

Scaling EDURES in Albania

EDURES (EDUCATION RESILIENCE IN TIMES OF EMERGENCIES AND CRISIS)



Strategic Benefits and Recommendations for Nationwide Implementation

The EDURES 'Education Resilience in times of Emergency and Crisis' toolkit strengthens the educational ecosystem's capacity to withstand, recover, and adapt to crises. Its strategies focus on institutional preparedness, enhancing public authority performance, and improving overall education quality. This fact sheet summarizes the key findings, best practices, and recommendations from the toolkit's 2024 pilot implementation in Albania.



Why is EDURES necessary in Albania?

Albania's recent history has demonstrated the indispensability of this approach:

- **2019 Earthquake:** Exposed a lack of coordinated mechanisms for emergency safety and temporary education, displacing thousands of students.
- **COVID-19 Pandemic (2020):** Forced an overnight shift to online learning, which:
 - Exacerbated existing inequalities.
 - Left many children in rural or low-income households without devices or internet access.
 - Further marginalized vulnerable children.

EDURES directly addresses these systemic weaknesses, transforming education into a stabilizing force.



Key Findings from the Pilot Phase

The EDURES pilot in Albania (involving Tirana, Durrës, Kavajë municipalities, schools, public institutions, and civil society) revealed a system that is operationally active and socially engaged yet remains financially fragile and lacks long-term strategic planning.

COMMON WEAKNESSES ACROSS ALL ACTORS:



Economic Dimension

This is consistently the weakest link. Lack of financial sustainability and long-term resource planning undermines resilience at all levels (municipalities, schools, institutions).



Strategy vs. Action

Actors tend to be more reactive (focused on short-term action) than proactive (focused on long-term strategy).



Biased Self-Assessments

Many SWOT analyses were overly optimistic, overstating strengths and opportunities while overlooking real weaknesses and threats, which can obscure critical risks.

SPECIFIC FINDINGS:

Schools



Showed the most diverse results, indicating sharp inequalities. Some schools are leaders in resilience, while others are "critically fragile."



Public Institutions

- **NCPA (National Civil Protection Agency):** Operationally strong (absorptive capacity), but reliant on external support and locked into a "reactive mode."
- **People's Advocate:** Possesses strong strategic vision but is the most economically fragile, creating a "gap between vision and means."
- **RED Durrës (Regional Education Directorate):** Has one of the strongest and most balanced profiles but remains financially vulnerable.



CSO - Albania Red Cross

A strong and trusted humanitarian operational actor, this organization serves as a leading model of high preparedness within the Albanian CSO sector, demonstrating a level of capacity others can aspire to and highlighting its potential for even greater impact with enhanced funding stability.

Actor Category	Key Strengths	Key Weaknesses	Overall Resilience Profile
Municipalities	Operational & governance frameworks	Economic continuity, long-term strategy	Moderate, but reactive
Schools	Community engagement, pockets of excellence	High variability, widespread economic fragility	Uneven (from high to critically low)
Public Institutions	Strong governance, strategic vision (People's Advocate)	Economic sustainability, institutionalized innovation	Strong in mandate, but fragile financially
Civil Society (ARC)	High operational capacity & community trust	Financial instability, informal learning cycles	Operationally strong, strategically vulnerable

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION



Institutionalize Policies:

EDURES principles must be embedded in national education and civil protection policies, making resilience a structural element of governance.



Multi-Stakeholder Governance:

Establish “educational resilience teams” at municipal, regional, and national levels (involving ministries, municipalities, NCPA, CSOs, and students).



Digital (and Non-Digital) Preparedness:

Invest in digital infrastructure, teacher training, and equitable access to close the digital divide, while also developing non-digital alternatives.



Foster a Resilient Culture:

Normalize preparedness through regular drills, continuous training, and empowering student leadership in resilience planning.



Sustainable Funding:

Transition from project-based funding to core state budget financing, supplemented by international donors and private sector/ community partnerships.



The EDURES pilot in Albania was designed and implemented with technical and financial support from the Council of Europe (CoE) Education Department, following its 2023 Resolution on Education in Times of Emergency and Crises. The initiative was conducted in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the People's Advocate of the Republic of Albania, the National Civil Protection Agency, Municipality of Durrës, and the Albanian Red Cross.

These partners are united by a core commitment to the right to education, recognising it as a fundamental child right that must be guaranteed with quality, inclusiveness, and continuity, especially during crises. The entire process was guided by the technical assistance of the ISIG and implemented in schools participating in the Sida-funded Council of Europe project, "Strengthening Democratic Citizenship Education in Albania."

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