

**CONTRIBUTION OF PARTNERS  
ALBANIA IN THE  
GREEN START-UPS  
AND  
SOCIAL ENTERPRISES  
ECOSYSTEM**

**©PARTNERS ALBANIA FOR CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT**

**TIRANA, ALBANIA**

# Our Work

Partners Albania offers services of incubators and accelerators in the field of green start-ups and social enterprises. The services offered by PA are related with: capacity building, mentoring in developing business ideas, networking opportunities, exposure to international markets, and seed funding. The seed funding is provided through a pool of funds established as a combination of philanthropic institutions, donors and local businesses contributions.

Beside these services, Partners Albania provides its contribution in research and advocacy, in particular related to the legal framework of social enterprises. PA has pioneered the research of social entrepreneurship in Albania, covering issues of sector mapping, understanding its challenges and opportunities in local markets, existing funding and institutional support, the potential for growth and the role of state and non-state actors in social entrepreneurship development. Partners Albania has been part of several research initiatives on social enterprises and social entrepreneurship in the Western Balkans. Its research findings make the basis of advocacy at national and European level, backed up by participation in diverse networks such as EMES, EUCLID, Balkan Social Enterprise Research Network, Diesis, etc.

Since 2012, through its programs, PA has supported **45 SEs** and green start-ups directly impacting in the employment of more than **145 individuals** and the involvement of more than **3500 direct beneficiaries<sup>1</sup>**

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[1] Three most notorious programs that Partners Albania has implemented in this aspect are: Green Ideas, EMBRACE and Social Reuse of Confiscated Assets.

# GREEN IDEAS

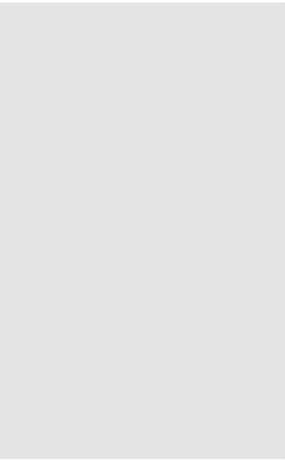
Green Ideas serves as an acceleration program, since 2012, for small scale green economy enterprises in Albania, utilizing local resources and revitalizing traditions of production and community-based markets in an environmentally friendly way. The program consists in several steps:

**01** **Call for ideas** - A call for business ideas is designed as the first step of collecting business ideas. The call is open for individuals, social enterprises, non-for-profit organizations and small business ventures which have a business idea at conceptual or startup phase.

**02** **Selection process** - The selection process consists in the evaluation of the ideas that fulfill the application criteria.

**03** **Training and Coaching** - The program offers training and coaching in **business planning and marketing** to all pre-selected entrepreneurs provided pro-bono by local companies such as Intesa Sanpaolo Bank, Credins Bank, and Grant Thornton Albania.

**04** **Competition phase** - The competition consists in the selection of three best ideas by the Jury of experts through a pitching event in the form of a National Competition. The Jury is composed of experts from environment, academic and economic fields as well as representatives of enterprises which contribute financially to the competition and the support of the winning ideas.



05

**Seed funding** - At least three winners are awarded with seed funding in the amount of EUR 5000-8,000.

06

**Regional Competition** - All the winners at national level participate at the regional competition which represent an opportunity for winners at local level to receive additional funding provided by Rockefeller Brothers Fund through local partner foundations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Partners Albania is RBF local partner in Albania.

07

**Further training programme for the winners** - Partners Albania delivers a training package, focused on legal and fiscal framework regulating the economic activity, tips for design of employment contract and other relevant contracts, local and regional market regulations.

# Facts:

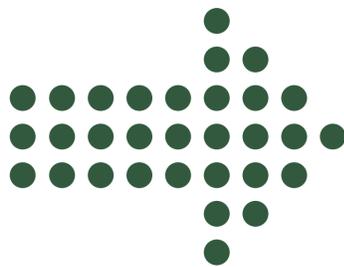
125

entrepreneurs have received trainings and coaching.

26

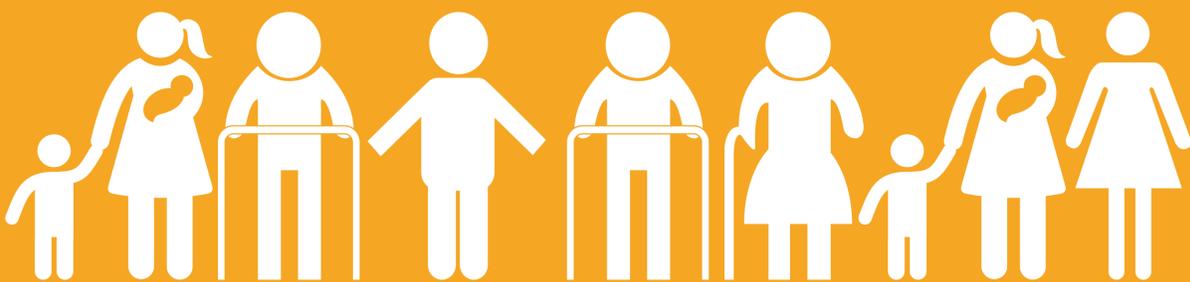
*social enterprises*

have been supported with a total financial amount of around 22.5 million ALL (approx. EUR **165,000**).



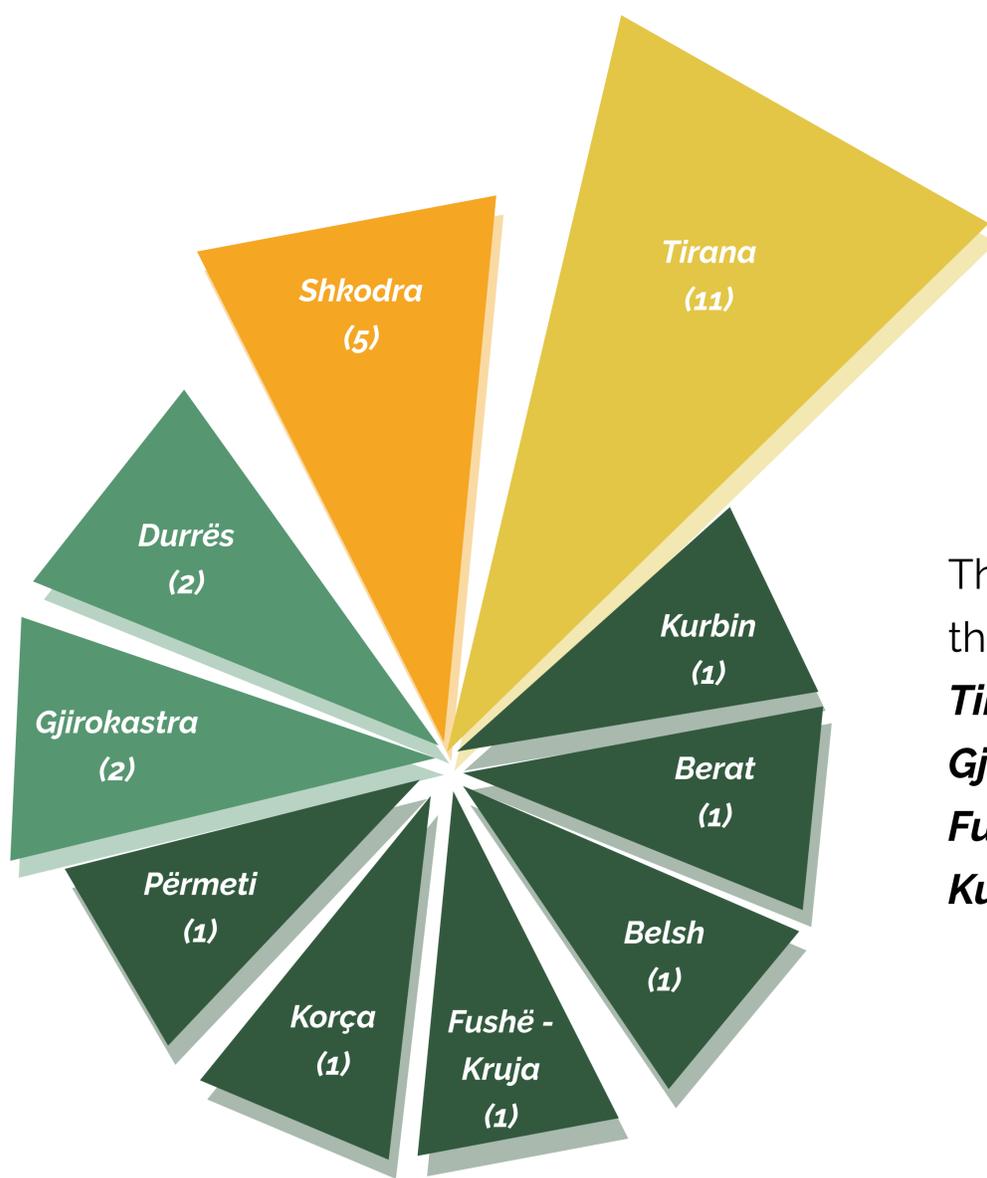
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times Albanian winners have been awarded at Regional Green Ideas Competition.



82 individuals

Direct employment to **82 individuals**, mainly youngsters, women and people coming from marginalized groups.



The supported green ideas are from the following geographic area:

**Tirana (11), Shkoder (5), Durrës (2), Gjirokaster (2), Permet (1), Korce (1), Fushe – Kruje (1), Belsh (1), Berat (1), Kurbin (1).**

Enhancement of local economy development, by supporting

**58** local farmers

around **85** guest's houses & bars and restaurants



which have accommodated and provided services for

around **8,750** visitors



Their field of operations involved: **recycling and up cycling, promotion of culture heritage and domestic culinary, responsible tourism and agro-tourism, crafts production, local, innovative and healthy products, as well as birdwatching.**

# EMBRACE

Entrepreneurship Models Building Relations and Creative Economy (EMBRACE), a 3-year program that contributed to the creation of successful models of sustainable social enterprises. The program encompasses a fully-fledged package for social enterprises.

01

**Capacity Building Program** – One-year program for CSOs which had an idea of social entrepreneurship to develop their business model and to get introduced to social economy sector.

02

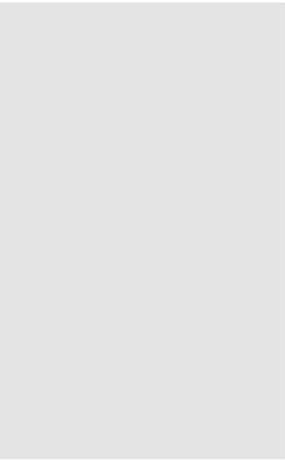
**Mentoring and coaching** - on partnership building with business sector, organizational development and sustainability of social enterprises, financial management and reporting to third parties, visibility and communication tools and rules.

03

**Pro-bono consultancy** - provided by 10 corporates to social enterprises in marketing, contractual agreements, reporting to state authorities, etc.

04

**Sub granting Scheme** – Three calls for proposals with a total budget of EUR **101,000**. The scheme was addressed to social enterprises in the conceptual phase or early stages. The average amount of a grant was EUR **6000-7000**.



**05** ***National & International Networking Opportunities*** – All social enterprises were exposed to European/regional networks and introduced with various financial schemes. **Three** speed dating events establishing contacts and bridges of cooperation between businesses and social enterprises.

**06** ***Advocacy actions for a conducive environment*** – Research studies, handbook and guides developed, national and international public debates laid the ground towards a conducive legal framework that would further advance Social Enterprises in Albania.

# Facts:

63

participants  
from

47 CSOs

developed their business model for  
their social entrepreneurship idea.

Partners Albania provided

12  
trainings



180  
days of mentoring

accompanied with pro-bono  
consultancy offered by big  
companies to support the  
development of these social  
entrepreneurship ideas.

Central (6)

North (7)

South (2)

15 SEs across  
Albania were  
supported with  
seed funding.

The Social Enterprises supported with seed funding provide a variety of products/services such as:



• *Handicraft products in loom;*



• *Handicraft products made of recycled willow wastes;*



• *Artisan products promotion and sale through web platforms;*



• *Bio - products collection, processing and promotion;*



• *Inclusive outdoor tourism and water sports in through mobile platforms;*



• *Education services to children, youngsters, parents and a wider community of marginalized groups;*



• *Cleaning services;*



• *Prenatal/postnatal services;*



• *Bar & Hostel employing marginalized people.*

- Exposure to 16 international networks
- Three speed dating events between social enterprises and business
- Connections of local SEs with 10 social enterprises in Europe

In these social enterprises, about

**46**

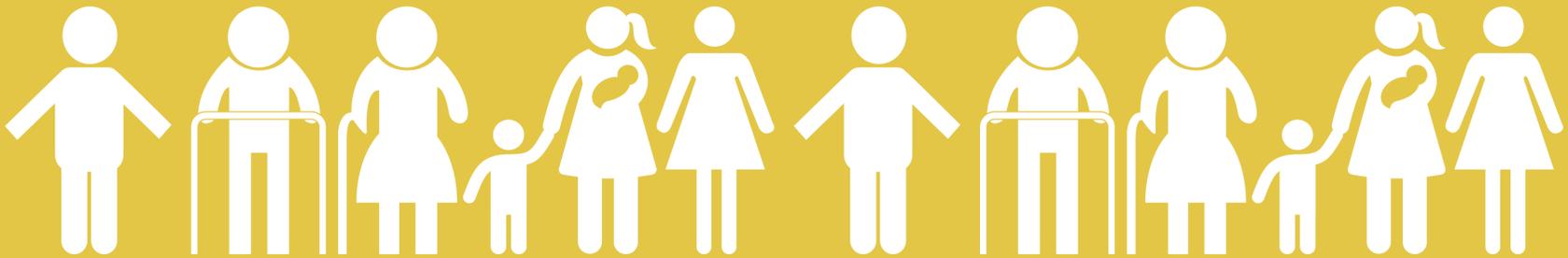
persons were employed full time and part-time

&

the integration of over

**100**

persons (unemployed women, women in conflict with law, unemployed youngsters, youngsters with Down syndrome, people from Roma community, etc.)



They involved **1494** direct beneficiaries

- **17** youngsters trained on touristic guides;
- **110** youngsters were involved in activism;
- **17** youngsters with down syndrome trained on independency courses and **64** children benefited from free therapies;
- **302** children educated on sports and healthy food;
- **9** children from poor families benefited free after school programs;
- **25** orphans and 8 elderlies have benefitted from entertainment activities and food.

- **20** women in conflict with law trained on handicrafts;
- **5** women from poor families benefited prenatal/postnatal services;
- **150** women victims of trafficking benefitting free services;
- **92** rural women trained;
- **200** women in agriculture as suppliers;
- **200** mothers educated on healthy food;
- **40** artisans helped to sell their products;
- **100** adults with disabilities benefited products;
- **11** small businesses;

# Social Reuse of Confiscated Assets of Organised Crime

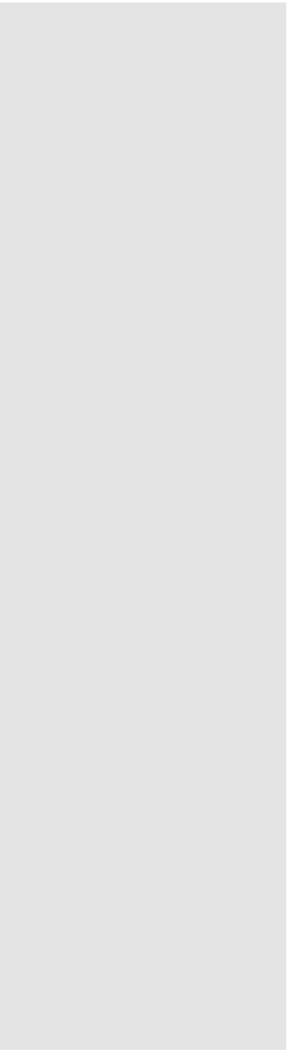
The first initiative in the Western Balkan countries that created a model of sustainable re-use of confiscated assets from organized crime by civil society organizations, as a valid tool to reaffirm the value of legality and citizen's actions against organized crime. The impact of the program was very strong as it transmitted a powerful political message that what is stolen by the community can be returned to the community, through the courage and strength of civil actors that challenged the state institutions and showed that they are trustworthy partner in the fight against organized crime and the reintegration of its victims in their communities.

This program established the first social enterprises in confiscated assets in Albania by employing a multiple range of approaches, such as:

**01** **Assistance to the Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets (AASCA)** – Enhance the agency's skills to work with SEs **ranging across:** a) Training on social re-use of confiscated assets; b) Provision of guidelines to support the preparation of internal procedures for the destination and the assignment of confiscated assets to CSOs for social re-use; c) Study visit in Italy, where this model is well established with a long tradition; d) Establishing links of communications with CSOs.

**02** **Sub-granting scheme** - **Three** social entrepreneurship ideas were awarded to re-use **3** confiscated assets for social purposes. The total amount of fund distributed was EUR **300,000**.

**03** **Mentoring** - **28** mentoring sessions to social enterprises which benefited from the sub-granting scheme.



**04** **Networking** – A study visit in Italy where social enterprises and the representatives of the AASCA experienced first-hand and networked with social enterprises established in confiscated assets in Italy.

**05** **Awareness Campaign** - Information sessions, preparation of a practical guide, and several spots and documentaries that were broadcasted in traditional and social media to assist CSO, and to educate the general public.

# Facts:



**146** informed and on the social re-use of confiscated assets through **CSOs**

**13**

info sessions



**Online**

**Onsite**

**3** *social enterprises*

Ke Buono  
in Fier

KinFolk Library  
in Durrës

Social Crafting  
Garage  
in Saranda

transformed three confiscated assets from organized crime, and started their economic activity.



**28**

**mentoring sessions**

were provided to three social enterprises to implement properly their business model.

**Products & services provided by these SEs**



**pastry**



**stone  
handicraft  
production**



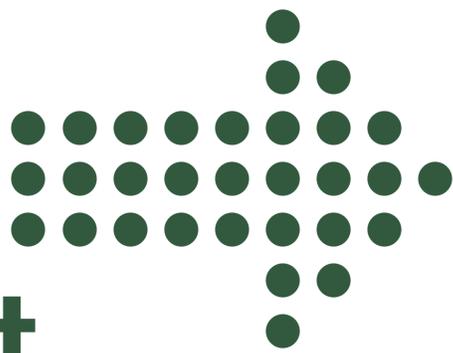
**coffee-  
library**



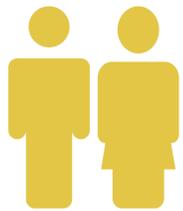
**15** people from marginalized groups

such as women at risk or victims of crime, trafficking, domestic violence and youngsters with economic difficulties employed directly in these social enterprises.

Beside employment the social impact of these social enterprises in their first year of operation consisted in:



- Creation of a **Social Hub** supporting the integration of women and girls in the economic and social life;



- **Over 1150** youngsters informed on social issues and engaged on educational, artistic and cultural activities;



- **16 youngsters** qualified through vocational education training out of which **7 youngsters** employed;



- **Over 700 children** involved in integration activities;



- **4 awareness campaigns** organized to promote Roma Culture, prevention of drugs and alcohol abuse, inclusion of people with special needs and awareness on gender-based violence;



- **27 courses** on foreign languages and exact sciences with youngsters;



- **7 capacity building** programs for **54 students** empowering their skills on leadership, advocacy and lobbying, social enterprises, local and central governance, readiness to work, etc.

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