



## 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**

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**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



**Nikolco Gosev**

President

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**Milena Ignjatova**

Programme Manager

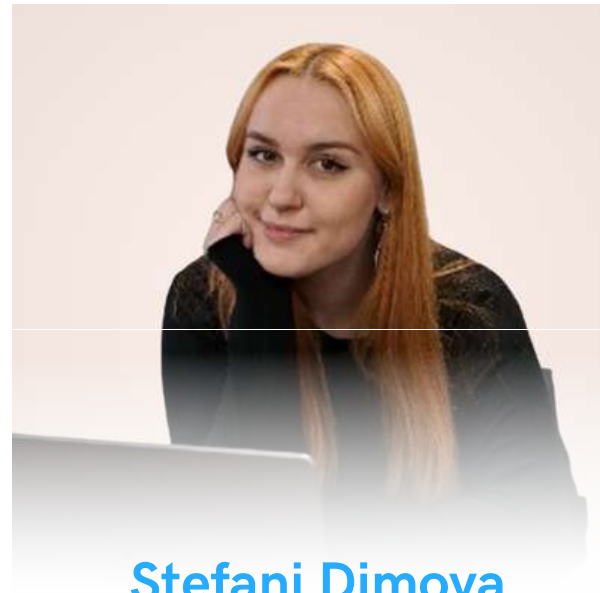
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Innovation for social good



# International partners & donors

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Implemented by



Horizon 2020  
European Union funding  
for Research & Innovation



# 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



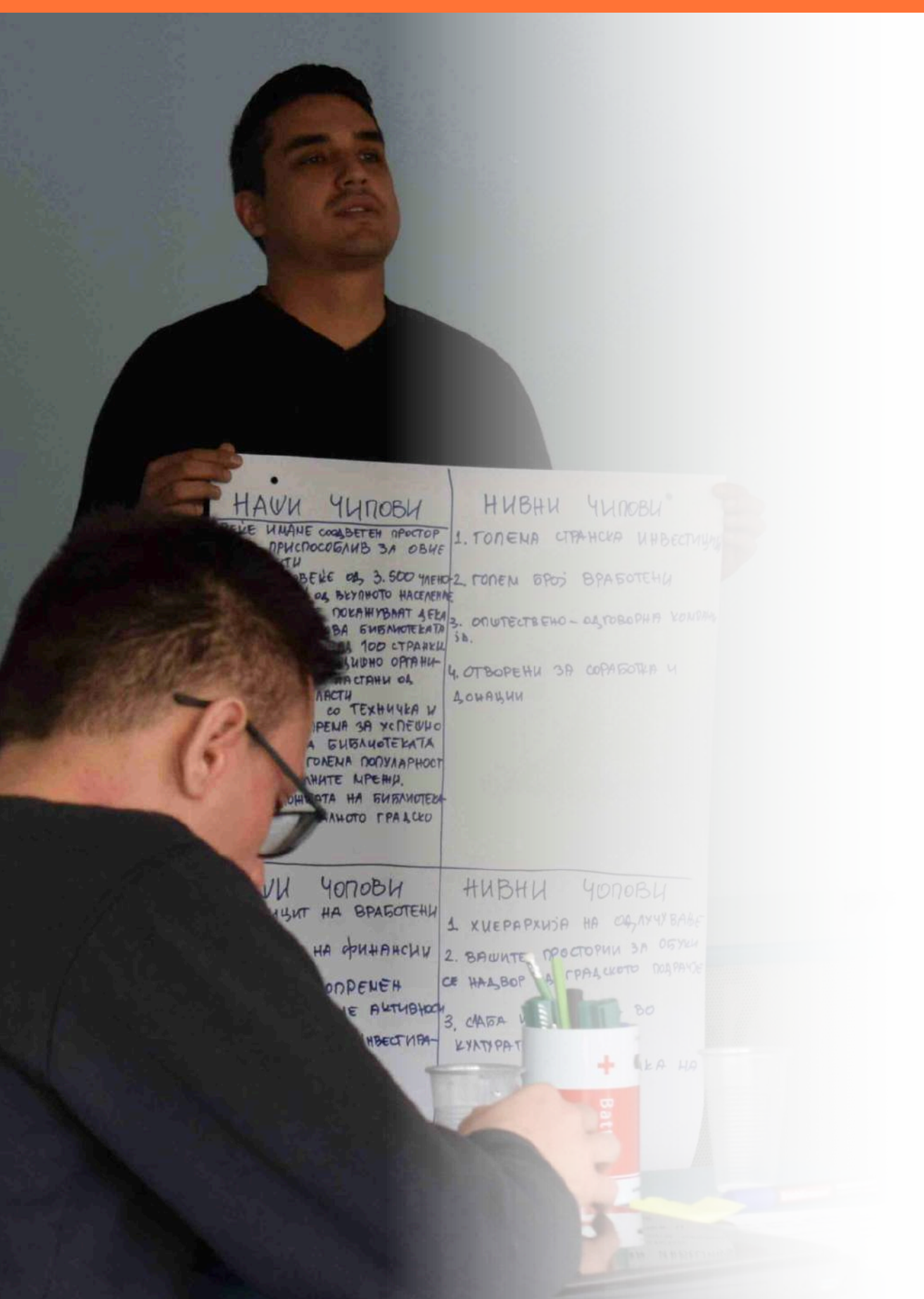
- **Public Sector Innovation Training for Local Government and MZ (Mjesne Zajednice-Local Communities) Representatives:** Delivered two innovation training programs for **66 local government and MZ representatives**, improving their innovation skills through practical exercises. The project also identified 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.

## 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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