smartup
Social Innovation Lab

"We are a non-profit social innovation lab that co-creates and implements solutions to complex public challenges."



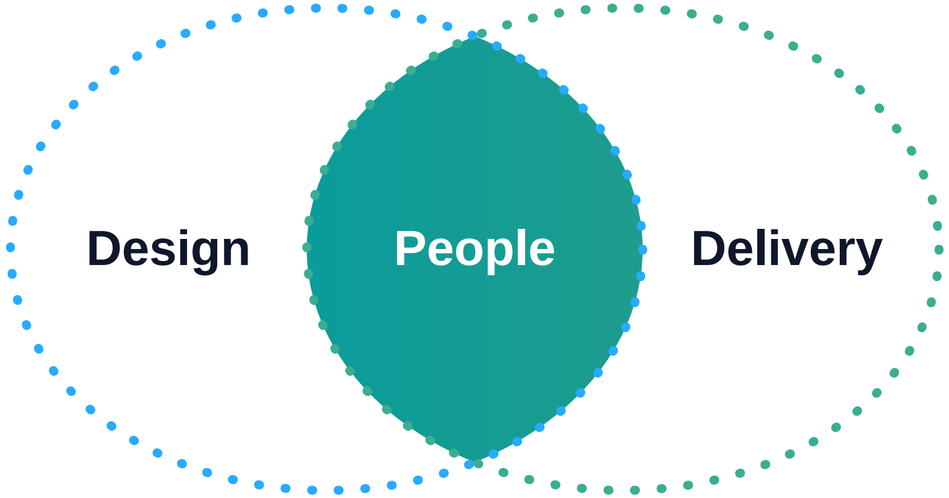
About us

SmartUp – Social Innovation Lab was founded in 2014 and has since built a **regional portfolio of projects and partnerships.** We collaborate with public institutions, private-sector companies, civil society organisations, and communities.

Our work is **human-centred,** combining **research, facilitation, co-creation, digital tools, and capacity building** to understand challenges, develop and test ideas, and support their implementation in practice. We **adapt our methods** to the needs of each project and the people and institutions involved.

We work across four programme areas: **Education, Youth, Climate Change, and Public Sector Innovation.**

Our Approach



Mission

We use custom-designed processes to understand complex challenges and co-create lasting solutions by connecting and collaborating with organizations, communities & individuals.

Vision

Our vision is to shape a sustainable, equitable, and prosperous region through innovation.

Our Programmes

To co-create an enabling environment where better teaching and learning experiences can evolve.

Education

To empower youth to become active changemakers and contribute to the development of their communities.

Youth

To transform the public sector into innovative and citizen-centred institutions.

Public Sector Innovation

To accelerate the transition to a climate-resilient society.

Climate Change

Our Services

Co-creation & innovation processes

Participatory workshops, design labs and tailored innovation processes.

Research, insights & strategy

Needs assessments, stakeholder research & analysis for better decisions.

Digital platforms & tools

Tools for learning, participation, collaboration, and public services.

Learning & capacity development

Training, mentoring and resources to strengthen institutional and community capabilities.

Pilots, implementation & scaling

Delivery, monitoring, learning & adaptation to move solutions into practice.

Services can be delivered individually or combined within wider programmes.

Impact at a glance



Mobilised 2,000+ educators to create 4,700+ video lessons, reaching 25,000+ teacher users and 30,000+ student users. The platform was transferred to the Bureau for Development of Education.



Across two national editions, SmartUp supported 20 youth-led solutions through mentoring and incubation, producing two global winning teams — AndroMeta in 2019 and eBionics in 2020.



Delivered 40 innovation activities, engaged 850+ citizens, supported the redesign and digitalisation of public services, and developed 16 public space concepts through citizen participation.



Led a five-city partnership, helped establish the Skopje Development Institute, and assessed roughly 60 municipal projects to create a prioritised impact investment portfolio for Skopje.

Our Latest Work



Promoting a Safe School Environment

We work with students and educators to support children's right to quality education by strengthening protection, participation, and equality in schools through capacity building and improved support mechanisms.



Community Mobility Co-operatives

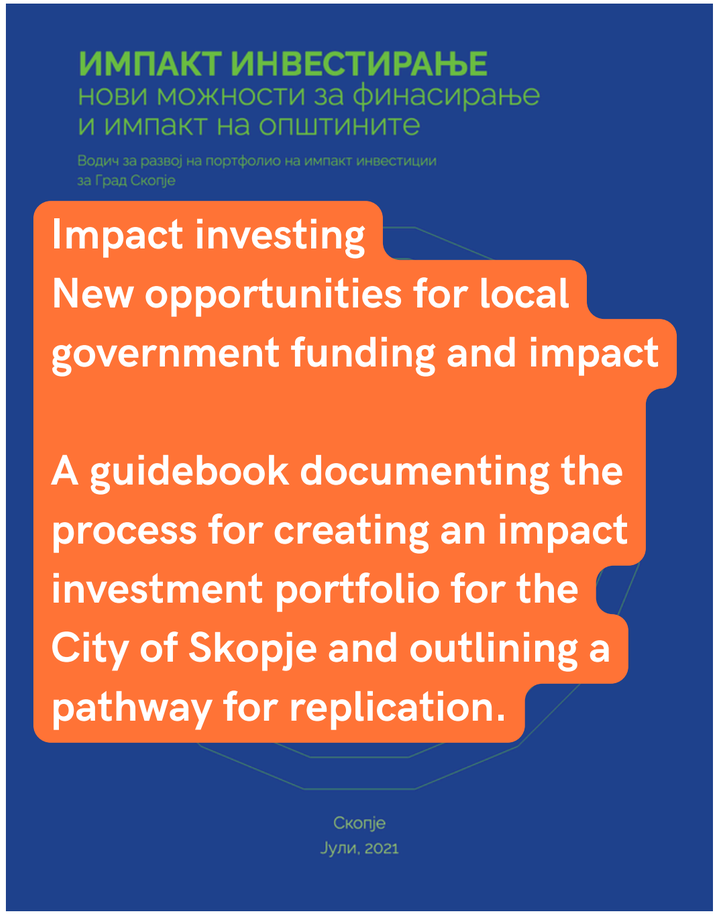
We are exploring how shared electric vehicle fleets and community-driven EV charging infrastructure can be supported and leveraged to advance community mobility in South East Europe.



Researching Mechanisms for the Operationalization of the National Development Strategy

We tested how strategic foresight can be leveraged to support North Macedonia’s long-term development goals, with a focus on co-creating policy pilots and institutional integration.

Handbooks & guides



Impact investing
New opportunities for local government funding and impact

A guidebook documenting the process for creating an impact investment portfolio for the City of Skopje and outlining a pathway for replication.

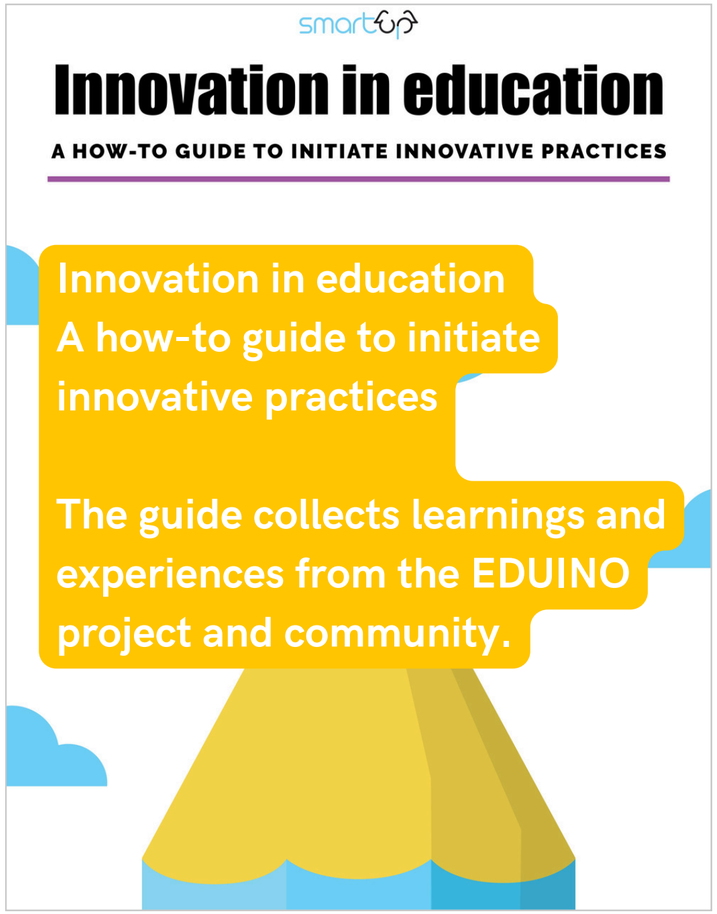
Learn more



Co-creating crowdfunding models - policy framework and models in North Macedonia

A handbook for local government and practitioners synthesising knowledge from the InnoFinRES project.

Learn more



Innovation in education
A how-to guide to initiate innovative practices

The guide collects learnings and experiences from the EDUINO project and community.

Learn more

Meet the team



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International partners & donors

Supported by:

Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action

on the basis of a decision by the German Bundestag

European Climate Initiative EUKI

eit Climate-KIC

Climate-KIC is supported by the EIT, a body of the European Union

Pestalozzi Children's Foundation

unicef for every child

МАКЕДОНСКИ ЦЕНТАР ЗА ГРАѓАНСКО ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ

СЕГА
Коалиција на младински организации
www.sega.org.mk

U.S. Embassy Macedonia

UKaid from the British people

UNDP

KORIMAKO

OSCE

ПРВА ДЕТСКА АМБАСАДА ВО СВЕТОТ МЕѓАШИ
МЕЃАШИ
РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА

P2R
PATHWAYS2RESILIENCE

Fundación hazloposible

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

german cooperation
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

European Commission

Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation



Climate Change



Program: Climate Change

Combating Climate Change: Collaboration as a key to Thriving Futures

Our goal is to help communities, institutions, and partners move climate action from ambition to practical, locally grounded responses that strengthen resilience, adaptation, and long-term change.

Objectives:

- **Strengthen the capacity of public institutions and municipalities** to turn climate priorities into practical action.
- **Enable communities and affected groups** to play a meaningful role in shaping local climate solutions.
- **Develop climate approaches that support local ownership,** practical implementation and long-term use.

Our Approach

We work where climate ambition meets implementation.

Our approach brings together community engagement, institutional capacity, and practical financing or delivery models so climate responses are rooted in local realities and can move into action. We focus on work that is evidence-based, participatory, and realistic enough to be sustained over time.

Climate Change: Our Range of Services

Our Climate Change and Environment Program offers a comprehensive suite of services tailored to support organizations, communities, and individuals in their quest for environmental sustainability. We provide:

Project Development and Implementation

We help partners move from concept to delivery, turning climate ideas into workable projects and programmes.

Capacity Building

We strengthen the knowledge and skills that institutions, communities, and organisations need to plan and act on climate priorities.

Research and Analysis

We provide research and analysis that help partners understand challenges, identify opportunities, and make stronger climate decisions.

Networking and Collaboration

We connect institutions, communities, experts, and practitioners so climate work can benefit from shared knowledge and coordinated action.

Climate Change: Examples of Our Impact



Our commitment to environmental stewardship is evident in the numerous projects we have undertaken, each contributing to a more sustainable future.

Here are a few notable examples:

- **Community Mobility Co-operatives**: This initiative focuses on **transforming the local transport systems** by promoting shared electric vehicle (EV) fleets and community-led EV charging infrastructure in Southeast Europe.

- **Future Cities of South East Europe**: From 2019 to 2022, SmartUp was part of this project co-financed by the EU under the EIT Climate-KIC initiative. The mission was to accelerate the zero-carbon transformation of **15+ city neighbourhoods** in at least **five cities in South East Europe**, making them some of the best places in Europe to live, work, and visit.

Climate Change: Examples of Our Impact



- **Pathways2Resilience – Building Climate Resilience:** SmartUp contributes to climate adaptation planning through several initiatives under the Pathways2Resilience programme.
  - **Kumanovo:** Our work with the municipality combines stakeholder engagement, participatory planning and capacity building, focusing on flooding, stormwater management and water scarcity.
  - **Southern Serbia:** Consultations across Toplica, Nišava and Pirot focus on identifying priorities for addressing floods, droughts and heatwaves.
  - **Sarajevo:** Together with Korimako and local partners, we support the development of a climate resilience strategy addressing the Miljacka River, existing plans and institutional responsibilities.
  - **Sveti Nikole (completed):** We guided the municipality through climate resilience planning and supported the development of its Climate Resilience Strategy, Action Plan and Investment Plan.
  - **Cetinje (completed):** Our role focused on capacity building and consultation, supporting the local team as it developed its climate resilience planning documents.

Climate Change: Examples of Our Impact



- **#SkopjeseZagreva Interactive Visualizations Project**: Household heating was identified as the biggest contributor to air pollution in the Skopje Valley, according to a study conducted by UNDP, the City of Skopje, and the Ministry of Environment. The findings were presented in a clear, visual format, **providing valuable data** to support better decision-making for cleaner, more sustainable urban living.

- **Co-designing household-waste solutions:** The project brought together **35 stakeholders** from multiple sectors to collaborate on waste management solutions through workshops. It resulted in the development of five prototype waste management solutions, focusing on the efficient selection and disposal of household waste.

- **Kanta.mk - GARB (Interactive Eco Mobile Application)**: The "Kanta.mk" (GARB) mobile app's goal was to improve waste management in Skopje by crowdsourcing data on waste disposal and illegal dumping. Developed by SmartUp, the app encouraged citizens to report waste issues, helping city authorities make informed decisions and **improve waste management efforts.**

Our belief

> If you want to be incrementally better, be competitive.
> If you want to be exponentially better, **be cooperative**.

We see problems as **opportunities**, and we believe that individuals and communities are the best agents of **sustainable development**.

Partner with us

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