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HANDBOOK

Digitization for citizens: Good practices for municipalities and cities

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Content

I.	INTRODUCTION	4
II.	MUNICIPALITY CENTER SARAJEVO	7
A.	E-BABIES	8
B.	VIBER CHATBOT MUNICIPALITY CENTER	9
C.	MOBILE APPLICATION MOJCENTAR	11
D.	URBAN LAB OF MUNICIPALITY CENTAR SARAJEVO	13
E.	FORUMS OF CITIZENS	14
III.	REGGIO EMILIA	17
A.	CONSULTE – A PLATFORM FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING	18
B.	HAMLET	20
C.	INFOGIOVANI – NETWORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	22
D.	CLUSTER CHIOSTRI SAN PIETRO – LABORATORY FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION	24
E.	FOUNDATION E35	27
F.	YOUNGERCARD	29
IV.	CONCLUSION	31

I. INTRODUCTION

In this handbook by the Institute for Development and European Integration (IREI) we present good practices collected during the implementation of a knowledge exchange project conducted from January to December 2023 in cooperation with the partner Foundation E35 from Italy and the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, Italy. In this introduction we would like to introduce you to the important aspects of this project and its purpose.

This project is the result of successful cooperation between IREI and our partners from Italy. During two mutual visits, representatives of both local governments had a unique opportunity to share their valuable knowledge and experience in the areas of **citizen participation** in decision-making and **digitalization** of public administration. As part of these visits, numerous meetings were held with representatives of services, public companies and other organizations related to municipalities, which enabled the creation of this handbook.

The handbook in front of you is the result of **analysis of best practices** that we managed to identify in both municipalities. This compilation of experiences and solutions aims to serve as a guide and a source of inspiration for you, in order to **improve practices** in the areas of citizen participation and digitalization, but also in **other areas under the jurisdiction of local government units** in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the analysis so far, we have noticed significant differences in the field of **digitization** between these two municipalities. Reggio Emilia shows significant progress in the digitization process, while Bosnia and Herzegovina faces challenges arising from a decentralized approach to this process. **The centralization** of digitization in Italy enabled faster progress, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina each unit of local government has a certain freedom and responsibility for the implementation of digital solutions, which created various challenges.

Also, we noticed that one of the key problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina is **the lack of capacity in IT services** of local government units. This gap in resources and expertise represents a significant challenge for effective digitization.

As part of our handbook, we also investigated the area of **participation** that is applied in both municipalities, and a, which is of essential importance for our citizens. This area stands out as extremely important, because it directly affects the way in which citizens participate in decision-making pro-

cesses and the quality of the authorities' decisions on the distribution of resources and the way municipal programs are implemented. During our visit, we had the opportunity to analyse this area and identify key aspects.

We noticed that the laws regulating participation in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not differ significantly from the legal framework in Italy. However, what has become obvious is that the very **application** of those laws, the process **of organizing participation** and **moderation** are the biggest challenges. There is a clear need to improve these aspects in order to enable citizens to participate more effectively in decision-making processes.

During our visit to Reggio Emilia, we observed several interesting examples of participatory mechanisms and the results of their application. This is the model that we would like to present in this handbook, because it can serve as an inspiration and guide for local governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina that strive for greater citizen participation.

We hope that in this Handbook you will find inspiration and concrete guidelines that will help you overcome challenges and improve practices in your local government. We wish you a successful use of this information and look forward to future cooperation in order to further develop the community.

II.

CENTAR SARAJEVO MUNICIPALITY

II. CENTER SARAJEVO MUNICIPALITY



Population : 55,181 (according to the 2013 census)

Budget for 2023: €40,910,997.86

Head : Srđan Mandić - from 2020 to today, Naša Stranka (*Our Party*)

The Centar Sarajevo Municipality is one of the nine municipalities of Sarajevo Canton and represents the urban, administrative, business, cultural, educational, health and commercial service centre of the city.

The Centar Sarajevo Municipality covers an area of 33 square kilometres with a total length of 43.3 kilometres. Of that, 16.7% is inhabited area. Approximately 16 kilometres of land is privately owned, while 17 kilometres belongs to the state.

Within the Canton of Sarajevo, the Centar Sarajevo Municipality shares borders with the Municipality of Stari Grad to the east, the municipalities of Novo Sarajevo and Vogošća to the west, and to some extent with the Municipality of Ilijaš to the north.

Despite being one of the smaller municipalities in Sarajevo Canton, according to the 2013 census, this municipality has a population of 55,181 inhabitants with a population density of more than

1,676 inhabitants per square kilometre or 4,810 inhabitants per square kilometre in the urban region, making it one of the densest populated municipalities in Canton.

Within the municipality there are 19 local communities that operate according to the Rules on the Work of Local Communities. In these basic units of local government, citizens are provided with basic information and certain documents are issued under the jurisdiction of the General Administration Service. Representatives from all local areas (a total of 30) participate in the councils of local communities, which have a four-year mandate.

Good practices

A. E-babies

The E-babies project, whose implementation in the Centar Sarajevo Municipality began in **November 2022**, represents a significant step towards improving the process of **registration of newborn citizens of the Centar Sarajevo Municipality**. This project was initiated by **the Office of the Coordinator for Public Administration Reform of Bosnia and Herzegovina** (PARCO) and is implemented through the Strengthening of Public Institutions Program in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in cooperation with the Society for International Cooperation - **GIZ**.

One of the key benefits of this project was the significant reduction in the time it took parents to obtain birth certificates for their children. Previously, **the waiting time** for the allocation of birth registration numbers for newborns lasted from **7 to 10 days**, however, with this project, in **cooperation** with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Sarajevo Canton and the Agency for Identification Documents, Records and Data Exchange of Bosnia and Herzegovina (IDDEEA), **that time was reduced to 20 minutes**. Now, after receiving the report from the hospital, parents can simply and quickly complete the procedure of registering their newborn children in the birth register.

The General Administration Service of the Centar Sarajevo Municipality was responsible for collecting all the necessary documents through official channels, except for the **residence certificate** (CIPS). In addition, in cooperation with **IDDEEA** and based on the signed agreement, the possibility is open that in the future documentation on residence records will be automatically collected when registering newborns, which represents another significant step in improving services to citizens.

Centar Sarajevo Municipality stands out as a leader in this process, and it is the only local community in the Sarajevo Canton and among the few in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina that implemented such an advanced approach and thereby significantly facilitated the service for parents of newborn children. Also, during the establishment of this measure, the process of developing contact with **two hospitals**, namely the General Hospital "Prim. Ph.D. Abdulah Nakaš" and the Clinical Center of the University of Sarajevo. Accordingly, reports on newborn babies are submitted within **24 hours of the child's birth**. It is recommended that other municipalities, which are interested in working on this measure, establish regular contact with hospitals in the area of their municipalities/cities in order to be able to receive timely data through which these measures could be implemented.

B. Viber Chatbot Municipality Center



In order to improve the provision of services and increase user satisfaction, Centar Sarajevo Municipality developed Viber Chatbot application - a further step in the process of digitization of services to citizens.

Viber Chatbot represents an innovative way of communication between citizens and the Centar Sarajevo Municipality. It offers a wide range of information and services that are available 24/7, thus enabling citizens to communicate with the municipal administration whenever it suits them and from anywhere.

This application is easy to use and was set up with the aim of making **it easier and faster for citizens to solve their administrative needs**. Below we will provide you with more detailed information about how Viber Chatbot works and how it can benefit you. What is worth noting is that currently the Viber chatbot application **is followed and used by 1,029 citizens** of the Centar Sarajevo Municipality.

Main advantages of Viber Chatbot applications:

1. **Availability 24/7** : Viber Chatbot is there for you 24/7. Regardless of whether you need information about the working hours of municipal services or you want to submit a request, it is possible to do so at any time.
2. **Fast and efficient communication** : Chatbot is designed to allow you to quickly solve your administrative needs. No long waits for answers or visits to municipal premises.
3. **Easy to use** : Use Viber Chatbot is simple.. Regardless of your technical skills, you can use the app effectively and get the information you need.

What services can be obtained through the Chatbot application?

1. **Registry Office**: By clicking on the option Registry Office, it is possible to access the option of requesting an extract from:
a) Birth Register b) Marriage Register c) Death Register d) Certificate of Citizenship
2. **Checking the status of the case**: Through the Chatbot application, the citizens of the Centar Sarajevo Municipality are enabled to monitor the status of their request. All that needs to be done to get that information is to click on the option "Check the status of the case" and enter the number received from the competent municipal office, after which we will receive an answer as to the status of our case.
3. **Service information** : By clicking on the "Service information" option, citizens can access information about all municipal services, and the contacts are clearly stated: telephone and e-mail of heads of municipal services who can be contacted if citizens need additional information.

Link to Viber Chatbot applications of Centar Municipality : <https://chats.viber.com/centar-sarajevo>

C. Mobile Application MojCENTAR

The mojCENTAR (myCENTAR) mobile application aims to improve and preserve the quality of public areas and infrastructure in the Centar Sarajevo Municipality. This application provides citizens with an efficient way to report various types of problems and irregularities that require attention and resolution. The mojCENTAR application was developed by the Centar Sarajevo Municipality through **the use of its internal capacities of the IT service**, and the Municipality only has to pay for its maintenance. **MojCENTAR** application enables simple and quick reporting of various types of problems that citizens notice in the Centar Sarajevo Municipality. These include the following types of problems:

- ▀ Communal problems
- ▀ Housing irregularities
- ▀ Social challenges
- ▀ Questions related to the safety of citizens
- ▀ Praises or criticism regarding the work of the Municipality

In order for citizens to be able to **describe in detail the problem or situation** they are reporting, the application allows **a description of at least 20 characters** to be entered. In addition, you have the option to attach **photos** that will further illustrate the application, making it as precise and understandable as possible for the competent services. It is important to note that myCENTAR it also allows **precise marking of the location** on the interactive map, which makes it easier problem **identification** and its faster resolution.

To enable **faster and more efficient** processing of applications, within the application it is recommended that you turn on the GPS location on your mobile device before submitting the application. In this way, the competent services will have accurate information about the location of the problem and will be able to address it more quickly.

An additional advantage of using **the mojCENTAR application is the possibility of automatically receiving reports on the status of the application directly to your mobile device.** In addition, the mojCENTAR application provides an option to enter your contact information, including **e-mail address and phone number**, so that citizens can receive notifications and information about solving problems through these channels.

With this application, the Centar Sarajevo Municipality opened the door for better communication with citizens and enabled them to actively participate in the preservation and improvement of their local community.

Currently, according to data from **GooglePlay**, this application has been downloaded and used by more than 1000+ citizens of the Centar Sarajevo Municipality.

OPĆINA CENTAR SARAJEVO

mojCENTAR

PRIJAVA KOMUNALNIH PROBLEMA

mojCENTAR

www.centar.ba

ŽELITE PRIJAVITI NEPRAVILNOSTI?

PREUZIMITE!

Download on the App Store

Available on the Google Play

Uz pomoć aplikacije prijavite komunalne probleme u par jednostavnih koraka.

Cilj usluge mojCENTAR je održavanje i povećanje kvaliteta korištenja javnih površina i infrastrukture općine Centar Sarajevo.

RJEŠAVAJMO ZAJEDNO NAŠE PROBLEME!

UOČILI STE NAPRAVLNOST?

FOTOGRAFIŠITE NAPRAVLNOSTI

PRIJAVITE NEPRAVLNOST

PRATITE NAS:

www.centar.ba

Link to the application : <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.segvic.reportcenter&pli=1>

D. Urban Lab of Centar Sarajevo Municipality

A pilot initiative of sustainable urban transformation called "Re-imagine my street " or "My imagination for my street," implemented by **the Centar Sarajevo Municipality, with the support of UNDP** in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in **partnership** with the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Sarajevo and the City of Sarajevo, represents a significant step towards creating **a better and more sustainable** urban environment for citizens of the Centar Sarajevo Municipality.

The Centar Sarajevo Municipality has joined the digital platform called Urban Lab, which can be found at <https://centar.urbanlab.ba/bs-Latn-BA> . This platform serves as an online communication channel between **citizens, local administration and experts in the field of urban transformation**, arrangement and maintenance of public spaces in Sarajevo.

The main **purpose** of the platform is to enable citizens to express **ideas, opinions and attitudes** regarding the transformation of selected public spaces in the Centar Sarajevo Municipality. Urban Lab represents the first step in the process **of urban transformation** of those spaces. The results collected through **the survey** on this platform play **a key** role in the creation of project plans for future competitions and/or the development of project solutions for the arrangement of selected locations.

In addition, the initiators of the initiative plan **to hire experts who will analyse and assess** the feasibility of the presented opinions of citizens. This **multidisciplinary** team will use the collected data to develop concrete plans for the improvement and development of selected sites in accordance with the needs and wishes of the community.

Urban Lab represents an extremely important tool for the promotion of citizens' participation in the creation of their urban environments. This platform **facilitates dialogue between local administration, experts and citizens**, thereby achieving greater transparency and democratic processes in the planning and development of the urban environment. Sarajevo. Its role is crucial in achieving the goals of sustainable urban development and creating cities that better meet the needs of its residents. This initiative represents a positive step towards creating a better future for Sarajevo and its citizens.



Projects that are currently being implemented within **Urban Lab** and on which you can see on which principle the application works:

- ▶ One of the pilot projects implemented within the project is the arrangement of the "Hastahana" park, which is located in the area of the Centar Sarajevo Municipality. **Link :** <https://centar.urbanlab.ba/bs-Latn-BA/contests/1/hastahana-javni-prostor-za-sve>
- ▶ The future vision Street Franca Lehara, **Link :** <https://centar.urbanlab.ba/bs-Latn-BA/news/6/ucestvujte-u-kreiranja-vizije-buduceg-izgleda-bulevara-franca-lehara>
- ▶ A vision "Musala" Street, **Link:** <https://centar.urbanlab.ba/bs-Latn-BA/news/8/status-procesa-urbane-transformacije-ulice-musala>

E. Forums of citizens

The organization of citizens' forums is a key mechanism for engaging and mobilizing the local community in order to work together to solve problems and improve the quality of life in the local community. These forums allow citizens to come together and actively participate in the decision-making process that affects their community.

At citizen forums, problems and challenges that affect everyday life in the local community are first **identified. After identifying these problems, a constructive discussion** about potential solutions will follow. This phase is crucial, as it allows citizens to actively contribute to the problem-solving process and agree on **priorities**.

The results of these forums are **a list of priorities** that **citizens** identified together during the discussion. These priorities serve as guidelines for the development of project ideas that will contribute to the improvement of the local community. Decisions on priorities, made by citizens in forums, form **the basis** for future joint initiatives. This initiative is further **promoted and nominated through the local community council**, which represents the interests of the local community before the competent municipal services.

It is important to note that **the successful** organization of a citizens' forum requires the presence and active role **of facilitators**. A forum facilitator is **a professional** person who is trained to facilitate and lead discussions on forums. Their role is essential, because they help the participants to structure their ideas, direct the discussion towards solutions and reach a common agreement. Facilitators play **a key** role in making it open and inclusive environment on the forums, where all participants feel welcome and respected. Training of persons for facilitation is carried out by UNDP, and in addition to persons from municipal administrations, members of local community councils are also trained for this process so that they themselves could manage the process within their community.

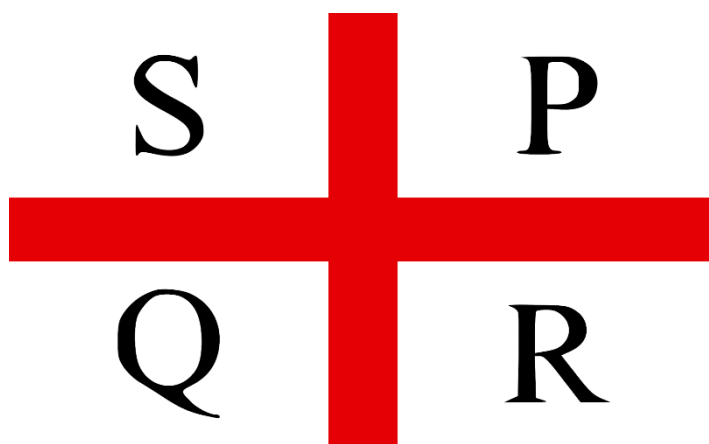
Through the organization and management of citizens' forums, space is created for the democratic participation of citizens in making decisions that directly affect them. This process strengthens the local community, improves communication between citizens and authorities, and contributes to better management and development of local communities.

The Centar Sarajevo Municipality publishes invitations on its website, in order to make the process as transparent as possible. So far, the Centar Sarajevo Municipality has held five assemblies of citizens in different local communities in 2022. The topics they discussed are related to the nomination of the projects of those local communities to the Centar Sarajevo Municipality, which ultimately decides what to do. In 2023, five citizens' forums were held, with the topics of nomination of projects, nomination of activities for maintenance in the Community Center of the Municipality - the needs of citizens, women and socially vulnerable categories of the population. Also, a forum was held in the Great Hall of the Municipality in which the review of activities and measures determined by the Operational Plan for the implementation of the Vision of Local Communities in the Centar Sarajevo Municipality was discussed and the harmonization of approaches for its implementation.

III.

REGGIO EMILIA

III. REGGIO EMILIA



Flag of Reggio Emilia

Full name: *Comune di Reggio Emilia*

Population : 171,944

Budget: €300,000,000 (2023)

Head: Luca Vecchi, *Partito Democratico* (PD – Democratic Party)

Web : <https://www.comune.re.it/>

Municipality of Reggio Emilia is located in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy. It is known for its rich history, cultural heritage and progressive approach to education. Reggio Emilia is also known for its advanced and innovative pedagogy in preschool education, which has attracted international recognition. This beautiful municipality also offers a wide range of cultural activities, including museums, exhibitions and theatres. With its lively squares, picturesque streets and rich gastronomic offer, Reggio Emilia offers visitors a unique experience that delights and wins the hearts of its residents and visitors.

Good practices

A. Consultas – a platform for citizen participation in decision-making

Consultas serve as a platform for dialogue which, when placed in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, can be compared to the institution of local communities (*mjesne zajednice*). They serve to develop cooperation and communication between the city administration and the local community, ensuring participatory decision-making processes in Reggio Emilia. Reggio Emilia is the only local government unit that has established this participatory mechanism in Italy, and they consider it successful and show good results. Reggio Emilia consists of 55 districts, which, based on the territory where they are located, are grouped into nine Consulta, from which a total of 124 members are elected who represent the interests of their local community and participate in the decision-making process.

About Consulta components :

- Universal suffrage: All individuals over the age of 16 have the right to vote in Consulta elections, which allows for broad representation and inclusiveness ;
- Gender equality and representation of persons under the age of 25: Consulta ensures gender equality and representation of persons under the age of 25 through non-elected representatives from social centres, trade unions, schools and the third sector - the term non-elected representatives means representatives of organizations/groups who automatically receive one place in Consulta (youth, representatives of social centres, trade unions, schools and tertiary/service sector);
- Facilitator : The municipality appoints facilitator which will support functioning of Consulta;
- Number members of a Consulta – No of the participants of the Consulta work varies of quarter to quarter. On average, the number members varies from 15 to 42 selected representatives, on what of course size also affects neighbourhood and number citizen who is represented on certain area.
- Enabling communication with the municipal councillors : Na meetings Consulta attendance is mandatory two councillors, who are delegated for participation in front current political of the majority which proposals Consulta they record and deliver Municipal council on consideration and adoption. Next to mandatory presence of the majority, that is representatives two Councillors, for there must be participation insured the presence of councillors which is coming

from opposition, they serve like corrective factor and monitor processes from of the other angle.



Role of Consulta :

- Understanding and analysing the city's needs: Consulta improves the understanding and analysis of the city's needs by including every single city neighbourhood in the decision-making process.
- Involvement of residents: Consulte encourages the involvement of individual and connected residents, encouraging discussions and dialogues about neighbourhood issues with the city administration.
- Reporting and program proposals: Consulte prepares a written report on by October 31 of each year, which provides program input for the Unilateral Programming Document (unilateral programming is the system that local governments in Italy must go through when forming a budget based on the Sustainable Development Goals - SDG. Therefore, each of the departments must submit its goals that are in line with the goals of sustainable development defined

by the mayor of Reggio Emilia when taking over the mandate and the municipal services, guided by that process, submit their budget proposals and the work plan of the department) and the budget preparation process.

Consulta powers :

- Submission of questions and petitions: Consulta may submit questions and petitions to the City Council, the Mayor or the Board of Directors regarding matters specific to the area in which they operate;
- Organizing listening and dialogue sessions: Consulta convenes moments of listening, dialogue and information in each neighbourhood, facilitating engagement with city services and Council members;
- Setting the agenda: Consulta can request the inclusion of certain issues of territorial interest in the agenda of the Municipal Council.

The Consulta duration of mandate and manner of functioning:

- Term of office: Consulta operates for five years, even if there is a change in the municipal council. Valuable notes is that all the work is in Consulta unpaid, how for councillors which attend meetings so also for other selected members Consult.
- Functioning : Consulta follows method deliberations and implements their own activities in municipal halls, social centres and neighbourhood houses.
- Coordinators : Two coordinators, one male and one female woman, they are chosen from among members of each Consulta. These duties are performed voluntarily.

Through the consulta model, the Municipality of Reggio Emilia promotes deliberative democracy, inclusivity and neighbourhood participation in the shaping of public policy guidelines. Consulta Reggio Emilia serves as a valuable mechanism for citizen involvement, ensuring that the city's decisions and actions reflect the needs and aspirations of its residents.

B. The Hamlet application

The main goal of Hamlet is to facilitate the exchange of information and the connection of all entities that make up the social structure, including citizens, associations, the City, schools, community centres, churches and business entities. This effort is intended to support and improve relationships within the community.

Impact Huba Reggio Emilia coordinated the established network of organizations on the ground providing services. This network includes organizations that already exist in the territory of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia and whose activity coincides with the strategy of strengthening local services. In addition to contributing to the creation of the digital identity of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, these centres accompany citizens in their journey through the process of digital education.



This experiment, known as the Hamlet app, is taking place as part of a wider regional and national digital plan. The goal of that plan is to develop competencies and awareness of the digital society, and to create skills that are necessary for the active participation of citizens in decision-making processes. The Hamlet application is still in the experimental phase and is currently being applied in three neighbourhoods: San Bartolomeo, Codemondo and Santa Croce.

Thanks to the digital tools that Hamlet provides, information exchange and collaborative planning become much simpler processes. This innovative platform contributes to strengthening citizen participation in public decision-making processes, which is key to building a more inclusive and participatory local society. For this reason, Hamlet stands out as an extremely useful tool for establishing a dialogue between citizens and the city administration in Reggio Emilia.

In three pilot districts, the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Unimore) conducted a complex process of research and listening, identifying social actors and the networks that connect them. This

key information is used to personalize Hamlet, adapting it to the specific characteristics of each neighbourhood. The Hamlet in Reggio Emilia application should provide the following services:

1. A tool for establishing dialogue between the Municipality and citizens;
2. Support and platform for proposing projects that will be implemented in city districts;
3. An open mechanism for better exchange of information and communication between different actors.

This innovative approach will be accompanied by a free digital literacy course. The course will be led by Digital Freaks, a community of digital innovators created within the Chiostri San Pietro Cluster - Social Innovation Laboratory. Their goal is the spread of digital and technological culture, as well as the connection of social, economic and inclusive competences.

C. InfoGiovani - a network for young people

InfoGiovani is a welcoming place that combines the possibility of informal education and practical training. It is a service intended for young people from the Reggio Emilia area, between the ages of 14 and 35, and serves as a platform for young people where all the necessary information is available. That information ranges from:

- Orientation: guiding high school students in the process of choosing a faculty, training and career options;
- Training and Work: providing effective information for young people to orient themselves and make choices for their future;
- Participation: participating in various activities promoted in the environment and creating responsibility towards one's local community;
- Free time : orientation and information about various events that happen in their environment ;
- Cultural events : assisting in the organization of events.



In this regard, **INFOGIOVANI** has put together a set for young people the possibilities and **services it provides**, which are:

1. **Info desk:** At InfoGiovani, operators listen and provide information, give advice on services and opportunities in the area, collect and analyse data that is useful for mapping the needs and demands of young people.
2. **Post High School Orientation and Graduation Meetings:** InfoGiovani organizes meetings, often in cooperation with experts, to present a wide range of training and job offers in the area.
3. **Young Protagonists:** Young Protagonists are a series of projects where you can be an active citizen in your own area, using skills and dedicating time to the local community. On InfoGiovani you can find information and participate in already active projects that are being implemented in the Reggio Emilia area.
4. **Promotion of exchange of experiences among peers:** InfoGiovani is a place where different experiences can be connected through dialogue and discussion.

5. **Youth Associations and Via Cassoli Network:** InfoGiovani, which shares space with the #via-Cassoli1 network, informs and monitors the establishment of formal groups and/or youth associations.
6. **Help with writing a resume (CV):** On InfoGiovani it is possible to get help with writing a resume (CV), which serves young citizens as a form of help when applying for jobs, education, universities and many other things.
7. **Information about community service:** Universal civil service (The goal is to promote the individual and professional development of young people and their acquisition of skills through informal forms of learning. Young participants carry out activities in partnership with institutions within projects that last between 8 and 12 months) enables young people, pupils, students an educational experience of civic growth and social participation.

Support in the promotion of cultural events: On InfoGiovani it is possible to get all the information for the organization of events and manifestations as well as help in the promotion of events. InfoGiovani provides space on its website for the promotion of events, and also by promoting the event in the space itself, so that the response is as large as possible.

D. Chiostri San Pietro Cluster – Laboratory for Social Innovation

Given its historical importance, the San Pietro monastery cluster aims to become a cultural and exhibition centre of international importance. With the establishment of the Open Laboratory within the complex itself, one of the strategic goals was achieved, i.e. orientation towards the modern world in order to create a centre for social innovation in that area. This centre is a place of participation, discussion and open innovation in the field of personal and digital services that serve citizens and local and regional authorities in Reggio Emilia.

Open laboratory of Emilia- Romagna

Like all its offices, the Open Laboratory in Reggio Emilia is a place where forms of discussion, cooperation and joint action are developed between companies, citizens, the third sector, universities, the world of research and public administration. It is an opportunity for different subjects and different skills to meet, exchange knowledge, stimulate critical thinking and generate innovative ideas that encourage the exchange and contamination of social, economic and technological knowledge.



Namely, the monastery is the site of one of the ten Open Laboratories, and is part of the key element **of the Urban Agenda Por Fesr for Emilia-Romagna**, a project that was implemented from 2014 to 2020. The goal of establishing this open laboratory is to promote "attractive and participatory cities" and to connect the topics of urban quality of cities with social innovation.

Open laboratories are places where a digital and creative community develops, as well as a competitive and dynamic tertiary¹ economy for the city and the entire region. In this regard, the Chiostris San Pietro Open Laboratory has two key items:

- ▀ **Mission** : The mission of the San Pietro cluster is to promote the development of a centre of cultural production and social innovation that will foster an ecosystem of local actors, including institutions, public administration, companies, universities, schools, third sector organizations and talents in the fields of culture, creativity, innovation and new technologies.
- ▀ **Vision** : urban development project: The cluster wants to be the heart and initiator of an urban development project aimed at cooperation, development of entrepreneurship and social

¹ The tertiary economy is a sector of the economy that deals with the provision of services, rather than the production of goods. This sector encompasses a wide range of services, including healthcare, education, trade, financial services, tourism, hospitality, consulting, information technology and many others.

sustainability. The project is based on open and participatory innovation and the meeting of different subjects and skills.

In particular, the Open Lab in Reggio Emilia experiments with open and participatory forms of design and bases its activities on new dimensions of commons and digital culture. The laboratory animates **the regional** community of social **innovation, experiments and develops new solutions** in terms of services, products, organizations and processes to respond to the old and new needs of the community and territory in the logic of open innovation.

The specific and basic **goals** of the Open Laboratory are:

- Develop, spread the values and principles of social innovation;
- Develop and spread innovative solutions in the field of personal services, with special emphasis on the areas of social welfare, culture and education.

Several projects are being implemented within the Chiostri di San Pietro Cluster. Some of the projects being implemented are:

- Digital freaks community: Digital Freaks is a community of digital innovators created in 2021 during the first incubation process for socially useful entrepreneurship promoted by Open Laboratory. The goal of this community is to spread digital and technological culture, connect social, economic and technological knowledge and develop innovative skills aimed at inclusion and ethical reuse. More about it at the link: <https://www.chiostrisanpietro.it/lab-in-chiostri/digital-freaks/>
- **Make in Chiostri** – Learning by doing : an experimental project that is realized through five different workshops based on digital creativity and design as an opportunity to learn general skills and digital skills. Those five workshops are:
 - 1. Fabulous plastic** - a project through which the importance of recycling plastic packaging is explained to children and environmental protection is promoted;
 - 2. Space STEAM:** Through a space travel story, boys and girls are encouraged to think and solve problems by combining cognitive skills with imaginative elements. Other thematic content is also covered, such as the perception of taste in the absence of gravity and the relationship between man and machine.
 - 3. Architects for a day** : A learning experience in an outdoor context, combining elements of design, measurement, computation, geometry and spatial orientation. Boys and girls develop a model of their school's garden, adding architectural elements of their own design to encourage the development of creativity and imagination linked to the real task;

4. Design with Taste – Edible City : In these workshops, boys and girls have the opportunity to choose a challenge and work on making food molds, starting with making their own drawing. Food becomes a tool and an opportunity to build a virtual path to discover and valorise San Pietro ;

5. Special project 2°C: A special project that arose from a dialogue with boys and girls and that led to a joint review of some areas of the Marconi elementary school. Through the use of digital tools and technologies, we work on mapping the school, children explore tastes and aromas using the "rosette", or "pop up" object, designed by the architect Francesco Bombardi. Rosetta is a tool for connecting food with colours, flavours with geometric shapes.

More information about the projects and activities being implemented can be found on the page: <https://www.chiostrisanpietro.it/lab-in-chiostri/>

E. Foundation E35

The E35 Foundation was founded in April 2015 as a result of a joint project of local authorities and their numerous members: the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, Province of Reggio Emilia, Pietro Foundation Manodori, Reggio Chamber of Commerce Emilia and CRPA (Center for Livestock Production Research). It is worth pointing out that the E35 Foundation is a key partner in this project that enabled the realization of the project, by actively participating in the organization of the visit to Italy and as part of the delegation that visited the Centar Sarajevo Municipality in October 2023.

This cooperation stems from the need to support the European and international promotion of the region in order to attract financial resources, companies, partnerships and incentive conditions for local development policies, and as support for local authorities and their associations.

The E35 Foundation aims at the international promotion of the territory and the Reggio system Emilia by including institutions, companies and associations in the topics of economic, social and international cooperation. For this reason, it builds and manages contacts throughout Europe and the world to discover projects capable of bringing local policies, management strategies and land development to an international level.

It is an innovative way of attracting economic and human resources and strengthening the role of the territory of Reggio Emilia at the European level, enabling participation in consultations and projects and the development of innovations, the exchange of experiences and the transfer of expert knowledge on issues and policies of interest related to education, research, the economy, but also mobility, the environment and intercultural policies.

The E35 foundation deals with three things in the framework of work with the local community, and it refers to:

- 1. International relations :** The E35 Foundation has contacts with different parts of the world and promotes the international relations of the city of Reggio Emilia in order to implement projects and work on the promotion of the Emilia-Romagna region itself and the Municipality of Reggio Emilia. This strategic goal has the task of improving existing international relations in favour of new areas of activity such as: education, economy, solidarity, economic development, culture, work, integration and social protection.
- 2. Twinning of cities :** The E35 Foundation is responsible for managing the partnership relations established by the Municipality and the Province of Reggio Emilia to facilitate the exchange of human, cultural and economic goods. Partnership relations represent the foundation and the most visible form of European and international cooperation. The importance of precise management of partnership relations and projects lies in the benefits that the entire community can derive from it: supporting the growth of innovative practices in terms of public policies, research and economic development, but also strengthening the system of international contacts, which form the basis for starting a favourable cycle of projects and constant comparison at the supranational level.. Among other things, the E35 Foundation is one of the most deserving elements of the twinning between the Centar Sarajevo Municipality and Reggio Emilia, and the employees of the Foundation are actively working to establish relationships, projects and exchanges.
- 3. Project management:** The E35 Foundation implements several European and non-European projects in order to include local stakeholders, the service sector, civil society, schools and all socio-economic actors within networks and platforms of international city comparisons. These projects are a treasure for all the actors involved and can bring benefits to the community. Participation in this type of project, which includes numerous foreign partners, creates a territorial system of strong relations with a stronger role in defining, developing and managing European and international policies. The value of these projects is not only reflected in the fact that they are important actors at the international level, but also in the ability to attract, exchange and generate investments, competences, relations and European and international strategies.

The organizations that are closest to such Foundations would be the development agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, of which municipalities or cantons in certain cases are the founders. Such agencies already exist in Bosnia and Herzegovina, e.g. The Department for Development and International Projects in Gradiška - but they do not act as a separate body from the City unlike the E35 Foundation and certainly not in the capacity in which the E35 Foundation acts.



F. YoungERCard

YoungERCard is a valuable resource designed to benefit young people between the ages of 14 and 29 who live, study and work in the Emilia region Romagna. This free card offers many benefits that ultimately contribute to improving the lives of young residents.

Purpose of YoungERCard

The YoungERCard has the dual purpose of providing access to various benefits within the region:

- Support for cultural and fair trade consumption: The card facilitates a culture of cultural and fair trade consumption, providing access to exclusive discounts in many shops throughout the Emilia region Romagna. It encourages young people to spend responsibly and conscientiously, promoting local businesses and fair trade practices.
- Participation in volunteer projects: In addition to discounts, YoungERCard offers the opportunity to earn points through participation in volunteer projects known as "Young Protagonists" initiatives. By engaging in these projects, young cardholders can actively contribute to their communities and region while accumulating benefits and rewards.



To be informed about the businesses and institutions participating in the YoungERCard program, card users can refer to the regularly updated list on the official YoungERCard website : www.younger-card.it.

This program could be very useful and interesting for municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Municipalities could get in touch with various institutions located in the territory of the Municipality and offer the possibility of cooperation in order to create a card that could be useful to young volunteers. This can include public transport, recreational centres, discounts in certain shops, which could certainly intrigue the younger population and strengthen their interest in participating in the work of their local community. In this way, young people could participate in socially responsible work, and also benefit from it.

IV. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this handbook on good practices for local governments emphasizes the importance of applying the identified measures in order to improve the quality of life of citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The handbook contains 12 measures that have proven to be successful in both municipalities involved in this project, and we at IREI believe that other local governments should consider them and adapt them to their specific capabilities.

Some of these measures, such as the Chiostri San Pietro Cluster, provide excellent opportunities for local governments to make unused spaces available to citizens and civil society, encouraging them to shape these spaces and organize different activities and workshops, useful events that benefit people of all ages. population groups. Also, measures such as e-babies make administrative procedures easier for parents in one of the most important moments of their lives.

The practices of the Center Municipality, such as citizen forums, emphasize the importance of involving citizens in decision-making processes at the local level. Examples of applications such as Hamlet or Consulta raise that aspect to a higher level, enabling citizens to participate through online platforms and access transparent communication with the Municipality and its representatives.

These are just some of the examples that, we hope, will inspire readers to actively get involved in their local communities and raise the processes of participation and transparency to the highest possible level, thereby improving the lives of citizens in their municipalities.



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