smartup
Social Innovation Lab

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



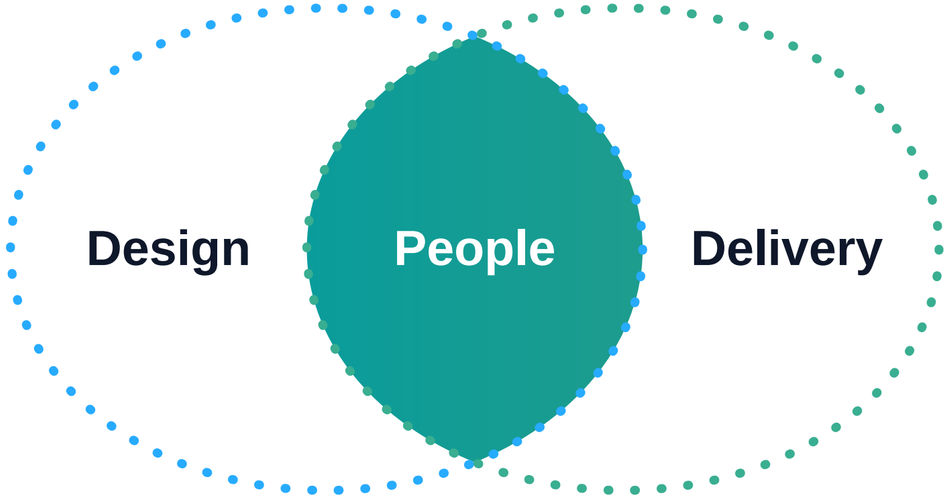
About us

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

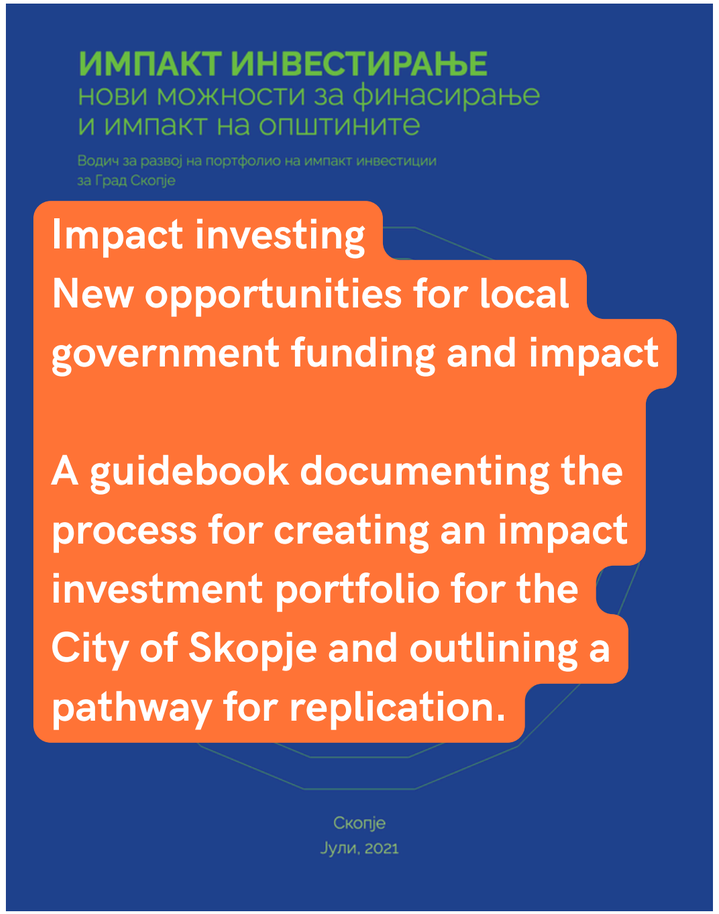
We are exploring how shared electric vehicle fleets and community-driven EV charging infrastructure can be supported and leveraged to advance community mobility in South East Europe.



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.

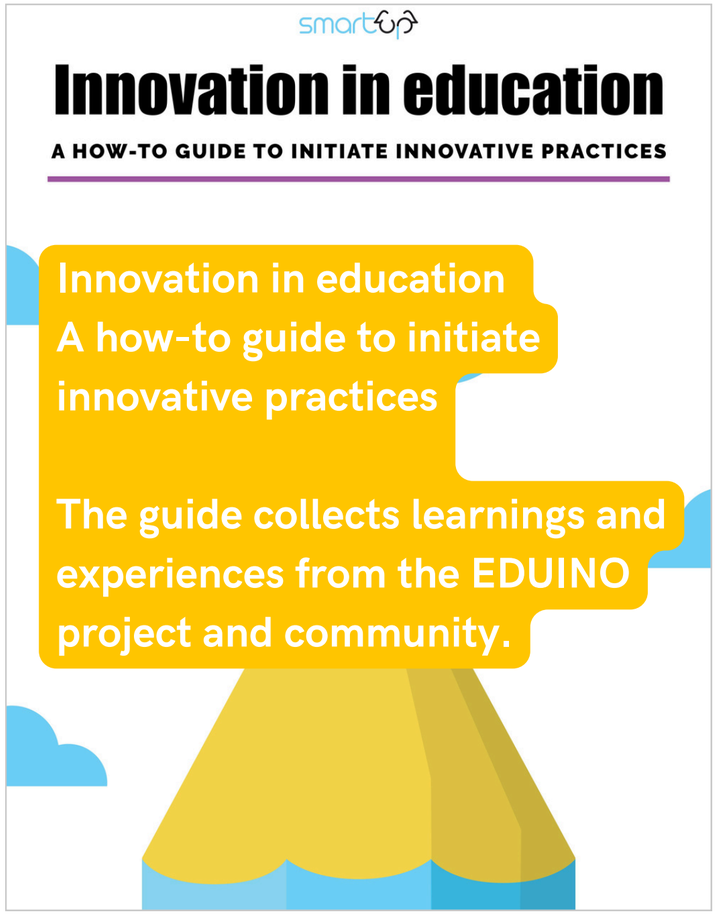
Learn more



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

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European Climate Initiative EUKI

eit Climate-KIC

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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

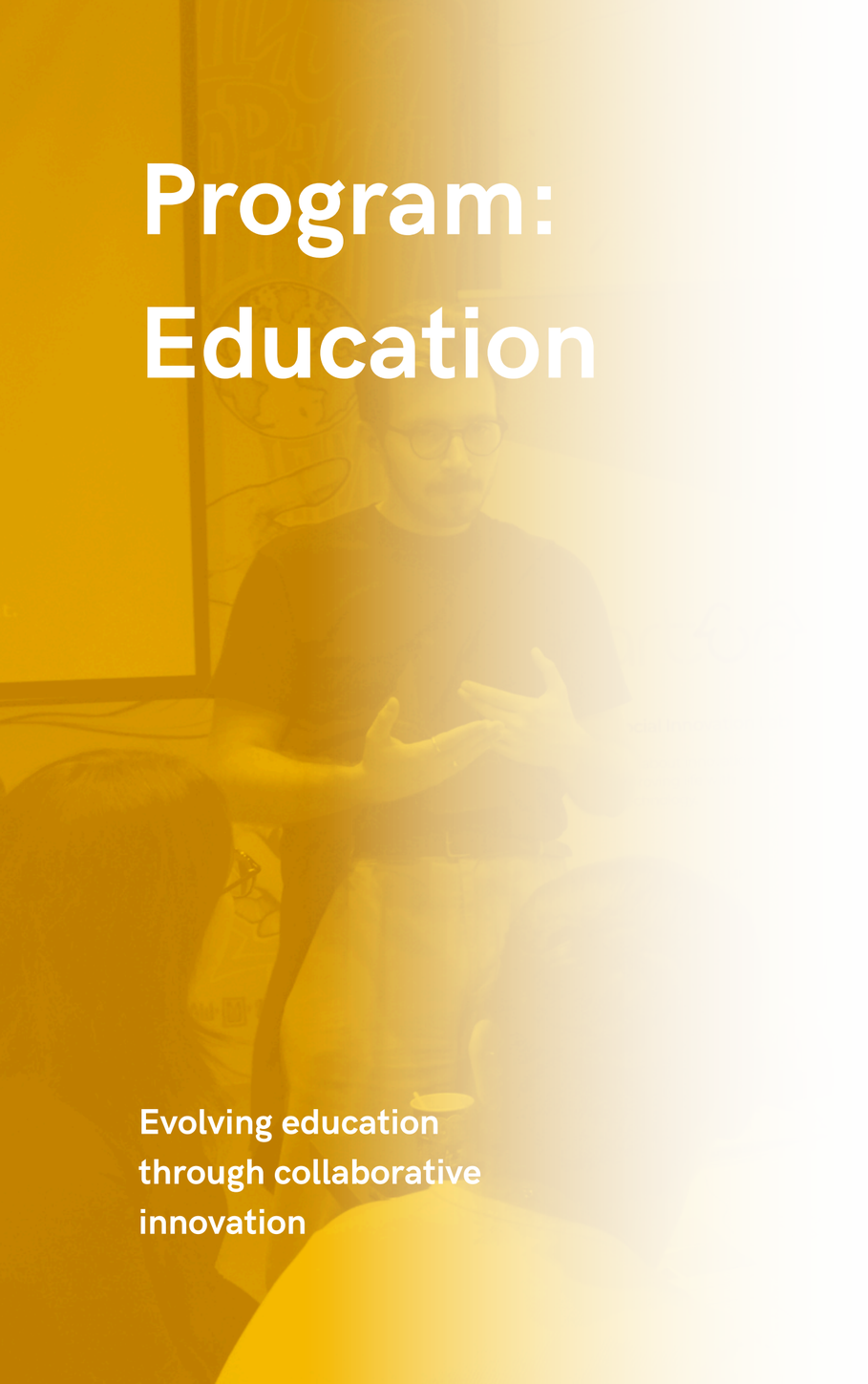
European Commission

Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation



Education

Program: Education



Evolving education through collaborative innovation

Our goal is to help education systems, schools, and communities create more inclusive learning environments, strengthen teaching practice, and support meaningful participation and better education planning.

Objectives:

- **Stronger learning systems** that identify needs and plan improvements for inclusive, effective learning.
- **Supported educators** with the skills, tools and confidence to improve learning in practice.
- **Meaningful student participation,** with students and communities playing a stronger role in shaping education programmes, resources and learning environments.

Our Approach to Education

We work with teachers, students, parents, school leaders, and education partners to understand where learning environments need to change and what would help that change happen.

Our work combines research, co-design, digital tools, professional development, and community engagement so that programmes and tools are grounded in the needs of educators, schools, and education institutions.

Education: What we offer

Our Education Program offers a comprehensive suite of services tailored to support educational institutions, policymakers, and organizations in their pursuit of innovation and excellence.

Co-design and co-creation

We work with education stakeholders to define needs, test ideas, and shape solutions that fit local learning contexts and priorities.

Digital platforms and tools

We design and adapt digital platforms that support teaching, learning, collaboration, and data-informed decision-making.

Community building

We help build learning communities where educators and partners can share practice, exchange knowledge, and work through common challenges together.

Capacity-building initiatives

We deliver workshops, training programmes, and collaborative formats that strengthen the skills educators and institutions need to improve learning environments.

Education: Examples of Our Impact



Our commitment to educational development has resulted in a significant impact on learners, educators, parents and communities. Here are a few notable examples:

- **EmpowerED – Digital Self-Evaluation Form:** We developed a digital tool to streamline the creation of individual professional development plans for teachers in North Macedonia. By digitalising the self-evaluation process, we helped educators identify their development needs and create relevant, personalised professional growth plans.

- **Promoting a Safe School Environment:** In its 2nd 3-year phase, through this project we continue to strengthen legal measures that empower student participation and protect children, improve schools' ability to prevent and address violence, and promote inclusive teaching methods **supporting protection, participation, and equal opportunities**.

Education: Examples of Our Impact



- **EDUINO – Collectively Improving Education Through Co-Creation and Innovation.** SmartUp conceptualised, designed and led **EDUINO,** North Macedonia's national **digital education platform**, launched in 2020 to support learning during school closures. Working with educators and education institutions, SmartUp mobilised over 2,000 teachers to create more than 4,700 curriculum-aligned video lessons in Macedonian and Albanian and delivered over 50 professional development webinars.

- Beyond video lessons, EDUINO included an **Early Childhood Development platform** with 700+ crowdsourced educational games and play-based activities, a **2D Science Laboratory** with 15 interactive experiments, and national Gameathons involving 1000+ educators and parents. SmartUp also established the **EDUINO Ambassadors programme** to strengthen professional collaboration and peer learning. The platform, with 25,000 active educators, was subsequently transferred to the Bureau for Development of Education for continued operation.

Education: Examples of Our Impact

- **SafeCyberEDU - Cybersecurity Training for Teachers:** With this project, we equipped 500+ educators in North Macedonia with essential online safety skills through an **EduLab course**, engaged 2000+ educators through educational **webinars**, and supported **continued cybersecurity learning** with ongoing access to practical resources.

- **EduInclusion – Innovation for Every Child:** This project co-created educational tools to **support children with Special Educational Needs** (SEN), especially in communication, by involving students, educators, and parents in a participatory process of research, design, and prototyping to ensure relevance and usability.

- **From Ideas to Action Through eTwinning Projects and Design Thinking**: Through **interactive design thinking workshops**, we helped educators in North Macedonia identify educational challenges, develop collaborative solutions, and turn their ideas into concrete eTwinning projects, which they successfully launched on the platform.

Education: Examples of Our Impact



- **New Technologies as Entrepreneurship and Innovation Boosters - 3D Modeling and 3D Printing Workshops for High School Students (N.Macedonia) #2:** Equipped **32 high school students** with hands-on experience in 3D technologies, sparking interest in integrating 3D technology into schools. Participants learned modeling software and printed their own designs, gaining valuable skills.

- **#Inno4Edu - Setting Up an Enabling Environment for Improving Quality Teaching and Learning Through Co-Creation and Innovation (N.Macedonia):** A national educational portal that promotes collaborative creation of learning resources. It engaged teachers, parents, and children through interactive events and challenges. The platform supports **diverse learning tools** and socio-emotional development, with plans for long-term integration into national education.

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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