



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

2023 Booklet



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About CSR of BALFIN Group

BALFIN Group is consolidating its giving back to society year by year, as the indicators confirm. In the last five years, approximately 450,000 people have benefitted from the social engagement of the companies of the Group, in all countries where they operate. Companies of the Group have applied sustainable practices and promoted initiatives according to the industries they belong to. They have joined forces with customers in specific campaigns, and have invited their own employees to share time and expertise with those that need it the most.

Shopping malls protect the environment by recycling paper waste, installing charging stations for electric cars, making use of solar energy, natural ventilation and lighting, as well as supporting projects that stimulate outdoor activities. Real estate companies preserve the best of natural and cultural heritage in their areas, in addition to helping categories of people in need.

Tirana Bank spreads financial literacy among young people, and is closely linked to education institutions and students. Through economic development, employment opportunities, innovation, and social investment, BALFIN Group challenges the status quo, fostering a positive impact on communities.

**APPROXIMATELY 450,000
PEOPLE HAVE BENEFITTED**

**BALFIN Group challenges the status quo,
fostering a positive impact on communities.**



About MANE Foundation

Mane Foundation is established in 2023, building on a long and rich tradition of social engagement on the part of BALFIN Group and especially that of its founder, Samir Mane. It all starts in the early years of the free market economy in the region, when the initial companies of the future BALFIN Group volunteered to collect and transport the aids from Austria and other EU countries to Albania. The social engagement went on to become a pillar of the Group's philosophy, involving all its companies across countries. In the 30th anniversary of BALFIN Group, the Mane Foundation is established to give a new dimension to the commitment to improve communities.

The Foundation is active in these fields of activity that address some of the most immediate issues in today's society, namely Education and Youth, Health and Well-being, Fight Against Poverty and Inequalities, Environment, and Arts.

It takes into consideration the SDGs and the experience of prestigious organizations, to bring about change in the lives of citizens.



Pillars of sustainability



EDUCATION AND YOUTH

Improving the education system, curricula and infrastructure.
Empowerment of initiatives that build capacities of students and academic staff.



ENVIRONMENT

Enhancing green areas, encouraging conservation of natural resources usage.
Awareness of people about the importance of a clean environment.



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Better living conditions, especially for categories of people in need.
Cooperation with public institutions to address issues concerning groups of people.



FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Meeting basic needs of most vulnerable groups of society. Own products (home appliances, clothes, food) for organizations and institutions that target these people.



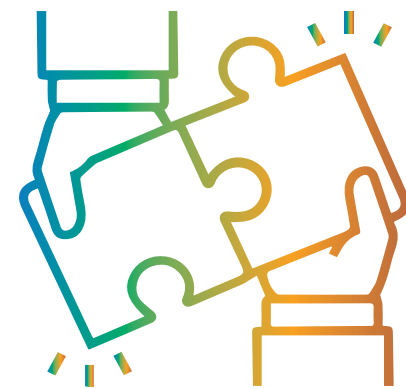
ART AND CULTURE

Promoting arts, culture, heritage and innovation for the people and economy.
Projects that enrich the art landscape in the country.

Year 2023 in numbers



4,000 STUDENTS
Enrolled in B4Students



40 PARTNER
organizations
and universities



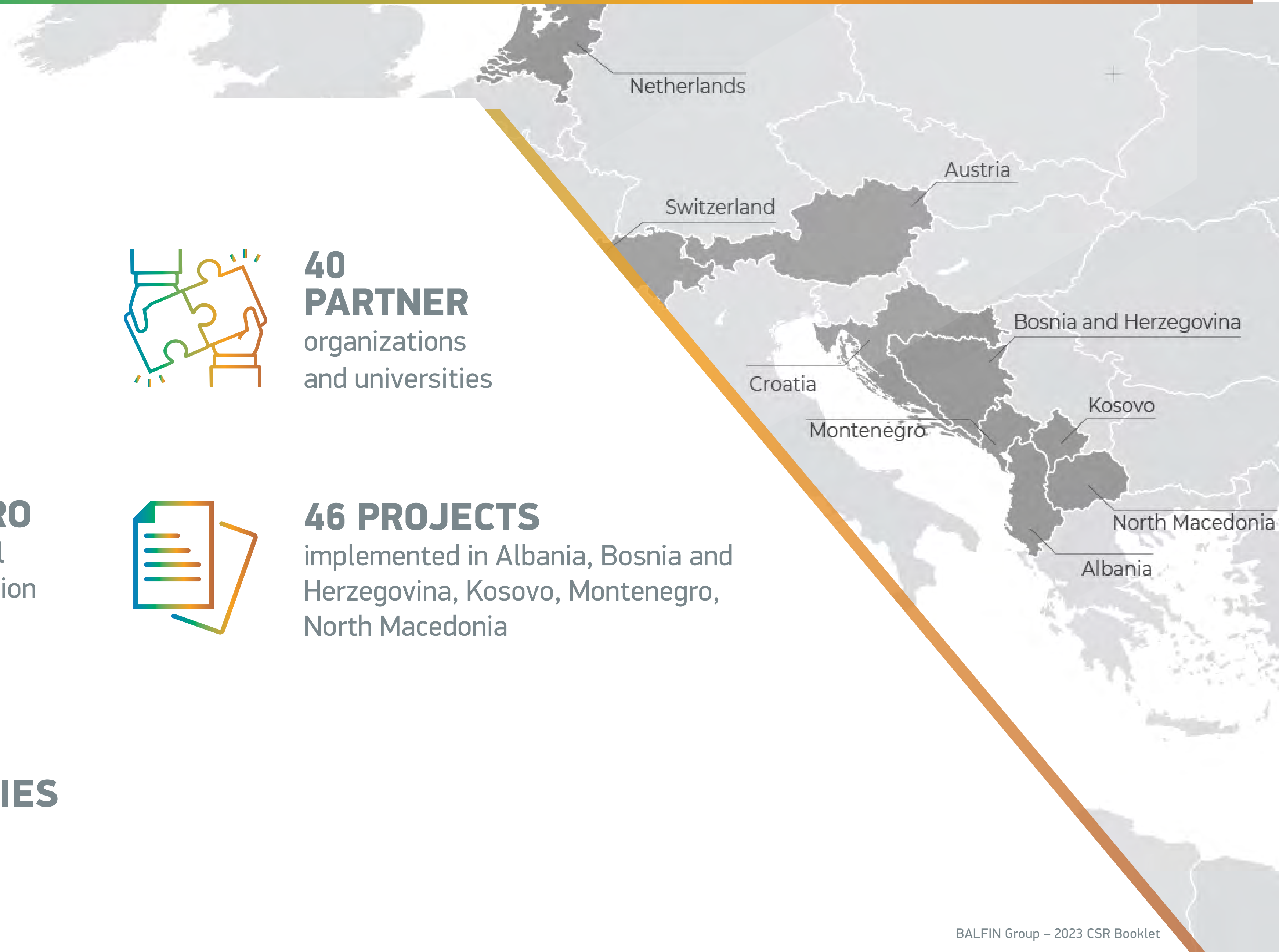
500,000 EURO
allocated to social
projects in the region



46 PROJECTS
implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia



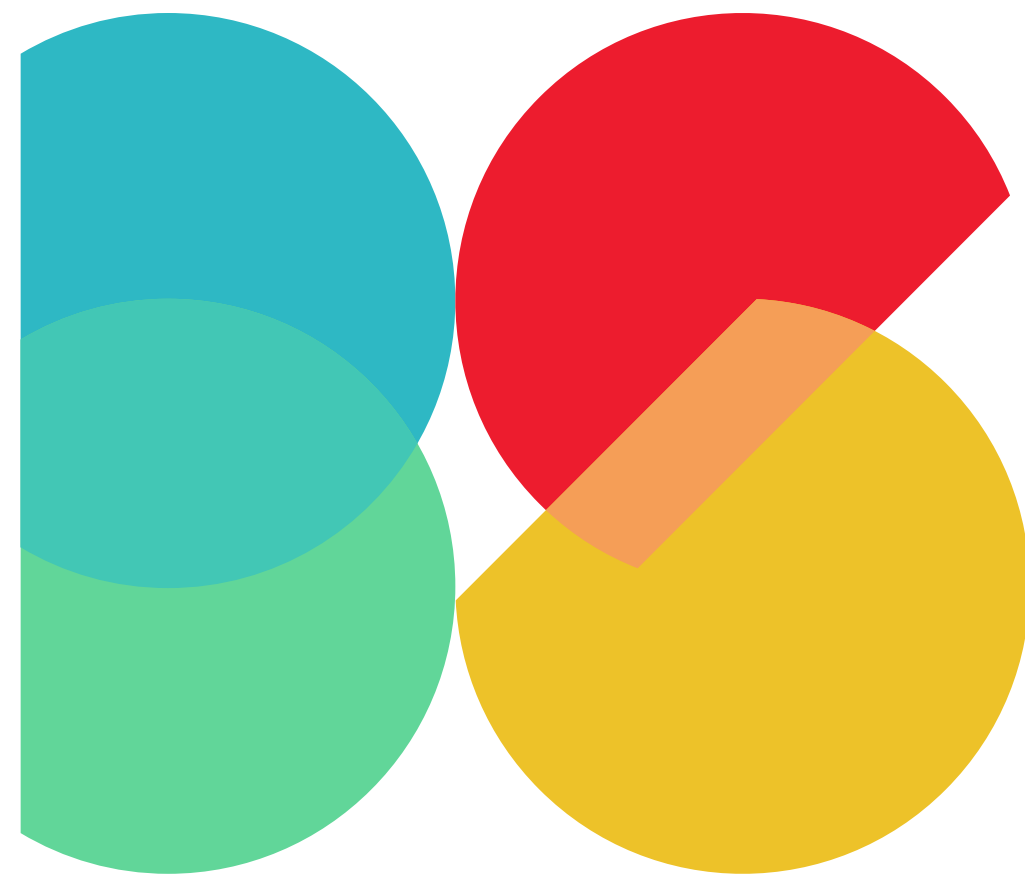
37,000 BENEFICIARIES
by 13 companies
of BALFIN Group





EDUCATION





B4STUDENTS

B4Students is a program of Mane Foundation to support students, local startups, and entrepreneurs by investing in education and sustainable solutions. The program offers internships, mentorship, site visits, and scholarships to develop students' skills and provide them with employment opportunities. B4Students also provides funding for startups and social activities.

B4Students collaborates closely with universities to invest in infrastructure, academic research, and curriculum feedback, as well as co-organizing activities with a positive impact on education, innovation, and community.

Get in touch, we can have a chat about how we can support each other.

www.b4students.com |

Winners of business ideas competition

In a demo day format, the finalists of the Business Ideas Competition presented their ideas to a jury and B4Students program will help two winners of 2023 with funding and mentoring during implementation.

The Living App business plan by Nadiela Ahmeti, a student in the Professional Master's program in Business Informatics at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Tirana, aims to create a gamification-based application that aims to promote local tourism and businesses and positively impact health and well-being of users.

The "Re-Work" idea by Eriselda Gjipali, a student at Tirana Business University College, is based on an online mediation platform for the employment of young people, with the aim of matching the needs of companies with the possibility of young people for part-time engagement or involvement in specific projects.



96 STUDENTS AT BALFIN GROUP COMPANIES

B4Students, the largest Albanian platform for students, offered an opportunity to grow professionally to 96 students from all universities of the country and even beyond its borders.

Balfin Development, Balfin Construction, Neptun, SPAR Albania, Tirana Bank, Fashion Group Albania, and BALFIN Group hosted the selected applicants, most of which preferred to gain from the experience of employees in finance, marketing,

human resources and information technology departments.

Many of the participating students are then employed in BALFIN Group companies, based on their performance during the internship. Do you know a student who would benefit from the Internship and Employment program? Spread the word about B4Students!



Vlora Marina welcomes students

23 students from Polis University visited the Vlora Marina tourism project in the coastal city, as part of the B4Students program initiative, to provide aspiring engineers with real work experience. The visit was a combination of observing site works and interacting with industry professionals.

Vlora Marina welcomed another group of students on a site visit, this time from the Faculty of Architecture at the Catholic University Our Lady of Good Counsel. 24 future architects were introduced to the team of engineers and architects who informed them about the construction techniques for the composite and functional part. Aspects of design, space planning, and the technology used were also discussed.



“The visit to this very important project is essential for students to better understand the challenges and new construction technologies in special conditions.”

Endri Duro

Lecturer at the Department of Architecture and Engineering Polis University



“This project will not only have an economic impact, but also a cultural one.”

Fabio Cappani

Dean of Faculty of Architecture Catholic University Our Lady of Good Counsel

Sharing practical expertise

#Here2Empower, the latest initiative from B4Students, aims to bridge the gap between theoretical education and practical skills by engaging experts from BALFIN Group companies. At the Faculty of Economics, University of Tirana, Elda Hysenbelli, Executive Director at ACREM, and Aurela Kalaja, Project Manager at Green Coast Resort and Residences, presented the “Green Coast Gallery by TEG” project, discussing its development, management, community impact, employment prospects, and sought-after skills in commercial real estate management with students.

At the Polytechnic University of Tirana, Andon Qirushi, Project Manager at BALFIN Developmentt, shared insights on “BIM, accelerating digital transformation in the AEC industry,” emphasizing the importance of BIM software with practical examples for the future of architecture, engineering, and construction.



BALFIN Group signs memorandum of cooperation with the Polytechnic University of Tirana

Universities and companies play an essential role in fostering innovation and human creativity. In the spirit of the World Week of Creativity and Innovation, BALFIN Group has formalized its collaboration with the Polytechnic University of Tirana, to evaluate new perspectives and expand opportunities for students.

The Rector of the Polytechnic University of Tirana, Prof. Dr. Andrea Maliqari, and the Executive Director of BALFIN Group, Edlira Muka, held a meeting and signed a memorandum of cooperation which creates the necessary space for the companies of BALFIN Group to support the Polytechnic University of Tirana for a higher quality academic process for students and lecturers, while simultaneously preparing young people for the labor market.

“Participation of experts in the auditorium, collaboration on research projects, as well as the engagement of students in internships and specific projects, contribute directly to their formation and experience”.

Prof. Dr. Andrea Maliqari

*Rector of the Polytechnic
University of Tirana*



Six high school students become BALFIN Group leaders for a day

BALFIN Group hosted six high school students of Junior Achievement of Albania in the framework of its *“Leader for A Day Program”*. The distinguished students were assigned to the headquarters of BALFIN Group, Fashion Group Albania, Jumbo Albania, Scan TV, and Tirana Bank, where they job-shadowed the senior directors and applied their original decision-making skills.

BALFIN Group’s President, Samir Mane, welcomed two of these future leaders. He was also a guest of honor at the program’s final event, where he encouraged the participants to try and realize the entrepreneurial ideas they may have.

For several years, BALFIN Group has partnered with Junior Achievement of Albania to encourage and support entrepreneurship among youth, in alignment with its *commitment towards education* in the countries where it operates.

“Leading people invokes a special kind of adrenaline that I wish to every inspiring entrepreneur. I am sure these elite students, too, will succeed in their ventures.”

Samir Mane

President of BALFIN Group



“LEADER FOR
A DAY PROGRAM”

Mane Foundation equips the Raqi Qirinxhi High School in Korça with a new ICT laboratory

600 STUDENTS

The most modern information and communication technology lab was inaugurated at the Raqi Qirinxhi High School in Korca. A contribution of Mane Foundation to a contemporary learning process, the new laboratory ensures the familiarity of young people with technology and its inclusion in school projects.

The high school Principle, Keti Qirinxhi, together with the founder of Mane Foundation, Samir Mane, were the first to present to a group of students the opportunities that are now created for them. Samir Mane explained that this is the high school he himself attended and that he wanted today's students

to dare and follow his example. "I would advise you to study and at the same time look towards the future. Technology, tourism, and the service sector are becoming more and more important and you have the opportunity, with this laboratory, to include technology in your projects," added Samir Mane. "I started with a dream and today I have achieved more than I could have dreamed. BALFIN Group colleagues are ready to help you to accomplish yours."



"Information and communication technology now becomes tangible for young people and the example of the former student who is heading an international business group is the best inspiration for them."

Keti Qirinxhi
Principle of Raqi Qirinxhi High School

What do we need to know about cryptocurrency, according to ABC Tirana Club

Informing and raising students' awareness about cryptocurrencies was the focus of the social project carried out by the ABC Tirana Club student group in collaboration with the Faculty of Economics in Tirana, with the financial support of B4Students. The idea was presented at the call for Social Clubs, organized by B4Students, in support of social initiatives with a positive impact on the community.

In order to assess young people's perception of cryptocurrencies and address their main concerns, ABC Tirana Club organized a survey with 300 students from public and private universities in the country.

Under the auspices of the ABC Tirana Club team, representatives of interest groups from public and private institutions, non-profit organizations, as well as academics and students of economics and finance, were part of the discussion forum, organized in order to analyze the findings of the survey, highlighting key challenges and providing suggestions, to inform the use of cryptocurrencies.

"New phenomena in the economic field require responsibility in management and interpretation, otherwise chaos is stimulated in people, in their thoughts and decision-making. The survey data and the conclusions of this forum directly contribute to the increase of this trust."

Prof. Dr. Dhori Kule

Dean of Faculty of Economy, University of Tirana

**300
STUDENTS**



SCHOLARSHIPS FROM GREEN COAST

Green Coast supports the top students of Tourism and Management Department

Three excellent students from the Master of Science in Tourism Management, at the Faculty of Economy of the University of Tirana, received *scholarships from Green Coast*, which has been continuing the tradition of supporting excellence for several years. Martha Klimi, Franko Kerka and Mirjan Aliaj are the young people who, thanks to their commitment in this field of studies, have benefitted professional and personal qualification opportunities in cooperation with Green Coast and other companies of BALFIN Group.

Green Coast, as a representative of modern tourism developments in the country, is focused on promising students in the tourism industry, believing that investment in education is the best way to bring the necessary progress in this sector.



New laboratory in the Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering in Prishtina from Neptun Kosova

This academic year, Neptun Kosova set up a modern laboratory for students of the *Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering in Prishtina*. Now students have a new learning and working space, aiming towards practical learning, as well as implementing their school projects. Representatives of the Faculty expressed gratitude on behalf of the institution for the improved technological infrastructure.

The renovated laboratory has a capacity of 42 workstations, complete with laptops, tables, and chairs, in accordance with the curriculum of the faculty. Neptun Kosova, pays attention to education as the right way to prepare the citizens of tomorrow. A year ago, it donated laptops to distinguished students of this faculty, as a fruitful promotion for talented young people.

42
WORKSTATIONS



Tirana Bank, IT laboratory at the Faculty of Information Technology

Education is one of the essential pillars of Tirana Bank's social responsibility. By renovating the ICT laboratory at the Faculty of Information Technology, University of Tirana, the bank demonstrates its commitment to the next generation of digital pioneers and the cultivation of new talents.



GEN-E Albania 2023: Tirana Bank supports the entrepreneurs of the future

Tirana Bank continued its partnership with Junior Achievement of Albania by supporting the National Entrepreneurship Festival, which enables high school students to hone their skills and develop new ideas together. Part of *GEN-E Albania 2023* were 125 students with 25 student companies from 17 high schools of the country. These companies created by the students addressed different market needs, particularly those related to green economy, services, IT and innovation.

The National Festival of Entrepreneurship was the finalization of the bigger Junior Achievement of Albania Student Company Program. This year, it engaged 2,532 students in 56 schools of higher secondary education and previously held three Regional Entrepreneurship Festivals in Gjirokastër, Korçë and Lezhë. Among the 25 finalists, the jury awarded the project titled *Fistrat* from the Harry Fultz Institute in Tirana as the winner.

Fistrat is a game designed to increase the financial literacy of young people by alleviating the challenges associated with financial management.



Tirana Bank, Here for Women and Girls

In the framework of the *International Women’s Day*, Tirana Bank undertook several initiatives aimed at empowering women, both inside and outside of its offices.

Representatives of Tirana Bank, lecturers and high officials of the Faculty of Information Technology shared their own professional experience in front of students of the faculty and employees of the bank. *“Here for Education, Here for Girls and Women in Technology”* was the theme that connected all participants.

Employees of Tirana Bank encouraged girls to excel in science, engineering, and technology. The organization is helping with its *Students’ Hub program of internships* and by furnishing a new laboratory for the Faculty of Information Technology.

Tirana Bank invited women and girls of the staff to the premiere of *“Women”* – a theatrical play about the challenges that women must face in today’s world. The production was part of the FemFest initiative, to encourage *young girls to pursue their talents*. Thanks to the proceedings from the tickets, five excellent students are now able to pursue their postgraduate studies at the University of Arts.



Girls and Women in Technology



**INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN’S DAY**

Mane Foundation and Jumbo renovate two kindergartens in Korça and Elbasan

Children of kindergarten No. 2 in Elbasan and kindergarten No. 8 in Korça had their playgrounds completely renovated, with new outdoor facilities for education and entertainment thanks to Mane Foundation and Jumbo.

It is the second year that Jumbo renovates two kindergartens, this time one in Korça and another in Elbasan. Our aim is to continue to contribute for a better growth of children in all the countries where we operate.



Jumbo supports the reconstruction of kindergartens in Kosovo

The reconstruction of the “Gezimi Ynë” kindergarten in Fushë Kosovë and Mitrovica are two of the projects supported by Jumbo Kosova, in the framework of social responsibility and the focus on caring for the wellbeing and upbringing of children. Now about 400 children will have new and dedicated entertainment spaces, as well as warm environments, for a more complete and comfortable educational process.

Jumbo is ensuring its mission makes an impact, one kindergarten at a time, wherever it is present: Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina.



An empowering summer camp for Himara's children by Mane Foundation and Green Coast

40 children and teens from the city of Himara and surrounding areas embarked on an entertaining experience of empowerment through the Summer Camp in Himara. The participants, aged 11 to 16, were exposed to a carefully crafted program that nurtured their talents, fostered life skills, and opened their eyes to a world of possibilities. The summer camp activities were meticulously designed around various themes that touched upon critical aspects of personal and social development, such as: *digitalization, innovation, inclusion, teamwork, self-esteem, stereotypes and bullying.*

Experts and facilitators guided the participants through thought-provoking sessions, encouraging them to reflect, learn, and grow together.



"By the end of the Summer Camp, we wanted to see these children and teenagers return to their communities with newfound knowledge, greater self-assurance, and a steady belief in their potential to create positive change. And I believe we achieved that, with the help of Mane Foundation and Green Coast."

Arbi Tepelena

Representative of World Vision Albania who led the camp's activities





ENVIRONMENT



Another Riciklo – Kreativ, another topic of sustainability

For the second year, Tirana East Gate welcomed and supported the creative spirit of architecture students, participants in the international competition *Recycle - Creative*, organized by the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism in Tirana, in partnership with Mane Foundation, B4Students program and the GO2 Albania organization. *18 lamps for urban and interior environments*, created with recycled materials by participating students, were evaluated by a jury and five of them were selected as best conveying the message.

“We are happy that this edition brought students from three countries - Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia, thus expanding its echo and promoting cooperation.”

Armand Vokshi

Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism



Tirana Bank supports the Green Business Competition

Green Business Competition, organized by Partners Albania, stimulates and encourages innovation for business ideas that revive local production traditions, use of local resources and markets, and an environmentally friendly approach.

The finalists selected from non-profit organizations, social enterprises, small businesses in the country and individuals, presented their ideas to an independent jury of experts in the field of economy, academia, and business development.

Tirana Bank's financial support for this program aims to increase the role of philanthropy in the local community and promote sustainable business concepts that match its values as an institution.



SUPPORTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES

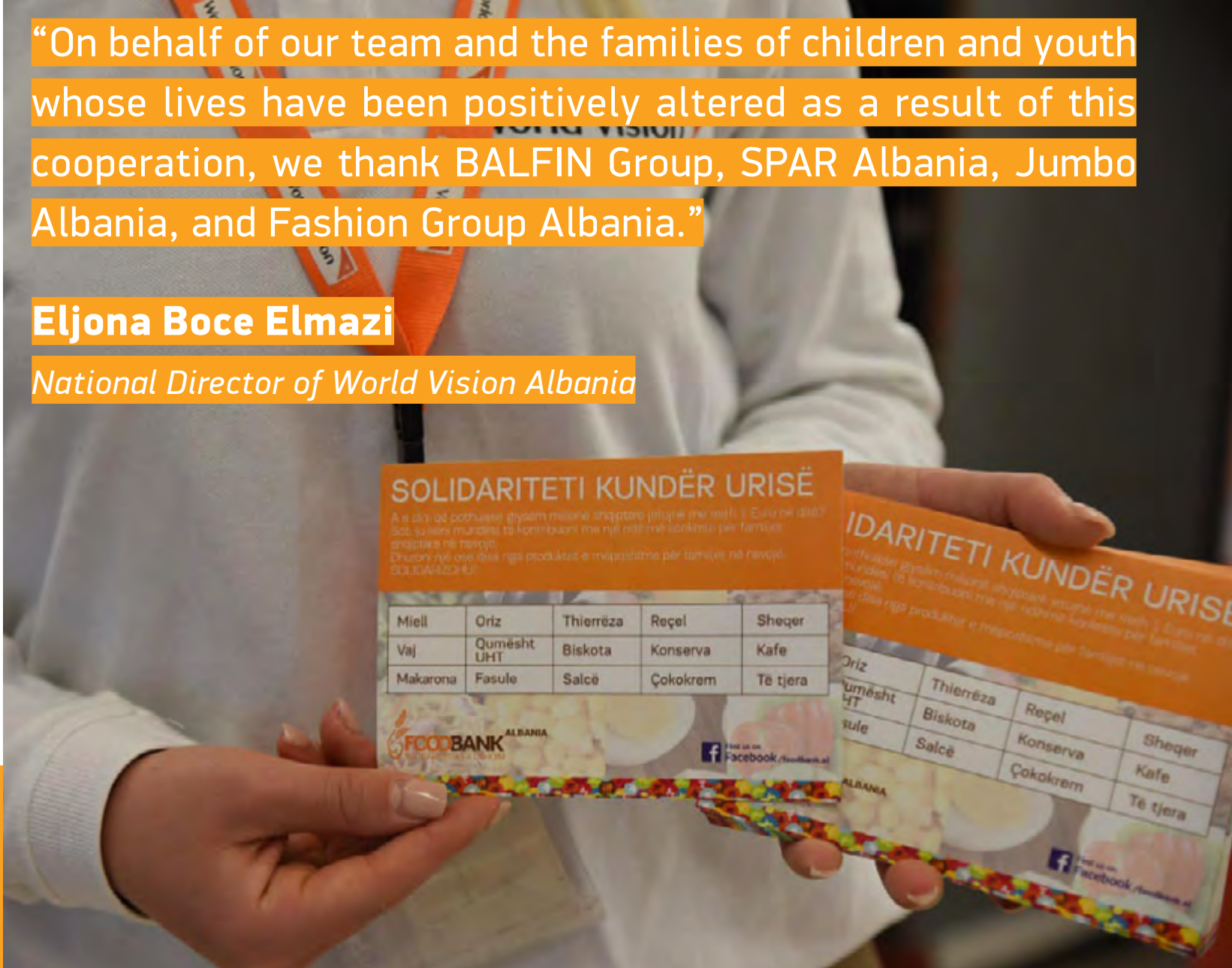


HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

SPAR, Jumbo and FGA's cooperation with World Vision Albania in transforming lives

SPAR Albania, Jumbo Albania and Fashion Group Albania's long-standing cooperation with World Vision has once again proved successful in transforming lives in Albania throughout the past year.

- » Specialized therapeutic sessions for 226 children with disabilities.
- » Counselling for 234 parents in the rural and suburban areas of Librazhd, Prrrenjas, Dibra, Bulqiza, Lezha, and Rrogozhina.
- » 3.7 tons of food distributed to 90 families in need in Vau i Dejës, Librazhd, Rrogozhinë, Dibër, and Kamëz.
- » 450 items of clothing to communities in need in Prrrenjas and Kamëz.



“On behalf of our team and the families of children and youth whose lives have been positively altered as a result of this cooperation, we thank BALFIN Group, SPAR Albania, Jumbo Albania, and Fashion Group Albania.”

Eljona Boce Elmazi
National Director of World Vision Albania



Jumbo Celebrates Children's Day with a Visit to SOS Village in Tirana

On Children's Day, Jumbo continued its commitment to supporting the wellbeing and happiness of children by visiting the *SOS Children's Villages in Tirana*. Jumbo employees once again shared joy and brought smiles to the faces of the little ones.

During the visit, Jumbo employees delivered thoughtful gifts to each child, embracing the opportunity to become a part of their extended family for a few precious hours. As always, Jumbo went beyond traditional presents, as the company also donated school and didactic materials, dishes and household items, toys, and summer essentials.



Jumbo Montenegro supports children and youth with disabilities

Jumbo continues its social impact journey in Montenegro. In a remarkable initiative to improve the lives of young people with disabilities, Jumbo has announced a donation to support the specialized JU Day Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities and Developmental Difficulties.

This contribution provides support to inclusive education through for children and youth with special educational needs. It exhibits once again their pledge towards the most sensitive part of society and consideration regarding the necessities of children with disabilities.



Introducing Jumbo Sensory Room, a multifaceted oasis of hope and healing

In an effort to significantly improve the quality of life for brave children and young people who have emerged victorious against cancer, Jumbo in *Bosnia and Herzegovina* has joined forces with the Association PIPOL to inaugurate a special facility, *Jumbo Sensory Room*. With the flick of a switch, a seemingly ordinary space is transformed into an extraordinary oasis, providing serenity for courageous individuals whose everyday life is characterized by complex procedures, long hospital stays, and strict isolation, as well as surgery and radiation therapy.

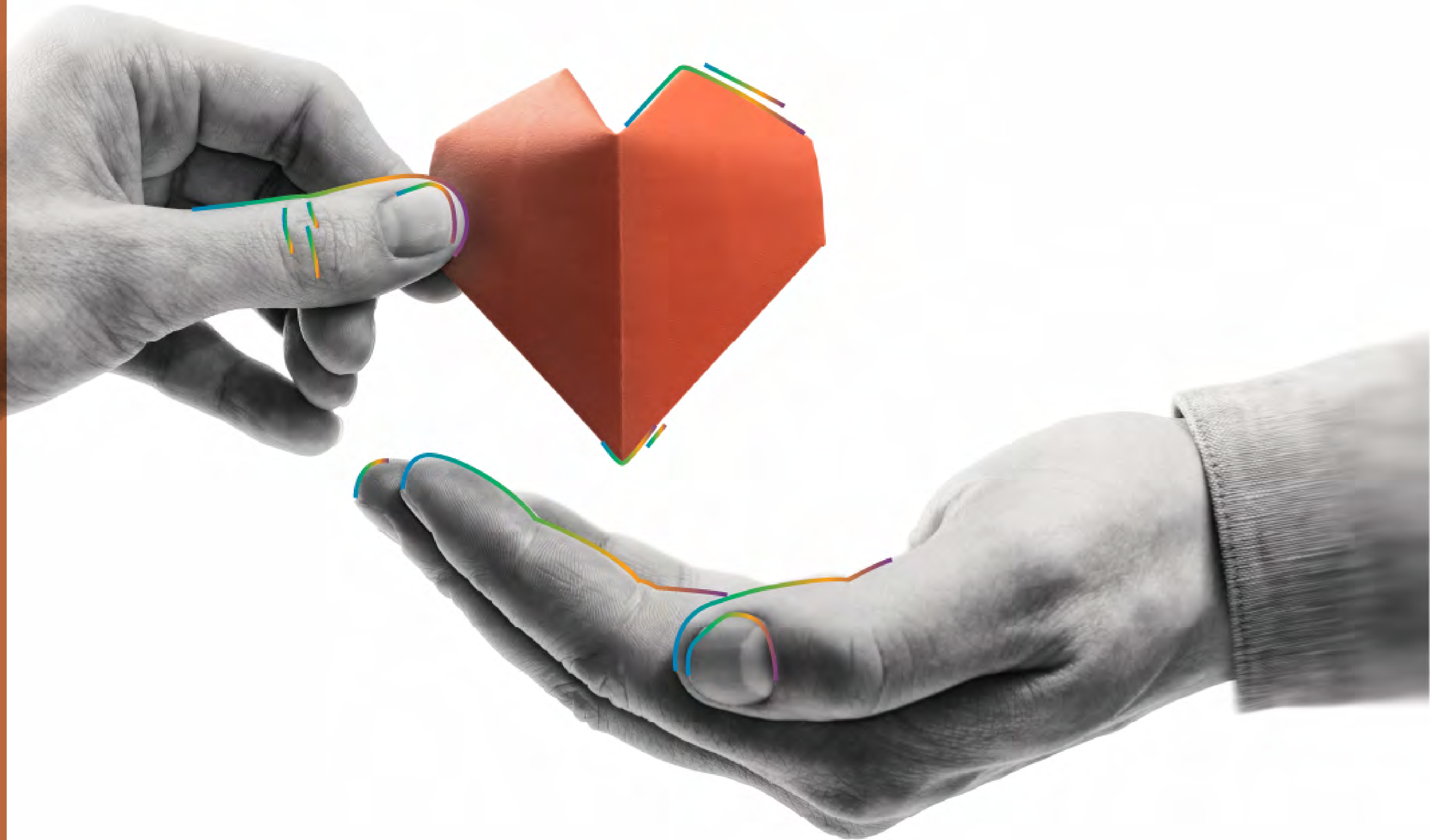
Its main purpose is the crucial support in sensory integration, rehabilitation, resocialization, and communication. The space features state-of-the-art technological devices to aid in the development, correction, and improvement of speech and communication skills.



JUMBO SENSORY ROOM



**FIGHT AGAINST
POVERTY**



SPAR Albania's good deeds on the holiday season

The last days of December found SPAR Albania occupied with a greater purpose, that of giving back to the community. In collaboration with World Vision, SPAR Albania came to the support of the orphanage in Tirana with toys and surprises for the children as part of the year-end campaign "Give a Toy".

On the occasion of the holiday season, employees of SPAR Albania joined the elderly at the capital's retirement home for a festive lunch which they prepared and served.



People and companies of BALFIN Group stand by those affected by earthquake in Turkey and Syria

In times of great despair following the earthquake-stricken areas in Turkey and Syria, BALFIN Group and its employees joined forces to provide the most necessary support for the communities affected.

Donation boxes in the premises of companies made it possible for employees to make monetary contributions. Then, QTU, Balfin Real Estate and Hospitality, Fashion Group, Elektroservis, Mane TCI, and OnSolutions in Albania, East Gate Mall in North Macedonia, Neptun, and Jumbo Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, expressed their support and responded to the emergency.

BALFIN Group does not have any subsidiaries in Turkey or Syria. As a human-centric organization, it considers the aid granted to disaster-stricken communities and countries a special mission of uttermost importance.



Jumbo Kosova Supports Families Affected by Flood in Peja

Jumbo Kosovo and Mane Foundation extended a helping hand to the families affected the devastating floods caused by heavy rainfall and adverse weather in Peja. They donated €10,000 worth of essential home products and appliances to ten families who were impacted by the floods. By providing home products and appliances, Jumbo Kosovo restored a sense of normality to their lives.



FGA's Love Bag Campaign: Spreading Love and Hope through Clothing Donations

Fashion Group Albania successfully completed another "Love Bag" campaign in collaboration with World Vision Albania. This month-long initiative aimed to collect pre-used clothing from Okaidi's customers in its stores in Tirana, with the purpose of providing support to underprivileged children aged 0-18. The campaign received a great response, resulting in the collection of 145 Love Bags filled with clothing items.



Mane Foundation and Tirana Bank support a better life for the Aroni family

Mane Foundation and Tirana Bank have come to the aid of the Aroni family from the city of Koplik, due to their difficult living conditions and the economic impossibility of their two children attending school.

The three members of the Aroni family, the head of the family File and her 2 children, Juliana 15 years old and Xhulio 14 years old, have been accommodated in a new apartment in Koplik Center, very close to the children's school, renovated and equipped for a normal life. The family will be financially supported with the monthly rent and utility expenses until the children reach adulthood.

Mane Foundation helps the children of the Likrama family to attend school

The Mane Foundation, with the special care of its founder Samir Mane, responded to the concern of the Likrama family, whose children were forced to work to ensure their minimum living conditions and education.

The Mane Foundation gave the opportunity to three children aged 7, 11 and 13 to dedicate themselves to education. With a monthly pension for each of them until they grow up and with the renovated house in Krrabë, Tirana, the living conditions of the Likrama family have improved significantly.



Happier Holidays with Mane Foundation

Mane Foundation spent the last days of the holiday season tending to several families in need, contributing to improving their everyday lives. In collaboration with “Fundjavë Ndryshe” Solidarity Center, ten families in difficult living conditions were identified in Tirana, Vorë and Kamëz, lacking basic needs, such as the inability to afford proper heating for their homes.

Mane Foundation provided these families with the electrical appliances needed for their daily activities, as well as heating equipment for the cold months ahead. All the members of these families can now meet simple needs for information, entertainment, heating as well as other basic needs.

BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS

We invite you to download this publication digitally.
Thank you for your eco-conscious choice!



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Front and back cover feature details from an artwork by student Ina Tuti, exhibited as part of an activity by B4Students.