

# SAVE THE CHILDREN IN ALBANIA

Country Profile | Championing Children's Rights Since 1999



## WHO WE ARE

Save the Children in Albania (SCiA) has been working to advance the rights and wellbeing of children since 1999, operating as a National Office across 12 districts in both urban and rural areas of Albania.

Our work reaches the most vulnerable and marginalized children – those living in poverty, children with disabilities, children from Roma and Egyptian communities, and those in geographically isolated areas.

Guided by our vision of a world where every child survives, learns, and is protected, we combine evidence-based programming, strong institutional partnerships, and child-centred advocacy to create lasting systemic change.

We collaborate with families, schools, communities, civil society, and national and local government – supporting Albania's path toward European integration and a more child-friendly society.



**25+**

Years in Albania

**12**

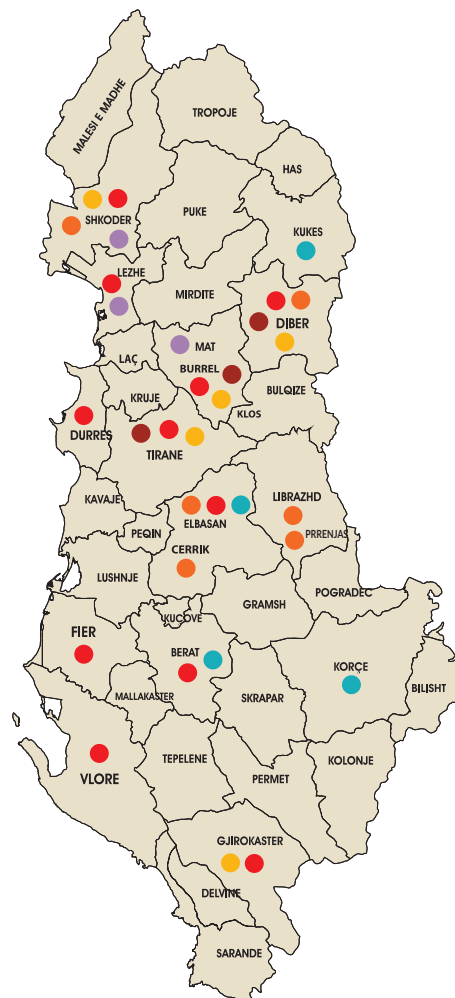
Districts Covered

**6**

Program Areas

# WHERE WE WORK

SCiA operates across 12 districts of Albania, reaching both urban and rural communities, including some of the most remote and underserved areas in the country. Our programs are implemented at national scale, with targeted local interventions in the districts of greatest need.



- **Education:** Diber, Tirane, Fier, Shkoder, Vlore, Berat, Durres, Lezhe, Gjirokaster, Burrel, Elbasan.
- **Child Protection:** Diber, Tirane, Burrel.
- **Child Rights Governance:** Burrel, Shkoder, Diber, Gjirokaster, Tirane
- **Reducing Child and Youth Poverty:** Shkoder, Diber, Elbasan, Librazhd, Prrenjas, and Cerrik
- **Health:** Berat, Korça, Elbasan, and Kukës
- **Humanitarian:** Shkoder, Lezhe, Mat,

## Country Context



**Population:**  
~2,363,314  
(2025 estimate)



**~1 in 3**  
children live in poverty or at risk — among the highest rates in Europe



**~48%**  
of children under age 6 at risk of poverty



**GDP:**  
USD 27 billion



**Life expectancy:**  
~80 years



**GDP growth:**  
~3.5%



Albania continues EU accession progress, with growing focus on social inclusion and child rights reforms



### Persistent challenges:



Child and Youth Poverty



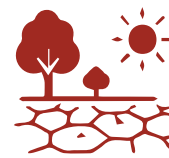
Child labour



School dropout



Social Exclusion



Climate and Environment related risks

# WHAT WE DO - PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

SCiA delivers integrated, child-centred programming across six thematic areas. Each programme combines direct service delivery, systems strengthening, community engagement, and evidence-based advocacy to create lasting change for children and families.

## EDUCATION & EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- Promote inclusive, equitable, quality education from early childhood through adolescence
- Work with schools, teachers, municipalities, and parents to improve learning, inclusion, and attendance
- Reduce barriers for Roma children through enrolment support, teacher training, and parental engagement
- Run eco-school programmes – children leading climate action and measuring air quality
- Sports for development: UEFA-Foundation for Children supported initiative across 99 schools; Albania's first Child Safety in Sport Policy



## CHILD PROTECTION

- Protect children from violence, abuse, exploitation, and harmful practices
- Strengthening child protection systems through community-based services and professional capacity building
- Focus on inclusion for children with disabilities and equal access to protection services
- Address online risks through digital safety, literacy, and child-centred protection frameworks
- Support children returning from abroad – evidence-based advocacy for child-sensitive return procedures



## CHILD RIGHTS GOVERNANCE

- Strengthen child participation and accountability systems at local and national level
- Support Child-Led Groups, youth forums, and the Child Advisory Body (CAB), a national participation mechanism
- Enable children to influence policy on education, poverty, climate, safety, and inclusion
- Promote better laws, financing, and governance systems centred on children's rights
- Connect children with decision-makers at local, national, and EU/UN levels



## CHILD & YOUTH POVERTY REDUCTION

- Address youth unemployment, social exclusion, and limited economic opportunities, especially in rural areas
- Build vocational, digital, and entrepreneurial competencies through foundational skills development, learning opportunities, and Vocational Education and Training (VET)
- Provide internships, mentorship, career guidance, and job placement support
- Strengthening links between training systems, employers, and local institutions
- Support youth-led businesses and green entrepreneurship initiatives



## HEALTH & NUTRITION

- Lead the “Schools for Health” initiative, promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing risk factors associated with Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) among children.
- Strengthening knowledge and skills of children, teachers, parents, and health professionals.
- Develop school health manuals, accredited training modules, and digital tools embedded in national systems
- Use of creative campaigns, celebrity ambassadors, and digital competitions to engage children nationwide
- Advocate for stronger government investment in school health systems



## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

- Provide child-sensitive humanitarian assistance: food, hygiene supplies, psychosocial support, healthcare, and safe spaces
- Deliver HEART methodology – Healing and Education through the Arts – for children in crisis
- Operate Child and Adolescent Friendly Spaces for play, learning, and emotional recovery
- Combine immediate relief with preparedness, resilience-building, and coordination with authorities
- Respond to diverse crises: Afghan displacement, floods, earthquakes, and climate-related emergencies



# PROGRAMME REACH and KEY RESULTS - 2025

## Total Reach

**72,656**

Individuals  
Reached

**60,301**

Children  
Reached

## Education & Early Childhood Care Development

### ○ Reach

**1,945**

children



**31,454**

children  
via sports  
initiative



**230**

teachers



## Key Results

**99.76%**

primary enrolment  
in target areas

**9**

child-friendly  
resource  
classrooms

**99**

sports initiative  
in schools

Albania's first  
Child Safety  
& Inclusion in  
Sport Policy

Roma inclusion  
reached

**140**

children

**9**

school eco-clubs  
established

## Child Protection

### Reach

**229**

children &  
youth



**79**

adults



**4**

community  
centres



### Key Results

First evidence  
base on  
EU return/  
readmission  
impact on  
children

**35**

youths in  
vocational  
training

**28**


completed  
accredited  
courses  
(hairdressing,  
aesthetics,  
cooking)

Child-sensitive  
return  
procedures  
advocated with  
government.

## Child Rights Governance

### Reach


**25**  
children and youth members of the Child Advisory Body



**489**  
participants in climate action initiatives



**166**  
children and youth participated in Child Rights Initiatives



**323**  
adults



### Key Results

**266**

teachers trained from 14 schools

**92**

participants in the national child-led conference

**58**

children directly engaged in policy dialogue

• Input into National Child Guarantee Plan

• First European Child Participation Fair in Brussels


## Child & Youth Poverty

### Reach

**207**  
youth/adults in need



**85**  
employment opportunities



**24+**  
youth businesses



### Key Results

**492**

adolescents and youth supported with life/professional skills development

**78%**

of Supported Continuous Unemployed Learning, (SCUL) participants improved literacy/numeracy/digital skills

**75%**

improvement in life skills

**9**

direct job placements

- Green Mindset Programme
- Career counselling in VET schools.

## Health & Nutrition

### Reach

23,296

children



5,391

adults



693,038

indirect  
reach



### Key Results

Health  
knowledge  
increased

**21.2%**

School Health  
Coordinator  
Manual  
approved

AI in health  
promotion

Knowledge  
Portal integrat-  
ed in national  
Health system  
(first SCiA  
digital tool  
institutiona-  
lized)

Celebrity media  
campaign  
reaching

**148,000**

viewers.

## Humanitarian Response

### Reach

536

children  
(Afghan)



570

children  
(Afghan)



877

individuals  
(flood)



### Key Results

**536** Afghan  
children

& **851** adults  
with health &  
protection services

**1,327**

patients treated

**400**

flood-affected families  
in Mat & Shkodër  
reached with food,  
hygiene kits, and door-  
to-door delivery.

# OUR EXPERTISE & EXPERIENCE

Over 25 years of work in Albania has built deep institutional expertise recognized by the Albanian government, international donors, and the Save the Children network. SCiA is a partner of choice for technical assistance in programme design, policy development, and implementation.

## POLICY & SYSTEMS CHANGE

- Co-authored Albania's first Law on Protection of Child Rights
- Contributed to the Quality Education Law and Pre-University Education Law on inclusion
- Developed child-friendly juvenile justice framework and integrated referral system
- State Endorsement of General Criteria for Children's Participation (2020)
- School Health Coordinator Manual officially approved (2025)
- Knowledge Portal institutionalized in national HCSO system (2025)
- Child Advisory Body established as a formal national mechanism (2025)

## PROGRAMME EXPERTISE

- Inclusive education, ECCD, and sports for development (UEFA Foundation for Children partnership)
- Child protection: case management, psychosocial support, online safety
- NCD prevention and school health promotion – tools institutionalized nationally
- Youth employability: SCUL model, VET linkages, green entrepreneurship
- Child-led climate action, eco-schools, and environmental education
- Humanitarian response: Afghan displacement and flood emergency response
- Evidence generation: EU return policies, school nutrition, school health assessments

## INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

- Inclusive School & Kindergarten Model with parental engagement
- HEART Methodology: Healing and Education through the Arts
- Child Advisory Body (CAB), national structured participation platform
- SCUL: flexible learning pathways combining literacy, numeracy, and digital skills
- Speaking Minds methodology for child-led climate action
- AI in health promotion and celebrity media campaigns
- Schools as Community Centers model with child-led mini-grant projects

## ADVOCACY TOPICS

- Inclusive education for every child
- Stronger child protection systems and digital safety
- Youth employment and entrepreneurship
- Better school health systems and reduced NCD risk
- Reduced child poverty and inequality
- Climate justice with child participation
- Stronger investment in child-focused public services
- Meaningful participation of children and young people in decision-making processes at all levels

# ADVOCACY IN ACTION

SCiA translates programme evidence into policy change – influencing national legislation, EU accession processes, and international mechanisms while amplifying children’s own voices at every level.



## We advocate for:

- Inclusive education for every child
- Stronger child protection systems
- Safer digital environments
- Youth employment and entrepreneurship
- Better school health systems
- Reduced child poverty and inequality
- Development and implementation of the Child Guarantee National Action Plan
- Climate justice with child participation
- Stronger investment in child-focused services

## Key Campaigns & Systemic Results:

- “Protect Without Fear” (2024) – reached over **900,000** people, raising national awareness on preventing child sexual abuse.
- “Generation Hope” (2024) – youth-led climate campaign through Eco-Clubs and national and international platforms.
- ‘Eco-Schools for Climate and Environment’ campaigns (2025) reached **355,794** people increasing public awareness on climate change and environmental education
- “Born in the Climate Crisis” Conference (2025) – **92** participants including **58** children presenting to government, UNICEF, and the Ombudsman.
- Child Advisory Body (CAB) established (2025) – formal mechanism for children’s input into national policy, including the National Child Guarantee Plan.
- Knowledge Portal institutionalized (2025) – first SCiA digital tool fully embedded in Albania’s national health system (HCSO).
- UPR submission (Geneva) – Albanian children’s statement on the right to a safe and healthy environment.

# STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are central to SCiA’s approach. By combining our technical expertise with the reach and legitimacy of government, civil society, international bodies, and the private sector, we achieve results that no single actor could accomplish alone.

## GOVERNMENT PARTNERS (2025)

- Ministry of Education and Sports
- Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
- State Agency for Protection of Children’s Rights
- Municipal Authorities (15 municipalities)
- Health Care Services Operator (HCSO)
- Office of the Ombudsman (People’s Advocate)
- National Agency for Employment and Skills
- Judiciary – training of child protection professionals

## INTERNATIONAL & CIVIL SOCIETY (2025)

- UNICEF – co-leading humanitarian response clusters
- UNDP – youth labour market integration
- EU Delegation in Albania-National Child Guarantee Plan, climate justice,
- Roma Education Fund-Reducing barriers to education for Roma children
- Oxfam – climate justice partnership
- UEFA Foundation - sports and inclusion initiative
- Special Olympics Albania, Help for Children
- Save the Children International and SC Europe network
- Roma community associations and local NGOs

## PRIVATE SECTOR (2025)

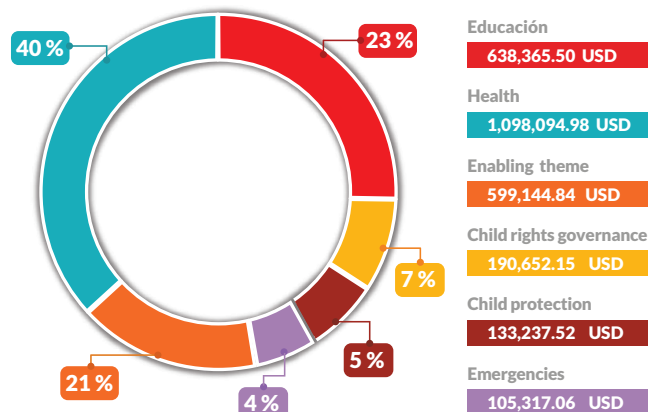
- Raiffeisen Bank – inclusive education and child-friendly resource classrooms
- Tirana Bank – support for children with disabilities and vulnerable youth
- Balfn Group – air quality monitoring in schools and environmental initiatives
- Growing corporate partnership portfolio aligned with ESG priorities

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW (2025)

- 2025 Total Budget:

USD **3,033,649** Expenditure:  
USD **2,764,812 (~91%)**

2025 by Theme:



# LOOKING AHEAD: 2026 PRIORITIES

Building on the two last years' striking results, SCiA is advancing a forward-looking agenda aligned with Albania's EU accession process, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



## PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

- Expand inclusive education and Roma inclusion
- Establish National Network of School Health Coordinators
- Scale SCUL, VET linkages, and youth entrepreneurship
- Grow Child Advisory Body and child-led climate action
- Strengthen online child protection systems

## ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

- Children's rights in Albania's EU accession agenda
- Launch large-scale campaign on children's online protection
- Health education integration into national curriculum
- Increase national budget allocations for children
- Climate rights at UN and EU forums

## PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Deepen collaboration with SC Europe – EU level offices
- Expand EU donor engagement on the National Child Guarantee, ECCD, child rights, climate and environmental action, online violence prevention, and the provision of model social services.
- Digital fundraising and new corporate partnerships
- Scale institutionalized tools (Knowledge Portal) nationally
- Strengthen emergency preparedness and resilience systems



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