

Dorcas Albania

Strategic Plan 2022-2025

Giving the most
vulnerable a helping
hand

Because
we care



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Our Identity

We fight poverty, exclusion and crisis. We empower marginalised people and communities to flourish. This is how we follow Jesus Christ.

What we believe

We believe in the value and God-given potential of every single person. We are called to demonstrate God's love for those in need. This is how we follow Jesus Christ.

What we see

We see a world where poverty, exclusion and crisis marginalise people. We also see the potential of these people and their communities to flourish despite their difficult circumstances.

What we do

We empower people who are marginalised to develop their talents. And we enable disadvantaged communities to flourish. We equip individuals and communities to promote and ensure participation of all.

We create hope and long-term perspectives in volatile and complex situations. We meet people's basic needs in times of crisis and increase their ability to overcome poverty

and exclusion. We persist despite frequent setbacks and invest in durable relationships to realise sustainable change.

We are part of a global movement of individuals and organisations working for a just and fair world. We recognise and appreciate everybody who supports our work. And we actively partner with others to create synergy and amplify our impact.

Theory of Change in short

Dorcas works towards change on three levels. We create opportunities for people to develop themselves further, and if necessary, we provide for their basic needs. We invest in resilient, self-organising communities that work together to solve their problems. Lastly, we contribute to a just society in which everyone has the opportunity to participate.



Poverty is a living reality in Albania and the most vulnerable groups are often completely excluded. Dorcas Albania continues to serve people who are abandoned and have no other support.

Dorcas Albania

History

Dorcas started to work in Albania at the end of 1991. In 1992, “Dorcas Aid International (DAI)” Albania was registered as a branch of “DAI” the Netherlands and assumed responsibility for implementing and monitoring projects in Albania. Initially, the organisation focused on aid and social projects in Korçë and in 1998, it managed the huge civil society action in support of Kosovo refugees coming there. Since 2003, Dorcas Albania has involved local partners in implementing its projects and has worked to strengthen their capacity. In 2018, the organisation started to implement integrated programmes. Now Dorcas Albania works mainly in two areas, Korçë and Tropoja.

Context

Albania faces many different problems and has changed little in the past five years. Three decades of uncontrolled tree felling have led to increased flooding, soil erosion and less water in rivers. Pollution levels are high and waste management is poor. Corruption is widespread, the political climate is problematic and there is a general lack of social services. The earthquake in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic have only added to these miseries. Tourism has suffered a lot due to the pandemic and the economy is struggling.



Poverty and unemployment are high and employment and skill-building programmes are not achieving the desired impact. And last but not least, many human rights issues still need to be addressed.

The disadvantaged and marginalised are hit hardest by these problems, and from the outset, Dorcas Albania has focused on these groups that other NGOs and the government often fail to reach. We are recognised for our skill in building dynamic, context-specific partnership programmes that prompt social and economic empowerment of the marginalised and develop local networks of support for people in vulnerable situations. Dorcas Albania is considered to be a trustworthy and experienced partner. We have a rich track record in areas such as social care, Roma inclusion, vocational training, rural development and employment, and expertise in approaches like Community Safety Nets. Dorcas Albania is therefore an attractive organisation for partnerships or consortiums in inclusive development.

Strategic Ambitions

For over forty years, Dorcas has reached out to people in need. We have learned how to contribute to the desired impact so that people and communities flourish. For the Strategic Period 2022-2025, we will focus on people who are marginalised, develop coherent and community-based programmes, achieve more scale by engaging and collaborating with thousands of individuals, partners, networks, and other agencies, and increase our agility. These main policy choices are worked out in six concrete ambitions for our Country Offices.



- We will increase our focus on **including people who are marginalised and socially excluded**.
- We will improve **the cohesion and integration of our community-based programmes**, monitor these more accurately and learn from those outcomes. We will also expand our influence on authorities and policymakers.
- We will **increase the scale and effectiveness of our work** through constructive partnerships that tackle today's complex challenges.
- We will **mobilise resources and engage communities** by increasing the number of foundations, groups and individuals who support our work.
- We will strengthen the position of our country offices, as well as the role of Dorcas as an **agile catalyst for change and a ConnActor** of various stakeholders.
- We will bolster and align our **regional strategies, cross-country learning and cooperation**.

How Dorcas Albania will work out these strategic ambitions is now described.



Include People who are Marginalised and Socially Excluded

Dorcas Albania will focus on unemployed/unqualified and excluded youth, disadvantaged families, Roma and Gypsy communities, abandoned grannies/ disadvantaged older people and children. Our work will focus on areas in Albania where many disadvantaged and marginalised people live. Dorcas Albania is already active in Kukes (poorest region in Albania) and Korçë.



Realise Coherent and Community-based Programmes

Dorcas Albania has made strategic choices based on experience, partner organisations, needs and opportunities, stakeholders and donors, and what we have learned working with Dorcas' Theory of Change. We see opportunities to develop partnerships further, locally embed projects and support efforts to improve local institutional sustainability.

As a learning organisation, we closely monitor and adapt our projects to achieve stronger results. Dorcas Albania will work on developing the local leadership of Community Safety Nets and the capacity of programme officers to train local leadership and facilitate cooperative relationships between different target groups.

We will incorporate themes like faith at work, gender equality and inclusion in our programmes. In the Korçë region, our integrated programme will focus on the components Adopt a Granny, Future for Children, Flourishing Families and Enterprising for Social Impact. In the Tropoja region, our integrated programme will focus on Community-Based Care, Resilient Livelihoods, Youth Employability and Enterprising People. Dorcas Albania also supports broad rural development processes in Tropoja, focusing on Micro and Small Entrepreneurship Development in agriculture and local tourism. Dorcas Albania also aims to realise social impact through cooperation with local enterprises in the agricultural and care sector. This is a recent



development which we will realise further in cooperation with specialised organisations from the Netherlands and Albania.

In general, our programmes will focus on improving expertise, building a good track record and working on long-term interventions that produce sustainable outcomes.



Increase the Scale and Effectiveness of our Work

Dorcas Albania is developing multistakeholder strategic partnerships in Korçë and Tropoja that support integrated programmes. Tirana is a new focus area in which we plan to develop new partnerships. Besides local partners and stakeholders, main donors like Kom Over en Help and New Day Impact are involved.

Various actors and stakeholders are involved in programme components related to Inclusive Entrepreneurship and Social Empowerment and Protection. Stakeholders focused on women empowerment would add value to such programme components.

Finding strategic partners in Albania who work with older people has not been easy. We now have a partnership with the Albanian Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology, which will enable us to link with other associations or actors in this field and influence government policy.

We will seek new partnerships with international organisations and work with the International Office to explore these possibilities.

Dorcas Albania represents the Albanian Network for Rural Development in the Women Hub created from the Balkan Rural Development Network. We are a member of the Albanian Evangelical network and will join networks for organisations that work with older people and children.



Mobilise Resources and Engage Communities

Dorcas Albania aims to increase the grants it acquires from international funds and expand the number of partnerships developed. We will also increase Local Resource Mobilisation (LRM) through various models as well as instruments like crowdfunding, social impact investment, social businesses, communication and marketing strategies and better corporate positioning.

Like many other organisations in Albania, our current annual income is

low. We will do more to increase our LRM because Dorcas is known as a trustworthy partner in Albania and our programme activities are attractive to local donors.

Crowdfunding is an opportunity we are working toward. We actively participate in the training and information sessions of a new Albanian crowdfunding platform. We also plan to use other international crowdfunding platforms, especially for the support of older people and children.

Social impact investment is an evolving opportunity in Albania, so we are increasing our efforts in Social Impact Entrepreneurship Development (SIED). We have started a SIED case in Tropoja and are working towards other cases in Korca. Our two social businesses in Korca continue to operate.



Become an Agile Catalyst and ConnActor

Human resources will continue to be the cornerstone of Dorcas Albania. We will focus on developing capacities and expertise on topics related to our strategic choices. Dorcas Albania will follow the hybrid model as a self- and co-implementing agency, while strengthening its role in collaborating with partners and enhancing the (self-)organising capacities of individuals and local partners. The self-implementation role has given the office a new rhythm and dynamic. This positively influences its capacity and expertise building and improves its corporate positioning.

In the next strategic period, we aim to have sufficient capacity in Community Safety Net development and in facilitating processes and stakeholders, especially those related to community mobilisation, development, inclusion, influencing society, creating community-based organisations and local ownership. We will increase fundraising, obtain funding from new donors and broaden our network nationally and regionally (in the Balkans). Dorcas Albania will make better use of its office premises to generate income for our target groups and improve the organisation's financial sustainability. We will improve the corporate positioning of Dorcas and increase our visibility through multimedia marketing, outreach and communication. This will enable us to directly address new emerging vulnerabilities and exert influence on a larger scale.



Effect Regional Priorities, Cross-Country Learning and Cooperation

In Eastern Europe, Dorcas is active in Albania, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine.

Regional priorities are rural poverty, job opportunities for youth and women, lack of care for older people and marginalisation of certain social groups. Root causes include the lack of inclusive economic institutions, weak governance and justice systems and deteriorating social and human capital.

Dorcas Albania will continue to focus on Social Empowerment and Protection and Inclusive Entrepreneurship. Together with the Dorcas offices in Ukraine, Romania and Moldova, we will develop a strong and visible regional profile in Eastern Europe based on cross-border programming, learning and exchange, and joint resource and partnership development. We will also upscale current successful models of developing Community Safety Nets and combining social empowerment with economic development.

At a regional level, we will increase online learning, sharing and discussion and exchange and replicate best practices and models. This will lead to a regional track record and the development of common approaches. We will prepare a regional strategy and develop a regional programme of activities, which will strengthen our regional corporate positioning. Regional capacity-building activities and exchange visits will also be realised.

Meet our Country Director



**Ilia Dishnica -
Country Director Albania**

‘From day one, Dorcas Albania has been there for the most vulnerable groups, the needy and abandoned ones, those who need a hand or a push to improve their lives. Poverty in Albania is a living reality, but very few NGOs work with the most vulnerable groups. The government also does little in this regard. As a result, these groups are often totally excluded. That is why our role and interventions are so vital for those in need.’

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