



Social Innovation Lab

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

Dr. Vasil Kotevski



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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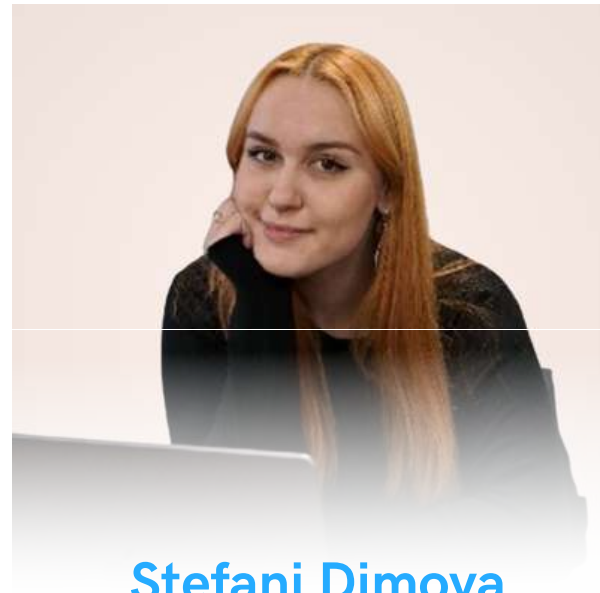
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Innovation for social good



International partners & donors

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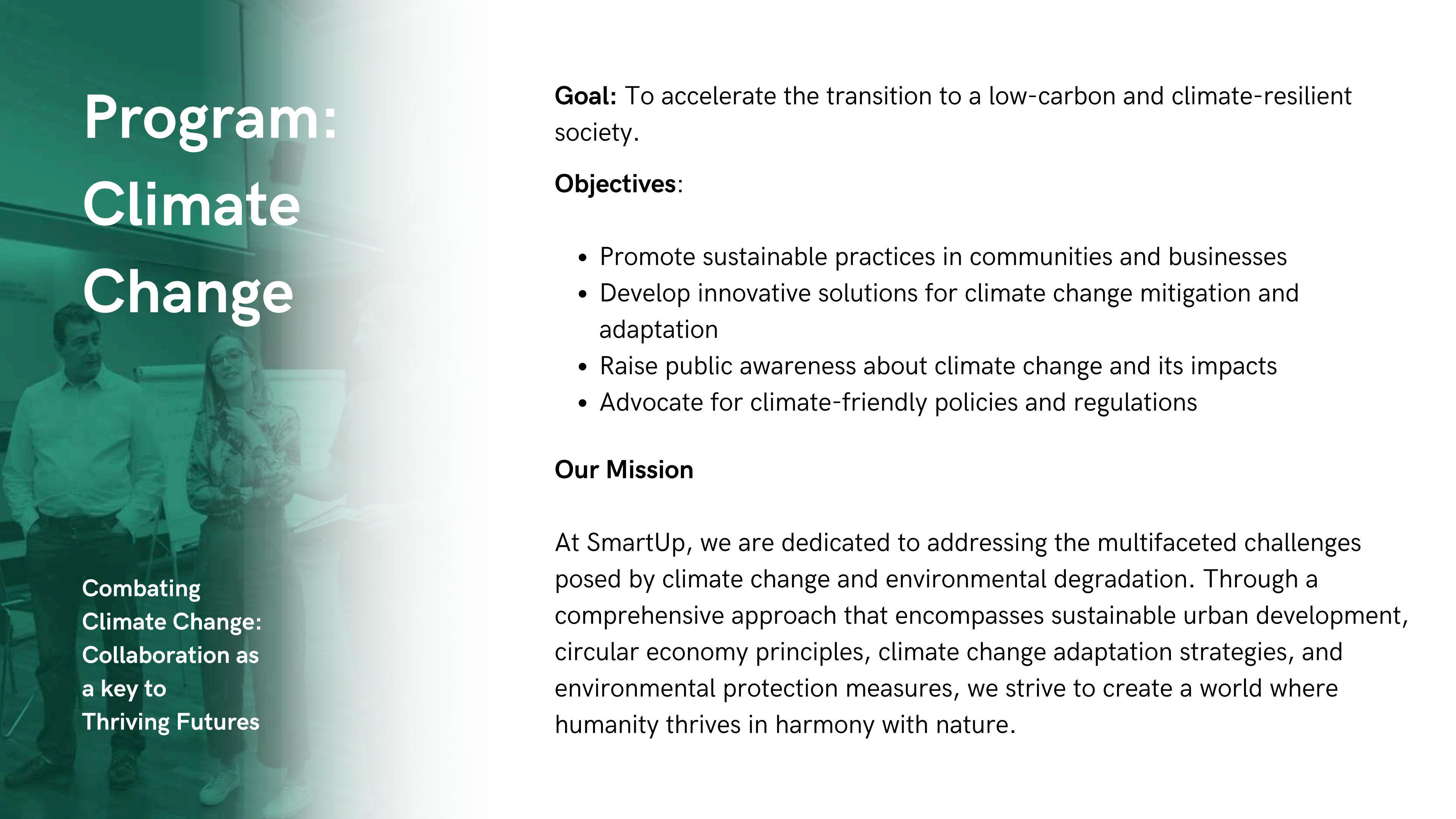


Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation



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
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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

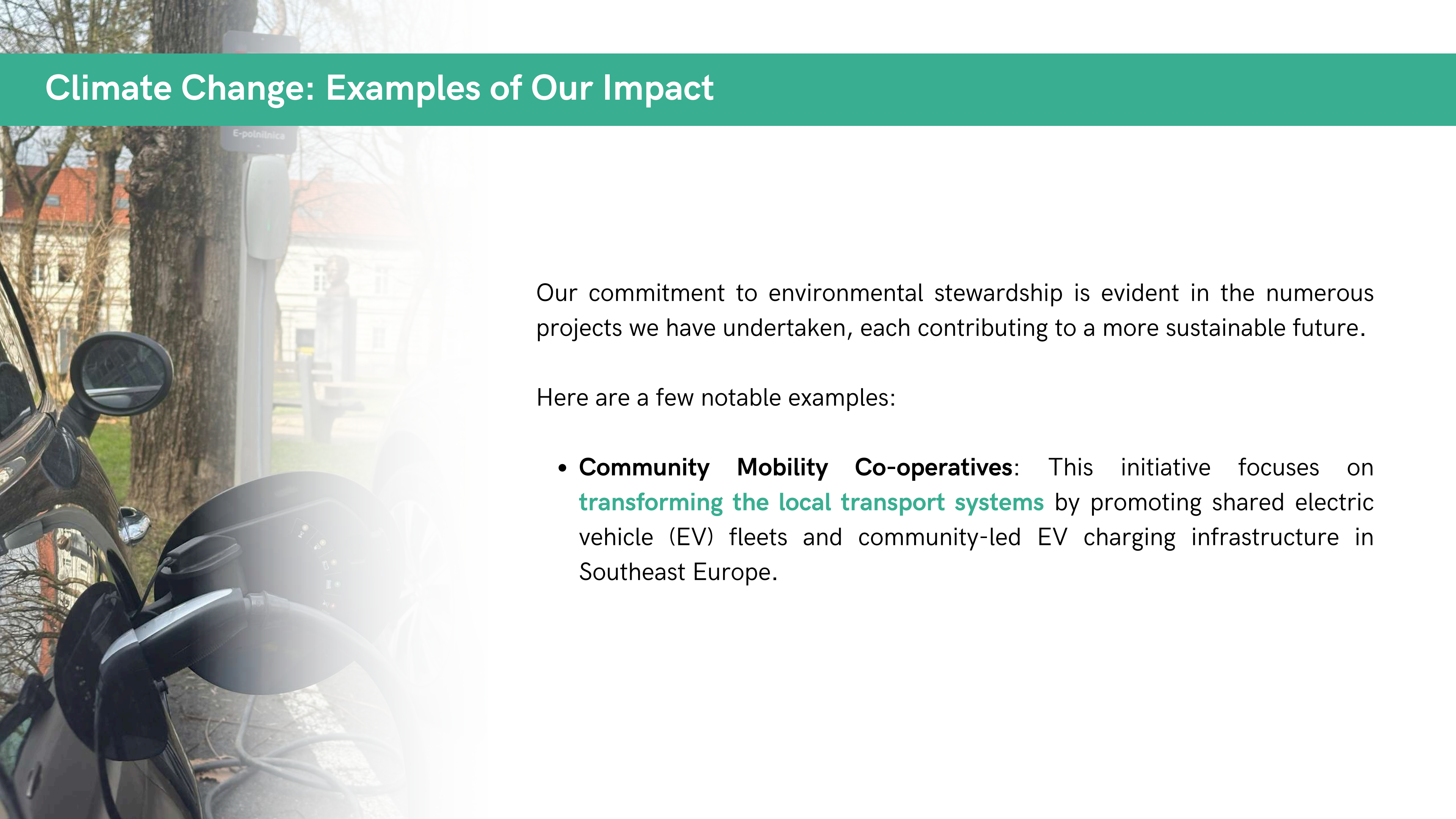
We conduct in-depth research and provide insightful analysis of environmental issues, offering valuable data and perspectives to inform decision-making and strategy development.

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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