annual report 2021
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FROM THE DIRECTOR

BOARD AND TEAM

OUR IMPACT IN 20 YEARS

WORK ACCORDING PROGRAMMATIC AREAS

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The year of 2021 marked the 20th anniversary of Partners Albania! It came in the second year of the global pandemic of Covid-19, when “resilience” was one of the most spoken and discussed term.

And, for us at Partners Albania it meant time to reflect on the past, take stock of the results and challenges, and build hope for the future within our teams and beneficiaries as the way to face hard times.

We are proud to see how our collective advocacy in these 20 years has marked the major achievements in the enabling environment for the non-for-profit sector in Albania including fiscal regime, participatory practices, formalization of dialogue with the state institutions, philanthropy development, social entrepreneurship and many more.

Partners Albania capacity building work by deploying 45% of its level of effort into training, coaching and mentoring, learning and exchange visits, is an evidence of Partners Albania commitment to effectively deliver as a resource centre for the non-for-profit sector.

In 20 years, Partners Albania has done its best to stay ahead of the development curve by introducing and supporting innovative practises for the NPO sector in the country. Our social innovation continues to assist the sector in developing effective solutions to address pressing organizational and societal issues.

In the same spirit, we continued our work in 2021 by introducing new methodologies, collaborative processes and IT solutions in each of our programmatic work. So, in the enabling environment for civil society, Partners Albania along with a group of likely minded organizations launched the NPO Code of Standards in Albania, which is expected to increase the transparency and accountability of the sector.

Our pioneer legal research, education awareness campaign and the first TF risk assessment methodology for NPOs are expected to ease the supervision and administrative burdens from state agencies.

In the philanthropy area, Partners Albania is introducing the new concept of community foundations as an effective mechanism to connect philanthropic institutions and individuals with local causes that matter to them. Thanks to a long standing partnership with one of the banking institutions in Albania, it was launched the very first crowd funding platform in the country.

We advanced our assistance to entrepreneurship development by launching DUA PARTNER INVEST, the first platform that brings together members of the entrepreneurship ecosystem from Western Balkans, including start-ups, investors and consultants. DUA’s mission is to increase networking and access to funding for the start-up, and serve as a learning and sharing platform. We are delighted to see how our list of donors and supports, partnerships with the private sector, membership in and alliance building with global and regional networks have been extended. It means increased opportunities for us to serve our beneficiaries and reach higher impact at a larger scale by participating in some global agenda discussions.

As we enter into the third decade of our work and look into the future, our mission will continue to be the success of organizations, individuals and institutions we support, driven by transparency and accountability, open partnerships and mutual understanding.

Juliana Hoxha
Director
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Artan Sauku
Logistics

Mare Paplekaj
Maintenance
Partners Albania has successfully led advocacy initiatives to address challenges faced by CSOs in Albania and introduce legal and practical arrangements aiming to improve the enabling environment for them. PA has been an active member of several task forces and working groups with Albanian government, international institutions (European Commission, DG Near, OSCE/ODIHR, UN), and regional and global networks, addressing issues of civil society development and operations.

Partners Albania, building upon the successful experience of its project RisëAlbania with the Tirana municipality, mobilized youth coalitions of 28 local NPOs in 9 cities, advocating for the creation of career guidance services at the municipal level. This national campaign is expected to address career and employment challenges for youngsters.

In December 2019, a new VAT procedure entered into force, which fully regulates VAT refund for every funding scheme, for all donors with a co-operation agreement with the Albanian government, as well as all sub-grant schemes.

The Ombudsman office addressed a set of recommendations to the State Police in July 2018, to improve the administration of peaceful assemblies and facilitate the procedures for organizing them. These recommendations were the result of a series of debates organized by Partners Albania on these issues with relevant state agencies, based on the findings of our monitoring work and legal analyses.

Partners Albania mobilized the "CITIZENS PRO JUSTICE REFORM" voluntary group of over 70 organizations from 11 cities, establishing a joint and independent platform advocating for advancement of the justice reform. A petition in support of the vetting process and further implementation of the reform was launched and signed by 31,777 citizens demonstrating the clear and strong will of Albanian citizens to bring an end to the corruption and injustice in our judicial system and the political class connected and supporting it.
Partners Albania assisted active organizations in 8 cities across Albania, to address through concrete actions bottlenecks in the processes of citizen’s participation in local decision making. One of the processes were participatory budgeting in these municipalities and capacity building for local actors to independently undertake them in future local government budgetary cycles.

Establishment of Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environmental for Civil Society Development, as a reputable and trusted report which serves as a base for CSO advocacy efforts, policy dialogue with government, and reference point for EU country reports. Matrix for Albania is part of a collection of reports from other Balkan countries, produced by BCSDN members.

Partners Albania, as the only support organization in the philanthropy field in Albania, steered changes in how philanthropic activity is perceived by public at large, how private sector and CSOs cooperate for the sake of public good, and developed an institutional framework how to stimulate and support development in this field.

In the first ever national conference “Social Partners – Time for Action” that brought together Albanian government and civil society sector at large, was introduced an agenda in support of the enabling environment for civil society in Albania. Within 18 months, the coordinated advocacy effort led by Partners Albania, resulted in:
- The adoption by the Albanian Parliament of the Resolution for the Recognition and Strengthening the Role of Civil Society;
- The enactment of the Law on the National Council for Civil Society, and its establishment;
- Tax regulations that finally allow NPOs to enter into economic activity;
- The approval of the National Accounting Standards for NPOs introducing differentiating reporting requirements for NPOs.

Partners Albania opened the very first public debate on the needed legal changes to stimulate and support social entrepreneurship in the country. The legal package for SE in Albania was approved in 2019.
During the local elections of 2007, Partners Albania introduced and implemented a new kind of bottom-up advocacy campaign for a more transparent and participatory local governance in seven major cities across Albania. “I Support Good Governance” initiative directly involved more than 2500 citizens in these cities to articulate and push forward local development alternatives. Since then, it became a model endorsed by other local groups and a source of inspiration for organizations at the-local level aiming for local change.

2008
ongoing

2007

2002

2001
ongoing

Partners Albania leads the sector’s efforts for the revision of the fiscal legal framework for the not-for-profit sector, with a special focus on the Value Added Tax.

Partners Albania introduced for the first time in Albania, as part of the Academic Program of Tirana University, Faculty of Social Sciences, a full course on Conflict Management along with a contribution of literature on the topic for the Faculty’s library.

Since its establishment, Partners Albania was positioned as an advocacy organization, monitoring and supporting with legal reviews and input the enabling environment for civil society.
20 YEARS PARTNERS ALBANIA

GRANT SUPPORT

Since its establishment, Partners Albania has directly awarded over 2.3 Million EURO in support of more than 160 NPO initiatives and entrepreneurship development.
In addition to that, through LevizAlbania have been awarded 3.9 Million EURO (4.2 million CHF).

Nature of grants

Main sub-granting schemes

- **The Civil Society Programme for Albania and Kosovo** supporting 14 CSO projects on anti-corruption, environment protection, independent media, non-discrimination & Marginalised groups
  - 2018-2021

- **LevizAlbania [a consortia of OSFA, Partners Albania and CO-PLAN]** supporting 255 CSO projects and actions undertaken by individuals and informal groups on local democracy issues.
  - 2015-2020

- **Social entrepreneurship program** supporting 45 social enterprises through:
  - GREEN BUSINESSES COMPETITION
  - EMBRACE Program
  - C.A.U.S.E Program
  - 2012-2021

- **Small Grant Fund under Democracy and Governance in Albania program**, supporting 48 CSO projects on free and fair elections, and fight against corruption.
  - 2004-2007

- **Social Development Grant Fund supporting** CSO projects benefitting diverse social groups all over the country.
  - 2001-2004
Partners Albania support the development of all elements of entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem.

**45** social and **green start-ups** supported with seed funding and training, contributing in creation of **145 full-time jobs** and serving more than **3500 direct beneficiaries**.

**125 entrepreneurs** trained and mentored (Green Businesses Competition).

**63 social entrepreneurship business ideas** assisted in design and business model development (Program EMBRACE).

**146 CSOs** trained and informed on the social re-use of confiscated assets.
Since 2011, Partners Albania has been working on the promotion and development of philanthropic activity, through research and creation of support infrastructure.

**RAISING AWARENESS AND PUBLIC INTEREST ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL VALUES OF PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITY**

- **Philanthropy Awards**
  - 47 individuals and entities awarded for their contribution in support of social and economic development causes.

- **Monitoring of philanthropic activity**
  - 72 monthly and 6 annually reports presenting data on the value & nature of donations, type of donors & beneficiaries, and causes supported.

- **Media coverage**
  - 274 media articles and TV presence

- **Philanthropy magazine**
  - Promoting act of giving through case profiling.

**DEVELOPMENT OF CROWDFUNDING PLATFORMS AND COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS**

- **Giving Circle**
  - Live Crowdfunding event, supporting community initiatives led by CSOs.

- **Crowdfunding platforms**
  - Support to civil society sector in successfully attracting crowdfunding for their community led actions.

- **Community Foundations**
  - Promote concept and working practices by generating dialogue and build understanding among stakeholders.

**RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS**
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Partners Albania has provided hundreds of tailored capacity building programs to various stakeholders, including community leaders, informal groups, grass-root organisations, NPOs, central and local government officials and private sector representatives.

Through training and development programs, PA has contributed to human capital enhancement, institutional set-up and development towards growth and sustainability, enhancement of cross sector cooperation and partnership among stakeholders, contributing to positive and sustainable development.

INFORMATION SESSIONS
more than 7,000 participants
150 days

COACHING SESSIONS
more than 1,000 persons coached
600 days

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING ASSISTANCE

CROATIA
BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA
SERBIA
KOSOVO
MONTENEGRO
REP. NORTH MACEDONIA

OTHER ACTIVITIES
Focus Groups, Community Meetings, Round Tables, Networking Sessions, Forums, etc.
more than 3,000 participants
150 days

PUBLIC EVENTS
National and International Conferences
more than 10,000 participants
200 days

TURKEY
GEORGIA
IRAQ
JORDAN
TAJIKISTAN
YEMEN
TANZANIA
Training Topics in 20 Years

- Proposal Writing and Project Cycle Management
- Advocacy and Lobbying
- Participatory Governance and Participation Tools
- Cooperative Planning - Mobilisation of Local Resources
- Fundraising Platforms and Tools
- A Business Model for Start-ups and SE
- Trends in Legal and Fiscal Regime for NPOs
- Organisational Development
- Strategic Communication for NPOs
- Women in decision making

168 Days of Partners Albania’s work in a year, is dedicated to training and development!

45% of our work!
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Interventions

- Monitoring of the enabling environment for CSO Development
- Leadership, facilitation of cross-sectoral debate, and development of policy options to advance the sector, in line with the international standards
- Preventing money laundering and combating terrorist financing for NPOs—Information Hub
- Financial (grant) support for the sector
- National Resource Centre for Civil Society in Albania
NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN ALBANIA

The National Resource Centre for Civil Society is an integral part of Partners Albania. In the three years since its creation in 2019, the Centre has become a focal point for the sector and beyond, in the areas of:

HELP DESK SERVICES AND INFORMATION

In three years, the National Resource Centre has provided information and assisted hundreds of civil society organizations through the Help-Desk services for the sector, online and on-site throughout its regional offices in Tirana, Shkodra and Vlora.

720 CSOs’ questions and requests addressed
90 studies, evaluation reports and policies documents relevant to the CSO sector in Albania widely shared and published
240 calls for proposals / calls for applications for grants published and shared with the sector
390 calls for participation in important events, training and capacity building opportunities in the country and beyond
35 government legal initiatives shared for consultation with the sector
45 advocacy initiatives of CSOs and groups / networks promoted

CSOs Directory in Albania

CSO networking

7 public networking events
850 participants

SECTORAL AND INTER-SECTORAL DIALOGUE AND ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

The National Resource Centre has facilitated the dialogue between the sector and public institutions on a number of relevant issues and advocacy efforts related to important issues such as: enabling environment for civil society, CSOs participation in policy-making, increasing the role of CSOs in the EU country integration process, diversification of CSOs funding sources, etc.
ESTABLISHING MECHANISMS FOR A MORE TRANSPARENT, ACCOUNTABLE AND RELIABLE CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR

During 2019-2021, the National Resource Centre has facilitated the drafting process of the Code of Standards for NPOs in Albania, an early Partners Albania initiative, which was re-introduced in sector in 2021 in order to create a self-assessment mechanism, aiming to improve the work effectiveness of non-profit organizations, good governance, transparency and accountability.

200 CSOs participating in information sessions and discussion on the initiative
110 CSOs participating in 4 regional consultative meetings on the draft Code
16 CSOs part of the working group for drafting of the Code

Code of Standards for NPOs in Albania
4 principles
7 commitments
16 founding NPOs and the Code of Standards first members

CSOS CAPACITY BUILDING

Based on annual assessments of the sector’s needs, as well as the requests or other needs of organizations arising from the sector development dynamic and but not limited, the National Resource Centre in three years has provided a wide range of training programs and assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The NPO Academy</th>
<th>Training programs/ Information sessions</th>
<th>Technical Assistance Program for Networks and Coalitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63 participants</td>
<td>1975 participants</td>
<td>10 networks / coalitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 girls &amp; women</td>
<td>1500 girls &amp; women</td>
<td>110 member organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>48 CSOs participants outside Tirana</td>
<td>1360 CSOs participants outside Tirana</td>
<td>50 mentoring sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>33 lectures</td>
<td>149 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>165 mentoring sessions</td>
<td>15 topics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9 study visits</td>
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CODE OF STANDARDS FOR NPOs

After an active process of almost two years consultation and cooperation among civil society organizations across the country, the Code of Standards for Non-Profit Organizations in Albania was launched, a set of 4 basic principles and 7 commitments, which aims to guide the way organizations operate, and undertake actions to improve the results of this work in the future. The National Resource Centre for Civil Society plays the role of the secretariat of the Code.

Throughout 2021, Partners Albania implemented a program to strengthen the sector, helping CSOs in raising their work standards as well as in using alternative fundraising methods, toward greater financial and organizational sustainability.

- **40 training programs** on the principles and commitments of the Code of Standards, with representatives of **588 organizations** from all over the country.

- **30 NPOs** were assisted to improve their organizational standards through a mentoring program tailored to their needs, at the end of which **12 NPOs** expressed interest in joining the Code and are now in the evaluation process.

- **4 Online Regional Forums** with **180 CSOs** and **networks** from the Western Balkans, to share and reflect on existing regional and global experiences, on self-regulatory mechanisms of CSOs as well as Community Foundations, challenges, and latest developments.

- **6 information sessions** with about **100 organizations**, and **8 training programs** with **90 organizations**, on the first Albanian crowd-funding platform smile.al, as an alternative funding source helping the growth and financial sustainability of organizations.

- **18 CSOs** mentored and assisted in the application process on the smile.al platform, in support of their community initiatives as well as the production of **7 promotional videos**.

- **4 regional NPO - Business Speed Dating** events in Tirana, Korça, Shkodra, and Vlora, aiming to create bridges of cooperation and explore concrete partnership opportunities between the two sectors, with **143 business and NPO representatives**.

*Standards4npo.al* is an online mechanism that was created to help organizations conduct a preliminary and rapid evaluation of their standards and work practices, as well as provide suggestions for improvement, according to the principles and commitments of the Code of Standards. This mechanism is accessible in Albanian and English, on the web https://standards4npo.al/ and as a mobile application in AppStore and Playstore.
From the regional trainings and NPO-Business Speed Dating events held during 2021.
PREVENTION OF RESTRICTIONS ON CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE NAME OF PREVENTING MONEY LAUNDERING AND THE FIGHT AGAINST THE TERRORISM FINANCING IN ALBANIA

In continuation of its work to create an enabling environment for the activity of non-profit organizations in the country, during the 2021 Partners Albania undertook the first ever effort in the country to prevent restrictive measures for civil society organizations in the name of preventing money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism, and to ensure that civil society in Albania is pro-actively engaged in the debate on the prevention of money laundering and the financing of terrorism, as well as to advocate on the restrictions on NPOs within of AML/CTF.

In its first year, this initiative carried out in cooperation with the General Directorate for the Prevention of Money Laundering and the General Directorate of Taxation, focused on three main directions:

Mapping and analysis of the legal and regulatory framework that regulates the activity of NPOs within the framework of the prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism, as well as the compliance of the measures taken by the Albanian state with Recommendation 8 and the Explanatory Note of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for non-profit organizations. The detailed report prepared in Albanian and English is published and widely distributed to all stakeholders.

Extensive information, education and awareness-raising campaign for the sector and beyond about this issue, which included:

(1) organization of a series of round-table discussions during which around 140 representatives of NPOs were informed about the report findings, and had the opportunity to discuss them with the senior officials of the two institutions responsible for the prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism in the NPO sector, such as the General Directorate of Taxation and the General Directorate for the Prevention of Money Laundering.

The discussion on these sensitive issues for the sector was further extended in a regional event organized by Partners Albania in cooperation with partner organizations in the region, with the participation of NPOs from all Western Balkan countries and Turkey.

(2) The production of a series of informative materials that explain the national and international structures, the principles of a risk-based approach in regulating the sector, the hindering effects of the sector’s over-regulation on the work of NPOs, etc.

(3) Production and broadcast on national television of three informative and awareness-raising videos.

Drafting of the NPO Sector Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment Methodology, in accordance with the requirements of Recommendation 8 for Non-Profit Organizations and IO.10 (Immediate Outcome 10) of the FATF. The design and implementation of this methodology by the responsible institutions will help to identify those categories of NPOs that may be at risk of being affected by terrorist financing, understand the nature of risks to NPOs, and review the adequacy of the measures in order to take proportionate and effective actions to address the identified risks.
This process is being implemented through a structured and participatory approach with NPOs, religious communities and responsible state institutions. For this purpose, in 2021 was carried out a survey with 153 NPOs, and information was collected from state and financial institutions, which will serve the design of the methodology.

The Methodology Oversight Group is established, with representatives from state institutions, religious communities, and NPOs. The group held its first meeting in December. This process is expected to be completed by mid-2022. Partners Albania will continue its efforts in this direction, with other activities with the sector during 2022 and beyond.

Partners Albania in collaboration with the National Resource Centre for Civil Society prepared and published the Monitoring Matrix Report on the Enabling Environment for the Development of Civil Society for 2020. Among its findings, the report highlights that several important legal initiatives, part of the Anti-Money Laundering/Combating Financing of Terrorism package, including the new law “On the Registration of Non-Profit Organisations”, were prepared through a non-inclusive process and not taking into account important recommendations from civil society organizations, thus representing a restriction on freedom of association and operation of CSOs.

The Albania report is part of a series of reports from Western Balkan counties, within the project “Protection of Civic Space - Regional Hub for Civil Society”, implemented by the Balkan Civil Society Development Network where Partners Albania adheres.

The Hub contributes to increasing the cooperation and sustainability of CSOs in the Western Balkans by empowering them to undertake innovative initiatives to create an enabling environment and practices related to their transparency and accountability.
CIVIL SOCIETY PROGRAM FOR ALBANIA AND KOSOVO

The Civil Society Program for Albania and Kosovo (2018-2022) is implemented by the Kosovo Foundation for Civil Society (KCSF), with partner organization Partners Albania. The program supports democratic participation and the development of a strong and vibrant civil society in Albania and Kosovo, by supporting NGOs that advance the EU accession process by contributing to one of the five thematic areas: non-discrimination and gender equality; independent media; minorities and marginalized groups; environmental protection, and the fight against corruption. Since 2018, in the framework of this program, Norway has supported 46 projects of civil society organizations in Kosovo (27) and Albania (19) with a total of about 1.5 million EUR.

Grant beneficiaries of the program during 2021

The Institute of Roma Culture in Albania through the initiative “YES – to integration of national minorities in Albania”, will contribute to providing a space for national minorities living in Albania through the promotion of their identity, culture and tradition, as well as the promotion of intercultural dialogue. Engaging the public, especially young people, against racial prejudice and intolerant attitudes, as well as advocacy with institutions responsible for developing measures against discrimination of national minorities, are some of the interventions as part of this initiative.

The “MJAFT!” movement through the initiative “Accountability, Technology and Institutional Openness in Albania – Action ALBANIA” will contribute to good governance by promoting the transparency of institutions in terms of public information, as well as strengthening the participation of civil society actors and young people in particular, in the process of the rule of law. The added value of this initiative is the collection and publication of data on the performance of Albanian public institutions in meeting international standards of good governance, in an “open-data” format.
The **Social Center for Helping People in Need**” Fushë-Arrëz through a series of training programs, extensive information and awareness campaigns, as well as the engagement of over 300 young people in the region of Puka and Fushë-Arrëz, will contribute to the public education and involvement in advocacy processes at the local level, on the design of good local environmental policies and the implementation of the environmental Sustainable Development Goals.

The **Albanian Institute for Legal and Territorial Research - ALTRI** is working to improve the media environment to guarantee a policy of zero tolerance toward intimidation and attacks on journalists. The initiative consists of carrying out a study based on evidence, round table discussion with interest groups (journalists, police, judges, prosecutors, NPOs operating in the media field), awareness-raising and advocacy campaign with targeted institutions (parliament, government, independent institutions), to provide recommendations on how to promote and guarantee freedom of expression.

The **STREHA** center is the first residential center in Albania that helps the LGBTI+ community in cases of housing emergencies. Through the initiative “Improving the situation of LGBTI+ persons in Albania”, the Center is working to empower them and change the negative stereotypes associated with the LGBTI+ community. This will be achieved through informing service providers about the rights of this community; training and mentoring for the provision of adequate services; working with key institutions with the aim of increasing their access to the labor market, and wide public information on the respect of human rights in order to improve perceptions on the LGBTI+ community in Albania.
ADVOCACY INITIATIVES IN SUPPORT OF AND WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE SECTOR

The Commission for Legal Affairs, Public Administration and Human Rights held on February 24, 2021, a hearing on the draft law “On the registration of NGOs” with representatives of civil society organizations, although the request for its implementation was made in October 2020. A group of 119 organizations, under the leadership of PA, issued a public statement where they recommended the Albanian Assembly request to the Venice Commission a legal opinion for the draft law “On the registration of non-profit organizations” and to avoid its approval in emergency conditions.

Following all the continuous reactions regarding the process that the draft law “On the registration of non-profit organizations” has gone through, the group of organizations launched a public appeal before its voting in the plenary session of June 24, 2021. However, the draft law was voted in this session, showing the failure of the Albanian Parliament to reflect on the concerns raised by civil society. The arguments given in the rostrum of the Assembly for the involvement of civil society in the consultation and consideration of the recommendations provided by the civil society did not reflect what actually happened with this process.

In August 2021, the High Judicial Council issued a press release in which it expressed its inability to come up with a date for the creation of the electronic register in fulfillment of the obligations created by Law no. 80/2021 “On the registration of non-profit organizations”, its article 52/3, which required from the HJC the setting of the date for the registration of the NPOs by August 30, 2021. This position once again confirmed what was articulated with concern by the group of civil society organizations throughout the previous year, as part of discussions and consultations with institutions, that the process of drafting and approving the law has been rushed, not well planned, and without the involvement of institutions responsible for the law implementation, in this case related to the creation and management of the electronic register of NPOs.

FOSTERING REGIONAL COOPERATION AND POLICY RESPONSE IN TIMES OF CRISES

This initiative will provide an overview of the current state of Covid-19 impact on the social-economic areas in the region, from all stakeholders points of view, thus contributing to sharing of experience and challenges, promoting successful practices of adaptability in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. In addition, the initiative aims to propose policy recommendations to address the problems of various target groups and reduce the political-social-economic pandemic crisis effects. The initiative is led by Partners Albania in cooperation with partner organizations in the Western Balkans: Civic Initiatives in Serbia, the Kosovo Civil Society Foundation, MCIC in North Macedonia, CRNVO in Montenegro and the Center for Civic Initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
RESILIENCE +

In 2021, the Resilience+ framework developed by Partners Global continued to be implemented in 7 countries: Serbia, Georgia, Senegal, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, and Ecuador. Partners Albania, as part of the international trainer’s team, worked with three organizations in Tanzania, guiding them through the process of internal capacity assessment and ecosystem analysis, as well as in the development of Resiliency + Roadmap.

Partners Albania will bring this model to the non-profit sector in Albania in 2022, aiming to increase the capacities of CSOs to anticipate and respond to possible changes in the internal and external environment where the organization operates.

TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR NPOs

Partners Albania offered an assistance program to increase the effectiveness and quality of projects implemented by ten organizations from around the country, beneficiaries of the United States Embassy Democracy Commission Grants Program. The program consisted of training focused on Financial Management, Project Writing and Management, Strategic Communication, Advocacy and Lobbying, as well as individual assistance with representatives of beneficiary organizations on various issues related to the implementation of their projects.

NATIONAL FORUM “GOVERNANCE FOR CHANGE: PROPOSALS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY”

This forum, organized by Co-Plan, was conceived as a pre-electoral platform, where civil society actors from different sectors and with clear representative mandates raised issues and articulated proposals for change. In the second thematic session, Mrs. Juliana Hoxha, Director of Partners Albania gave a series of recommendations regarding the strengthening of civil society in the country.
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

Interventions

• Evidence-based advocacy for advancing the legal and regulatory framework in support of entrepreneurship and social innovation

• Support the development of innovative start-ups through the provision of integrated services

• Advancing the development agenda of social entrepreneurship in the country through involvement in networks and institutional dialogue at European level

• Promoting employment and self-employment of women and youngsters through training and support programs for entering the labor market
DUA PARTNER INVEST PLATFORM

Following its several years of work in support of the start-up ecosystem, Partners Albania launched the Dua Partner Invest platform. This platform comes as a development opportunity for start-ups in the Western Balkans region, offering a complete package of services from creating opportunities for initial funding, mentoring, market exposure and international partnerships. Dua Partner Invest brings together start-ups looking for funding opportunities, with international investors (companies, venture capital funds, donors, impact investment schemes) looking for competitive business ideas, and consultants with diverse expertise in the start-up sector offering a unique opportunity for the development of start-ups that generate social and environmental impact.

The online regional event “A click away from entrepreneurship!” which took place on October 20, brought together about 70 participants representing all the stakeholders of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem from 6 Western Balkan countries, who had the chance to hear about the opportunities and support mechanisms of the European Commission presented by DG Grow and the ones of the Regional Cooperation Council for start-ups and new ventures. Government representatives from these countries and organizations that support entrepreneurship in the region, offered an overview of the programs and instruments in place in each country, which offer services to start-ups, addressing some of the challenges start-ups and new ventures in the Western Balkans currently face. This event served as the official launch of the platform.

With a community of 162 members (entrepreneurs, start-ups, investors, consultants) from 11 countries, since its first year, Dua Partner Invest has become a virtual hub serving the start-up community in the Western Balkans countries.
WORK4YOUTH

We believe that entrepreneurship is one of the key and most effective labor market practices that can be utilized to address the high level of youth unemployment. Supporting youngsters to start their own business ventures is an effective mechanism to bypass the challenges of getting an entry-level position in the market. The newest two-year initiative of Partners Albania in this regard started in January 2021 and is being implemented in partnership with ADP-ZID in Montenegro, and Young Intellectuals Hope in Shkodra. It aims to contribute to increased employability and fostered social inclusion among young people in the cross-border area Albania – Montenegro (Shkodra region in Albania and the municipalities of Podgorica, Tuzi and Bar in Montenegro), creating an enabling environment for the community of young entrepreneurs to start their own business. This will be realized through a training and mentoring program of young people who have an entrepreneurial initiative, exchange, networking and partnership among young people, promotion, information about opportunities for financial support, and presentation of business ideas to potential investors.

During the first year, about 40 young men and women from the cross-border area Albania - Montenegro were selected and became part of the Innovation Boot Camps that took place in July, a 5-day program during which they were trained to become involved in entrepreneurial and business activity through the use of innovative approaches and technologies. At the end of the program, 16 winning teams were mentored to develop their business idea and pitch it to potential investors.

At the end of the capacity-building program, we organized in Podgorica in December, the Cross-border Pitching event before the investors and supporters, which was a testimony of the journey and development of business ideas from initial ideas to concrete business plans ready for financing.

During the Cross-Border Forum for Future Cooperation, held in Shkodra in November, young men and women from the cross-border area had the opportunity to get to know each other, listen and exchange their business ideas, explore cooperation as well as other funding opportunities such as crowd-funding, loans, or auxiliary platforms (Dua Partner Invest).

Work4Youth will continue to support these young entrepreneurs in 2022, and expand the group of beneficiaries with other young men and women with an entrepreneurial spirit.
GREEN BUSINESS COMPETITION 2021

For the ninth year in a row, Partners Albania organized the national Green Businesses Competition, an annual activity in support of Albanian entrepreneurship! Fourteen finalists selected among the applicants who responded to the call, representing social enterprises, individuals, local small businesses, and non-profit organizations, presented their business ideas during the two days of the competition held in June. The independent jury of experts in the field of economy, education, and business development, selected the following winners.

LOT 1: Business ideas in the conceptual phase

Romix Toys, an already established brand with the publication of the first book with comic stories for children, has started to produce simple and unique toys made of recyclable materials such as wood and textile pieces. This venture serves as a source of employment for at least three women from the Roma minority and other vulnerable groups.

Përmeti’s Yummy Treasures is an exhibit shop for tasting and trading organic products, typical of the Përmeti area. The store offers healthy products to consumers, and supports the farmers and local producers by helping sell their products, while also complementing the experience of tourists and visitors of Përmeti in terms of gastronomy and agritourism.

The Punnet of Taste (Arka e Shijes) was established with the aim to bring back once again to the consumer tables the values and tastes of autochthonous, organic products of the Tirana area. The business offers agricultural products from indigenous seeds, engaging other farmers in the area, thus contributing to the improvement of the local economy.
LOT 2: Businesses in the Pre-Seed Stage

Xheviti’s Farm is a business established in the Mallakastra area that offers local products such as olive oil, hazelnuts, honey, etc. At Xheviti’s Farm is organized the Hazelnuts Tour, which offers farmers in the area the opportunity to sell their products during the harvesting period, as well as a unique experience for visitors who not only buy the products but also enjoy the experience of the harvesting process up-close.

Immortelle Tirana offers farmers and exporters in the Petrela area, quality seedlings and seeds of medicinal and aromatic plants. Immortelle also offers the necessary training from planting to harvesting, aiming to increase organic cultivation in Albania, increase sustainable income for rural families, as well as have a positive impact on the environment.

Përmeti’s Yummy Treasures was one of the winning ideas in the regional competition for 2021, held in Montenegro. The regional competition is organized by the Balkan Green Foundation in cooperation with partner foundations in the Western Balkan countries and Greece. Partners Albania is the partner for Albania.
EMBRACE - BUSINESS MODELS THAT BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND CREATIVE ECONOMY

Since 2018, the program EMBRACE has supported 51 NPOs and 15 social enterprises in developing products and services, impacting the social integration and economic development of vulnerable groups, providing exposure in national and regional networks, helping build sustainable partnerships with the business sector, and enhance institutional sustainability.

In the closing event of the program held on June 17, 2021, in Shkodra, more than 50 participants from the supported enterprises, representatives of the EU Delegation in Albania, and local businesses, discussed the main achievements of the program such as the integration of women in the labor force; employment and integration of people with disabilities; employment and social cohesion of young people; and social inclusion of marginalized communities.

EMBRACE Achievements:

- **46 employed people** (full-time and part-time) and integration of over 100 people (unemployed women, women serving sentences, unemployed young people, young people with Down syndrome, people from the Roma community, etc.)

- **Over 1494 direct beneficiaries**: 17 young people trained as tourist guides; 110 young people involved in activism; 17 young people with Down syndrome trained on independence courses, 64 children benefiting from free therapies; 302 children educated on sports and healthy food; 9 children from families in need benefited from after-school learning programs; 25 orphan children and 8 elderly people benefited from entertainment programs and food packages; 20 women in conflict with the law were trained in handicrafts; 5 women from families in need benefited from pre and post-natal services; 150 women victims of trafficking benefited free services; 92 women from the rural areas were trained in the processing of medicinal plants; 200 mothers were educated on healthy food; 40 artisans were helped to sell their products; etc.

A documentary film on the activity of the 15 supported social enterprises was produced and broadcast on public television RTSH, the official PA YouTube channel, and social media.
MAKING THE LABOR MARKET WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN ALBANIA

Youth employment, an ongoing priority for Albania, has been the main objective of the RisiAlbania project, which works to create more and better employment opportunities by focusing on three main directions: the development of the private sector in Albania, introduction and improvement of career guidance services and intermediation, and finally skills development to match demands from businesses.

As part of the launching ceremony of the third phase of the project, RisiAlbania presented the results and achievements in eight years of its work, as well as discussed future common challenges, in the presence of over 100 representatives of public and private institutions in Albania.

CAREER GUIDANCE – A MODEL TO OFFER CAREER SERVICES TO YOUTH AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL

Partners Albania, as part of RisiAlbania, organized a national discussion forum on the introduction of the career guidance service model at the local level, as a need to address the challenges of career guidance and youth employment. This event came in following of the advocacy campaigns of 9 local coalitions supported by PA during 2020, for the establishment of such service at the national level. Representatives of the Career Guidance Office of the Municipality of Tirana, as the first example piloted in the country with the support of RisiAlbania, shared some of their achievements with representatives of local coalitions and senior representatives of the targeted municipalities, who are working on replication of this model in other cities.

Visit www.risialbania.al to learn more on RisiAlbania work.
RISE - ALB: ENHANCING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ALBANIA

Partners Albania is one of the implementing organizations of the RISE - ALB project. Following the announcement of calls for grants within the project, during 2021 Partners Albania carried out two four-day training cycles for interested organizations. The trainings offered by PA experts focused on the topics: Introduction to Social Entrepreneurship, Financial Management and Accounting for Social Enterprises, Legal Framework related to Social Enterprises in Europe and Albania, Funding Sources for Social Enterprises, and Impact Measurement of Social Enterprises. The training was followed by mentoring sessions for grant beneficiaries.

In addition, as part of the activities of RISE - ALB, Partners Albania organized three regional NPO - Business Speed Dating events in Tirana, Shkodra and Vlora, with the participation of social civil society organizations and local businesses from the banking, tourism and accommodation sectors, etc. from these regions. These events aimed at building partnerships, served to create connections and networking, and explore cooperation opportunities among participating businesses and organizations.

WESTERN BALKANS YOUTH SOCIAL ECONOMY ALLIANCE - WB SEA

Partners Albania, in collaboration with ADP-Zid in Montenegro, the Diesis network in Belgium, CDP Globus in Bosnia and Herzegovina, COSV in Italy, Lens in Kosovo, Arno in North Macedonia, and Young Ambassadors in Serbia, started in 2021 the implementation of the WB SEA initiative that aims to create a favorable environment for the inclusion of the social economy in youth policies and youth work practices in the Western Balkans region. As part of WBSEA, the partner organizations conducted the study Supporting Youth Social Entrepreneurship in the Western Balkans and Europe, which analyzes the social economy environment and the role of young people in it, at the European level and in the six Western Balkans countries.

GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

As one of the key actors in supporting the entrepreneurship ecosystem in the country, Partners Albania was part of the Global Entrepreneurship Week, a series of events in the field of academia, entrepreneurship, start-up ecosystem, and women entrepreneurs.
**EUROPEAN SOCIAL ECONOMY SUMMIT #EUSES2021**

Juliana Hoxha - Partners Albania Director, and Klotilda Kosta - Director of Programs, were key speakers in the panels Social Entrepreneurship in the Western Balkans: Ways to open the fast track to sustainable development, and SSE in South East Europe: perspectives for cooperation and development from meso-level organizations in the region. This discussion highlighted the need for enhanced partnership and cooperation among key stakeholders at the regional and European levels, to scale up the initiatives in support of social entrepreneurship and social economy.

**WESTERN BALKANS BUTTERFLY INNOVATION & BUSINESS FORUM**

As a speaker in the Beyond Tech: Social Innovation in the Western Balkans panel of this Forum, Klotilda Kosta, Director of Programs, shared Partners Albania’s experience in the field, focusing on the concept of social innovation, developments, challenges, and its future in the region.

**SUPPORT FOR START-UPS**

Partners Albania, together with 10 new startups and green businesses supported through its entrepreneurship and social innovation program, were part of the Tirana International Fair organized by Klik Ekspo Group on December 1-4. Participation in the fair presented an excellent opportunity for these startups for promotion in the market and the establishment of new business connections.
PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITY AND SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Interventions

- Raising awareness and interest in the economic and social value of philanthropic activity
- Development of online crowdfunding platforms and community foundations
The second giving circle event in Albania

Three community initiatives presented during the second Live crowd-funding event Giving Circles held in Albania in June ’21, thanks to the generous support of many individuals, institutions and different businesses, have already been finalized. The total amount of 3,035,150 ALL raised during the event, which exceeded several times the set objective of 900,000 ALL, confirmed once again the civic awareness toward social causes and solidarity with the communities in need.

The organization of the Giving Circle event is now becoming a tradition, as part of Partners Albania’s work in the field of philanthropy.
Thanks to the support provided in the Giving Circles 2021, it was made possible:

**The equipment with study corners for 14 families living in unfavorable economic conditions in the area of Tufina, an initiative of the organization - Tek Ura.**

**Construction of a new playground for children in the Lana-Bregas area, an initiative of the organization Initiative for Social Change ARSIS.**

**Enriching the digital corner of the Thumana Multifunctional Center with new equipment, an initiative of the organization New Vision.**
THE FIRST CROWD-FUNDING PLATFORM IN ALBANIA SMILE.AL

In May 2021, SMILE.AL was launched, the first crowd-funding platform in Albania that aims to support community projects through the contribution that comes as a result of the mobilization of financial resources and not only, from individual and institutional donors in the country.

The SMILE.AL is an initiative of the Credins Foundation, in partnership with Partners Albania, Vodafone Albania Foundation, and Grant Thornton Albania.

As part of its work in helping CSOs raise their standards, Partners Albania offered training, mentoring and individual technical assistance to NPOs, on the design and implementation of Crowd-funding campaigns, as well as on the preparation of applications for their campaigns on the SMILE.AL platform.
COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS IN ALBANIA

At a time when the world is experiencing the consequences of a long pandemic that is not yet over, Community Foundations are very important structures to address the many needs of the communities they serve. Being a structure that is newly introduced in the non-profit sector in Albania, Partners Albania is working closely with non-profit organizations and informal groups that have expressed their interest to operate as such, to identify needs, increase capacities and provide assistance in this regard. In addition to working at the local level, Partners Albania participates in international thematic meetings organized by the European Community Foundations Initiative (ECFI), where it shares and discusses with European colleagues the challenges and achievements related to the establishment and operation of community foundations.
MONITORING OF PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITY

2021 was unfortunately a difficult year again due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic changed forever the way we live, making virtual reality more and more present in our lives and work. As a result, in 2021, the most frequent and preferred way of donating has been through fundraising campaigns, especially those through crowdfunding platforms and social media. Through careful daily monitoring of donations, campaigns and events published in various media, social media, websites of public and non-public institutions, during 2021 579 campaigns and individual donations were registered in the amount of 265,195,000 ALL (2,210,250 Euros).
PHILANTHROPY WEEK 2021

Partners Albania organized the Philanthropy Week for the second consecutive year! A series of events took place from November 8-12, including an online awareness campaign and promotion of philanthropic figures over the years; discussion forums with students, businesses, NGOs, and individuals; Competition on Philanthropy with general high school students; as well as discussions in the media about the topic and events of the week.

#PhilanthropyWeek 2021
8 - 12 November
TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

Interventions

• Empowering CSOs and change actors in their monitoring role and engagement in policy-making processes

• Promotion and advocacy on good governance practices, and support of institutions and interest groups in their implementation
LevizAlbania is a project that aims to strengthen the local democracy in Albania through the engagement of civil society actors and individuals as champions of democracy toward a better local government. LevizAlbania is implemented by a consortium of three organizations: Open Society Foundation for Albania, Partners Albania for Change and Development, and Co-Plan.

In its capacity as a consortia member, Partners Albania directly implements two strategic interventions in support of LevizAlbania work, as part of Value Added Support Services (VASS). The first one comes in support of LevizAlbania sub-grantees for effective implementation of their projects, and the second one is focused on youth mobilization around local democracy issues.

17 beneficiaries of LevizAlbania grantees, CSOs and individuals, participated in three thematic networking sessions, which enabled them to share with each other plans, objectives, and undergoing initiatives. The discussion also helped for finding space for joint advocacy actions and coordination on the ground.

12 beneficiaries of LevizAlbania grantees participated in 26 days of mentoring sessions for the development of training programs in the field of advocacy and lobbying for their beneficiaries, building bridges of cooperation with local self-government units, improving communication channels and tools for public information, guidance on how and where to seek legal advice related to their actions, etc.

Youth Movement - A new page for local communities is another initiative of Partners Albania within the VASS program of LevizAlbania, which aims to create a movement of young people across the country, that through their civic engagement and volunteer work contribute to stronger local communities and a more responsible local government.

In 2021, 8 other youth camps were organized, with the participation of 161 high school students from Fieri, Lushnja, Patosi, Ballshi and Berati. During the camps, they developed 21 interesting project ideas for community initiatives, out of which 8 were selected as winners.

As part of the activities of #LocalDemocracyWeek21 organized by LevizAlbania, PA organized the Youth Speak Up!, an event that promotes activism from young people to young people. Students from high schools in Durrës, Pogradec, Tirana and Elbasan, who implemented 8 community initiatives during 2020, shared their success stories with their peers and other stakeholders at the local level.
WESTERN BALKANS & TURKEY FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Partners Albania, in collaboration with Ana & Vlade Divac Foundation (Serbia), Prima Association (Montenegro), Youth Alliance (North Macedonia), and Community Volunteers Foundation (Turkey) - part of the Youth Hub for the Western Balkans and Turkey - are implementing an initiative which aims to create informed solutions for improving youth employment policies in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

Since 2016, this network works to promote the social, economic and political inclusion of young people through the implementation of advocacy initiatives in the field of policies, partnerships with stakeholders, and awareness-raising activities.

At the regional conference “Sustainability of (youth) organizations in pandemic and post-pandemic period” held in March ’21, senior officials from donor institutions and organizations from the European Union and the Western Balkans discussed the importance of supporting youth organizations.

In the week of December 8-16, the network organized an online campaign in all member countries, to present the key findings of the 2020 Youth Participation Index, an annual monitoring report that provides an overview of the political, social and economic participation of youth in four countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The Youth Participation Index Report serves as a guide for policy recommendations and advocacy initiatives of the network regarding youth participation in political, economic and social life.

On December 15-16, the Network held in Tirana the regional forum on Youth employment during the period of COVID-19, where over 60 representatives from the government, public institutions responsible for youth and employment issues, national statistics offices, researchers, youth organizations, young leaders, experts and media from Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey, discussed about the improvement of the position of young people and the development of a legislative and institutional framework for the implementation of youth policy at the national level. The Youth Participation Index 2020 was also presented at the Forum.
ACADEMY OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND NEGOTIATIONS

During 2019 - 2021, AIEN in cooperation with Partners Albania implemented the “Academy of European Integration and Negotiations”. Through education and training, the Academy contributes to the preparation of a European Albania, based on the principles of respect for the rule of law, human rights, freedom, free economic enterprise, solidarity and civic participation.

Participants from state institutions, civil society, business organizations and media, attended a series of training programs led by Partners Albania, on the topics of Public engagement and consultation; Cross-sectoral planning and cooperation; Financing mechanisms that enable cross-sectoral cooperation, and Project Writing and Management.
This report consists of an analysis of the legal and regulatory framework on counter-terrorist financing and anti-money laundering affecting non-profit organizations in Albania compared with the FATF Recommendation 8 and its Interpretive Note that applies to the non-profit organizations.

This document prepared within the WB&T for EmploYouth project, aims to reflect the impact of Covid-19 on youth employment in Albania.

The Youth Participation Index is a unique method for measuring and presenting the level of opportunities for young people to be involved in the decision-making process, their access to the labor market, and their participation in social life.

The Report for Albania 2020 provides an overview of the situation on the political, social and economic participation of young people in our country and serves as a guide for evidence-based policy recommendations and advocacy initiatives.
This report prepared in framework of the Work4Youth cross-border initiative emphasizes that the cooperation at the local level between local communities of the two countries is a good precondition and untapped potential for improving the self-employment and entrepreneurship of young people. Thus, this region, which is affected by the high youth unemployment rate, would be encouraged to prosper in the economic sense through mutual dynamics and networking.

This policy paper aims to draw attention to promising financial and support mechanisms, which could help startups and social enterprises in their early stages to jump into the market and become sustainable. The paper outlines the characteristics of business incubators, accelerators, business angels, and venture capital funds as the most prominent mechanisms used nowadays.

This study prepared by Partners Albania in framework of the WB SEA regional project, among others, presents an analysis of the services available to young people in the field of entrepreneurship, a mapping of the main stakeholders, inspirational cases, as well as a series of recommendations.

This brochure presents Partners Albania’s main programs that have contributed to the ecosystem of green start-ups and social enterprises. The methodological approach, as well as the social and economic impact, are explained for each program.

This study analyzes the social economy environment and the role of young people in it, at the European level and in the six Western Balkans countries.

This brochure presents a pool of existing supporting and financial mechanisms (incubators, accelerators, venture capital, business angels) intending to inform startups in the Western Balkans on the available supporting instruments. These mechanisms operate in the region and across the globe, classified as per their target on traditional start-ups or social enterprises.
This report reflects the philanthropic activity in Albania during 2020. The report analyses the main sectors and issues supported, nature and value of the donations, geographic coverage and also the nature of donors and beneficiaries. Since 2021, the annual analyses is part of the Philanthropy magazine.

The green enterprises supported since 2012

Annual report 2020 provides an overview of our work, supporters and beneficiaries during the previous year.

Philanthropy is a magazine that reflects developments regarding various initiatives and issues of philanthropic activity in Albania. This publication comes in continuation of the 10-year work of Partners Albania in promoting and developing philanthropic activity in the country, by appreciating its importance for the advancement of society.

Community foundations - an overview of their characteristics and importance in Europe and the world

This research, prepared by Partners Albania and the National Resource Center for Civil Society, presents to civil society organizations and other interested stakeholders, an overview of community foundations and their role in supporting the empowerment of the civil society sector and local communities.

Philanthropy for Green Ideas

NATILENE

Improving the economic and social conditions in the rural areas of Albania, and providing opportunities for the young people to start their own businesses, and to become entrepreneurs, is a complex and multifaceted process. The Local Business Support Programme (LBSP) of Partners Albania aims to support the development of new business ventures, and to provide young people with the necessary skills and knowledge to start their own enterprises, while also contributing to the creation of new jobs and the stimulation of economic growth in the rural areas of Albania.

The PA latest news digest, the Bulletin of the National Resource Center for Civil Society, and the Dua Partner Invest News Bulletin cover a wide range of developments in civil society, in the field of entrepreneurship and beyond, both at national, and regional and global levels.
Budget managed directly by Partners Albania, excluding LevizAlbania and RisiAlbania projects.