

SEA4NEB



# Case Study Youth Center Split

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This document is funded under the SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE call.

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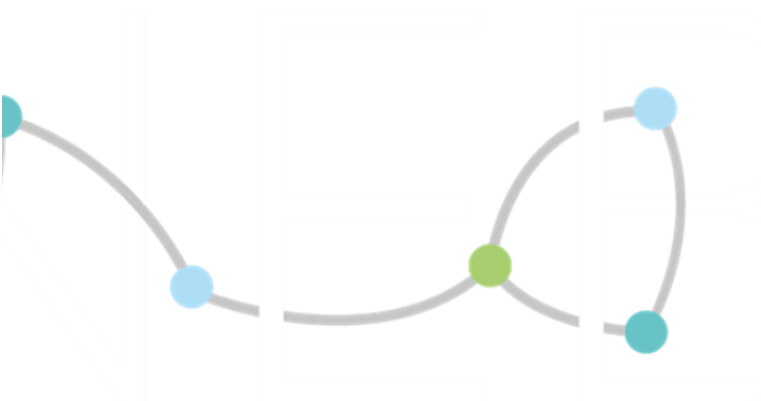
## **Case Study of good practice:**

### **Dom mladih Split, Youth Centre Split**

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**Thematic axis:** Regaining a sense of belonging.

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## CONTEXT AND HISTORY OF HOW THE GOOD PRACTICE HAS BEEN DEVELOPED

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The Youth Centre is located in the city of Split, which is the second largest city in Croatia and the largest city on the Croatian coast. The Youth Centre's magnificent building benefits from an extremely favourable location, at the heart of the Split peninsula. Split's historic core was included in the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1979. In addition to the concentration of cultural and historical monuments, the core and its surroundings hold most of the city's cultural institutions. However, Split is not only the old urban core, but a geographic, identity, political, economic, educational, cultural, sports and traffic centre which extends beyond the narrow borders of the Split peninsula into an uninterrupted agglomeration. Although the city formally has a developed and complete cultural structure, ranging from museums, theatres and galleries to an alternative cultural and club scene, cultural actors often feel the existence of a certain blockage related to the way in which cultural activities in Split function. The prevailing opinion is that some new ideas could be put in place with the support of the wider community and the participation of various stakeholders, including subcultural groups.

Although the Youth Centre is located near the city centre, i.e. the old town core, it has so far not been particularly exploited for tourism, in terms of the development of contents that would attract tourists interested in contemporary and independent culture, the Diocletian's Palace





The construction of the imposing but never completed, building called the 'Home of Youth' in Split began in 1974. Architecturally, the building is conceived as a series of spaces located around a central volume consisting of two amphitheatre auditoriums located around a stage, above which rises an impressive stage tower almost 25 m high. The auditorium was designed to hold more than 1,000 visitors, and the accompanying spaces were supposed to accommodate the performers and staff and provide audience access. However, the money ran out in 1979, and work was stopped leaving only the preliminary works (concrete, façade and roof) completed. For the next 15 years, the building was left empty and neglected. It hosted its first events only in 1994, at the initiative of a group of alternative artists called "Art Squat". Around 50 young people joined in a three-month cleaning campaign, and slowly began an organised struggle to turn the unorganised space into a gathering place for the independent cultural and youth scene.

In 1997, the City of Split established the Cultural Centre for Youth, a public institution for creativity and performance in culture, technical culture and the arts, which operated as the governing body of the Youth Centre until 2005. The name of the institution clearly indicated the institutional formalisation and inconsistency with Art Squat's original programme and self-managing ambitions. However, the self-organised process of conquering space for

independent scene activities was still going on, which is why the Coalition of Youth Associations (KUM) was established in May 2001 — the first of its kind in Croatia. In June 2001, the City Council of Split gave KUM access to the unfinished concrete basement of the building, which lacked any installations or infrastructure. Through the efforts of the associations, the space was gradually equipped for concerts, exhibitions, performances, workshops and readings, and has continued to operate until today, carrying the name Klub Kocka. Since social innovation and social entrepreneurship are the very core of this transformation, KUM shows many if not all characteristics of a fully-fledged social enterprise, although it does not recognise itself as such. Furthermore, KUM is one of the best examples of the social enterprise-driven model of successful governance of maybe the most unattractive part of the building for more than two decades.

After the Youth Cultural Centre was shut down in 2005, the Split Multimedia Cultural Centre (MKC) (**a city-owned public institution in charge of managing the Youth Centre and implementing its own programmes in it**) took over the management of the building. This change of governance made the first step towards the public-civil partnership as it exists today in the management and use of the Youth Centre, as well as the beginning of restoring parts of the building that were completely unusable.

Throughout these years, the premises have been used by independent associations and arts organisations, although the building has never been completed. Long-term efforts of various organisations and associations, with the aim of furnishing the space in the Youth Centre, and at the same time designing the contents within, were guided by the slogan “construction is not necessary if you have no one to do it for”. This meant that the organisations were simultaneously renovating the space with programmes and attracting and creating new users. Over the years, depending on the will of the local government and financial resources, the premises have gradually been redecorated in order to achieve minimum technical conditions for operating, but the landscaping has never been completed. A crucial step for the Youth Centre came in 2012, when six associations (initially as an informal initiative) applied for a competition for the advocacy platforms of the newly founded Kultura Nova Foundation.

With the change of government, the Ministry of Culture announced that year that it was investing with European funds and that it would finally finish the Youth Centre. Although the Ministry of Culture positioned itself as a project partner from the beginning, the City of Split and the County of Split-Dalmatia did the same in spring 2013, when the project to renovate the Youth Centre was submitted to the competition of the Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds, which gave it the status of regional development project.

In 2015 a new formal association of CSOs was formed – Platforma Doma Mladih (PDM) – and since then, PDM has acted as a union of associations for the independent cultural scene and the youth sector. It sees the Youth Centre as a space where contemporary art, cultural, critical social practices and activities will be developed and presented.

When it comes to financing activities in the Youth Centre, PDM implemented several projects in partnership with institutions, cultural and civic organisations in the field of culture, art, education and social inclusion. Hence, the Youth Centre, first activated by art and youth movement stakeholders, and joined by the local government, became a crucible of social experimentation and innovation that led to its present position of being recognised nationally and internationally as a best practice example of a collaborative approach between the public and civic sectors regarding the co-development and co-management of public spaces aligned with the principles of social innovation and social entrepreneurship in the creative, cultural, social and sports sectors. It is completely aligned with the principles of the New European Bauhaus.



## SUMMARY OF MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF GOODPRACTICE APPROACH

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### Structure of the Centre

The megalomaniacal building of the Youth Centre, over 40 years old, has a total gross area of 10,400 m<sup>2</sup>, of which only 4,700 m<sup>2</sup> is landscaped. Space occupancy is low (40%), and the infrastructure is rarely used in the summer. Precisely because of its huge area, its peculiar design and its initially planned purpose (a huge theatre) – which was very expensive to fully realise and was complicated to adapt to new uses – the Youth Centre was never completed, and any initiative to start systematic work on it was stopped because it would require huge financial resources.

15 years ago, MKC hired architects Dinko Peračić and Miranda Veljačić to create a design project that, with relatively small funds, would bring the building to a state where it was safe for users and suitable for contemporary cultural practice. With their involvement, work began on bringing the unfinished parts of the Youth Centre into use through a series of "minimum interventions", as the work could only be carried out partially due to a lack of funds. Thus, over time, the gallery of the MKC was brought "to the stage of usability", and quickly established itself as one of the best locations for the contemporary art scene. Then came the (small) amphitheatre and the space named "Beton kino" ("Concrete cinema"). All these spaces can be used for other purposes as well (workshops, forums, round tables), and each is described individually below.

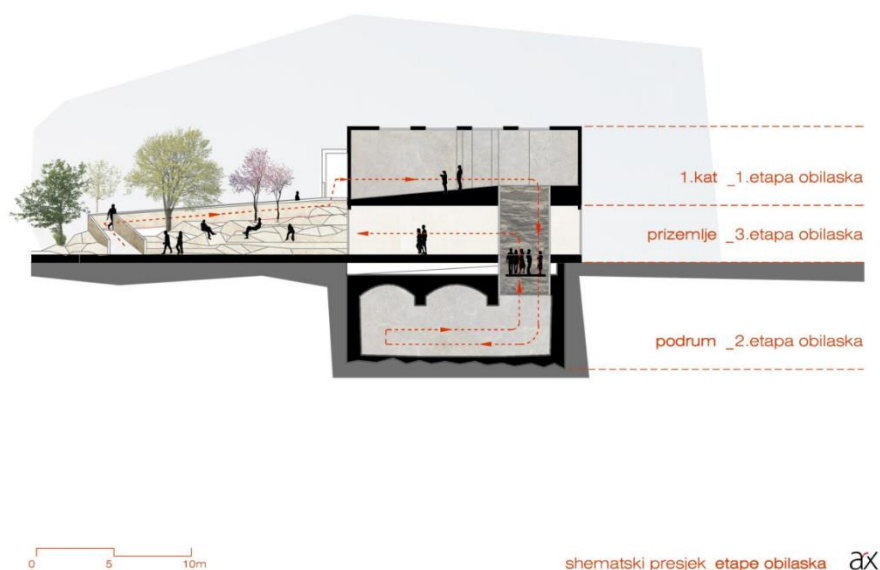


Figure 1: Schematic representation of the interior of the Youth Centre

**Beton kino (Concrete Cinema):** a multi-purpose space that organisations and individuals, operating inside and outside the Youth Centre, use temporarily, at time slots allocated by the users with the Multimedia Cultural Centre. It is a space intended for diverse activities such as exhibitions, education, workshops, panels/conferences, performances, festivals and film screenings.

**MKC Gallery:** every year in June, MKC holds an open competition for the production/co-production of gallery programmes. The competitions are open to authors, groups of authors and cultural and artistic organisations, while the Programme Council selects and approves them, in accordance with the mission and vision of MKC. Dozens of exhibitions are held annually, produced and co-produced by the Multimedia Cultural Centre and other organisations, most of which are from the Youth Centre.

**Izlog (Shop Window):** the space on the ground floor of the MKC Gallery facing the square in front of the Youth Centre, where the Gallery's exhibition programmes are occasionally "extended".

**Kocka (Square):** located in the basement of the Youth Centre, where in a little less than 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> there are a space for concerts, a space for parties, a gallery, a library, a radio, a recording, mixing and music production studio, an office, two toilets, a bedroom and a kitchen.

**Klub Kocka (Square Club):** Split's alternative club, led by the Coalition of Youth Associations, has already entered its second decade of existence. Music and socialising are categories of programmes implemented through Kocka. For years, they have been presenting and hosting bands and artists from Croatia, the region and the world, and together with demo bands, young artists and visitors, they are designing the cultural and subcultural vision of the City of Split.

**Open box knjižnica (Open Box Library):** operates through the association Aktivist, and was revived at the beginning of 2013 by taking some of the books from the former library of Dyslexia. Currently, there are about 500 books that can be borrowed by members without charge. Open Box owns some of the domestic and foreign magazines, fanzines, newsletters and pamphlets and encourages socialising, literature, education and workshops.

**Galerija Praktika (Practice Gallery):** has a permanent exhibition programme carried out by the Mavena association, QueerANarchive and the Coalition of Youth Associations (KUM). They present young contemporary artists and different media of artistic expression.

**Medijski centar (Media Centre):** this space functions as a shared workspace where KLFM, as coordinator, organises interviews with YC actors and guests, press announcements, education, media campaigns, produces a radio programme, and also coordinates the use of the space for various activities, in cooperation with interested stakeholders, MKC employees and other actors.

**Studio ¾:** deals with the recording of young and unestablished bands. The goal of the studio is to bring the possibility of high-quality recording of demo material closer to young people with the aim of strengthening the youth music scene.

**Dvorište (Yard):** an area located in front of the Cube, at the entrance. The programmes that are occasionally held there are categorised under gatherings and activism, and are organised by the QueerANarchive and Aktivist associations. There is also access to a small climbing rock in the courtyard.

**Tiskara (Printing Office):** this is located in the garage of Klub Kocka, and screen-printing workshops are held in the space, organised by the QueerANarchive association.

**Trg (Square):** an open space between the HRT building and the Youth Centre where various music and festival events take place.

**Plava dvorana (Blue Hall):** a space intended for training, workshops and education, and is used daily by the Style Force collective for dance programmes.

**Mala scena (Small Scene):** it is used daily by the Circus Colectiv association for regular annual activities: aerial skills (silk, circle, trapeze), circus with children, contemporary dance, jazz dance, dance recreation, tai chi, aikido. Several times a year, the association organises cabaret and children's cabaret, on the Small Stage open performance evenings. It is occasionally used for use by the Tiramola dance association, for the Merge in Motion programme, a platform for education in contemporary dance, workshops of visiting dance choreographers and pedagogues, and performance artists/training. The space is equipped with a dance floor, tatami mats, mats, Swedish ladders, equipment for aerial circus skills, juggling equipment and a studio for music and video production.

**Amphitheatre (Amphitheatre):** it is used equally by organisations and individuals operating inside and outside the Youth Centre for performance and discourse programmes, independently or in collaboration. The space, which covers 320 m<sup>2</sup> and includes 350 seats, is let to users for temporary use, in agreement with the Multimedia Cultural Centre. It hosts Pričigin, the story-telling festival, which is famous for being one of the best-attended cultural events in Split, various international guest appearances by the contemporary circus and other performance programmes that regularly fill it to capacity. The small amphitheatre is recognised as an important cultural scene in the City of Split.

**Veliki amfiteatar (Big Amphitheatre):** covers an area of 410 m<sup>2</sup> and includes 650 seats. Although the space is unorganised, there are occasional events such as exhibitions, art installations and performances ("conquering the space").

**Penjačka stijena (Climbing Rock):** Sport climbing club Lapis, which operates in the Youth Centre, on the scene between the Big and Small Amphitheatre, arranged one large and one small climbing rock, which are accessed from the Dvorište (Yard). This infrastructure is used by members of the club and occasionally holds national and other climbing competitions.

**Skate Park:** indoor skate park which so far contains a few handmade mini ramps, a bowl, a BMX course and all the infrastructure necessary for high-quality functioning. The space was arranged and managed by the Skate Club Kolo association.

**Baletni studio (Ballet Studio):** Dance Theatre uses several rooms (dance hall and dressing rooms) in the Youth Centre to hold a classical ballet school for different ages.

**Infoteka (Infotheque):** this is the space currently used by the Playdrama theatre, but it is planned to transform it into an Infoteka. The space is on the centre's Square.

**Kino klub Split (Split Cinema Club):** it has several spaces in the Youth Centre where it carries out its regular activities. These are a lobby (which can be used for socialising), a multimedia hall for projection, education and workshops (which also includes a lab for

developing analogue photographs), a video and audio editing suite, an office space (shared with members of the Youth Platform, the Uzgon (Buoyancy) association and the QueerANarchive association), and an equipment storage space located in the lobby.

**Ispod bine (Under the Stage):** the space that, as the name suggests, is located under the stage of the Big and Small Amphitheatre. It is used for the realisation of the Under the Stage festival, organised by the Mavena association in cooperation with the Multimedia Cultural Centre since 2016.

**MKC and SFF offices:** the offices of the Multimedia Cultural Centre, the institution that manages the Youth Centre building, and the Split Film Festival are located on the first floor of the building.

**Razred (Classroom):** the space has been reconstructed within two EU-funded projects, "Building a Home Together" and "Taskforcome", according to the plans of Dinko Peračić, B.Sc. ing. arch., a member of Platform 9.81. Razred is a multipurpose space where discussion, educational and information activities and co-working take place. It has office infrastructure, technical equipment, and a space for work and meetings where users are encouraged to network. The first peer review meeting was held in this space.



### Governance structure

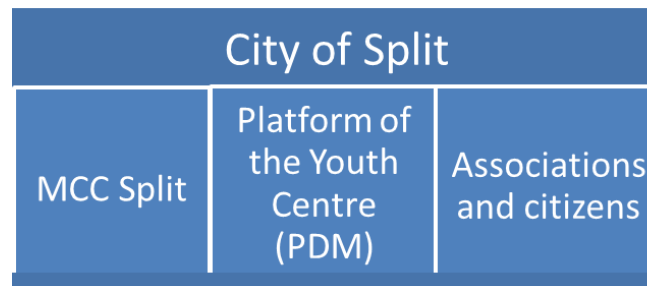
The main value of this good practice is a bottom-up citizens' initiative that successfully embraced and combined the concepts of civic engagement, public-civic cooperation, social entrepreneurship and all aspects of the NEB Compass values in regeneration, co-development and co-management of a large unused public infrastructure.

The key stakeholders in the management and use of the Youth Centre are:

1. **The City of Split** as the owner, the founder of the institution that manages the spaces and the administration responsible for the implementation of relevant public policies (in this case these are cultural policies, youth policies, urban development policies and others).
2. **Split Multimedia Cultural Centre (MKC Split)** as a city-owned public institution in charge of managing the Youth Centre and implementing its own programmes in the centre. It manages the space of the Youth Centre, guided by the idea that defines the centre as a meeting place of different fields of activity, interests, perceptions and thinking. MKC supports the work of young artists and cultural workers and develops programmes to support their professional development, such as education, production of works and organisation of presentations.
3. **Platform of the Youth Centre (PDM)** brings together the centre's users who are interested in active participation in its governance. The users are mostly civic organisations, mostly financed through their programmes and activities, and thus may be considered as social enterprises although they do not perceive themselves as such. In fact, some of them reject the idea that they are "entrepreneurs" of any kind, and see themselves more as social and/or cultural activists with interests in specific types of social engagement (culture, sport, youth, etc.). The Platform is a formal union of 17 associations for the independent cultural scene, registered in 2016. The Youth Centre Platform acts as an advocacy platform at the local level – a non-profit, non-partisan, and participatory initiative for the independent cultural and youth scene. The already mentioned **Coalition of Youth Associations (CYA-KUM)** which manage the largest part of the underground area, is one of the oldest living representatives of the Youth Centre transformation process. Besides it are some new associations equally motivated to contribute to the finalisation of the regeneration process such as Platforma 9.81, an architectural research, development and policy action platform, and Permaculture Dalmatia, which was one of the partners in the most recent proposal



for the next steps of the regeneration project, based on the best practice of permaculture design.



Through one of the several EU-funded projects involving all or some of the three representatives, the new Management Plan was co-created and proposes a participative model for the Youth Centre's management and structure. The new management structure proposes involvement of the final beneficiaries

The City of Split, as the owner of the infrastructure and the founder of the Multimedia Cultural Centre, has the strongest political power. MCC represents the operational management of the Youth Centre facility. The institution covers overhead costs and infrastructure investments, providing technical and logistical support for programme implementation and giving space to users without charge. However, in practice, MCC closely cooperates with the Platform of the Youth Centre and co-manages the space.

Through joint action, MCC and PDM strive to improve working conditions, maintain high-quality communication with tenants, and plan programmes and goals. PDM brings together the tenants of the Youth Centre, represents their interests, coordinates communication, and conducts activities related to visibility and promotion free of charge.

Both MCC and PDM advocate a change in the management model because they recognise that the more democratic the model, and the more intensively citizens are involved, the greater the participation of the public, not only as the audience but also as co-creators of cultural policies and programmes, may be expected to be. Hence, the idea is to further develop the co-management model based on a full civil-public partnership model.



### Funding and management

Following initial investments in creating project documentation and reconstructing parts of the space (gallery, small auditorium and Concrete Cinema) in 2007 and 2009, the City of Split at first cut the annual equipment maintenance budget by a factor of ten, and in the period 2013 to 2017 withdrew financial support altogether. It turned to European Union (EU) funding to complete the building, but this financing was not realised.

When it comes to financing activities in the Youth Centre, PDM implemented the “Gradimo Dom zajedno” (“Building a Home Together”) project, in partnership with the City of Split, Multimedia Cultural Centre – MKC, Cluster for Eco-Social Innovation and Development – CEDRA Split, Coalition of Youth Associations – KUM and the Mediterranean Film Festival Split – FMFS, funded by the European Social Fund through the project “Culture at the Centre – Supporting the Development of Public-Civic Partnership in Culture”.

Also, additional projects were implemented such as TASKFORCOME from 2019-2021 involving five countries (Austria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Poland) and twelve partners: CGE Erfurt e.V., Malopolska Provincial Office, TCF HUB Centrum Sportu i Integracji Non Profit Sp. z o.o, Institute for Economic Promotion of the Austrian Economic Chamber, Multicultural Association, Cluster for Eco-Social Innovation and Development-CEDRA Split, Municipality of Split, Polytechnic University of Marche, O.P.E.N. Network - Offenders Pathways to Employment National Network, CNR National Research Council, Institute of Clinical

Physiology, Plattform e.V. funded within the INTERREG Central Europe programme, priority 1 – Cooperating on innovation to make Central Europe more competitive. The project addressed two of the major challenges of the EU and its member states: the socio-economic integration of migrants and the potential of social innovation for social and economic development. In this project, Split Youth Centre was involved as a context for the socio-economic and cultural integration of these goals with the new infrastructural element regenerated and turned into a multifunctional coworking and co-creating space titled Razred (Classroom).

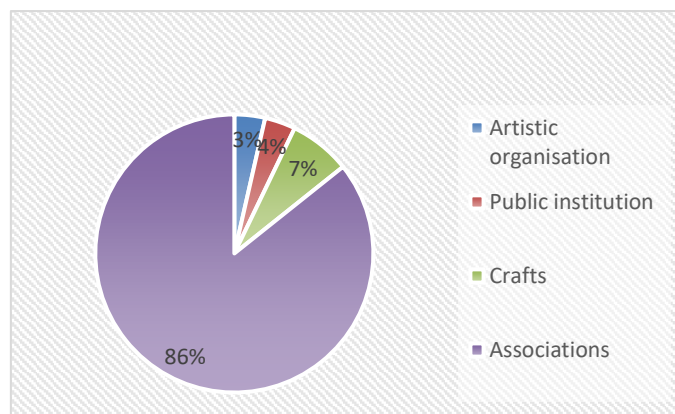
In August 2019, the Youth Centre applied for a project to finance counselling, information and non-formal education programmes (leading to the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes by young people), leisure activities and youth initiatives.

In January 2023, an ambitious new project proposal was submitted under the Urban Innovative Actions NEB call for proposals. The activities proposed include investment to complete the larger part of the building through a wide co-creation process with a vision to *close the loop* of transformation of the Youth Centre into a public-civic-private partnership-driven Cultural and Creative Power Plant of the city of Split, the region and Europe.

**Users of the Youth Centre** are associations, artistic organisations, individuals and informal initiatives, micro and small companies, and public institutions that operate in areas related to the programme clusters and profile of MCC.

**Usage terms** include continuous and/or occasional use of the premises, awarded through a public tender, with a deadline of 1 year and the obligation to return the space to the condition it was found in. MCC manages the entire Youth Centre building, but tenants themselves define the dynamics and conditions of use of the premises in which they are located. MCC defines the conditions of use exclusively for the following spaces: MKC Gallery, Exhibition, Classroom, Concrete Cinema, Small Amphitheatre. For **occasional use** (irregular use of certain premises, from several hours to several days), the obligation is again to return the space to the condition it was found in. **Possible forms of commercial use** are defined as: events that do not match the programme profile of the Youth Centre, and which are closed to the public or intended for a very specific public, for which only occasional use is possible and is limited to 30 such events per year; permanent catering activity for which a tender must be announced; occasional catering activities related to individual programmes, or events, for which a price list is determined based on the number of visitors. As a condition, the payment of the market price of the lease is stated, while the time regimes (permanent, temporary, occasional) are not specified.

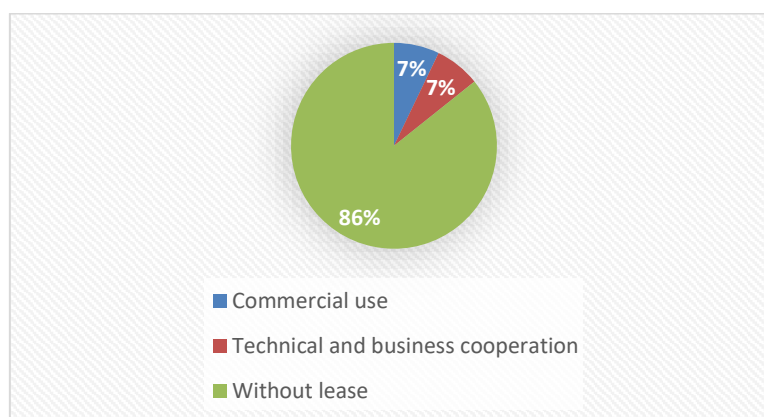
According to the legal form, most users are associations, 24 or 86% of them. One of the users is an art organisation. Only one institution is the public administrator, i.e. MCC Split. Two users are crafts that use the space for non-programme activities.



*Figure 2. Legal forms of Youth Centre users*

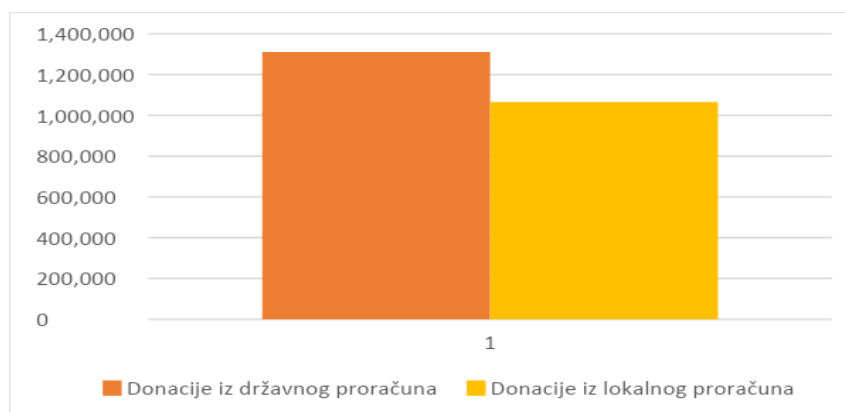
Regarding the main field of activity, organisations that primarily deal with culture and art dominate, 19 of them or 68%. Other areas of activity (democratic political culture, sports, education, science and research, and technical) are directly or indirectly linked to cultural activity. The remaining two trades are on commercial leases, and their activity is related to the rental or repair of technical equipment.

As for the conditions for using the space, most users, 24 or 86% of them, use the space rent-free.



*Figure 3. Users by types of use*

Analysing the financial data, it may be noted that the City of Split, through its call for public needs in culture and/or through other calls, should gradually increase donations to organisations or even more to social economy ecosystems operating in this area so that the investment in the building itself is meaningful and sustainable.



*Figure 4. Ratio of income from state grant and from local budgets*

Although it would be expected that most of the revenue comes from the local budget (since they are mostly organisations with a local reach), the total funding is still higher from the state budget (55% vs. 45%). A certain level of coordination with the County would also be desirable.

It is also indicative that EU funds were not used enough with only three projects involving the Platform of the Youth Centre, MCC Split and/or the City of Split. That indicates the need to build the capacity of the stakeholders to use the opportunities of EU co-financing.

#### **Main strategies:**

- capital investment (reconstruction and equipment of infrastructure)
- partnership building and networking
- intersectoral connection and cooperation
- diversification of programmes and increase in the scope of services
- audience development
- internationalisation

- positioning in public space and increasing visibility
- social innovation and social business model innovation
- value chains and clustering
- stronger connection with special interest tourism with high socio-cultural added value
- R&D&I hub/living lab
- accommodation capacities for “in-residence” programmes
- involvement of digital, creative and cultural nomad movement
- intergenerational programmes

Organisations that use certain spaces have arranged them according to their needs and possibilities. Also, the common areas were partially reconstructed, which enabled an increase of public programmes. In the last ten years, the Youth Centre has established itself as one of the centres of the cultural life of the city with a multitude of programme and activities.

However, there are still many problems related to the coordination of programmes within the Youth Centre, maintenance of the space, and wider recognition of the Youth Centre by the public. This is because the new management model of the Youth Centre was developed as a proposal, but was never fully adopted.

One of the objectives of the Strategic Plan of MCC Split 2022-26 is the development of a governance structure for the Youth Centre that includes the users of the Youth Centre and the interested public in the Youth Centre’s management. In this way, rights and responsibilities would be distributed among all the actors using the Youth Centre. The creation of this model includes defining the profile of the Youth Centre itself (what it does and for whom), the creation of a dynamic model in which there is the possibility of including new actors, and the determination of the rights and obligations of all users, including sanctions for non-fulfilment of obligations.

The Platform member organisations are especially dedicated to co-designing a new participatory model for governing the space, and to that end they collaborate closely with the public institution MCC and representatives of all users/tenants.

In the new proposal for the management of the Youth Centre from January/February 2022, the models proposed or their variations have never been fully developed and accepted by all



stakeholders, and it will be necessary, in addition to their refinement, which is proposed later in this document, to invest additional effort in developing of the governance model further. Also, it is important to emphasise that it is extremely difficult to change the conditions and methods of use in the current situation in the centre, where relations are complicated, created over many years and where the infrastructure is still not quite adequate. In the further development of the model, it is necessary to act carefully, respecting the previous contributions of all actors.

## EVIDENCE/JUSTIFICATION FOR GOOD PRACTICE

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### Hard evidence:

- Economic/social measures of outcomes – almost 30 years of continuous efforts that activated once unused infrastructure into the only functional co-creative space of this size and relevance that provides work (including jobs), cultural, creative, social, sport and recreation space for 28 public, civic and private organisations with hundreds of programmes happening throughout the whole year, increasing the quality of life of the local youth, artists, hobbyists, cultural and social activists and the community with more than 200 of hours of programmes a month or more than 2,000 hours a year (not counting exhibitions);
- Physical regeneration and activation of about 40% of the built environment, a figure which is still growing.

### Soft evidence:

- Organisational changes/innovations have been generated through gradual development of the management system and models with formation of new actors (the Platform of the Youth Centre, Architectural Platform 9.81) and upgrading the management structure of the existing actors (City of Split and Split Multimedia Cultural Centre approved involvement of the Platforms in the management structure), outreach to new target groups including subcultural sports such as circus, skating and free climbing;
- Congruence/synergy of the project with the local, county and national level policies on socio-cultural centres, social and cultural engagement;
- Recognition: this Youth Centre best practice model was recognised by professionals nationally and international and was showcased at international exhibitions (Rome and New York, 2011; Montpellier, 2013; Venice Biennale, 2016). However, what is more important in the Croatian context is that it proved to be applicable to the renovation of the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka, located in the

former Benčić factory complex, as well as to the reconstruction of the former Jedinstvo factory in Zagreb, managed by the Zagreb Centre for Independent Culture and Youth, Pogon (Višnić and Veljačić, 2016).

## OUTCOMES (FOR DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS)

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**Local government** is the owner of a functional social and cultural centre for youth, independent culture and art, sports and recreation which runs on minimal costs (less than €350.000/year) and opens new opportunities for social, cultural and economic development.

**The independent cultural and creative sector, artists but also social, civic and cultural activists, sport and recreation programme producers** have spatial and technical resources for their programmes, projects and activities available under very affordable or even no-cost conditions.

**Local youth, citizens and guests** have a very intriguing and inclusive as well as equally affordable infrastructure, programmes and activities able to support multiple interests and needs relevant to a high-quality and diverse social and cultural life.

**The education sector**, including the local university (University of Split, especially its Art Academy), their professors and students, have a much-needed infrastructure for creative expression, programmes, conferences, exhibitions, projects, etc. also available for free or under very affordable conditions.

The additional achievements include opening of the space to larger-scale events such as festivals, urban innovation and development conferences (such as the URBACT conference); the involvement of social entrepreneurship and migrant entrepreneurship projects and programmes, through projects in cooperation with the Cluster for Eco-Social Innovation and Development CEDRA Split, social and creative economy actors and universities from across Europe), social and cultural policy bodies and foundations (such as the National Foundation for Civil Society Development (supporting social-cultural centres and public civic cooperation and partnerships) and the national Kultura Nova Foundation (supporting participative cultural centres); and being a showcase of public-civic partnerships for local cultural, social and spatial development based on the principles of participatory governance.

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

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### Weaknesses

Weak and unstable infrastructure management. Difficult introduction of a new management structure due to long-standing and irregular management habits. Independent decisions of individual users instead of joint management and joint decision-making in favour of better management of the infrastructure and the programme that takes place in the premises. Lack of understanding and application of the models and potentials of social innovation and social entrepreneurship in both the public and civic sectors.

### Strengths

New forms of networking and joint action. Intensive collaborative platforms or tactical networks are emerging new sociocultural practices, the main characteristics of which are expanding the definition of cultural activity and developing new collaborative practices and models. Initiated dialogue, strong network of stakeholders involved including City of Split, two civic platforms, internationally recognised best practice, lately stronger involvement of the stakeholders active in social innovation and social entrepreneurship such as Cluster for Eco-Social Innovation and Development CEDRA Split, strong connections with NEB and new local, regional, national, EU and global eco-socio-economic and cultural policies.

Considering the issues they deal with (issues of the public domain, social transition, hybrid models of public-private partnership, intellectual ownership, etc.), as well as the methods they use (activism, association of citizens, advocacy, transfer of technological and other practices to the field of culture, socio-theoretical activities), collaborative platforms greatly extend to other cultures, defining the field not as art and heritage, which is the traditional approach that dominated European culture for decades, but as an area of intense interaction between the social, technological and artistic. By doing so, they create a field of possibilities according to which the culture would again accept its proactive, dynamic and critical function in societal production

## COMPARISONS WITH OTHER EXPERIENCES

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**UFA Fabrik** in Berlin is an example of a socio-cultural centre that can serve as a reference for the management of the Youth Centre space. It consists of about 18,566 m<sup>2</sup> of former film studio space that was intended for demolition, but in 1979 a group of young activists and artists occupied it and built a unique centre for art, culture and sustainability in which to live and work. The centre has 200 employees and around 30 tenants who work on the development of new and unconventional ideas such as ecological pilot projects, energy-efficient buildings, the design of cultural events and various other projects in the field of art and creative industries.

**Webpage:** <https://www.ufafabrik.de/en>

Another example of good practice is Vienna's **WUK**, an umbrella organisation that brings together around 150 associations, initiatives and individuals who manage the complex of a former locomotive factory, which the City of Vienna entrusted to them to manage. It provides a space of about 12,000 m<sup>2</sup> for self-organised culture, education and social interaction. The users of the centre are organised into seven autonomous sectors: socio-political initiatives, children and youth, intercultural activities, performing arts (dance/theatre/performance), educational programmes, visual arts and music. What they have in common is respect for the democratic decision-making structure and joint management through the plenary assembly, which is convened once a month.

**Webpage:** <https://www.wuk.at/en/>

**Pogon** – Zagreb Centre for Independent Culture and Youth – is the first Croatian example of a so-called hybrid institution and in fact the only example of an institution in a culture based on participatory management. Based on the model of public-civil partnership, Pogon was founded at the end of 2008 and is jointly managed by the Operation City Association of Associations and the City of Zagreb. Its fundamental function is to provide the space it manages for use by cultural and youth organisations Zagreb for various programmes, without charge. The space is not used by one, but by many different entities under the same conditions. The role of the City of Zagreb is to provide adequate premises and basic resources for the basic functioning and development of the programme (operating costs, maintenance and renovation of the premises), while the production and promotion of the programme is financed by the beneficiary organisations, i.e. the centres' partners. The city also has the role



of public supervision over the use of city property and monitoring the operation of the centre as a public institution. The roles, powers and responsibilities of the founders are precisely defined in the basic documents.

**Webpage:** <https://www.pogon.hr/>

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Photo source: PDM



## PROJECT PARTNERS

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The SEA4NEB project consortium is composed by:



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