

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

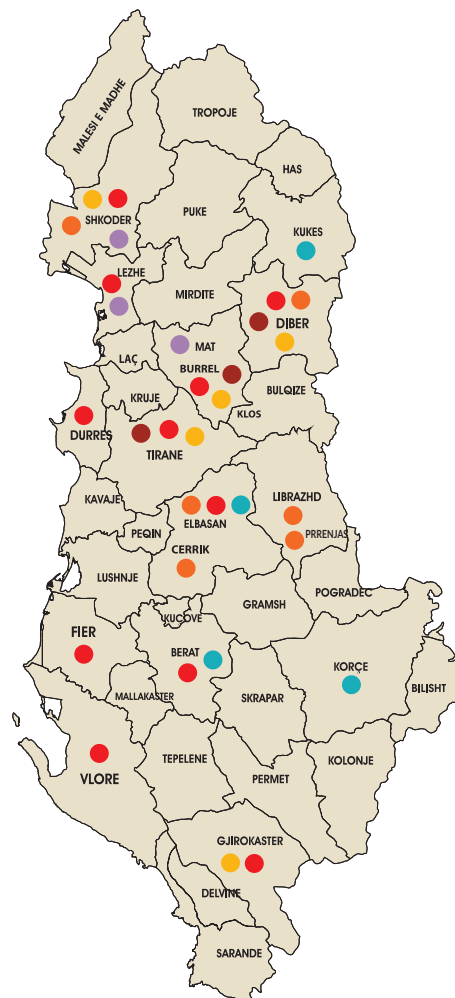
Districts Covered

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



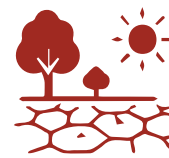
Child labour



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

40,704

Individuals
Reached

28,449

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 integrated in national Health system (first SCiA digital tool institutionalized)

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)

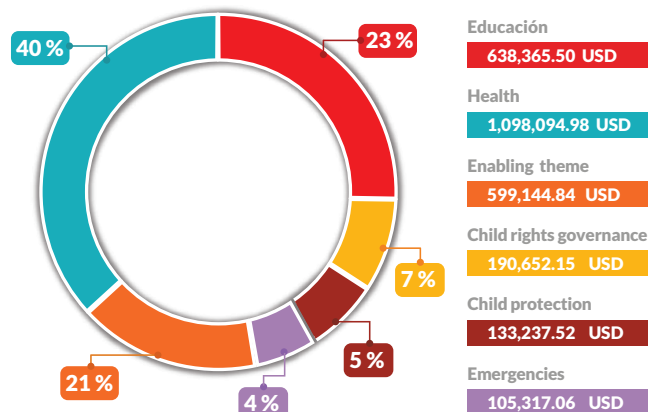
- Raiffeisen Bank – inclusive education and child-friendly resource classrooms
- Tirana Bank – support for children with disabilities and vulnerable youth
- Balfn Group – air quality monitoring in schools and environmental initiatives
- Growing corporate partnership portfolio aligned with ESG priorities

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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