



# Transnational Guidelines for Danube Cities

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## Introduction

With the support of Danube Transnational Programme, 12 partners from 7 different countries in the Danube Region have been working together in the framework of NewGenerationSkills Project to upgrade the cooperation of the local actors and to create innovative local support schemes going beyond existing fragmented initiatives through establishing Innovation Labs in each country. Additionally, through the unique Dynamic Learning Package developed by the partners, the youth became skilled to generate new ideas and take the first steps towards Social Innovation. This youth focussed innovation supporting process has ultimately led to better economic performance, lower brain drain and had a positive impact on the quality of the local working environment.

According to the Transnational Innovation Lab methodology developed in the framework of NGS project, Local Innovation labs are conceived as a physical and/or virtual environment for generating, developing and commercializing innovative youth' ideas through relevant trainings, mentoring and technology put at their disposal, following the entrepreneurial pathway. Innovation Labs (ILs) offer community/co-working space and serve as “one-stop shops” for (social) innovation and entrepreneurship support for the youth. In each country with an innovation lab, partners from the private sector, NGOs, academia, government ministries, civil society, and youth co-create solutions for the most pressing challenges facing young people.

This document conceptualizes the process of creating innovation-friendly environments for the youth through setting up ILs and implementing the DLP programme on local level. As such, it codifies the good practices accumulated during the implementation of NGS project and translate them into a transferable format to be taken up by cities and other interested stakeholders. This Guide will benefit those who are planning to start their own Innovation Lab. It is intended to be used by Danube cities, youth-serving practitioners and organizations that wish to design or improve their own youth-focused innovation support schemes. The expectation is that the information provided makes implementing a lab easier, and constitutes a central resource with which the NGS Transnational innovation Lab network can collectively grow and engender an even greater spirit of collaboration.

The first chapter describes the way of how certain barriers in the local community could be identified, how to propose solution for those barriers and ends with general advices to Danube cities of how to be socially innovative and successful. Chapter 2 outlines the necessary steps in understanding and assessing the local services and youth needs in the local community. Chapter 3 provides key components of a successful process of establishing and running the Innovation Labs on local level and covers all necessary elements in this regard: organization, infrastructure, funding and financial planning of IL, marketing and communication, activities, programs and services. Chapter 5 highlight the importance of monitoring and evaluation practices in order to assess whether the program has effectively met its goals in a cost-effective manner. In the chapter 6, necessary elements and activities that need to be considered in order to ensure the sustainability of Innovation Labs are emphasized. The last chapter shows 7 Local Innovation Labs established by the partners of NGS project. Key information, activities, target groups and achievements of Local Innovation Labs are presented.

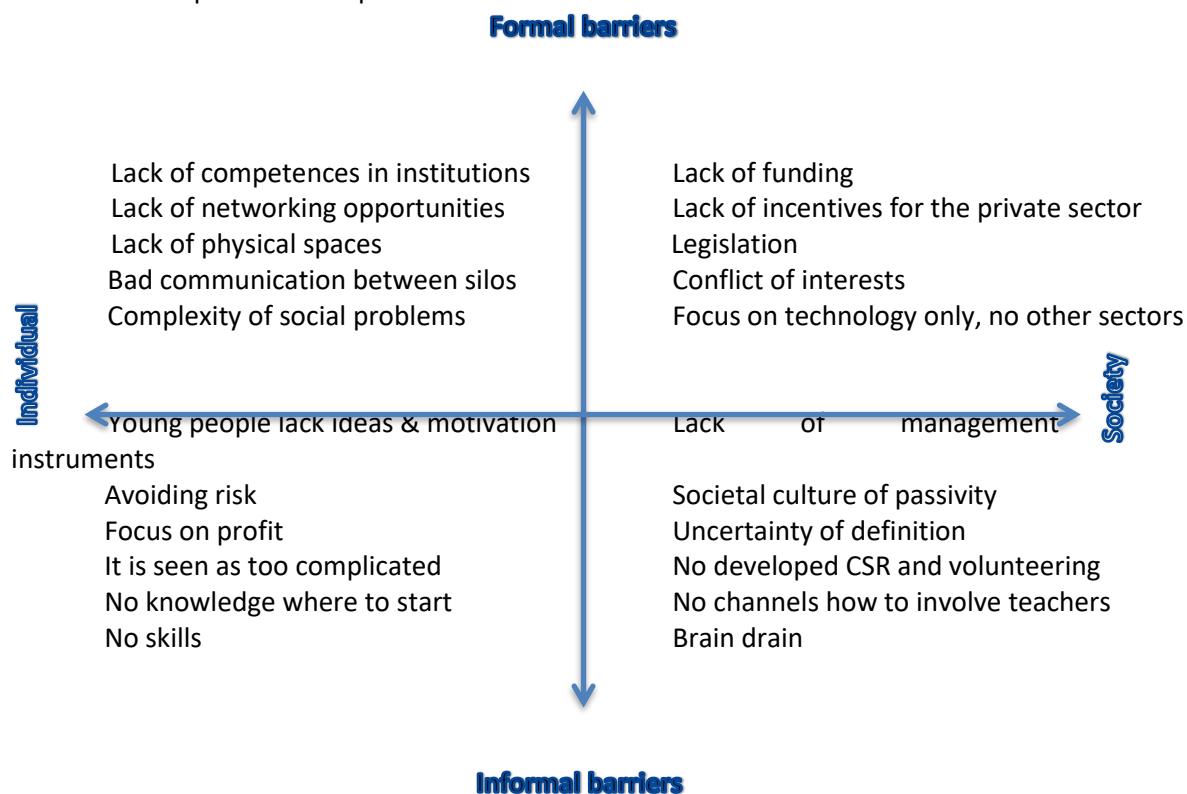
## 1. How to be socially innovative and successful at local level

Although many successful social innovation initiatives have taken place randomly, however social innovation can be also an organised process taken up by local institutions and cities.

This section provides the example of how certain barriers in the local community could be identified and how to propose solution for those barriers. It ends with general advices to Danube cities of how to be socially innovative and successful. It builds upon the result of group discussions from Transnational Expert Workshop held in 2018 within NGS project.

### 1.1. Identification of barriers to social innovation at local level

Certain barriers to social innovation are undoubtedly very present in the Danube Region; otherwise we would witness an explosion of social innovations initiatives across the Danube region. The workshop discussion on the barriers to social innovation resulted in a set of different problems that are presented on a two-axis coordinate system. One axis determines the degree of formality of the barrier. It ranges from formal barrier, which can be changed through policy decisions, to informal barriers, which are defused and relate to issues like personal capabilities and culture. The other axis ranges from barriers related to single individuals to society as a whole. Thus, figure 1 shows structural level and nature of identified barriers to social innovation identified during group discussions within Transnational Expert Workshop.



**Figure 1:** Identified barriers to social innovation in Danube region countries

## 1.2. Identification of possible solutions

Understanding the barriers to social innovation is important from a **policy perspective** since it allows for the identification of potential solutions. Thus the problems in the “Society/Formal barriers” section are new or amended policies that affect society as a whole:

- establishing/testing a local (small-scale) funding program for social innovation;
- initiating legislative amendments to foster social innovation;
- create local incentives for the private sector implementing or supporting social innovation (such as free parking spot, public transport passes);
- policy decisions to diversify social innovation sectors beyond technology.

The “Individual/Formal” area is primarily addressed by trainings, capacity building, new and improved operational models.

The “Individual/Informal” area is targeting individuals and therefore relies on reaching them through different channels; motivational and inspirational events; capacity and skills building; access to relevant networks and funding.

The last sector – “Informal/Society” seems most difficult to address and overcome barriers since you can’t build public trust overnight, nor change organizational culture easily. These barriers take time and are overcome as a result of addressing successfully the other 3 groups.

After identifying barriers and solutions the “reality check”: is this really the right solution for this barrier? should be implemented. In result we had to re-define some of the proposed solutions. For instance the lack of capacity for social innovation in the local public bodies was supposed to be addressed by more trainings for the public servants. However, trainings can indeed broaden the understanding of social innovation but if this means more work for the same individual, it is not effective. It is better to have a special person in charge of fostering social innovation, and this responsibility is part of his/her job description.

Some **general advice to cities how to be socially innovative and successful are:**

- Celebrate success!
- Try to achieve tangible improvements in people’s lives.
- Turn problems into social innovation.
- Utilize properly European competitions like the European Capital of Culture, of Youth, of Sports, of Social Economy. They bring visibility, mobilize resources and can result in some sustainable results.
- Create and use your own competitions in this area.
- Promote young people from NGOs as role models.

Taking into account that advices above are not necessarily convincing to politicians and elected officials, **some major political arguments to use when lobbying for more and better support for social innovation are following:**

- Inactivity today will bring serious damages in the future.
- Help the community to help itself – it is much cheaper than the long-term public programs to address the wicked problems (like unemployment, immigration, housing, environment, etc.)
- Social innovation can keep young people here by giving them opportunity to work and develop and do something meaningful.
- This can give you visibility and growing support (more voters).
- This is a way to stop migration to bigger cities and other countries.

## 2. Understanding and Assessing the Local Services and Youth Needs

### 2.1. Assessment of local innovation ecosystem

The local innovation ecosystem and the existing youth support infrastructures in the local community largely determine the success of future Innovation Lab support programs. Danube region is characterized by a high difference among countries and regions with regard to economic and social prosperity. Most countries of the Danube region are characterised by low innovation performance and by relatively weak innovation and entrepreneurial culture. There is high variation in the youth unemployment rates across the different sub-regions of the Danube Region, consequently, the development gap within the Danube Region is a major challenge for defining a common transnational methodology and future development path.

Understanding the current state of an innovation ecosystem is an important condition for future actions that relate to supporting youth in the local community. Assessing the needs of young people as well as a wider analysis of existing services offered at the local level, including social innovation, is the first step in assessing the need for the establishment of innovation labs and the design of a future program of services that the Innovation Lab will offer. The first step in creating an Innovation Lab is to determine why it is needed, and to identify the current issues or opportunities it could help tackle. It's also important to understand what your innovation capabilities and gaps are – both currently and going forwards – in terms of skills, resources, leadership, impact measurement, and methods.

Initial assessments should determine which community-based organizations provide services for young people and evaluate whether they can add value to the program of future Innovation Lab. When assessing local youth support organizations, the following questions might be considered:

- Which organizations are offering similar youth support programs?
- What type of programs and services are offered?
- To what extent is social entrepreneurship included in existing services?
- What target groups are supported?
- What business models are in place?
- What is the level of support from other organizations to the specific programs and Labs?
- Are programs monitored and evaluated?

The main objective of the assessment analysis is to determine the gap in the provision of services that need to be filled in with the new Innovation lab program. It is important to keep in mind that those existing organizations that provide similar services can be potential stakeholders to support the new initiative. This cooperation is possible through offering complementary services in order to provide full service to youth in the local community.

## 2.2. Definition of aims and target groups of Innovation Lab

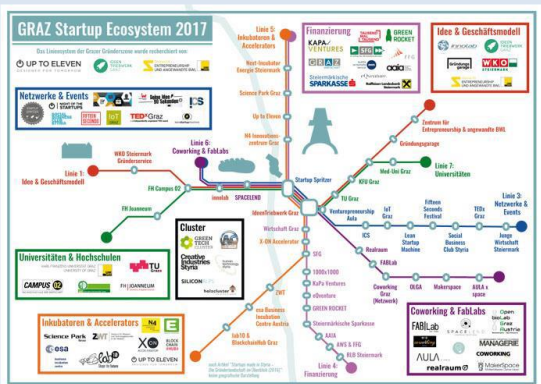
Defining mission and vision statements, as well as goals, is an important starting point for any project idea. The mission and vision statements are an indispensable part of every project program or initiative and they can best be described as a compass and destination of the project respectively.

Knowing how to identify target group is important task since that Innovation Labs can offer various categories of events in order to satisfy youth needs, so doing some research to analyse what advantages ILs can provide and emphasizing the difference of ILs' services should be considered in order to attract more young people. It is important not to combine all youth into one category; each program should identify the intended target populations and group youth according to needs, capacities, experiences, and interests. Youth segments can also be further subdivided according to age, geography, education level, or work experience.

Below is the good example from Graz showing final fields of actions and target groups as a result of initial assessments, the analysis of local community ecosystem and local case study carried out within the framework of NGS project.

**The local youth innovation lab in Graz: "YOUTH INNOVATION SPACE"**  
**Assessment of local innovation ecosystem and the definition of target groups.**

Initial assessments in the City of Graz have shown that there are increasing capacities in the area of young, innovative StartUps, as e.g. Science Park Graz. All universities offer programs in the field of entrepreneurship. Innovation is often linked to technology, less focus on services and social entrepreneurship. There is a lively community also in the direction of services and social entrepreneurship, as e.g. Ideentriebwerk, Annenviertel, Managerie, etc. This community is well networked with Academia, Business and Government (see Ecosystem).



According to the analysis in the Local Case Study Graz and the Local Youth Agenda including Local Action Plans derived from it, the following fields of action and target groups have been prioritized in the framework of Innovation Lab and NGS project:

Field of actions:

- Social entrepreneurship
- Innovative access

- New approaches to the culture of failure

Target groups:

- Young people (15-19)
- Girls and young women
- Highly qualified young non- academics

There is a strong need for special support for pupils, apprentices and non-academics, especially at the beginning of an entrepreneurial career.



### **3. Establishing and running an Innovation Lab**

This section provides guidance on how to move beyond the design phase and to successfully run an Innovation Lab. It provides information on key elements that need to be considered in the process of setting up an Innovation Lab: organization and infrastructure; financial planning and funding; marketing and communication and portfolio of services offered.

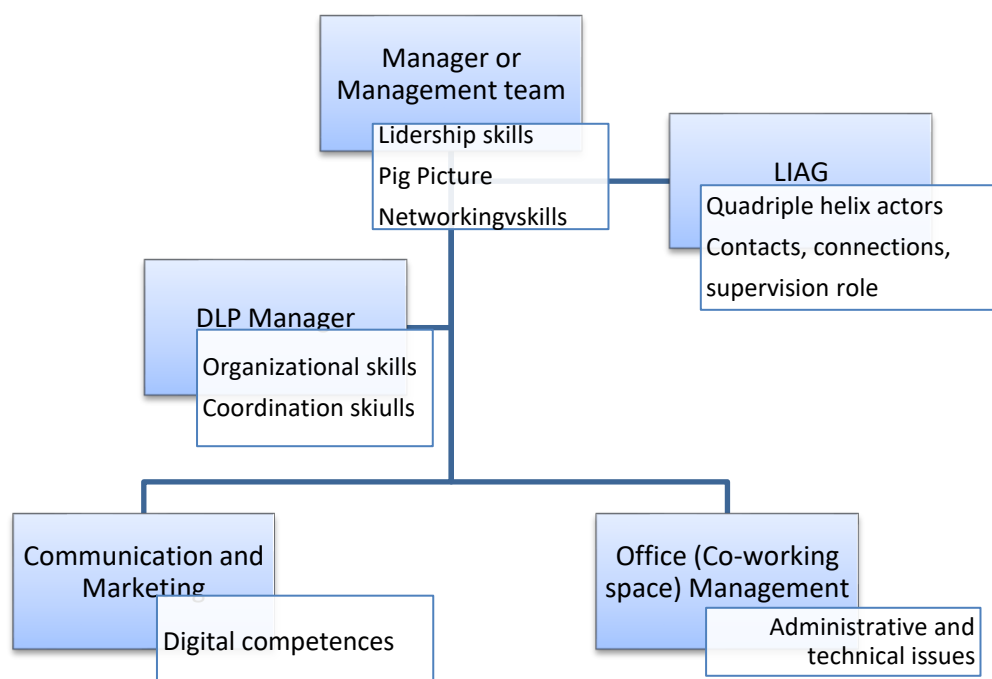
#### **3.1. Organization and Infrastructure**

The governance structure of an Innovation Lab describes the way it is organized and managed at different levels. Innovation labs should be structured and operated in a way to best use the assets available in the local community, and match their level of development. Regarding the ownership of IL, the most usual ownership concepts are the following:

- IL could be the ownership of Municipality or
- It could be set up as network of existing business, social business and innovation support organisations that are not owned by Municipality.

When the Municipality is owner of IL, responsibility for ownership, program management and funding of Innovation Labs can lie with one government or local municipality department; co-owned with more than one department; be totally separated as independent entity founded by the municipality; or independent organization with government funding but independent in setting own agenda.

Usually, Innovation Labs have a small team which includes a managing director, responsible for overall programme management, budget etc. as well as administrative staff and staff involved in lab-process facilitation. Hiring processes are often dependent on ownership and funding structure of the lab. The governance structure of an Innovation Lab presented below describes the way of how Local IL could be organized and managed at different levels. The Organization chart proposed below is the result of group exercise discussions from Transnational Expert workshop organized within the framework of NGS project.



**Figure 2:** Organization chart of the Local Innovation Lab

Innovation Labs should have manager or management team who should create the framework for the provision of the IL services, building on proactive, intensive networking/awareness rising to bring together fragmented services and involve stakeholders to take active role in ILs. Manager or management team should have excellent leadership and networking skills. He/she or they should be local influencers and good communication channels with the local government. Their primary focus should be on fundraising. According to the agenda and work plan of IL and available budget, it should be decided if the manager or management team should be engaged part or full time.

DLP Program manager should be responsible for developing and organizing Dynamic Learning programs and Educational courses. DLP manager should have good organization and coordination skills and be able to find right people (participants and trainers). This function is not necessarily new one, in some cases IL manager and DLP manager could be the same person or be the part of management team.

Local innovation advisory group (LIAG) is external body. LIAG can act as an “advisory board” having regular meetings with the Innovation Lab’s management. As the LIAG is already consisted of quadruple helix actors, they should help IL with providing new contacts, connection as well as in strategic decision making. This body could have supervision role in some cases. LIAG members could help IL with fundraising. Educational, business sector representative and civil sector, involved through the LIAGs should take an active role in the ILs. Moreover, schools and universities, local entrepreneurs, local SMEs or multinationals with existing youth support programmes, youth support organizations, civil organizations, should be all invited/contribute to the local ILs.

In order to conduct daily activities and administrative issues, each IL should have one, two or three persons responsible for administrative work. Their role depends on the volume of work of ILs on daily bases. It is important to emphasize that marketing and communication are crucial for the successful functioning of ILs in order to attract young people and other stakeholders to take part in IL. Accordingly, it is recommended to employ one person who will only deal with marketing and communication. Communication and marketing manager should have excellent digital competences.

Infrastructure refers to the facilities, services, and installations or features required for the operation of an Innovation Lab. Infrastructure of ILs should be chosen depending on the environment in which the Innovation Lab is to be deployed and the objectives which are to be achieved. It should be designed to provide full hardware, software, institutional and scientific support for the proper growth of any good youth initiative that fits the IL course of action. In addition to the successful management team, it turned out within the pilot implementation of Innovation Labs within the NGS project that the location is an important factor for the efficiency of Innovation labs. A well-fitted space might be the key to attracting stakeholders and to develop new and innovative projects. For some labs the “functional space” in which lab processes are developed and conducted is very important, therefore, generating a space which is new and inspiring at the same time can make an important contribution to effective lab-processes.

ILs could be organized as physical infrastructure or virtual infrastructure:

- Physical infrastructure, which is the most common model, refers to entities established through restructuring / redesigning of the existing facilities owned by the municipalities, building, offices and other facilities already built for different purposes which are re-allocated for the use of Innovation Labs. It can also be a completely new entity that is built for the purpose of Innovation Lab, which is much more expensive option.
- Also, Innovation Lab could be organized as coordination body which get together all stakeholders contributors to the development of the simulative environment for business and social innovation created by young entrepreneurs. This means a network/communication channel organized in the form of virtual infrastructure.

The pilot implementations of Innovation Labs within the NGS project has shown that the physical infrastructure in the form of co-working space was the most common organized model that has been shown as very successful in the pilot phase. Physical infrastructure provides a space for various partners and resources to come and work together under a single roof. This allows for person-to-person collaborations like brainstorming sessions, workshops, and skills training. The participatory atmosphere invites partners to join in collective problem solving—and also problem identification—thereby increasing the relevance of solutions to the local community.

## 3.2. Funding and Financial planning of Innovation Lab

At the beginning, each IL should find the way how to cover their fixed cost to operate ILs. Development of the Innovation Lab is especially cost intensive in the first year, therefore the costs of establishing the Innovation Lab must be planned in advance by the IL manager. Based on the experiences from Pilot implementation phase within NGS project, all costs of ILs can be classified into the following categories:

- **Cost of staff** refers to professionals involved in developing and running the lab. Each IL, in order to be efficient, needs professional staff to keep the whole IL running on the right track. Proposed structure of people and functions engaged in the Innovation Lab is given in the Figure 2. The inclusion of volunteers and students in the Innovation Lab's activity is a recommendation. They can reduce personnel costs and increase the efficiency of services delivered.
- **Cost of venue (space)** – hiring and fitting a creative co-working space. A physical space involves overhead like rent, utilities, and maintenance costs. Looking for possible sponsorships from local stakeholders or municipalities could reduce or eliminate this kind of costs. Within the NGS project, the role of local municipalities in providing space for Innovation Labs was crucial. In most cities in the Danube Region, there are unused and abandoned spaces that have the potential to be restructured for the purpose of the Innovation Labs. There are already many examples in Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria and other Danube region countries where during the transition process and de-industrialization, there are a lot of abandoned industrial infrastructure spaces left behind. These spaces have a high potential for reconstruction and repurposing by integrating them into the community.
- **Costs of equipment and facilities maintenance** – The space should be furnished according to the lab needs, by considering the respective equipment needs for office, workshop, and collaborative spaces. Whether IL has its own space or not, there are costs of electricity, furniture, facilities that need to be planned and considered in the planning phase.
- **Cost of communication and network activities** - raising stakeholder's awareness and increasing levels of comprehension for the idea about Innovation Lab. Each IL needs to spread out and to let target group know about it. When promoting events, some activities such as issuing invitations to young people as well as marketing through various advertising channels, should be considered according to the ILs resources. These activities require costs that should be previously planned.

Continuous exploration of business opportunities or expanding of the ranges of services, based on the existing reputation, networks, skilled staff, experience and creative people working in the ILs need to be under permanent consideration of IL management. Intangible assets such as reputation, the number of members, and the benefit of social innovation, collaboration and people's trust should require considerable time to be developed.

If IL builds a good reputation by offering a good service over a long period, it might be possible to, in addition to a basic service which is free of charge, offer services that could be charged e.g. for special projects if more intensive cooperation is agreed with a company. Searching for possible sponsors is essential for events, so knowledge of how to approach the potential sponsors and what advantages sponsors can gain from events is very important. As a result of group discussion within Transnational Expert workshop held in the framework of the NGS project, the following suggestions of possible sources of funding that need to be considered by IL management have emerged:

- Use crowdfunding practice as a form of alternative finance
- Project funding, raised from the EU support programs, national programs which support innovation and entrepreneurship, private and public development agencies, local municipalities and other providers of the financial innovation support
- Attract private funding (from companies that are interested in development in the field of operation; from companies with CSR budget that are looking for activities to support)
- Provide commercial services for others (training programmes and similar, developed and delivered during DLP can be offered also to interested participants outside the IL, like companies,...)
- Involve municipality in indirect financing (like, covering costs for IL manager, etc.)
- Attract public companies as IL (or specific SI initiative) sponsors
- Set up a pub / cafe as a generator of income for IL (opened to the young entrepreneurs)

### 3.3. Marketing and communication

Innovation Labs could use a variety of techniques to reach out to young people and the local communities to inform them about the Innovation Lab's services and activities.

Although NGS partners agreed that it is difficult to reach young people between 15 and 19, pilot implementation phase of 7 Local innovation Labs within the NGS project has resulted in 4 most efficient approaches of reaching young people:

#### 1. ICT-Tools/platforms

- Using existing hubs, online platforms, etc. for communication and campaigning with 15+
- Starting very early, feed target group with information regarding possibilities and success stories
- Using "Chatbot" as a very personalized tool for information, survey and registration -
- Using fab labs as door opener
- Using platforms, e.g. CRM for offers, webinars, matching mentors, success stories, newsletter, etc.

#### 2. Using existing programs

**Innovation Lab FEJS(T)SPEJS in Maribor** started very early, has a program with schools/students 15+. Schools selected students who were accompanied by external mentors/practical experts. The best schools/ideas won a "weekend-camp", where they could intensify their ideas. The best 3

ideas/projects got an award. This is where the program ended and it would be interesting to continue with the contribution of companies.

**Bulgaria** runs a Sport Youth Academy with special focus on vulnerable groups under 19 as Roma, young people with behavioural deficit, etc. where these youngsters should be motivated by a very low threshold approach.

Bulgaria also runs an education fund where young people under 19 act in small projects with the method of peer education – “network-brothers/sisters”.

### **3. Focusing on specific areas of strengths with future potentials**

**Innovation lab YOUTH INNOVATION SPACE in Graz** focusses on existing innovative clusters and matches companies and representatives of these areas of strengths with young people under 19. They contact students in schools, young people in organizations and apprentices, especially girls/women. They initiate a process of information, encouragement and innovative thinking together with these innovative companies/organizations.

The best results are awarded; they win a “Design Thinking Process” to develop their prototype.

### **4. Using the LIAG-network**

**All partners** are using the LIAG-network to disseminate information, raise awareness and reach the target group. Special focus is on young people between 15 and 19 who should be reached via student organizations, community, etc.

## **3.4. Programs and Services**

Innovation Lab represents the “one stop shop” where the potential young innovative people should come and receive the full range of support. As IL has a goal to stimulate and develop (social) innovative ideas and solutions by employing creative potentials of youth, it should be involved in various activities. ILs can provide complementary services, e.g.: organise meetings with experts/successful entrepreneurs who can help to improve and advance ideas; linking to existing enterprise development programmes; match-making between innovative ideas and companies/public services in need of innovation via challenge competitions, hackathons; counselling (e.g. on commercial regulations, intellectual property rights, etc.); networking with innovation stakeholders at local and transnational level etc.

The most common services provided by Local Innovation Labs in the pilot implementation Phase within NGS project are the following:

- **Training and capacity building programs for (Social) innovation and entrepreneurship (DLP);**
  - Training in social innovation, business canvas model, sales, marketing and team building; Training in communication and social media
  - Inspiration talks, lectures and discussions on business successes and failures and needed skills and attitude for success.
- **Networking and meet-ups/community events:**
  - Meetings with experts/ successful entrepreneurs who can help them improve and develop their ideas further

- Networking/Role models: Networking services are offered in form of connecting relevant representatives of the quadruple helix.
- informal networking with refreshments
- **Individual counselling sessions**
- **Individual mentoring, peer to peer reviews**
- **Local promotion/general information** on existing enterprise development programs
- **Providing the co-working space with technical setup**

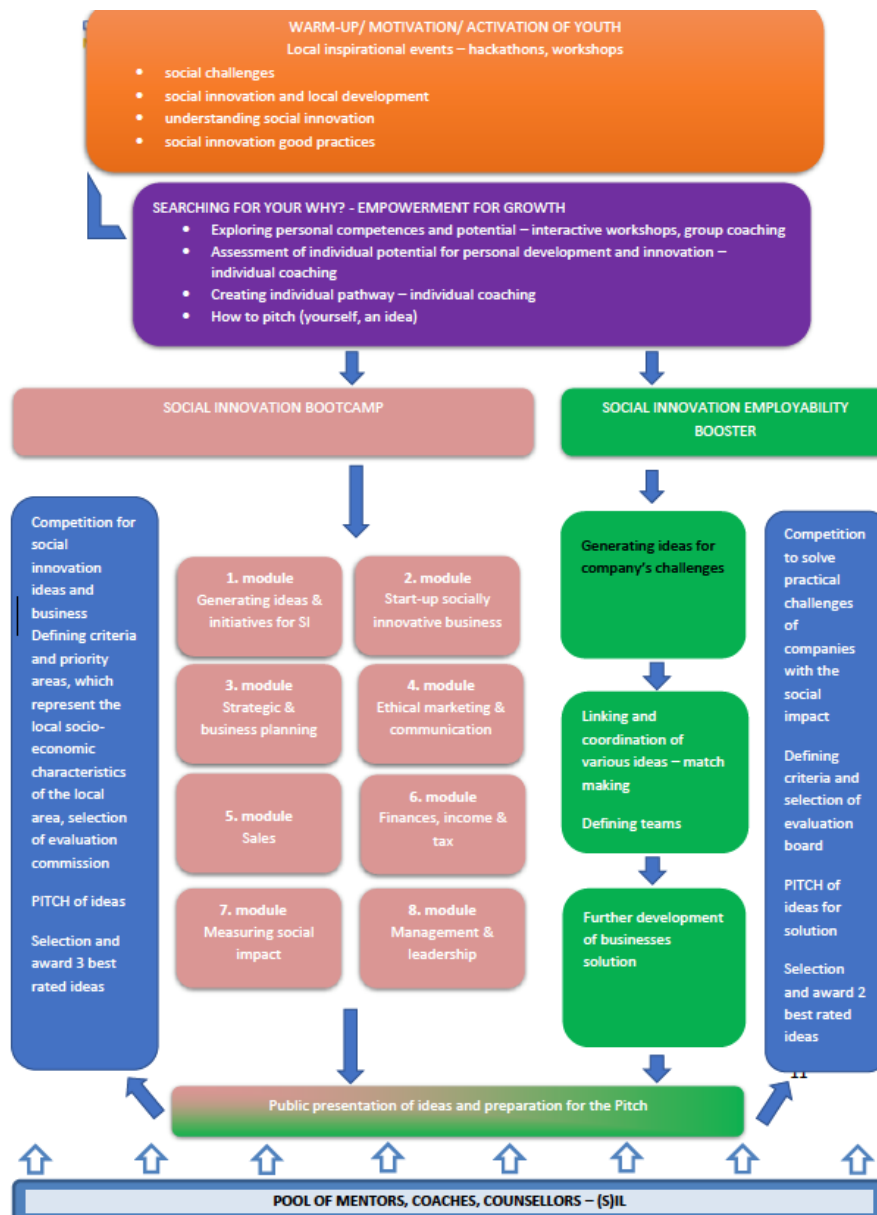
Depending on the previous assessment of the local innovation ecosystem, defined goals and selected target group, Innovation Lab management should define the program framework of the Innovation Lab as well as the additional services provided to young people. Within the NGS project, a Dynamic Learning Package was developed and successfully implemented by Innovation Labs in the pilot phase of the implementation. The next section explains this learning package that could be applied to all other labs in Danube region.

### 3.4.1. Dynamic Learning Package

Dynamic Learning Package (DLP) is transnational learning tool, a modular package that offers young people an education entry point equipping them with 'soft' skills and competences, beyond the curricula of formal education, drives them towards taking initiative and engages in innovation driven entrepreneurship. The tool targets motivated, high potential youth that, if equipped with the right skills, can significantly contribute to innovation and sustainable local growth. DLP is the main part of the Innovation Lab. It helps young people to develop new culture for co-creation of ideas and competences not available in the formal educational system. DLP is a combination of individual/group work, self-learning, using modern digital technology. Trainings are based on hackathons, design thinking, storytelling, prototyping in fab-labs, peer to peer mutual learning, webinars, on site visits of good practices, etc. DLP empower young people to develop ideas for solving practical social challenges and do things differently.

Through the implementation of the DLP training permanent individual and / or group mentoring is organized, which is reasonably upgraded and linked to the contents of the modules/workshops. Mentors are experienced trainers, (social) entrepreneurs, specialized experts on actual topic (creating ideas, social innovation, strategic business planning, pitching). Mentors offer support to young people and give them time to reflect, plan and act as social innovators. Young people learn from the experts how to be more creative, open-minded and how to turn ideas into action.

Based on the pilot implementation of DLP in seven cities in the Danube region, we collected lessons learned that may be considered if transferring the model to your country.





## Step 1: Adapting the DLP programme to your local needs

**DLP helps young people to do things differently.** It offers them time and space to reflect, plan and act in safe and supportive environment. They can share experiences with peers, and find support, learning and insight in return.

Partners adapted the common concept of the DLP shown in above charts to their specific contexts. In doing so, the DLP manager should consider:

- *Who are the target groups and stakeholders, what are their needs and interests?*

**The DLP is flexible, but you should get to know your audience first in order to adapt it.**

The DLP is basically structured around **two main paths**: 1) supporting social innovation as an employability booster and strengthening (social) entrepreneurial spirit and competences; 2) social innovation bootcamp, in which participants get support in developing their (social) innovation business ideas.

For the DLP manager it is important to identify in which direction the DLP modules need to be structured to best fulfil the identified needs of the target groups. In order to do so, he/she will need to present and discuss the DLP with potential clients/stakeholders; e.g. schools, municipalities, employment services, other partners in the social innovation ecosystem and, if possible, get in contact also with potential participants directly.

In the pilot implementation, the partners tried out both paths and developed their own modules strengthening the topics they found most needed. See the two examples:

*DLP Graz focused on two priorities: entrepreneurial education (4 modules), digital competences (4 modules). The programme was flexible, for some groups only some of the modules were implemented, while the entire programme was carried within the apprenticeship programme of the Federal Government of Styria.*

*Sofia Development Associations designed the DLP closely linked to the strategic document of the city on smart specialisation and its main priorities innovation & entrepreneurship. The 4 DLP modules addressed innovation and entrepreneurship in four different sectors: cultural and creative industries, ICT innovation in nuclear energy, social entrepreneurship at local level, innovation in ICT/AI. Each of the DLPs was uniquely adapted to target groups.*

- *Who will deliver the DLP?*

**Trainers should be competent, experienced, inspiring, motivating, engaging, and used to working with the young.**

Trainers, mentors, coaches, advisors are the heart of the DLP implementation, and their selection is an important part of the overall success. In the pilot implementation, the partners used several approaches in establishing trainer teams, mainly depending on how the local DLP was structured and what were the possibilities in terms of finance, availability, expertise, etc. In some cases, a wider range

of trainers were invited (e.g. Budapest, Sofia), while in other cities they decided for a core team consisting of a few qualified trainers (e.g. Maribor, Graz) who led participants through all modules.

As the DLP basic concept is to provide participants with skills and knowledge that usually are not covered well by the formal education programmes, and as the approach is based on learning by doing, a **combination of professional trainers/academia and practitioners from real life businesses** proved very effective.

It is useful to organise an interview before hiring external trainers.

- *How should we plan the DLP timewise?*

The DLP concept has been structured in 3 phases that all should not last more than 6 months: Time to inspire (2 months), Social innovation bootcamp (max. 4 months) and social innovation employability booster (max. 4 months).

The experience of the pilot cities showed that 6 months is quite a long period and that usually the programme can (and should) be planned for a shorter period. As learned, also for the young people the time is precious, and they have to get well organised in order to engage both at school and in DLP.

*Intensive training is better than modules organised every week/month, especially when working with high school students, as they have to travel and get parents' permission. (experience of the DLP Sofia, which focused on social innovation and entrepreneurship)*

The DLP Manager has to discuss with trainers and mentors on how to best balance the overall duration in order to give sufficient time for reflection on the topics and the work to be done on business ideas between the modules. This is very important for the Social innovation bootcamp; in a few cases the business ideas were quite complex and demanding and it was not possible to finalise them in time. The DLP manager should plan for additional support of the IL services if such cases occur. It is also possible that DLP is organized in part or as a complementary programme aiming at raising awareness of stakeholders, in that case it can be organised in more concentrated and less intensive way.

- *How can we create synergies with other IL services and wider social innovation ecosystem?*

DLP is considered an essential element of the IL services and its implementation should be coordinated in a way to provide the participants the best range and quality of support needed.

The DLP manager should pro-actively cooperate also with a wider network of (social) innovation and (social) entrepreneurship support ecosystem in order to:

- To promote DLP and identify opportunities for its implementation for different target groups included in the existing projects, programmes and initiatives;
- Identify potential trainers or good practices worth presenting in DLP Time to inspire phase;
- Identify local challenges where the DLP learning tool could provide possible solutions;
- Look for systemic solutions to be able to include in the DLP/IL as many potential (social) entrepreneurs as possible.

## Step 2: Developing DLP modules

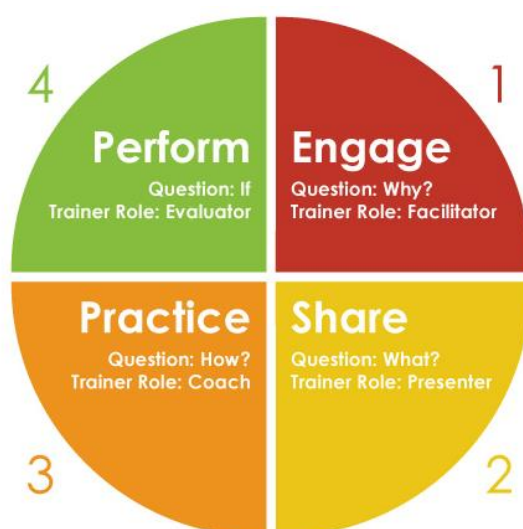
DLP learning tool adapted to your needs in Step 1 should now be ready for a detailed planning of each module. Your pool of trainers will likely combine professional trainers, teachers, but also persons who are specialists in specific field but may be less experienced in teaching, facilitation or mentoring. The DLP manager should provide the trainers and mentors with a brief description of the entire DLP and its overall objectives, the target groups and their specific needs and training objectives, and basic contents that should be addressed. Trainers however should be free to design the presentations and decide on working methods and use of the materials during implementation (e.g. life cases, learning tools, apps, etc.). In this section we present some good practices that the DLP manager and the pool of trainers can use in developing learning logs and training materials.

In case there are several trainers engaged, the DLP manager should coordinate them in order to create proper linkages between the modules and that topics are not repeated but complemented and synergies created. Depending on the design and needs, the DLP can be stretched over a longer period of time, in which participants/teams work on their own and are supported by mentors or coaches. The DLP manager or somebody else should act as contact person and be responsible for coordinating the entire process.

### - *How should a trainer structure a session?*

The trainer should structure the lectures and presentations in a way to make the learning process effective and efficient. Complex topics should be divided into smaller chunks so that participants can process the information, use practical examples, initiate discussion, let participants try things out, etc.

A good trainer should also consider that people have different learning styles. The 4MAT model can be very helpful in structuring the learning session in a way to integrate different learning styles in a sequence that follows the natural cycle of learning.



Starting from one and moving around to four, answering the key question of each style:

- **Why?** The Imaginative Learner demands to know why he or she should be involved in this activity.
- **What?** The Abstract Sequential learner wants to know what to learn.
- **How?** The Concrete Sequential learner wants to know how to apply the learning.
- **If? / What if?** The Abstract Random learner asks, if this is correct how can I modify it to make it work for me.

For a detailed planning, a simple learning log or a screenplay can be produced:

Indicative time	Topic	Description (method)	Trainer activity	Participant activity	Materials needed
20 min	Introduction of participants	Two Truths and a Tale	Gives instructions: Each person must make 3 statements about themselves, one of which is untrue. Give some time to think and write them down if needed. Facilitate presentations.	Once one person makes their statements, the rest of the group must guess, or vote on, which statement is the tale.	none

- *What were the most common methods of work with young participants in the pilot implementation?*

The DLP should be designed in an interactive way, allowing opportunities for individual work, group work, peer to peer learning, ... Most common methods of work with participants were: short lectures and presentations, discussion in small or larger groups (usually following the presentations to allow participants to share views, experience or deal with answers to questions, discuss solutions to identified challenges etc.); work in pairs, groups, individually (e.g. analysing cases, life-like examples, developing ideas, etc.), mentoring and coaching (group or individual), peer to peer learning (exchange of experience, knowledge among participants' teams; team building (indoor and outdoor team building exercises or events); networking (organization of community events with various stakeholder, or leaving some time and space for networking after trainings; informal personal conversation (among participants and trainers, often participants ask questions during breaks); and others.

Participants have often highlighted in their feedback forms that they liked **working in groups**, learning about practical examples, meeting the young entrepreneurs, and above all, they appreciated **individual mentoring and advise**.

In most cases the trainers also used **digital tools to make the sessions interactive**, ranging from interactive quizzes (using applications) to more advanced ones, especially during the development of business ideas.

- *How to design the Time to inspire – warming up events?*

Here we would like to highlight the importance of careful planning the **Time to inspire - warming up/motivational events**, which are decisive in terms of inspiring and further engaging potential participants to training. Depending on the situation, some cities organised a series of events in order to recruit sufficient number of participants to DLP, other used direct approach to closed groups (e.g. within institutions, schools, etc.).

Inspirational events were very successful especially in cities that invited young entrepreneurs from local environment or those living as digital nomads outside country and who succeeded in their business and were willing to share their stories with the audience. It was important to select young role models to strengthen the idea that things were possible.

*In Budapest, organisers developed a module titled “Freelancers’ world”, in which young start-ups who can be described as dream achievers introduced themselves, either face to face or online.*

*“Although the programme has been stretching beyond the planned timeline, the students’ attention did not fade. Furthermore, at the end almost all students stayed one hour longer in order to ask questions and to join informal discussion on the topic” (presenter’s summary, DLP Monitoring report)*

*In Liberec, the first module titled “2getinspired” was carried out by two mentors and three entrepreneurs engaged in 3D printing, IOT and robotics who presented their successes and failures in business.*

#### - *How to approach specific topics?*

The transnational DLP concept already identified particular methods that can be used for training in specific modules. Among most used methods were the following:

- **Personality, skills assessment, values, interest:** Identity board game, DISC test, skills assessment tests, spider web;
- **Teamwork, group dynamics:** Marshmallow tower
- **Efficient learning environment:** Eisenhower matrix, Cornell note-taking method, visualisation, memory techniques, Feynman-technique, ‘last minute’ learning,
- **Identifying problems, idea generation and project/business strategy and product development:** mind mapping, brainstorming at individual and group level, brainwriting, brain-walking, prioritising ideas based on criteria, Business Model Canvas, Design Thinking method (e.g. Wallet challenge, Persona model), Service Design Thinking methodology, De Bono Six Thinking Hats model, product pyramid, SWOT analysis, Gantt Chart, 4P, strategy maps, Five Forces model, product life cycle - BCG matrix, Ansoff matrix, ...
- **Measuring social impact:** Social Accounts, ...

Apart from above, some more complex methods/approaches can be used, such as hackathons, pitching events, ... These however require more organisational efforts.

Here we present few examples of how specific topics were addressed in the pilot implementation, ranging from simple to more complex designs:

*Explaining the concept of social economy, social entrepreneurship and social innovation:*

- **Graz:** Module 1 covered the following themes: \* Basic understanding of social innovation and social entrepreneurship \* Characteristic of social innovation and social entrepreneurship based on good practice \* Personal strengths and interests related to social innovation and social entrepreneurship \* idea collection on social challenges and untapped potentials

Step 1: Speed dating (3 questions, creation of one joint poster with participants' post-its)

What do you associate with the term 'Company'?

What do you associate with the term 'Creativity'?

What do you associate with the term 'Strengths/Talents'?

Step 2: Presentation 'Social innovation – social business' by the trainer

Step 3: Idea generation in groups of 4-5 students – use of brainwriting, brainwalking:

Question: What social challenges from your environment do you know? Where do you see/recognised unused possibilities?

Step 4: Idea selection - Which idea is the most interesting to you?

Step 5: The first idea outline – the teams think about more detailed facts concerning their preferred idea

Step 6: summary and feedback.

#### **Identifying problems of our city/society:**

- **Cluj:** a city tour bus was organised for participants, participants used mobile app Menti.com to identify and collect information, mind-mapping method was used to identify problems and finding solutions
- **Maribor:** interactive session consisting of several steps –
  - Step 1: In what city do I want to live? What is the dream Maribor? (participants share their vision in the whole group)
  - Step 2: What is good in Maribor? (work in pairs, write on post-its, reporting to the group, post-its placed on a flipchart)
  - Step 3: What would you like to change in Maribor? What does the city need? (group formation of 3-4, select 3 main challenges as a group, record them on a paper, papers are displayed)
  - Step 4: participants prioritise challenges they would like to further work with on generating ideas for solutions)

#### **The art of pitching:**

- **Belgrade:**
  - Step 1: Introduction to pitching (why pitching, overcoming the fear of public, the art of pitching: intro, timing, problem, solution, market, competition, team, finance)
  - Step 2: participants prepared and pitched their ideas in a 5+3 format (pitch plus questions & answers)
  - Step 3: Pitching event (determining the order of pitching, pitching, decision making, announcing the winner, networking)
- **Maribor:**
  - Step 1: each participant presented own idea in 3 minutes, the other participants provided feedback. Presentation followed the structure: \* What is the problem that we solve? \* For whom do we solve this problem? \* What is the solution? \* What changes does the solution bring? Feedback provided in a form 'plus-minus-plus': \* What was good about the presentation? \*Where is the place for improvement? \*Conclude with one positive rating.
  - Step 2: Open space – discussion about presentation of ideas or pitching

*Elements of pitching: \* What is the context? \* For whom do we have a pitch? \* What time is available (30 seconds, 3 minutes, 10 minutes) \* What is the potential outcome we are targeting? \* Conclusion – return to the starting point – what do you aim to do.*

*What are investors' interests?*

1. IDEA – why, personal story;
2. BUSINESS MODEL – mechanism for the realisation of the idea;
3. CUSTOMERS, USERS: who are they, what do we know about them;
4. TEAM, sources.

*Task: define your 30-second pitch based on the given structure.*

### ***Innovation and entrepreneurs in ICT and nuclear science***

#### ***Sofia:***

*Day 1: introduction, importance of physics and nuclear science in people's lives, being an entrepreneur in the field of nuclear technology, business modelling, communication, networking and team work;*

*Day 2: Programme Competition - Hackathon 'Digital technologies in nuclear science and engineering' (presentation of the rules, team work on project development, presentation of the ideas to the jury);*

*Day 3: Mentorship programme / Electronic communication with and further developing of the project ideas);*

*Day 4: Practice programme (visit of the nuclear power plant, presentation of the project ideas and discussion with the employees).*

When designing the modules, it is worth **cross-checking** the following:

- Were the most relevant themes properly addressed? Particular attention should be given to highlighting the concepts of social economy, social innovation and social entrepreneurship.
- Have we got a good balance of theory and practice?
- Is there a balanced mix of work methods allowing sufficient interactivity between participants and trainers and between participants themselves?
- Have we planned enough time for individual counselling and mentoring?

### **Step 3: Implementation**

#### ***Organising the venue***

If possible, the DLP should be organised in an environment that provides possibilities for various types of setting, like working in groups, circles, etc. You may use the walls or tables to display posters made by participants, etc.

Before starting a session, make sure that all equipment is in place and working. This is particularly important if you make online connections with people at other locations.

#### ***Starting the modules / sessions***



As for every event, the first minutes are important in terms of **establishing rapport** with the audience. There are many materials related to ice-breakers available which you may use or create on your own. However one should take into account how familiar the participants are with each other that you make them more comfortable after the icebreaker and not achieving the opposite effect. The DLP manager can be the person connecting the participants with trainers and mentors at start.

Although the trainers will have received information on target groups, their needs and interests, it is useful to use the warming up time aiming at getting to know each other also for a brief screening of participants knowledge and experience.

In practice you may find **groups with different levels of knowledge** and it is good to think about strategies of how such challenges can be addressed during the session not to make frustrations on the part of participants or trainer (e.g. peer to peer learning, dividing the teams to different levels, etc.). The trainer should adapt the dynamics and pace of learning to the identified needs, what means taking more time for topics that appear less clear to participants, shorten time for topics that are already familiar or less relevant at the moment, ...

Analysis of the participants feedback showed that participants appreciated time for **informal conversation, individual advice, mentoring & coaching, and networking**. When possible, allocate some time also for this type of activities.

#### **Step 4: Monitoring and evaluation of DLP**

Monitoring and receiving feedback are very important:

- For trainers to receive information on how participants perceived the session, to learn about possible improvements, further needs;
- For organisers to learn about how well all the logistics was organised, what can be improved, etc.
- Both the trainers and organizers are interested in how much the level of knowledge has increased by participants.

The DLP manager has several options of how to organise collection and use of this information:

- Using standardised feedback forms after each module - one set of questions should refer to self- assessing the level of specific knowledge and skills before and after the module;
- Allocate some time at the end of the session/module for a group reflection on what worked well, what could be improved;
- Organise a workshop/focus group with trainers to discuss improvements, changes, etc.

For each IL manager/DLP manager it is also of a great interest to monitor results in terms of what happened to participants and their (social) business ideas after completion of DLP. Therefore, it is important to keep contacts with participants and follow-up on their careers.

For a more comprehensive analysis of short-term results, a dedicated evaluation can be organised.



## 4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the Innovation Lab program is very important to identify successes and challenges and to assess whether the IL has effectively met its goals in order to enable IL management to make the right decisions and create higher quality programs and services in the future.

Monitoring involves continuous tracking of innovation lab activities, through recording and updating of data and regular reporting. It is a constant process, which includes the collection and storage of data, their analysis and reporting on the realized programs and services of the Innovation Lab. In the process of developing new programs, it is important to define what exactly needs to be measured and monitored to determine if the program is successful. Indicators determine whether desired levels of inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes are being met. Indicators should satisfy the commonly used smart format:<sup>1</sup>

<b>Specific</b> - To measure the information required as closely as possible
<b>Measurable</b> - To ensure that the information needed can be readily obtained
<b>Attributable</b> - To confirm that each measure is linked to the program's overarching objectives
<b>Realistic</b> - To guarantee that the data can be obtained in a timely fashion, and at a reasonable cost
<b>Targeted</b> - To ensure the intended population is acquiring the necessary skills and training

Evaluation is a periodic assessment of targeted results related to the Innovation Lab programs based on data collected through the monitoring process. It is a process of measuring the achieved results, efficiency and impact of the implemented activities on the set Innovation Lab goals. It can identify both positive and negative effects of activities and interventions undertaken during the implementation of Innovation Lab activities in some period of time. Some of the most frequent types of outputs tracked within Innovation Labs are:

- The number of youth enrolled in the program
- Number of youth completing the training program
- Reasons for dropping out
- Number of additional services provided
- Number of youth utilizing support services during and after the program
- etc...

The useful sample of indicators used for monitoring and evaluation purpose is provided in the table below.

**Table 1:** Logic of intervention and indicators:

<sup>1</sup> Information on the SMART format is from: International Youth Foundation, Project Design & Proposal Writing: A Guide to Mainstreaming Reproductive Health into Youth Development Programs, p. 24-25, <http://library.iyfn.org/library/project-design-proposal-writing-guide-mainstreamingreproductive-health-youth-development>.

### Innovation Lab Program: Mentoring scheme

**Specific objective:** Providing mentoring support to young entrepreneurs in the field of social innovation

**Input indicators:** financial, staff, other resources allocated  
e.g. **number of mentors deployed**

**Output indicators** which quantify the implemented measures  
e.g. **number of youth benefited from mentoring scheme**

**Result indicators** which are measuring expected changes  
e.g. **Number of youth implementing their own social innovation idea**

In order to make the evaluation of Innovation Lab programs possible, it is necessary to organize a process of monitoring of IL programs in an efficient way. This includes data gathering and tracking in a consistent manner. IL management must ensure that the information is collected and recorded properly throughout the implementation of IL activities within defined period of time. If IL management doesn't have capacity to organize data collection and monitoring in a proper way or doesn't have experience to do so, it is recommended to consult experienced evaluators on a local level.

Evaluation assessments are based on two types of data gatherings:

- Qualitative – provide an understanding of the way people think and behave. Qualitative methods seek to understand events from stakeholder perspectives in order to analyze how different groups of people interpret their experiences and construct reality. Common examples include focus groups, interviews, etc.
- Quantitative – use statistical data to reach an objective assessment of a situation. Common examples include surveys, questionnaires, tests etc.

Indicators for measuring the success of the IL program, followed by a monitoring system which implies the process of data collection, should be determined by the objectives of the programs that are defined as well as the resources that are available. IL management must define framework for evaluation and monitoring system before the start of IL operating programs.

## 5. How to be sustainable

Durability of the IL could be defined as the ability of an IL to perform its required function over a lengthy period under normal conditions of operations and/or to be able to last a long time without becoming redundant and therefore closed. Sustainability of IL is the ability to continue its mission or program far into the future. All projects or programs have to end eventually, but the IL results impact should continue. Sponsors and donors usually want to see how the IL and its impact will outlive their direct involvement in the IL.

Innovation Lab should be permanent entity which durability is connected to the capacity of its members - the actors in the innovation eco system. Therefore, it is recommended to involve as much as possible quadruple-helix representatives, which have an influence to the economic mainstream. Each local environment is dominantly marked by one or a few actors either ICT cluster of small companies or big multinational company, or Agro cluster, University, etc. IL could rely dominantly on one of the most powerful actor – innovation leader or combine equally all of them or majority of them.

Pilot implementation phase of 7 Local Innovation Labs operated within the framework of NGS project has shown that in order to ensure the long duration of innovation labs, it is necessary to pay attention to several very important elements of sustainability. According to the experiences from NGS project, the most important factors for ensuring sustainability could be summarized into the following suggestions:

- IL should be independent but connected/have good cooperation with local authority / municipality (e.g. municipality representative is one member of IL programme committee, mentor in the IL, etc.)
- Involve key stakeholders. Another major step to ensure sustainability is the involvement and participation of key stakeholders in IL program development. Cooperation with academia world (universities, faculties,...) as a knowledge and support provider is important. ILs are focused to the development of the innovative entrepreneurial ideas of young people with the commercial potential and this focus actually determines the list of stakeholders interested in supporting it and make it sustainable at the mutual benefit basis.
- Use funds/surpluses for further development of IL (continuous development). The most important aspect of sustainability is to diversify sponsor base and to develop long term partnerships with sponsors to support IL.
- Renting the free space of IL (co-working space, room for training, events,...). The subsidized space provided by the municipality is the important factor of the overall sustainability of ILs. Institutional support could be provided by other stakeholders like regional and national development agencies and other organizations and business and innovation support organizations.
- Attract public companies as »providers« of social challenges (which they are facing while carrying out the public services). Besides the initial funding, public sector support is crucial in communication with other local institutions such as schools, employment offices etc. helping the IL to integrate better in the local eco system.

- Emphasis on communication and marketing activities. Develop a strong communication strategy so that IL results can be shared with a large audience. Well documented results can help in getting support from a range of stakeholders and donors. There is a huge range of the marketing activities to attract potential sponsors from the business sector to support ILs. It is very important to rise the public awareness on ILs at the regular basis with the aim to attract the support from different stakeholders and involve them into the innovation eco system.
- “Alumni” support - participants who benefitted from the IL services become active alumni, offering in turn their support to the community and participants. Alumni could be asked to share their stories and career trajectories, share new business ethic and perform mentorship duties to new and incoming members.

## 6. Good practices: Profiles of Innovation Labs established within NGS project

This chapter provides the profile of 7 Local innovation Labs set up in the framework of NGS project. Main information and short description, target groups, services offered and achievement are presented so it refers to experiences accumulated in the Pilot implementation phase of NGS project.

### 6.1. The Sofia Lab

#### **The Sofia Lab, Sofia**

**Address:** Serdika street, in the Serdika branch of Sofia Library

**Website:** [www.facebook.com/sofiabdsda](https://www.facebook.com/sofiabdsda)

**Email:** [office@sofia-da.eu](mailto:office@sofia-da.eu)

#### **Main information**

The Sofia Lab, set up in the framework of NGS project, is located in the city center of Sofia, on the 3rd floor of №1 Serdika street, in the Serdika branch of Sofia Library. The space is 150 sq. m. The hall can easily be transformed according to the wishes of the organizer and the type of the event. There are chairs (30 folding chairs, 10 conference chairs, 7 chair type "armchair", 2 puffs and 1 hanging chair) and tables (8 tables (1.20 m to 0.80 m.), 18 personal tables / folding desks, 2 personal desks, 8 tables (1.10 m to 0.90 m.)), flipchart, 6 sq.m. yellow writing wall and hot and cold water machine (Crystal Water Laguna system). As technical equipment IL possess Logitech Video Conferencing System, a smart board (65 'touch screen monitor), a LED screen connected with it by HDMI cable and 5 laptops.

The primary objective of The Sofia Lab as 'One Stop Shop' is to support the local youth in their (social) innovative ventures mainly in two prioritised fields – ICT and CCI, but also building entrepreneurial capacity and skills.

#### **Target groups**

The most common participants of the IL programs are young people at the age of 15 to 29 years old. They are students or working people in the field of IT, social entrepreneurship and public sector. Young people of Sofia seem to be very interested in integration of people from different nationalities and devoted to volunteering.

#### **Services offered**

There are two main priorities that are supported by the Sofia Lab and which are in accordance with the strategic documents of the city of Sofia:

1. Innovations in ICT and
2. Innovations in Cultural and Creative Industries.

Sofia Lab tested the following services since its launch in September 2018:

- training and capacity building programs for innovations and entrepreneurship (DLP);
- innovation competitions;
- networking and meet-ups/community events;
- business counselling and mentorship;
- co-design and co-working
- research and data collection.

Events in the field of Information Technologies, hackathons and workshops with this topic are of great interest. Events in the field of social entrepreneurship are very popular as well.

#### **Achievements**

The SDA and Sofia municipality tested a set of services offered by the Lab which are helping the youth in developing and putting in practice their ideas, but also create networks.

Since its launch in September 2018, Sofia Lab hosted more than 100 events and welcomed **more than 2500 participants**.

New partnerships were established. The various events were organized by SDA, Sofia Municipality or in partnership with different organizations (academia, NGOs, international organizations, businesses).

The Sofia lab received its first donation from business – 2 Lego robots that will be further used to teach teachers and students to code.

## 6.2. TheLab, Cluj

### **TheLAB, Cluj**

**Website:** [www.thelabcluj.ro](http://www.thelabcluj.ro)

**Email:** [hello@thelabcluj.ro](mailto:hello@thelabcluj.ro)

#### **Main information**

The Social Innovation Lab, powered by NGS project, was set up in Cluj-Napoca as a functional laboratory for the youngsters identified as target group in the project. TheLAB has been set up in the campus of the University of Agricultural Science and Veterinary Medicine, after getting the approval of the University's senate. Parts of the equipment have already been included (3D printer, 3D scanner, video conference system etc), still, some furniture and small electronics was purchased from the NGS project budget. TheLAB functions under the Cluj Metropolitan Area (CMA), but not as a different juridical entity, and it will be managed by the CMA. The IL program are in line with the action plan and the DLP. The visual identity of TheLAB was established in January 2018.

The main objective of TheLAB is to support youngsters in learning from others entrepreneurial experiences and providing them additional support in putting their ideas into practice.

#### **Target groups**

The main participants have been students, with a good rate of retention. One of the reasons for participants to drop out was scheduling the modules during the weekend, which did not encourage them to attend. As of then, IL management have scheduled the events during the weekdays and tried to find interesting topics, giving the opportunity to the students to choose themselves the type, calendar and the subject of the next modules.

#### **Services offered**

The services provided so far refer to:

- Meetings with experts/ successful entrepreneurs who can help them improve and develop their ideas further;
- Information regarding various existing enterprise development programs;
- Networking with innovation stakeholders at local and transnational level;
- Training in social innovation, business canvas model, sales, marketing and team building;

- Training in nutrition and healthy-life promoter/entrepreneur;
- Training in communication and social media

As the government has several programs in the field of start-up financing, TheLAB have tried to offer complementary services.

#### Achievements

The number of the attendees at the implementation modules was 342 + online presence. Participants have been very satisfied and retention rate was on a very high level.

### 6.3. Innovation Lab “YOUTH INNOVATION SPACE”, Graz

#### Innovation Lab “YOUTH INNOVATION SPACE”, Graz

**Address:** IBOBB Café

**Website:** [www.nowa.at](http://www.nowa.at)

**Email:** [eva.janusch@nowa.at](mailto:eva.janusch@nowa.at)

#### Main information

The local youth innovation lab in Graz, set up in the framework of NGS project, called “YOUTH INNOVATION SPACE” and integrated as an additional offer in the IBOBB Café, will succeed in encouraging and empowering young people to identify innovation and (social) entrepreneurialism as a career opportunity, both to start a startup business and as a part of a company to act innovatively (intrapreneurship).

The implementation process started at the beginning of 2018 in close cooperation and commitment with the relevant departments of the City of Graz (Departments for Education and Integration, Women & Equality and Economy and Tourism).

#### Target groups

According to the analysis in the Local Case Study Graz and the Local Youth Agenda including Local Action Plans derived from it, the following fields of action and target groups are prioritized in the framework of the project. There is a strong need for special support for pupils, apprentices and non-academics, especially at the beginning of an entrepreneurial career.

- Young people (15-19)
- Girls and young women
- Highly qualified young non-academics

#### Services offered

The IBOBB cafe offers extensive information on education and training as a one stop shop and is now being expanded by including the topic of social innovation and social entrepreneurship through the Youth Innovation Space. Due to the existing Ecosystem Graz, the priority of the Youth Innovation Space Graz is concrete awareness-raising:

- **Local promotion/general information:** Information about meetings and workshops with successful entrepreneurs is available or posted via social media channels. During regular information workshops about education and training the opportunity to start your own company with your great idea is also core-issue.
- **Innovation discourses/Marketplaces/Excursion:** Information about companies, best practices, role models are available in a very practical way. Young people get the chance

for direct exchange. The opportunity to start their own company with their great idea is here also core-issue.

- **Coaching:** Young people who have developed enthusiasm from the first workshops and who want to work with creative approaches in their ideas and want to go the way to start their own company receive a coach from the StartUp Ecosystem Graz. A pool of professional experts for specific topics is provided (e.g. marketing, product/services development, financial issues).
- **Networking/Role models:** Networking services are offered in form of connecting relevant responsible persons of the Ecosystem Graz considering the quadruple helix.
- **Assuring sustainability:** With a resource-oriented alignment of the service (specifically to fill the gaps between the existing ecosystem and not on more of the same), the offer can continue beyond the project term.

#### Achievements

Briefly summarized what has been achieved in working together with young people:

- Strong awareness that innovation and entrepreneurship also includes services and creative businesses was created and the term “social entrepreneurship” was clarified.
- Good practices and role models were identified and lead to entrepreneurial behaviour with a special emphasis on women.
- A discussion about potentials and an integrated culture of failure was initiated.
- Young people – women, young agers, non-academics – were empowered and encouraged, to identify (social) innovation and (social) entrepreneurship as a career option to run a startup as well as being part of a company (intrapreneurship).

A sustainable continuation through the IBOBB Café is planned and is welcomed and confirmed by all, the extent depends on the resources available.

## 6.4. Innovation Lab FEJS(T)SPEJS, Maribor

### Innovation Lab FEJS(T)SPEJS, Maribor

**Address:** Tkalski prehod 4, Maribor

**Website:** [www.facebook.com/fejstspejs](http://www.facebook.com/fejstspejs)

**Email:** [a.brodnjak@fundacija-prizma.si](mailto:a.brodnjak@fundacija-prizma.si)

#### Main information

Innovation Lab FEJS(T)SPEJS, set up in the framework of NGS project, is located in the centre of Maribor in the ground floor of the building owned by Maribor Municipality that was empty for more than a year. This public (municipal) space with 107 sq.m. and 2 additional multipurpose rooms (23 and 19 sq.m) that could be used as small seminar rooms, rooms for individual mentoring etc. is reallocated for the purpose of Innovation Lab. IL Space is equipped with furniture, notebooks, free wi-fi, cafe & snacks machines, projection screen, projector, air condition, board games and other equipment needed for implementation of the FEJS(T)SPEJS portfolio. The FEJS(T)SPEJS offers 20-25 workstations that could be easily rearranged and adjusted to different activities (individual work, team work, conference space, etc.) or to the number of visitors/participants.

#### Target groups



The most common participants of IL programs are secondary school students. Participants are diverse: secondary school students, faculty students, unemployed youth and, with the help of DLP program at the end of it, also self-employed ones.

Despite the smaller number of participants, it is positive that they regularly and actively participate and have an interest in social entrepreneurship. They also attend other events with similar content organized in Fejstspejs, e.g. creative workshops. Overall young participants expect short, interactive programs with an attractive award(s).

#### Services offered

Innovation Lab FEJS(T)SPEJS offers networking events, co-working space, community management events, networking and knowledge transfer workshops.

IL got the best positive feedback from programs that included social innovation and entrepreneurship. So far, the best outcome came from:

- interactive methods,
- informal networking with refreshments (catering),
- public debates (through social media).

#### Achievements

Approximately 385 young people and representatives of youth organizations as well as local authorities and social entrepreneurs participated at the events.

Till May 2019 Innovation Lab FEJS(T)SPEJS carried out 6 Social innovation bootcamps in a frame of Dynamic Learning Program and “pitching” for youth participant of bootcamp. It is a combination of workshops, mentoring and team work. It also carried out 2 individual counselling sessions for 10 participants in the field of generating and validating ideas and strategic planning.

It is planned that FEJS(T)SPEJS will be complementing the program of wider, comprehensive and lasting ecosystem for social economy support in Maribor and Podravje region named “SocioLab” that is under development in Podravje region.

## 6.5. DEXIC FabLab, Liberec

### DEXIC FabLab, Liberec

**Address:** DEX Innovation Center

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#### Description

Local Innovation Lab, called DEXIC FabLab, set up in the framework of NGS project, was launched in February 2019. It is located in the DEX Innovation Center. DEXIC FabLab is a fully equipped, comprehensive, innovative prototyping lab. FabLab now offers young people the equipment that makes them able to create their own prototypes and develop their business plans. At the same time, it succeeded in establishing cooperation with local enthusiasts, entrepreneurs, as well as professors from university who are interested in Lab activities.

DEXIC  $\mu$ FabLab was created to give young people the opportunity to improve their digital and entrepreneurial skills by offering them unique equipment and a training course with interesting mentors. Its goal is to make this possible for participants to improve their abilities and skills and create a community of people who will be connected with this space.

### Target groups

The FabLab offers its services to the following target groups:

- Students  
 The main target group for the FabLab operation will be secondary school (2nd part – 17-19 years due to their advanced profile) and university students including PhDs. (19-29 years).
- Technological innovation youth teams and digital startups  
 Secondary meaningful target group for the FabLab operations are young technological innovation teams and digital start-up's.

### Services offered

FabLab offered more activities that enabled (and still allow) students and novice workers to meet their needs / interests in a supportive and positive environment, and still help them gain further technological and business support.

FabLab has so far offered these activities:

- Inspiration talks, lectures and discussions on business successes and failures and needed skills and attitude for success.
- Access to digital equipment not available elsewhere and relevant technical support
- Seminars / workshops on using digital technologies for 3D design and prototyping
- Community /networking events + alumni club – the aim is to create a community of people around FabLab, bringing together technology and business interests. Such a community will contribute to the use of space and this community can carry out certain activities in itself.
- Individual mentoring, peer to peer reviews – for those interested, FabLab will offers individual approach and mentoring in the field of digital technologies and business.

### Achievements

FabLab is currently still working on developing IL and supporting young people.

A lot of DLP participants have shown interest in continuing their business plans. These participants are still going to IL and improving their prototypes they created during the DLP program.

## 6.6. Innovation Lab, Budapest

### Innovation Lab, Budapest

**Address:** Digital Knowledge Academy Public Association - UP Center

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### Description

Innovation Lab in Budapest, set up in the framework of NGS project, is located in UP Center community space provided by Digital Knowledge Academy Public Association (further on referred to as DTA) as the project's partner company. Innovation Lab has utilized DTA's infrastructure, as well as the tools acquired within the framework of financial support. DTA's employees and volunteers have organized and helped during the presentations for the Innovation Lab with the guide and support of the district council. The realization was also supported by the Contact

Foundation as an external partner for the project. The presenter's for Innovation Lab has been selected from the various experts coming from DTA (Up center and UP academy). The second location planned in the first phase will launch in the autumn of 2019.

The programs held by Innovation Lab usually occur every second week in the UP center. For those talented youngsters who participate, Innovation Lab set up a separated area with work stations, where every tool is in place to reach a quality standard work. If any participant is in need of further professional help, the employees and presenters of UP center and UP academy gladly aid them.

#### **Target groups**

Most of Innovation Lab audiences come from high school and college students and who are interested in becoming entrepreneurs.

#### **Services offered**

Innovation Lab has provided four type of services:

- Co-working space: office provided for the students, a location for them to use as a project location, which the youngsters have used regularly,
- Community building: To develop the IL program's reputation and to seize up the target group's interests and needs, Lab has started to organize community building events,
- Continuation of meetups and workshops: with growing participation and online streaming IL continued event series held every second week, which showcases themes and topics important and useful for the target group,
- Career choice and labor market trainings in schools in the district.

#### **Achievements**

The participants of Innovation Lab gladly use the co-working space, the previous teams of DLP 1.0 come back as well and the other youngsters from other IL projects use the opportunity regularly too.

The returning students are around 20-30%, and it is to be noted that those who come back bring a friend, a family member or a classmate. Innovation Lab has changed the way of communication, being more specific about the professional level of the events so the audience knows what they need to know before attending if there is anything required.

## **6.7. EUREKA Lab, Belgrade**

### **EUREKA Lab, Belgrade**

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#### **Description**

The Belgrade Innovation Lab, set up in the framework of NGS project, was opened on December 7th 2018 under the name EUREKA, The Lab has been completely adapted and equipped to begin work in the area of the former local community of Stari Grad municipality. The legal status of the laboratory is not yet fully defined, but it is most likely to work as a non-governmental organization founded by the municipality and two other founders. The lab is adapted to support young entrepreneurs and offer education and training of young people, especially in social and cultural

entrepreneurship and creative industries. IL offers modular community/co-working space, in order to provide networking, counselling, mentoring and educational activities. Also, the space is well-equipped for workshops, hackathons and different type of events.

Manager with experience in business, especially in marketing, public relations and consulting is a leader of the lab. Also, programs are run by several key experts in various business fields.

The “NewSkills” program offers participants a tool-box and the experience to bring the learning back to their teams and organizations after program finishes. Also, it helps young people to start their own business and learn how to build successful startup.

### **Target groups**

The most common participants of the IL programs are students interested in social entrepreneurship and young entrepreneurs without a lot of experience in business.

### **Services offered**

In order to stimulate and develop innovative ideas, EUREKA Lab provides different services:

- Educational (workshops, trainings etc.)
- Mentoring (communication with mentors)
- Organization of events (pitching event)
- Counselling
- Networking with other young people and interested companies

### **Achievements**

In a short time, Eureka Lab has managed to position itself as a place that offers quality service to young people. Young people showed great interest and rated the services as very good.

IL management managed to ensure the sustainability of the Eureka Lab through the establishment of cooperation with key stakeholders in the municipality.