

"We work across disciplines to inspire and empower people and organizations to solve emerging societal challenges."

→ ШТО Е DIGITAL INCLUSION ?

Дигитална инклузија (е-инклузија, евклучување) се однесува на ефективно учество на сите лица во секој аспект на општествениот живот преку користење на информациско-комуникациски технологии.



About us

Welcome to SmartUp – Social Innovation Lab, where we harness **the power of innovation** to drive meaningful social change.

As North Macedonia's first innovation lab, we set out with a clear mission: **to tackle pressing societal challenges through bold, forward-thinking, co-created solutions**. Our work centres on four core pillars: **education, youth, climate change, and public sector innovation**.

We are committed to shaping a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future, **with and for all**.

Mission

We use tailored design processes to understand complex challenges & co-create lasting solutions by connecting & collaborating with organisations & individuals.

Innovation for social good

Vision

Our vision is to shape a sustainable, equitable, and prosperous region transformed by innovation and co-creation.

smartUp

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

Impact at a glance



EDUINO Collective Portal

EDUINO is the national platform for digital educational resources, offering video lessons, webinars, guides, and games to support innovative and engaging learning for educators, students, and parents.



SkopjeLab City of Skopje Innovation Centre

SkopjeLab is the first public sector innovation lab in the Balkans, established in July 2017 with a mission to co-create innovative approaches to address challenges facing Skopje and its citizens.



Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge

As part of this global program, we implemented local contests in 2018 and 2019, engaging young people to design innovative solutions to local challenges. Our incubation programs produced winners in the international top 5 challenges for two consecutive years.



Future Cities of South East Europe

Together with 4 other partners from SEE Europe, we worked on making our cities the best places to live, work, and visit by 2025.

Latest work

Promoting a Safe School Environment

We are working 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

ИМПАКТ ИНВЕСТИРАЊЕ
НОВИ МОЖНОСТИ ЗА ФИНАСИРАЊЕ
И ИМПАКТ НА ОПШТИНИТЕ

Водич за развој на портфолио на импакт инвестиции
за Град Скопје

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

Скопје
Јули, 2021

**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

smartUp

Innovation in education
A HOW-TO GUIDE TO INITIATE INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

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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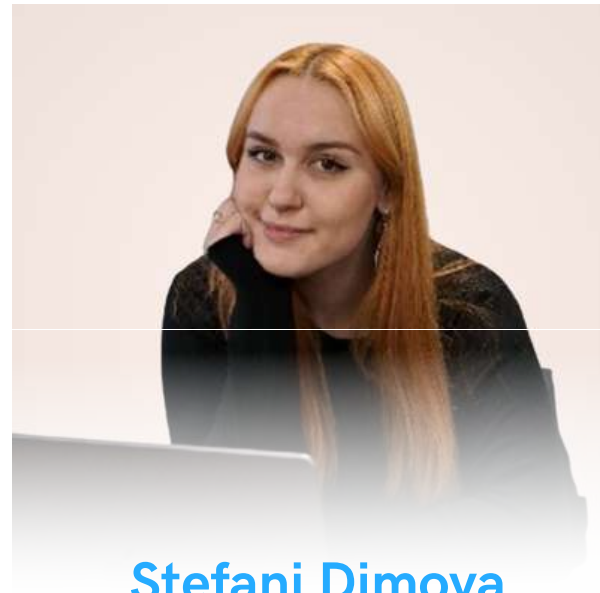
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Innovation for social good



International partners & donors

Supported by:



Pestalozzi Children's Foundation



on the basis of a decision
by the German Bundestag



Implemented by



Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation

A group of people, including men and women, are smiling and holding up papers or drawings. The image is overlaid with a solid yellow color. The word "EDUCATION" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

EDUCATION



Program: Education

Evolving Education
Through
Collaborative
Innovation

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

Objectives:

- Empower teachers to become innovative educators & education innovators.
- Create and facilitate diverse learning experiences.
- Integrate technology effectively.
- Strengthen partnerships with parents and communities.

Our Approach to Education

We believe meaningful innovation in education comes from understanding learners' needs and the challenges educators face.

By working closely with stakeholders through participatory processes, we identify key needs, co-create ideas, and co-develop solutions tailored to specific contexts. This is how we ensure our work is grounded, user-centred, and delivers meaningful impact.

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

Understanding your needs comes first, leading to co-created, innovative solutions tailored to your goals and context.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Strong learning communities are cultivated, enabling the exchange of ideas, sharing of best practices, and collaboration toward shared goals.

DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND TOOLS

Customizing digital platforms to improve teaching and learning by offering rich resources, collaborative features, and tools for data-driven decision-making.

CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES:

We offer training, workshops, and hackathons to build the skills needed for driving positive change and empowering educators and organisations to become agents of transformation.

Education: Examples of Our Impact

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

- **EmpowerED - Digital Self Evaluation Form:** An innovative initiative that creates a digital tool to streamline the development of individual professional growth plans for **teachers in North Macedonia**. By digitizing the self-evaluation process, it addresses gaps in teacher development and helps educators design relevant, personalized plans.
- **Promoting Safe School Environment:** This project aims 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



- **SafeCyberEDU - Cybersecurity Training for Teachers:** With this project, we equipped educators in North Macedonia with essential online safety skills through an EduLab course, engaged **894 teachers** and **1,500+ webinar participants**, and promoted lasting cybersecurity awareness with ongoing access to 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.
- **JUST SMART / Shtreber Education Portal:** SmartUp customized the platform for the Macedonian environment and trained **20 educators** to use digital learning tools effectively and create quality content.

Education: Examples of Our Impact



- **EDUINO: Collectively Improving Education Through Co-Creation and Innovation:** SmartUp took this opportunity to further develop an existing initiative, introducing the EDUINO community—a collaborative network of educators, parents, students, creators, designers, and developers dedicated to **improving education during this critical time**. The school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic led to the creation of the EDUINO Collective Portal.
- **Creative Business Cup (N.Macedonia):** Largest global competition for innovative and creative startups, with local entries in over **70 countries**. The competition aimed to help startups scale their businesses by offering space, tools, and knowledge, while also establishing national and international connections. The initiative included a 7-day Business Academy and a national multi-sector debate, contributing to the development of creative industries in the country.

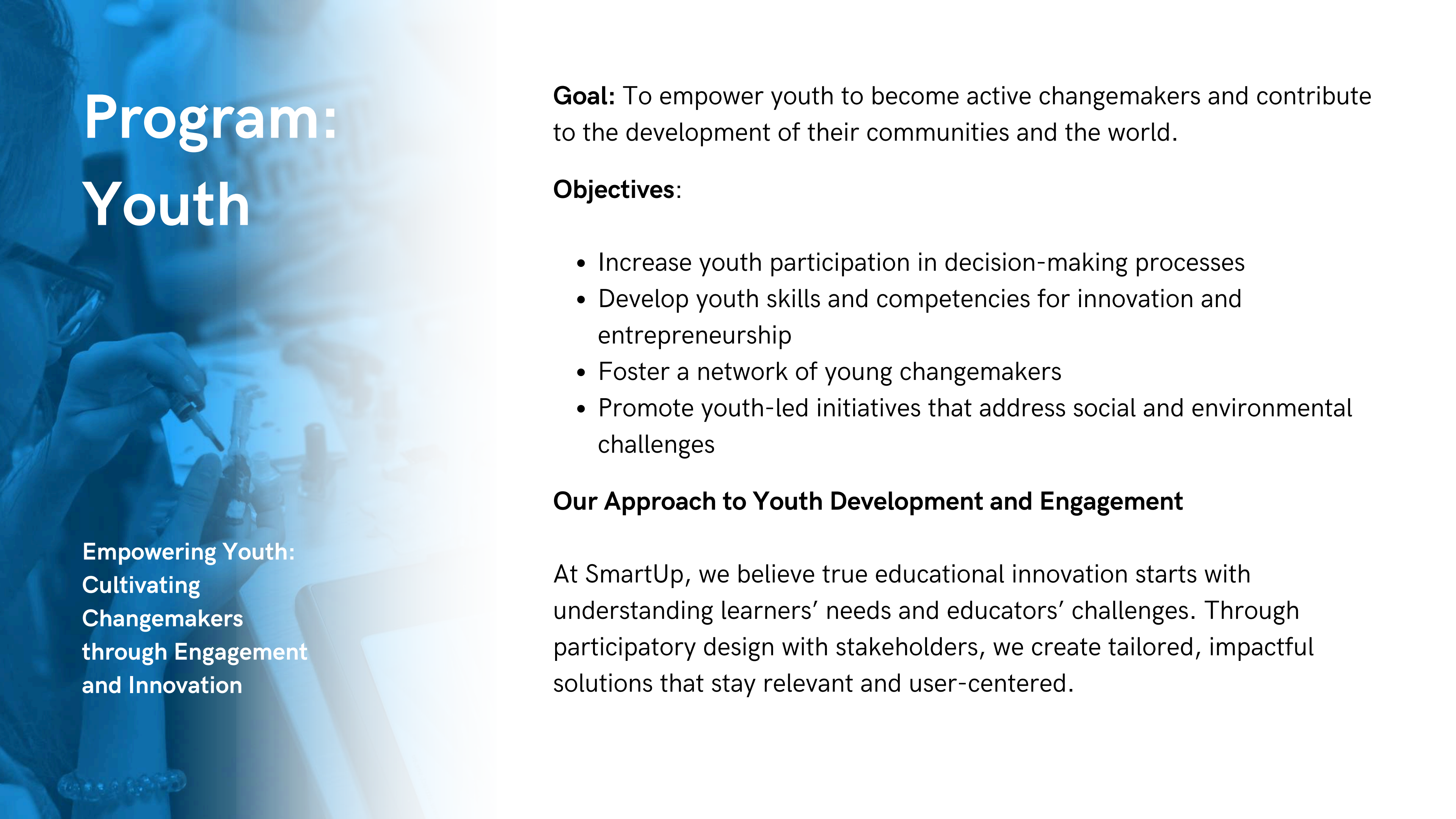
Education: Examples of Our Impact



- **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.

A photograph of three young women sitting at a table, with their hands raised in the air. They are smiling and appear to be in a meeting or workshop. The table has water bottles and papers on it. The background is a wall with a geometric pattern. The entire image is overlaid with a blue tint.

YOUTH

A background image showing a person's hands working on a circuit board with a soldering iron. The image is overlaid with a blue tint. The person is wearing a bracelet and a watch.

Program: Youth

Empowering Youth:
Cultivating
Changemakers
through Engagement
and Innovation

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

Objectives:

- Increase youth participation in decision-making processes
- Develop youth skills and competencies for innovation and entrepreneurship
- Foster a network of young changemakers
- Promote youth-led initiatives that address social and environmental challenges

Our Approach to Youth Development and Engagement

At SmartUp, we believe true educational innovation starts with understanding learners' needs and educators' challenges. Through participatory design with stakeholders, we create tailored, impactful solutions that stay relevant and user-centered.

YOUTH: OUR RANGE OF SERVICES

We offer a comprehensive range of services to support organizations and communities in their efforts to engage and empower youth. Our services include:

Developing and implementing youth engagement processes

We guide stakeholders through inclusive processes to identify youth needs, interests, and priorities, and to design engagement strategies that align with these needs.

Youth capacity development

We provide training programs, workshops, and mentorship opportunities to enhance the skills, knowledge, and confidence of young people, enabling them to become active participants in decision-making and change processes.

Creating engagement and participation platforms and initiatives

We design and implement engaging and impactful platforms and initiatives that attract young people, provide them with opportunities to participate, and amplify their voices.

Organizing innovation challenges and hackathons

We facilitate innovation challenges and hackathons that bring together young people with diverse backgrounds and expertise to collaborate on innovative solutions to real-world problems.

Youth: Examples of Our Impact



Our commitment to fostering positive change and empowering individuals is exemplified through impactful initiatives:

- **Mediathon: Youth Voices for Social Change:** Supported **30 high school students** from Skopje to create impactful media content addressing modern social challenges. The initiative promoted media literacy, storytelling, and leadership skills while encouraging youth to tackle issues like bullying, social inclusion, and community well-being through media campaigns.

Youth: Examples of Our Impact



- **Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge:** Global initiative aiming to ensure youth access to education, training, and employment by 2030. SmartUp organized local contests in 2018 and 2019, where young people from Macedonia designed solutions to local challenges. The teams participated in workshops, co-creation sessions, and mentoring, leading to **10 innovative solutions**. In 2018, “AndroMeta” won globally, while in 2019, “Bionic” and “Mind Benders” were national winners, with “Bionic” securing a **\$25,000 prize** for their prototype.
- **Nasoci.me Career Guidance Platform:** Showcases our **dedication** from user-friendly design to seamless technical development and effective content creation.

Youth: Examples of Our Impact



- **Extended Mentorship and Incubation for team AndroMeta - Global Winners of GenU Youth Challenge (N.Macedonia):** In 2018, Team Andrometa won the Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge with SpeakOutAppMK, an app providing a safe, anonymous space for victims of peer violence to share experiences and offer support. Mentored by SmartUp, they refined their solution and competed against **32 global teams**. As one of the five winners, they received financial support to further develop the app.
- **#MeetTheSkopjans/ #ZapoznajGiSkopjani:** Inspired by diverse cultures in Skopje, we launched the #MeettheSkopjans initiative to collect and share the stories of over **100 local citizens**. Through storytelling, we engaged local institutions and promoted positive change in the community. By incorporating creative event organizing, branding, and merchandising, we helped strengthen the connection between Skopje's citizens and their city.

These initiatives collectively represent our holistic approach to empowerment, innovation, and lasting positive impact.



PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION



Program: Public Sector Innovation

Initiating Public
Sector Innovation:
Co-creating for a
Better Future

Goal: To transform the public sector into an innovative and citizen-centered institution.

Objectives:

- Foster a culture of innovation and experimentation in the public sector
- Empower public servants to create and implement innovative solutions
- Increase citizen engagement in public sector innovation
- Use technology to improve service delivery and efficiency

Our Approach to Public Sector Innovation

At SmartUp, we take a collaborative, inclusive approach to public sector innovation. We believe true progress comes from engaging stakeholders- government officials, citizens, experts, and community groups - in co-creation processes to identify challenges and develop innovative solutions.

PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION: OUR RANGE OF SERVICES

We offer a comprehensive range of services to support governments and public sector organizations in their pursuit of innovation. Our services include:

Facilitating participative innovation processes

We guide stakeholders through collaborative processes to identify challenges, generate ideas, and develop prototypes of innovative solutions.

Engagement of citizens and other stakeholders

We actively involve citizens, experts, and community organizations in participatory processes to ensure that innovation is driven by the needs and perspectives of those who matter most.

Redesign of public services and spaces

We help governments re-imagine and redesign public services and spaces to enhance user experience, improve efficiency, and promote accessibility.

Service digitalization and data visualization

We help governments leverage technology to digitalize services, streamline processes, and enhance data-driven decision-making.

Public Sector Innovation: Examples of Our Impact



Our work in public sector innovation has made a significant impact on communities around the world. Specific examples of our impact include:

- **Researching Mechanisms for the Operationalization of the National Development Strategy:** The project helped North Macedonia implement its NDS for 2024-2044 by testing policy pilots on migrant integration and establishing a foresight unit for future planning. **89 stakeholders** were trained in strategic foresight, and **15 measures were developed**, including **three ready-to-launch policy pilots**.

Public Sector Innovation: Examples of Our Impact



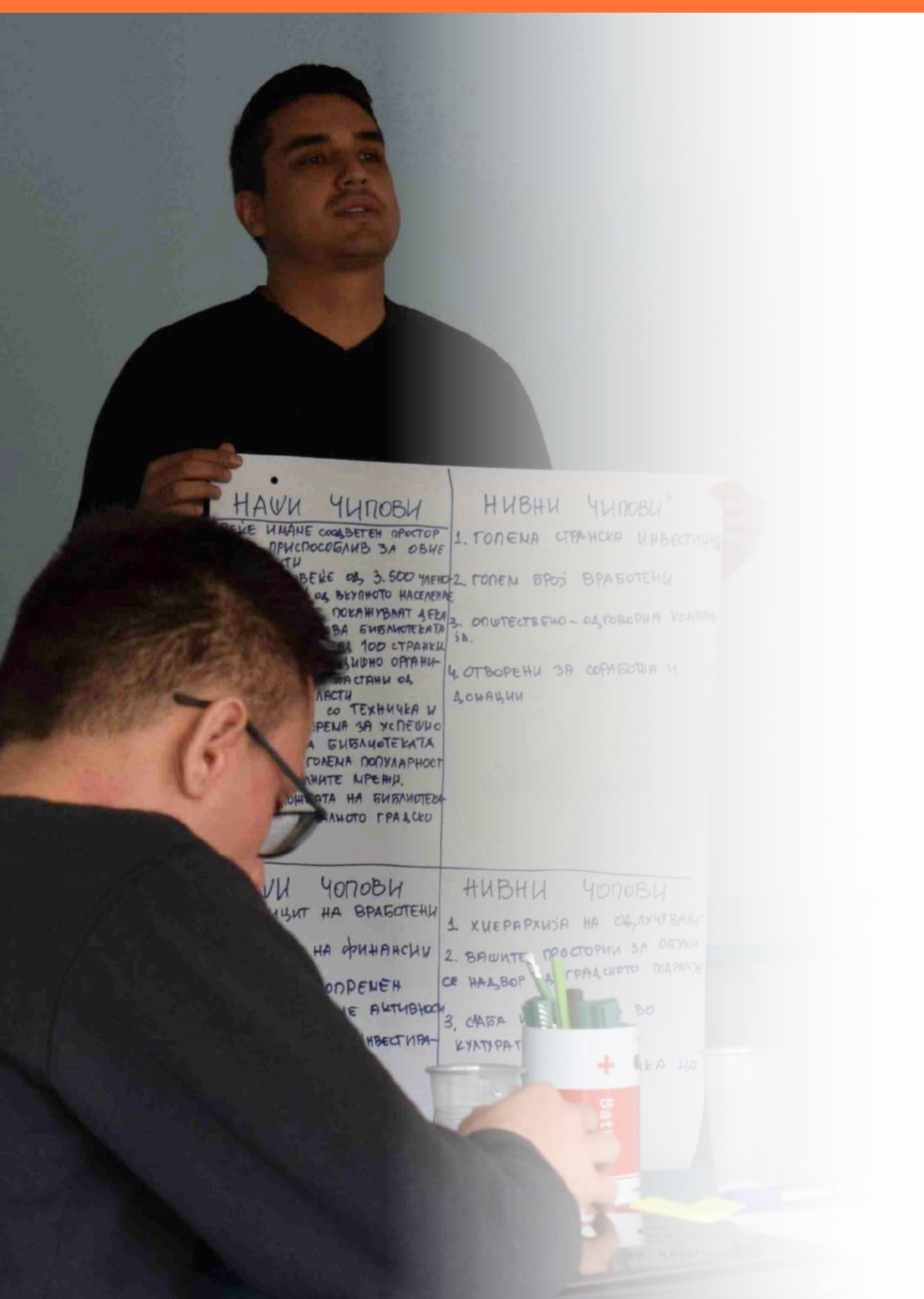
- **Public Sector Innovation Training for Local Government and MZ (Mjesne Zajednice-Local Communities) Representatives:** Delivered two innovation training programs for **66 local government and MZ representatives**, improving their innovation skills through practical exercises. The project also identified opportunities for ongoing support and professional development in public sector innovation.
- **Workshop on service development for national parks (N. Macedonia):** SmartUp, organized a workshop titled 'Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Development of National Parks in the Republic of North Macedonia'. The workshop brought together **37 participants** from national parks, municipalities, government bodies, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the private and civic sectors to discuss strategies for the sustainable development of North Macedonia's national parks.

Public Sector Innovation: Examples of Our Impact



- **Public Sector Innovation Training in Bosnia and Herzegovina:** In 2022, we developed and implemented a training program on public sector innovation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The training consisted of a comprehensive curriculum on public sector innovation, including introductory training and a policy lab for **50 public sector representatives**.
- **Open Government Partnership (OGP) for the City of Skopje:** In collaboration with the City of Skopje, SmartUp implemented the "Open Government Partnership (OGP)" initiative as part of the "Resilient Skopje" project. The project focused on **improving sustainability, innovation, and climate resilience** by establishing a framework for open data management, developing tools for data collection, and engaging stakeholders in these processes.

Public Sector Innovation: Examples of Our Impact



- **"Inclusive and Successful digital transformation for all - DIGITAL ALL" (N.Macedonia):** The DIGIT-ALL project, implemented by SmartUp as a subgrantee, aimed to accelerate Skopje's transition to a digital city by establishing a **fully functional e-government support center**. This center was designed to help citizens of Skopje navigate digital city services, including subsidy applications, grants, and more.
- **Impact Investment Portfolio for Local Governments (within Future Cities of SEE Project) (N. Macedonia):** Through the project Future Cities of South-East Europe, SmartUp in collaboration with Elson Solutions, and supported by Bankers Without Boundaries, we developed an impact investment portfolio for the City of Skopje and a guide for impact investing for local government.

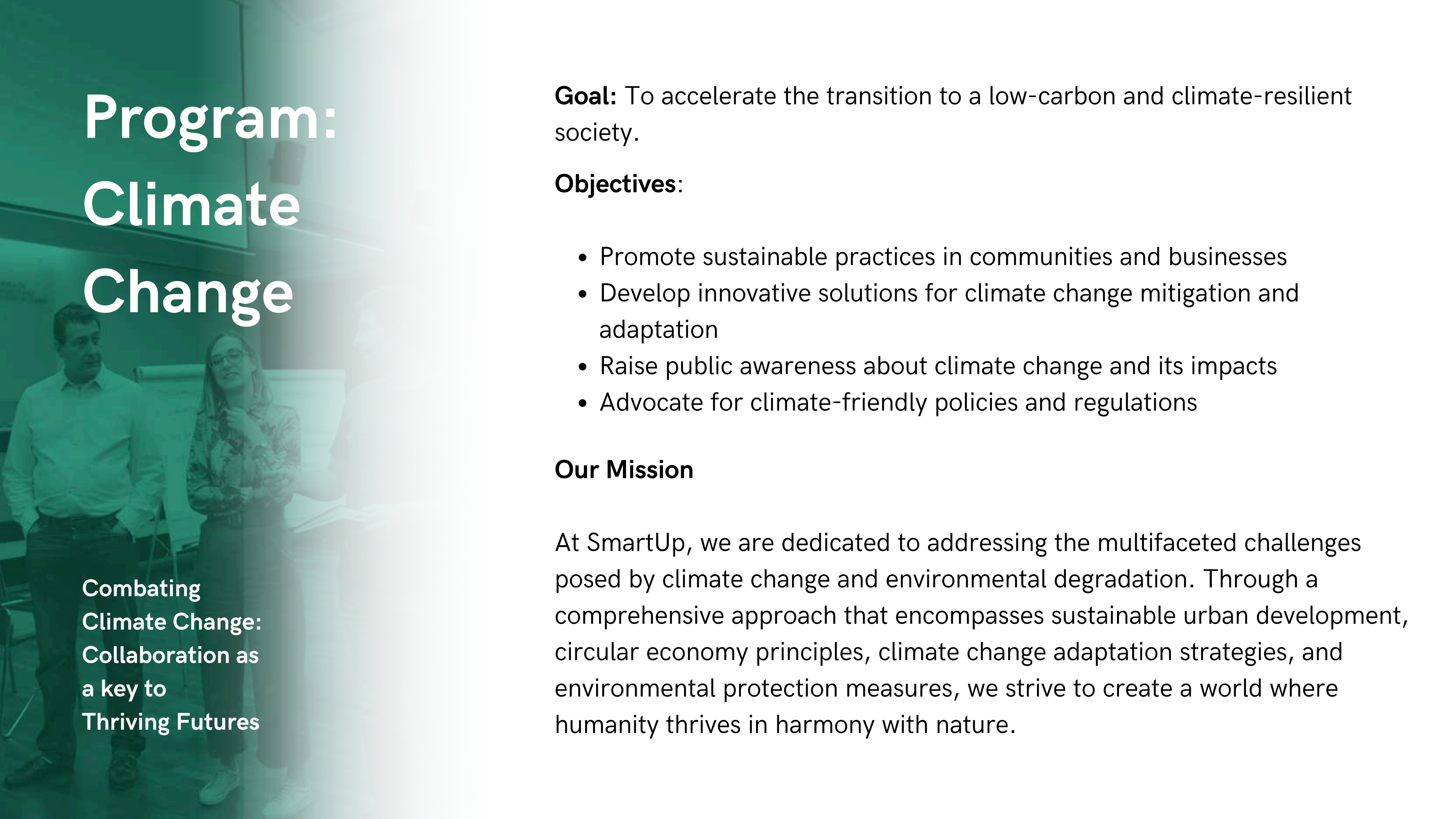
Public Sector Innovation: Examples of Our Impact



- **SkopjeLab:** In 2017, SmartUp implemented the **first public sector innovation lab in the region**, SkopjeLab. Over the course of four years, we worked together with the City of Skopje to create an environment where innovation, collaboration, and co-creation are a natural way of working.
- SkopjeLab demonstrated the **impact** of citizen engagement by connecting public administration, businesses, and the community to co-create better services and policies.
- **Notable achievements** include the digitalization and redesign of the bulky waste service, **16 public space concepts**, youth involvement in innovation, campaigns on energy efficiency and e-waste, and a sustainable model for the Green Cadastre—all contributing to more inclusive and collaborative governance in Skopje.
- SkopjeLab strengthened public-private collaboration, built cross-sector innovation capacity, and laid the groundwork for **more inclusive, responsive governance** in Skopje.

CLIMATE CHANGE

ПОЖАРНА
СВЕТИ НИКОЛЕ



Program: Climate Change

**Combating
Climate Change:
Collaboration as
a key to
Thriving Futures**

Goal: To accelerate the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient society.

Objectives:

- Promote sustainable practices in communities and businesses
- Develop innovative solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Raise public awareness about climate change and its impacts
- Advocate for climate-friendly policies and regulations

Our Mission

At SmartUp, we are dedicated to addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation. Through a comprehensive approach that encompasses sustainable urban development, circular economy principles, climate change adaptation strategies, and environmental protection measures, we strive to create a world where humanity thrives in harmony with nature.



Program: Climate Change

Combating
Climate Change:
Collaboration as
a key to
Thriving Futures

Key Areas of Focus

Our work in the Climate Change and Environment Program is centered on the following key areas:

- **Sustainable Urban Development:** We envision cities that are vibrant, resilient, and eco-friendly, characterized by reduced pollution, enhanced energy efficiency, and abundant green spaces.
- **Circular Economy:** We promote a circular economy model that minimizes waste, maximizes resource utilization, and creates new economic opportunities through innovative reuse and recycling strategies.
- **Climate Change Adaptation:** We empower communities to build resilience against the impacts of climate change, fostering strategies to withstand extreme weather events, mitigate water scarcity, and enhance air quality.
- **Environmental Protection:** We safeguard our planet's precious resources, implementing measures to reduce pollution, conserve natural habitats, and protect biodiversity.

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 guide you through the process of conceptualizing, designing, and implementing innovative solutions that effectively address environmental challenges.

Research and Analysis

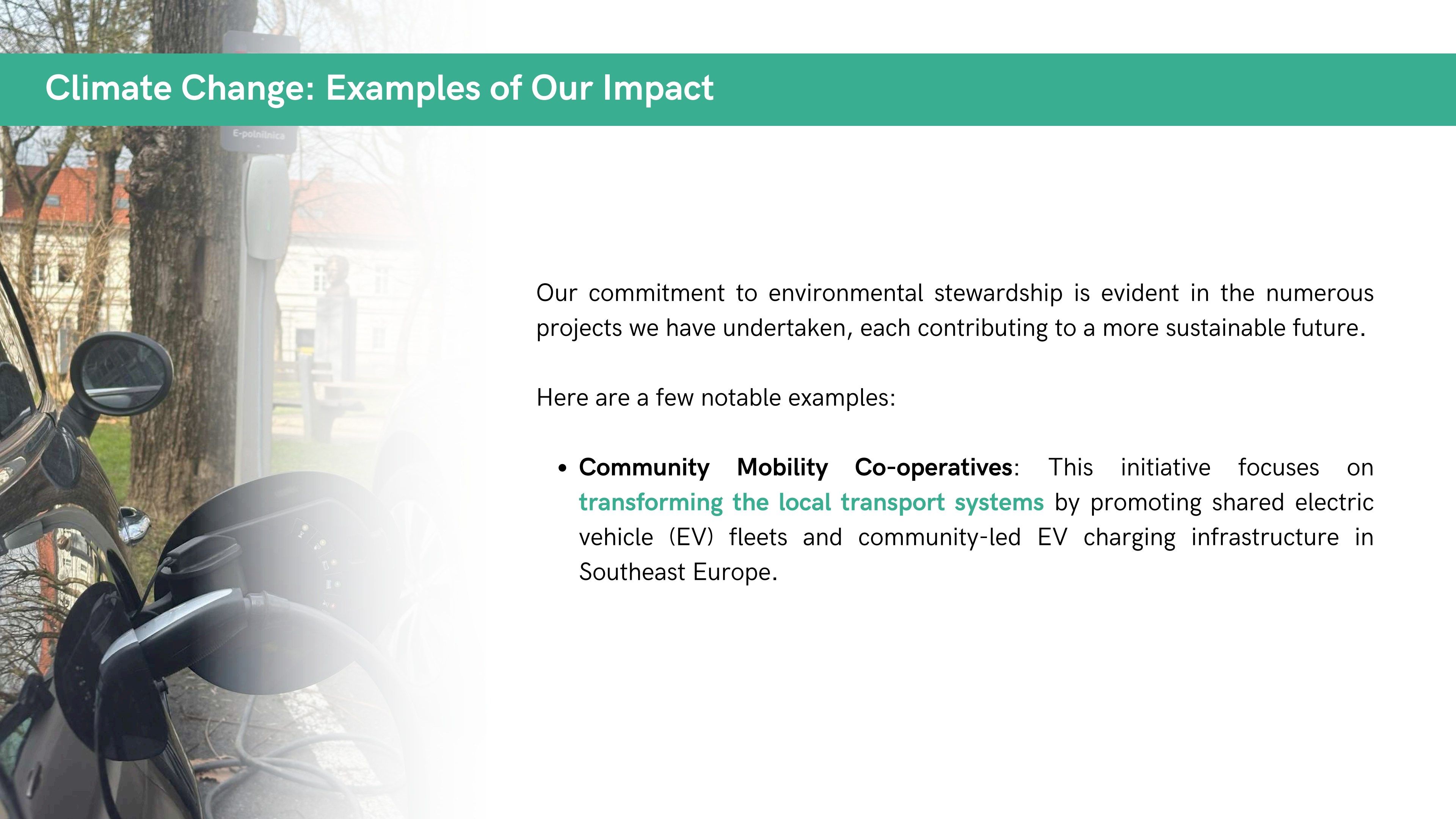
We conduct in-depth research and provide insightful analysis of environmental issues, offering valuable data and perspectives to inform decision-making and strategy development.

Capacity Building

We empower individuals and organizations with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to make informed environmental decisions and implement effective sustainability practices.

Networking and Collaboration

We facilitate connections and collaborations among diverse stakeholders, fostering a network of expertise and shared knowledge to advance environmental progress.



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.

Climate Change: Examples of Our Impact



- **Action4Climate (Erasmus+):** The project focuses on **increasing environmental literacy** and empowering youth in Spain, Cyprus, and North Macedonia, to take climate action. SmartUp is contributing by developing data storytelling guidelines to promote climate awareness and supporting youth in sharing their stories, as well as supporting green projects.

Climate Change: Examples of Our Impact



- **Pathways2Resilience:** This project supports climate adaptation in Sv. Nikole (N. Macedonia) and Cetinje (Montenegro), aiming to build local capacity for resilience strategies. SmartUp is contributing by **developing resilience strategies, action and investment plans**, while strengthening technical skills and collaboration.
- **Innovative Financial Models to Support the Transition to Renewable Energy Sources (N.Macedonia):** The project developed a community financing model for **renewable energy** in North Macedonia, focusing on local governments. It included a pilot hybrid photovoltaic/thermal system at a kindergarten to demonstrate cost-saving potential.
- **EnerBuild:** In Gran Canaria, smart building technologies and IoT were used to optimize energy use in a pilot building, making it more **energy-efficient**. The system provided real-time insights that helped reduce energy consumption, minimize downtime, and keep everything running smoothly.

Climate Change: Examples of Our Impact



- **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 neighborhoods** in at least five cities in South East Europe, making them some of the best places in Europe to live, work, and visit.
- **From Corporate Responsibility to a Healthier Living Environment:** Organized workshops across various sectors in North Macedonia, educating companies on **waste management, energy reduction, and compliance with environmental standards**. The workshops received high ratings, helping companies adopt sustainable practices and develop actionable plans for long-term environmental stewardship.

Climate Change: Examples of Our Impact



- **Transformation Financial Mechanism for Communities of South Eastern Europe:** Created a financing model to help five cities in South East Europe become **carbon-neutral by 2030**. By working closely with local stakeholders, the project set up a sustainable funding plan to support green initiatives like energy efficiency and urban mobility.
- **Mapping Circular Economy in Western Balkans:** The Cross-KIC Western Balkans project, led by SmartUp, mapped the circular economy ecosystem in North Macedonia, identifying opportunities across sectors. It engaged local stakeholders to foster collaboration and create **actionable policy recommendations for sustainable growth**.

Climate Change: Examples of Our Impact

- 
- **Intersectional Convergence of European Youth towards Green New Deal (System REset):** The ICEY-GND project **empowered 3,300 young people**, including those from marginalized groups, to shape a Green New Deal for a sustainable future. Through trainings and the "Zelen Glas" platform, it enabled youth to share their ideas and influence national and European policies on environmental and social justice.
 - **Online Platform for Reporting Pollution for the State Inspectorate for Environment in N. Macedonia:** The ClearUp project, led by the Institute for Communication Studies, aimed to improve collaboration between citizens and the State Environmental Inspectorate. SmartUp developed a platform that **simplified reporting pollution** and improved the response efficiency of state inspectors.

Climate Change: Examples of Our Impact



- **Velo Parking (N. Macedonia):** In partnership with GIZ and the City of Skopje, SmartUp created Skopje's first open Velo parking space, **engaging** over **50 citizens** in the design process. The project transformed a neglected area into a functional space with bike parking, greenery, murals, and a service station.
- **ICT for Urban Resilience - Improving Urban Resilience & Public Services and Planning Through New Technologies Together:** The project helped Skopje **improve flood risk management** using tech solutions. It included creating a tool for flood research, a flooding study, and visual tools like StoryMaps and an air pollution calculator to inform decisions and raise awareness.



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.
- **Organization of Waste Disposal Workshops:** 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.**



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