



Social Innovation Lab

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

Dr. Vasil Stankov



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



Nikolco Gosev

President

[LinkedIn](#)



Milena Ignjatova

Programme Manager

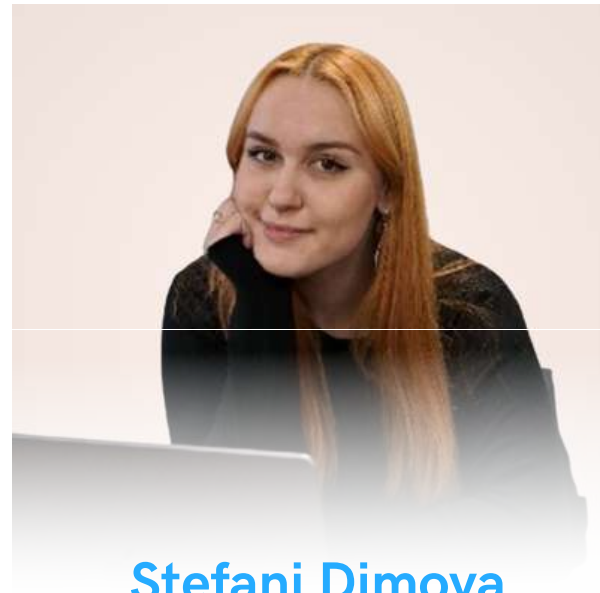
[LinkedIn](#)



Milosh Sokolikj

Programme Manager

[LinkedIn](#)



Stefani Dimova

**Social Media &
Comms Specialist**

[LinkedIn](#)



Ljubica Ruzhinska

Project Coordinator



Kristina Velevska

Project Assistant

[LinkedIn](#)

Innovation for social good



International partners & donors

Supported by:



Pestalozzi Children's Foundation



on the basis of a decision
by the German Bundestag



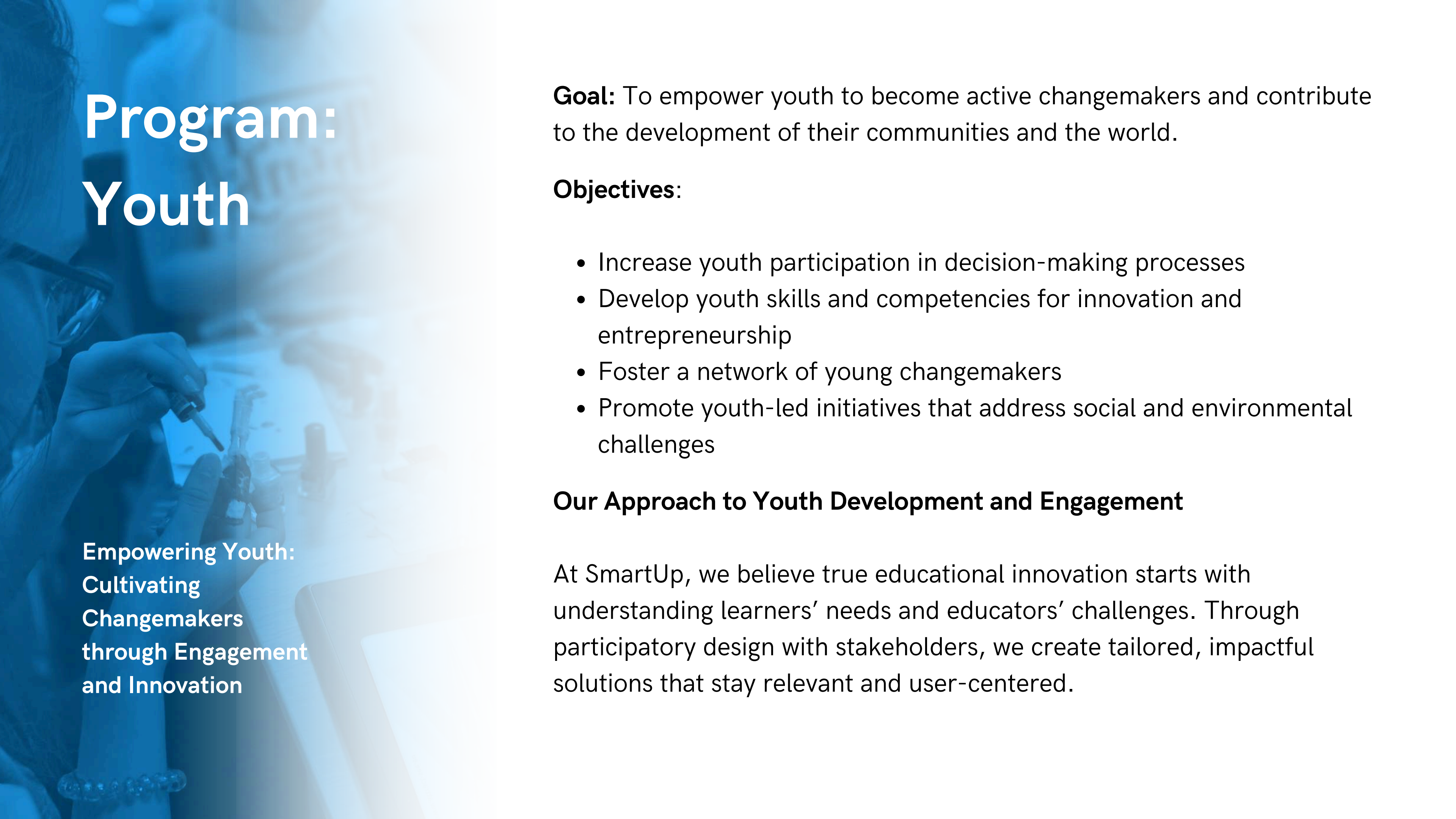
Implemented by



Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation

A photograph of three young women sitting at a table, overlaid with a blue tint. The woman on the left is raising her right hand. The woman in the middle is smiling. The woman on the right is also raising her right hand. On the table are three plastic water bottles with the 'aqua viva' logo, some papers, and a smartphone. The background shows a patterned wall.

YOUTH



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.

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

Nikolco Gosev - President

nikolco.gosev@innovationlab.mk

+389 71 335 141

Milosh Sokolikj - Programme Manager - Public Sector Innovation & Climate Change

milosh@innovationlab.mk

+389 71 231 519

Milena Ignjatova - Programme Manager - Education & Youth

milena.ignjatova@innovationlab.mk

+389 70 798 036

info@innovationlab.mk