supporter of young people and a healthy lifestyle, BALFIN Group supported the Tirana Open U18 tennis tournament with 100 young boys and girls competing for their countries and advancing their own tennis career.

In addition to Albania, the players came from all countries of the region, including Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and the further away such as Croatia, Italy, Austria, Germany, United Kingdom, and many others. Maria de la Paz Alberto from Spain was the winner of Girls' Singles, and the Romanian Filip Gabriel Bara took home the trophy of the Boys' Singles. The player from Romania also won the Boys' Doubles with Lorenzo Comino from Italy as his teammate, while Igkar Dyussebay and Dilnaz Mashabayeva from Kazakhstan were the winners of the Girls' Doubles.



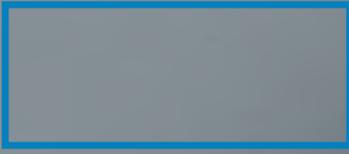
Winners of Tirana Open U18



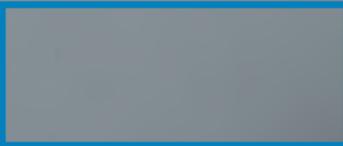
Boys Finalist of Tirana Open U18



Girls Finalist of Tirana Open U18



EDUCATION



BALFIN Group establishes a memorandum of cooperation with the Faculty of Economics

During a visit in the premises of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Tirana, the President of BALFIN Group, Samir Mane, met with the Dean, Prof. Dr. Dhori Kule, academics and students to strengthen bridges of cooperation. The meeting ended with the signing of a memorandum of cooperation between BALFIN Group and the Faculty of Economics, which lists the areas where joint contributions can be made.

Students and professors were present at the meeting to learn more about the opportunities that BALFIN Group offers to support universities and students. “Today, students face challenges at the regional level and beyond, but at the same time, the opportunities offered to them become ever greater. As a representative of some of the companies that lead their respective markets, I advise them not to give up their plans, and aim higher and higher. BALFIN Group prioritizes education in its social responsibility and is open to carry out joint initiatives with students and professors,” said Samir Mane.

Prof. Dr. Dhori Kule expressed appreciation for BALFIN Group emphasizing the importance of the relationship between university and business in several areas such as the realization of professional internships, support with infrastructure, conducting studies and research of common interest, bringing experience and business expertise by engaging the directors and specialists of BALFIN Group through various seminars and meetings.



Signing the memorandum of cooperation with Faculty of Economics



Signing the memorandum of cooperation with Faculty of Economics



Neptun Albania enables modern research

Neptun Albania joined the project of Faculty of Economy to establish a **Marketing and Tourism Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship** in the premises of the latter. It is a unique laboratory in Albania with the necessary technology to enable the synergy between the academic world and the private sector. Students of this Faculty, part of the University of Tirana, can experiment with their innovative ideas and implement entrepreneurship projects.

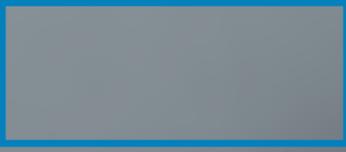
Neptun Albania provided **ICT equipment** to this advanced hub in the framework of its commitment to bring technology closer to the education system.



Center for Innovation @ Entrepreneurship



Center for Innovation @ Entrepreneurship



Tirana East Gate meets TUMO

Tirana East Gate reached an agreement with TUMO in Albania to identify up to ten young persons that are talented and willing to attend TUMO courses but find it impossible due to economic difficulties and will cover all fees!

At TUMO Center for Educational Technologies, teens take charge of their own learning, gaining cutting edge skills in the fields that matter today. Its learning program is made up of self-learning activities, workshops, and project labs around various learning targets.

Those passionate about technology and digital skills should be able to receive proper education and Tirana East Gate is contributing to making young people able to bring progress to society.



TEG representative visits TUMO



Tirana Bank supports the National Student Companies Fair and Competition

Junior Achievement of Albania organized the Fair and the National Competition of Student Companies in Tirana, where dozens of students from high schools in Albania presented 24 enterprises with products and services conceived and realized by the young people themselves. Throughout the academic year, Junior Achievement Albania, through the Student Companies program, has trained students and teachers in several high schools in the country on the conception and establishment of a genuine society, a process which concludes with a demonstration and competition in front of the public and the jury.

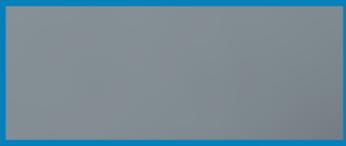
This activity had the participation of Tirana Bank, as one of the main supporters and as a member of the evaluation jury of the competition. Tirana Bank promotes the acquaintance of the youth with the economic world and the creation of opportunities for young people to prove themselves as entrepreneurs. Representatives of Tirana Bank chose the girls and boys of NEXUS as the Best Entrepreneurial Company of 2022, for the way of organizing their work and the practicality of their product.



Best Entrepreneurial Company



Representative of Tirana Bank announces the winner



Tirana Bank Students' Hub

46 university students earned the right to become part of the Students' Hub during this academic year. They all excelled in the selection process, including role play, debate sessions, and group presentations as some of the assignments. In the framework of the **Learn By Doing Goes Digital** approach, students were introduced to the **Digital Banker** service platform and KPIs were set for each of them. At the end of the internship period, they met their business objectives in each of the indicators they were involved.

Students combined their academic background with everyday tasks in various departments of the bank, while its employees have shared their knowledge and **practical skills**.



Students Hub in Tirana Bank



Members of the Students Hub



A new ICT laboratory for Raqi Qirinxhi High School from BALFIN Group

BALFIN Group, under the special care of President Samir Mane, equipped the Raqi Qirinxhi public High School in Korça with new computers for its ICT lab and new sports gear for the gym. Approximately 700 high school students enrolled at Raqi Qirinxhi will make full use of the newly refurbished ICT lab and sports gear, as part of information technology and physical education classes in their curriculum.

As a former student of this school, President Samir Mane acknowledges the achievements of the generations it educated over the years and pledges that BALFIN Group will always support the education system.



A new ICT lab in Raqi Qirinxhi high school



4 labs of the Natural Sciences Faculty have new technology devices thanks to B4Students

The Faculty of Natural Sciences in Tirana is the next institution to receive support with infrastructure investments from the B4Students program, created by BALFIN Group. The 4 teaching laboratories, C ++, Mathematical and Informatics Engineering, Molecular Biotechnology, Inorganic Chemistry, as well as the meeting room, are equipped with information and communication technology equipment, identified by the directors as one of the main needs of the institution, to improve capacities in function of the process of teaching, learning and practical training of students, according to the needs of the labor market.



B4Students contributes to Faculty of Natural Sciences



B4Students contributes to Faculty of Natural Sciences

95 students have been professionally trained at BALFIN Group companies

B4Students created the opportunity for 95 students from different universities in the country to be part of the Internship and Employment program for the period March - June 2022, organized in cooperation with Tirana Bank, ACREM, Mane TCI, Jumbo, Neptun Albania, Fashion Group Albania, SPAR Albania, Stella Mare, Milsped Albania, Balfin Real Estate & Hospitality, On Solutions, Elektroservis and BALFIN Group. Program participants are selected from over 700 applicants. Based on their performance during the professional internship, students are evaluated for employment opportunities at Group level.



B4STUDENTS

2 new businesses are founded by students with the support of the B4Students program

“Compact” and “DDA - Diabetic Digital Albanian App” are two new startups founded by students that have been supported with 5000 Euros and 3500 Euros respectively, as winners of the second edition of the Business Ideas Competition. A dedicated training module on the development of business competencies was provided to all competition participants, delivered by experienced managers of the BALFIN Group. 10 finalists of the competition were welcomed by the Group President, Mr. Samir Mane in a conversation about entrepreneurship.



Winners and jury of Business Ideas Competition



Participants of Business Ideas Competition

The 3 winning projects of the Social Clubs are announced in the second call of B4Students

“Students Fashion Recycling Exhibition” by students of the Faculty of Textile Engineering at the Polytechnic University of Tirana, “Virtual currency usage, are we ready?” by the students of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Tirana, as well as “The7Chambers” are the 3 winning projects of the second call of Social Clubs from the B4Students program that have been assessed for financial support for their implementation within the year 2022. All three projects aim to have a positive impact on society by engaging students in issues related to their field of study.



B4STUDENTS



ENVIRONMENT

SPAR Albania joins “One Tree Planted” initiative

On Earth Day, April 22, SPAR Albania joined SPAR International’s “One Tree Planted” initiative by planting trees in Tirana’s Park. This initiative also marked the 90th anniversary of the international market chain, hence the linden trees known for their longevity.

Employees of SPAR Albania joined the initiative and helped during the planting.



Trees planted by SPAR



Tirana Bank enhances green areas in Kamza

Tirana Bank is another company of BALFIN Group that places an emphasis to protection of environment and awareness for a responsible use of natural resources.

“Green, plant, recycle” was the motto of its employees when they increased the green area near the lake of Paskuqan in Kamza. It was a contribution for a greener city and a message to pass on to younger people that a better environment of the place we live in is essential to the quality of life of the community.



Tirana Bank enhances green areas in Kamza



TEG joined “Donate a bicycle” project

Tirana East Gate shopping mall joined the project of Tirana Municipality to encourage the use of bicycles as a means of transport. For every bike donated by citizens, TEG donated a new one and they all went to young people who cannot afford to have their own bike. Several young people benefited from the project, while some of the bicycles went to the community of people with Down syndrome.

TEG represents a lifestyle in alignment with today’s world trends. Healthy living and ever-increasing awareness of the environment are two of the areas where TEG is active, with social investments and international practices in its daily activity. And these intertwine best with the initiative to create more opportunities for bicycle enthusiasts.



TEG promotes cycling

Tirana Bank promotes green businesses

Green Businesses Competition encourages innovation for business ideas at local level and explores the role of philanthropy in stimulating local communities to generate ideas that utilize local resources, revitalize disappearing traditional production chains and community-based markets.

Tirana Bank supported this traditional project as a bank that helps small businesses and at the same time does its part in preserving natural resources during the daily operations. Representatives of the bank and other members of the jury – experts of economy, education, and business development – evaluated the business ideas of thirteen finalists. Out of this selection, Tirana Bank will further support the Funk Cabins project that will offer wooden cabins with 360-degree glass view, to explore the wonderful nature of the country. The bank will also support the Shebenik Egnatia Explorers; it is an idea to set up mobile camps in the Shebenik National Park and other segments of the ancient Egnatia road as entertainment opportunities.



Jury and finalists of Green Ideas Competition

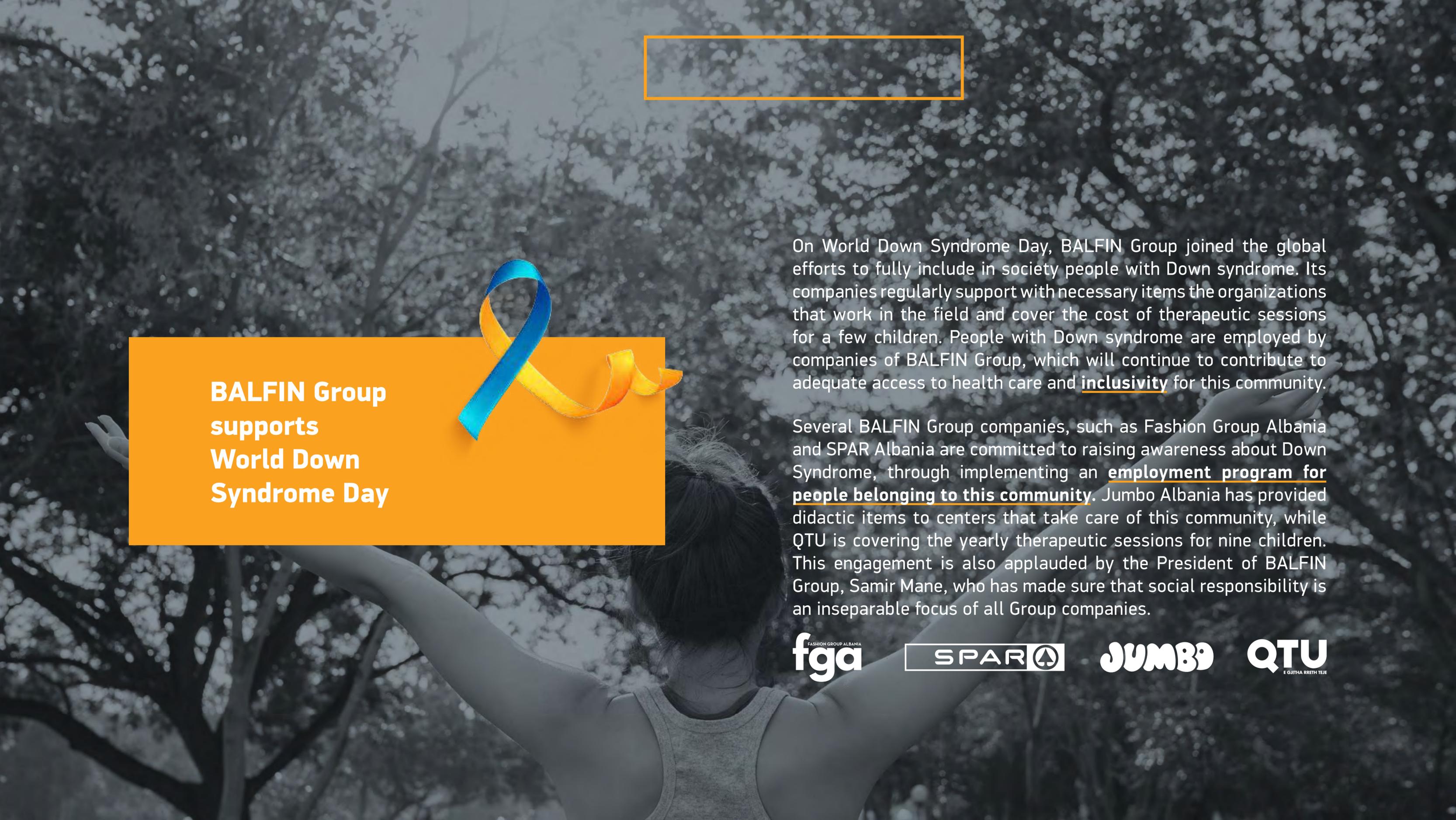


Members of the jury of Green Ideas Competition



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING





**BALFIN Group
supports
World Down
Syndrome Day**

On World Down Syndrome Day, BALFIN Group joined the global efforts to fully include in society people with Down syndrome. Its companies regularly support with necessary items the organizations that work in the field and cover the cost of therapeutic sessions for a few children. People with Down syndrome are employed by companies of BALFIN Group, which will continue to contribute to adequate access to health care and inclusivity for this community.

Several BALFIN Group companies, such as Fashion Group Albania and SPAR Albania are committed to raising awareness about Down Syndrome, through implementing an employment program for people belonging to this community. Jumbo Albania has provided didactic items to centers that take care of this community, while QTU is covering the yearly therapeutic sessions for nine children. This engagement is also applauded by the President of BALFIN Group, Samir Mane, who has made sure that social responsibility is an inseparable focus of all Group companies.

FASHION GROUP ALBANIA
fga

SPAR 

JUMBO

QTU
E GJITHA RRETHI TEJE

QTU supports the National Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Center for Children

Univers Shopping Center supported for the National Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Center for Children, which offers specialized care in fully renovated facilities. About 200 children and young people from all over the country are treated every year by a multidisciplinary team of doctors, therapists, and social workers at this center.

QTU provided monitors and IT equipment, which serve to display special didactic materials, in accordance with the needs of children and their families. The National Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Center for Children is a specialized central public institution that provides mental health care for children and adolescents through integrated clinical practice, education, and research. Services include diagnosing and treating mental health disorders as well as rehabilitating disabilities of this spectrum.



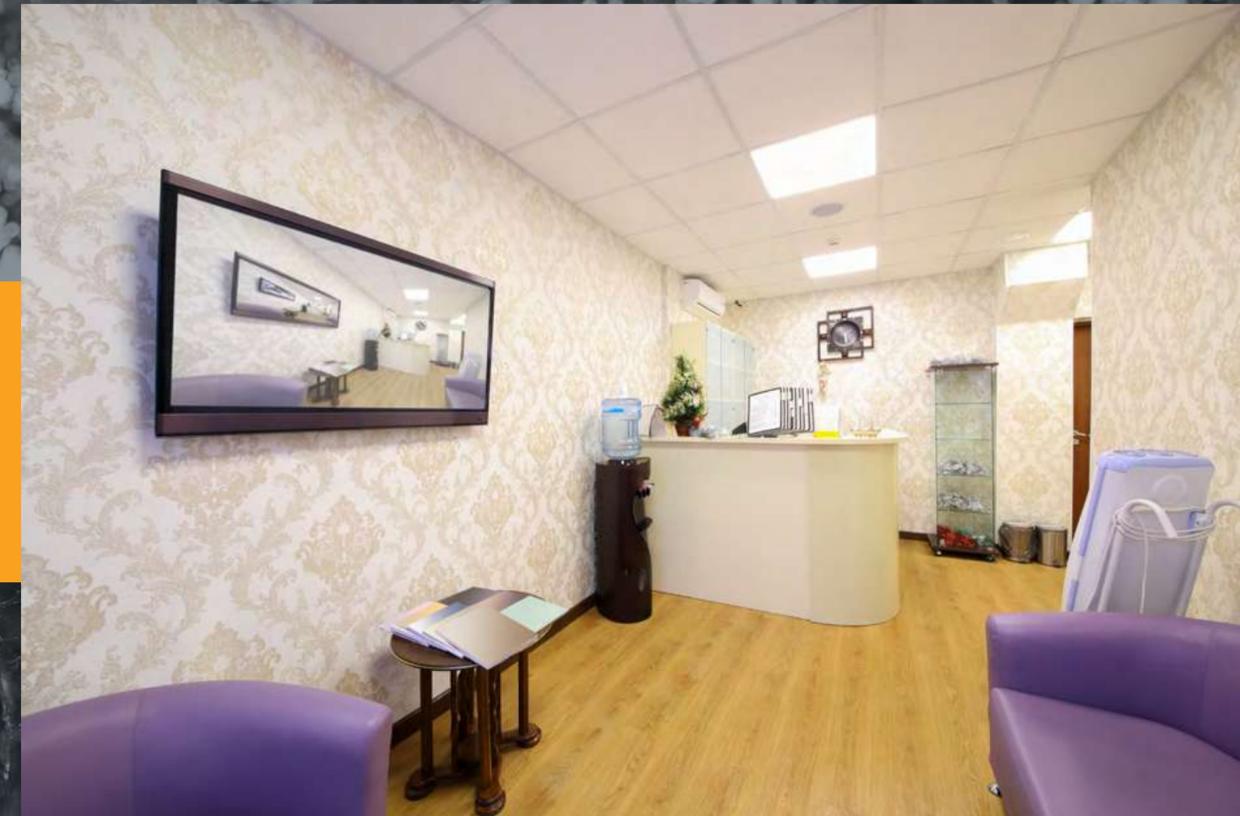
At the National Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Center for Children

Neptun Kosovo stands by health institutions

During the first half of this year, Neptun Kosovo cooperated with two central organizations in the health system of the country.

First, it equipped the Surgery Department in the University Clinical Center of Prishtina with monitors that are used during the therapy for patients. The main medical facility in the country now can provide a better hospitalization period.

Then, Neptun Kosovo provided the Blind Women's Committee of Kosovo with appliances that help members of this community to integrate in society.



Supplied by Netpun Kosovo

SPAR Albania endorses good nutrition

Healthy eating is the direction actively pursued by SPAR Albania when talking about its responsible retailing. High quality products combined with proper nutrition facts are of primary importance for a healthy diet and clients can find both information and the food items when choosing SPAR. The nutritionist Diola Dosti is providing her expertise to clients that visit the SPAR hypermarket at Tirana East Gate and helping them acquire the exact products within the store.

A published author, she provides diet plans, cooking recipes, health tips and an amount of motivation to all interested people, with the added benefit of having the relevant products at hand in the SPAR shelves.



Nutrition advices at SPAR



TEG supports the Tirana Triathlon

Tirana East Gate promotes a healthy lifestyle, with outdoor activities and environmental care education, and the Tirana Triathlon is one of the most prominent sporting events in terms of competitive spirit and approach to nature.

The fourth edition of the Tirana Triathlon marked the participation of 150 athletes from Albania, the region, and beyond, who competed in swimming, running, and cycling near Farka Lake in Tirana. TEG shopping center has been a permanent supporter of this organization with three sports disciplines which represent physical activities that each of us can practice in daily life.



Winners of Tirana Triathlon



Winners of Tirana Triathlon

Green Coast Trail Running – a new race is born

This year, runners of Albania have added a new itinerary to their agenda. One of the most rewarding spots for trails in the entire country, Palasa is now home to a 4 km race for the newbies who want to experience this activity and 16 km for the experienced trail runners.

Around 80 participants made the first edition a success that is bound to become a yearly tradition. Green Coast provides all necessary infrastructure for the competition, as an activity that promotes a healthy lifestyle and adds to the appeal of the Palasa area.



Winners of Tirana Triathlon

Customers of Jumbo in Bosnia and Herzegovina contribute to a good cause

This May, JUMBO Bosnia and Herzegovina celebrated its 5th anniversary with an entertainment program and additional benefits for customers. On this occasion, 5% of one day's traffic was allocated to charity.

This amount will be used to equip the playground of Los Rosales Center with entertainment products that are suitable for children with special needs, for example a swing. Los Rosales takes care for children and young people with special needs, and it will be the first institution in the country with such facilities.

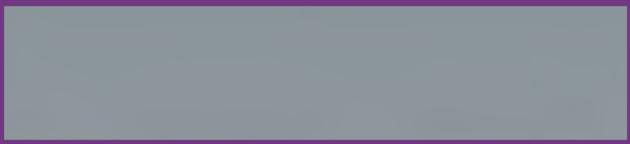
This was announced during the 2nd International Games for Children and Young People with Development Disabilities, held in the city of Mostar. The social contribution of Jumbo has been permanent during all its five years of activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Recognition for Jumbo's contribution



Recognition for Jumbo's contribution



POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Jumbo Montenegro brings happiness in Bijela

Organizations of university students in Podgorica have made it an annual ritual to visit the Home of Orphans in Bijela and provide all the support they can to the children. Jumbo Montenegro joined the students and made available considerable quantities of school supplies, education items and toys.

Jumbo is perceived as the place that makes children happy and this is especially true in the case of this cooperation with the students and the children in Bijela.



Jumbo Montenegro in Bijela

JUMBO

Employees of Jumbo in Albania celebrate with children of at SOS Children's Villages

Employees of Jumbo in Albania visited the SOS Children's Villages in Tirana and had fun with the little ones. The cooperation started last year, when Jumbo celebrated its 10th anniversary in Albania and pledged to provide all the necessary products for 10 children for one year.

Representatives of the institution thanked the company on behalf of SOS Children's Villages Albania and praised its long-term commitment to guarantee a healthier upbringing of children.

The employees delivered gifts to the children and for a few hours became part of the large family.

Ani Xhetani, Marketing Director of Jumbo, expresses the opinion of the employees when he says that "visits to the children are exciting and we have turned them to tradition. We want the children to feel the family atmosphere and understand that we are beside them."



Winners of Green Coast Trail Run

JUMBO

Spar and Jumbo in Albania cooperate with World Vision

Spar Albania and Jumbo Albania continue their cooperation with World Vision to help children with disabilities in the country. Donation boxes are placed in their stores for customers to donate money or food for the cause. At the same time, part of the proceedings from sale of Spar water bottles throughout the year goes to the same initiative.

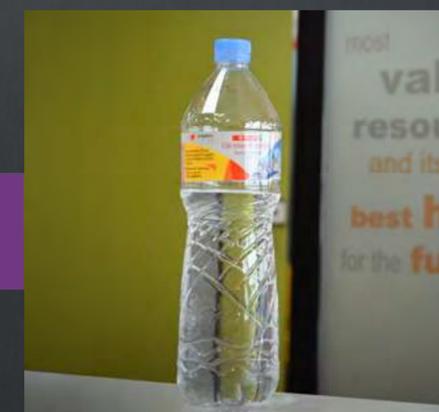
This contribution amounts to 93 food packages that World and Food Bank distributed to families in need in several districts, and to the equivalent of 242 therapeutic session for disabled children in rural areas. "Hello Life" is the World Vision program that provides physiotherapy, logopedic treatment, development therapy and other kinds of specialized care for 196 children with disabilities in Albania. Spar and Jumbo have made it a tradition to join forces for the health of children.



Spar and Jumbo in cooperation with World Vision



Spar cooperates with World Vision



Spar cooperates with World Vision



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