BUSINESS THAT HELPS:

TRANSFORM PROBLEMS INTO OPPORTUNITIES



Co-funded by
the European Union


PITCH YOUR SUSTAINABLE IDEA

PITCH YOUR SUSTAINABLE IDEA | Publication #01/2026

Business that helps: Transform problems into opportunities
© August 2026 | All rights reserved

This publication is a result of the KA210 Small Scale Partnership project, Pitch Your Sustainable Idea, funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

The project is implemented by:

- *Mladoevropani z.s. (Czech Republic)*
- *Tinerii 3D (Romania)*
- *Excel (North Macedonia)*

The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of its authors and does not reflect the views of the European Commission. Furthermore, the European Commission is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.

Co-funded by the European Union

Table of contents

About the project 5

Aims of the project 6

How to use this handbook? 7

What is a social enterprise? 8

From idea to implementation 9

National competitions 10

Pitch like a pro 14

Grand Finale in Skopje 15

Meet our AI chatbot 16

Stories that inspire 17

Czechia 17

North Macedonia 23

Romania 26

About us 27

About the project

We helped young people turn community problems into sustainable ideas

Pitch Your Sustainable Idea was an international educational project for young people who wanted to make a difference in their communities through entrepreneurship with added value. Participants from the Czech Republic, Romania and North Macedonia learned how to develop their own social enterprise ideas that address real problems.

The project combined practical workshops, teamwork, mentoring and an innovative use of artificial intelligence. Its main activity was a multi-round international competition that ended in an international Grand Finale in Skopje, where the best teams presented their projects to a professional jury.

Find more about the project on our website!

Aims of the project

What we set out to achieve

1. Develop young people's entrepreneurial and practical skills
2. Support young people from regions with higher unemployment and fewer opportunities
3. Show that social entrepreneurship can be a viable and sustainable model
4. Connect young people with mentors, experts and inspiring social enterprises
5. Create and test an AI chatbot to help navigate social entrepreneurship
6. Strengthen active citizenship, initiative and responsibility
7. Build collaboration between the Czech Republic, Romania and North Macedonia

How to use this handbook

Your idea deserves a plan

This handbook is one of the results of the project. It collects what participants learned and experienced, so that anyone with an idea can follow the same path: from a first spark to a real project.
Inside you'll find

- The key steps from idea to implementation
- How our national competitions worked
- Tips for presenting your idea
- A look at the Grand Finale
- An AI chatbot that keeps mentoring you
- 9 real stories of social enterprises from our three countries

**Tip: You don't need prior experience.
All you need is a pencil, a piece of paper
and the motivation.**

What is a social enterprise?

A social enterprise is a business that exists to solve a social or environmental problem. It earns money by selling products or services, and it reinvests that money in its mission.

The key ingredients

A real problem: Something that matters in your community
A real solution: One that works for people and for the planet
A real business model: One that can sustain itself

Did you know?

Social entrepreneurship is not charity and it is not "just business". **It combines both.** In this brochure you'll meet 11 social enterprises that prove it works.

From idea to implementation

5 steps to your own social enterprise

1 Identify the problem
Look around your community. What bothers people? Talk to them, and check that the problem is worth solving.

2 Design your solution
Create a solution with both social and economic impact. Who does it help, and how does it make money?

3 Make a simple budget and operational plan
What do you need to start? What will it cost? Who does what?

4 Think about customers, partners and sustainability
Who will use or pay for your solution? Who can help you? How will the project last?

5 Get feedback and improve
Ask mentors, experts and people from your target group. Then adjust your plan.

Participants worked in teams of 2–3 people and received feedback from trainers and mentors with experience in entrepreneurship and social projects.

National competition

Test your idea. Win your place.

Each participating country held its own national competition. Teams presented their social enterprise ideas to a jury, and the winners from each country advanced to the international Grand Finale.

How did it work?

Who? Teams of 2–3 young people aged 16 to 22





What? Teams presented their idea, the problem, the solution and the plan

Where & when? Prague, Craiova & Skopje; Spring 2026





The prize? A place in the Grand Finale for the 2 top teams from each country

National competition

Czechia

BRAKO

The idea is trying to offer students sustainable way how to equip an apartment in the dorms via renting the appliances for daily use instead of buying them.





Dog Day Care

Project is connecting dog owners with lonely pensioners who can take their dogs for walks, earn some money while getting social contact and excercise.





National competition

Romania

Mama's Sweets

Bakery with a clear mission of helping single mothers with providing them job that has flexible hours in order to combine with their responsibilities towards their kids.

PetVibe

PetVibe provides opportunities for people with disadvantaged backgrounds. It creates a space focused on animals – animal friendly café, hotel for animals for owners who have to leave the country and minor veterinarian services.



National competition

North Madedonia

Agro Link

A soil-moisture sensor that switches irrigation pumps on and off automatically, reducing water use in agriculture.



Atelier

Discarded barrels and canisters are cleaned, repaired and turned into furniture for bars, restaurants, schools and outdoor events.







Pitch like a pro: Tips for your own presentation

Social impact – The project must address a clearly defined community problem and demonstrate a measurable, positive effect on people or the planet. It should aim to empower local communities or support marginalized groups rather than solely focusing on financial return.

Innovation – The idea should offer a novel or creative solution to an existing issue, whether through a fresh business model or an inventive approach. It can also leverage modern tools, such as AI, to enhance the reach or effectiveness of its implementation.

Sustainability – The enterprise must have a viable financial and operational model that allows it to self-sustain through revenue rather than relying permanently on grants. It must also maintain environmental responsibility and long-term viability.

Feasibility – The solution must be realistic and achievable within the team's capacity, backed by a clear operational plan and budget. The jury evaluates whether the team can realistically execute the project from idea to implementation.

Scalability – The initiative should hold potential for growth, demonstrating that the model can be expanded or replicated in other communities or regions. It should show a path toward increasing its long-term impact beyond its initial scope.

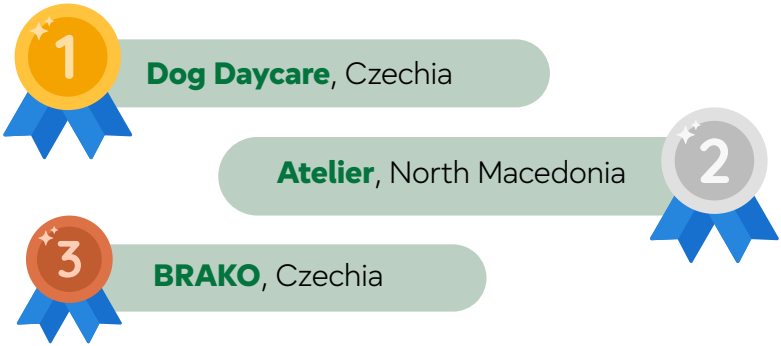
Grand finale in Skopje

3rd – 8th JULY 2026 | Skopje, North Macedonia

The Grand Finale was a reward in itself: a six-day trip to North Macedonia where the best teams from the Czech Republic, Romania and North Macedonia came together.
What we experienced

- Presented projects to a professional jury of experts in entrepreneurship and social innovation
- Prizes worth EUR 2,000 to support start of the business
- Met inspiring people and young changemakers from other countries
- Visits of local social enterprises
- Explored cultural landmarks
- Received feedback on our projects

And the winners were...



Meet our AI chatbot

We have created an original AI chatbot for anyone with entrepreneurial ambitions. It guides you through social entrepreneurship from the first idea to implementation, even after the workshops are over.

It can help you with

Your business plan: structure, ideas, next steps
Legal guidance: understand the basics before you start
Inspiration: find new angles for your idea

Answers are localized toward partner countries' legal systems

Scan here

STORIES THAT INSPIRE

11 SOCIAL ENTERPRISES,
3 COUNTRIES,
1 PROOF THAT IT WORKS.

Behind every successful social enterprise is someone who saw a problem and decided to do something about it. On the next pages you'll find three stories from each partner country. Scan the QR codes to read the full articles on our partners' websites. The articles are available in English and local language.

Czechia

Etincelle – Meaningful Work Through Everyday Experiences

Prague and the surrounding region are full of cafés and bistros. However, Mezi řádky, a network of cafés and bistros operated by Czech social enterprise group Etincelle, works both ways. It serves you a good cup of coffee and a snack while also providing jobs for people who may find it harder to be employed.

Their main goal is to create job opportunities for people with disabilities. It all started with the idea that "it is normal to be different". They decided to give people with disabilities an opportunity to develop their talents so they can live independent and meaningful lives.



Today, almost 200 of them work for Etincelle. Fifteen years of their work have proved that a disability is not an obstacle. Every time you visit one of their cafés or purchase their products, you confirm it.



The concept has grown considerably since its beginnings. The flagship Mezi řádky café is located in Prague's Smíchov district and has twice received the title of Café of the Year in Prague 5. The organisation has expanded to 16 establishments, including locations at Charles University's Faculty of Arts, Prague City Hall, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and several other institutions and companies.

Apart from cafés and bistros, Etincelle has much more to offer. It has its own artisan bakery, U Dvou rohlíků, and a small coffee roastery in Šumava. The menu includes daily lunch options, desserts, pasta salads and poké bowls. Customers visit not only to support its cause but also for good food, coffee and a pleasant café experience. Etincelle also grows fruit, vegetables and herbs on its farm in Ledce, makes dog biscuits, and runs laundry and cleaning teams that maintain public areas and greenery. It is currently working on opening the Mezi lesy guesthouse and bistro in Šumava.

Mezi řádky gives even a cup of coffee a bigger meaning. It represents employment opportunities, independence and a more inclusive labour market for people with disabilities.

AMADEA – Creating Joy Through Woodcraft

AMADEA combines traditional craftsmanship, modern technology and social employment to create a wide range of wooden products, from home accessories and jewellery to decorative items and nativity scenes. Since 2002, the Czech company has provided meaningful work for people with disabilities and health disadvantages, helping them develop their skills and participate in working life. Its approach shows how a successful business can combine creative products with social inclusion.

Read the full article



Švadlenky – Sewing Opportunities for a Better Future

Švadlenky is a social enterprise established by the Czech organisation Aufori during the COVID-19 pandemic to help people facing financial hardship and social exclusion earn their own income. What began with the production of reusable face masks has grown into a sewing workshop offering handmade textile products, custom sewing and ironing services. By providing paid work and allowing people to use their skills, Švadlenky turns a response to crisis into a lasting opportunity for social inclusion.

Read the full article



Jasan – Growing organic food and an inclusive community.

Jasan is a social enterprise founded in 2020 on an organic farm in South Moravia, Czech Republic. It grows seasonal vegetables and produces organic delicacies such as syrups, jams, pestos, and chutneys. The farm employs people with intellectual and physical disabilities and mental health conditions, adapting tasks to their individual abilities. Beyond farming, Jasan promotes biodiversity, cares for the surrounding landscape, and raises farm animals. It also collaborates with a Waldorf school, offering students hands-on experience with sustainable agriculture. Through its farm activities, educational initiatives, and inclusive community, Jasan brings people closer to nature while creating meaningful opportunities for everyone.

Read the full article





Dobroty s Příběhem – Creating jobs through homemade delicacies

Dobroty s příběhěm is a Czech social enterprise that grew out of a therapeutic workshop run by Portus Praha over 20 years ago. Based in Davle near Prague, it employs 15 people with special needs, helping them gain confidence, independence, and a sense of belonging. The company produces high-quality Czech delicacies, including marinated cheeses, pickled sausages, and other specialties. Its marinated Hermelín cheese has received the Regional Food Award of the Central Bohemian Region. Customers can purchase its products in shops, cafés, restaurants, and through its online store. By combining honest food production with meaningful employment, Dobroty s příběhem demonstrates how social entrepreneurship can improve lives and build a more inclusive society.

Read the full article





North Macedonia

Irina Tosheva – Sustainable and Socially Responsible Fashion

Founded in 2012, this Macedonian fashion brand combines creativity with social and environmental responsibility, using fashion as a tool to promote equality. It relies on upcycled materials, certified fabrics, and eco-friendly dyes, while operating a made-to-order production model to minimize waste. The brand actively collaborates with marginalized women facing employment barriers, including women in prison, offering fair wages, preserving traditional craftsmanship, and raising awareness about key social issues.

Read the full article







Coffee Mates – Innovative Use of Coffee Waste

Founded by young innovators Petar Stefanovski and Nikola Vuchkov, this Skopje-based social and environmental enterprise transforms everyday organic coffee waste into valuable, practical products. By collecting and processing coffee grounds from local cafés, restaurants, and hotels, the company promotes a circular economy and reduces landfill waste. Their flagship innovation is stylish eyeglass frames crafted from a blend of recycled coffee grounds and biomaterials, with further applications like organic plant fertilizers currently in development.

Read the full article



Mama Organa – Eco-Friendly Fertilizers and Family Support

Established in 2017 in Skopje, Mama Organa is an eco-friendly social enterprise that blends environmental sustainability with social inclusion. The company produces high-quality natural fertilizers, gardening substrates, and soil improvers by collecting and composting organic food waste, having already diverted over 200 tonnes of biowaste from landfills. Crucially, the enterprise creates meaningful employment and financial independence for marginalized single-parent families, particularly single mothers, while promoting plastic-free local production.

Read the full article



Romania

Mesteshukar ButiQ – Traditional Craft, New Markets

Mesteshukar ButiQ connects Roma artisans in Romania with contemporary designers, bringing traditional craftsmanship into modern markets. By supporting product development, branding and sales, it helps artisans earn income from their skills while preserving cultural heritage and challenging stereotypes about Roma communities.

Read the full article



UtilDeco – Building an Inclusive Social Economy

UtilDeco, founded by ADV Romania, creates employment opportunities for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups through a commercially sustainable business. Its services include document archiving, printing and the production of workwear and protective equipment. Profits are reinvested in social programmes, while its wider network supports employment, entrepreneurship and social innovation.

Read the full article



Ateliere Fără Frontiere – Turning Waste into Opportunities

Ateliere Fără Frontiere combines environmental action with social inclusion. By collecting and reusing discarded equipment and materials, it reduces waste while creating jobs and professional opportunities for people facing barriers to employment. Its model demonstrates how a circular economy can generate both environmental benefits and meaningful social impact.

Read the full article



About us

Mladoevropani, Czechia

Mladoevropani (Young Europeans) is an independent non-profit organization focused on non-formal youth education, promoting active citizenship, and building a sustainable future. Find more about our mission on **www.mladoevropani.eu** or scan this QR!

Excel Skopje, North Macedonia

Excel is founded by young people who have a common goal to make their place of living a better one with our main focus on encouraging young people to take active participation in their local community.

Tinerii 3D, Romania

The Association of 3D Youngsters helps young people to develop and encourage them to be actively involved in society by promoting volunteering in various activities and opportunities.

Co-funded by the European Union

Pitch Your Sustainable Idea is a KA210 project funded by the European Union under the Erasmus+ programme.


PITCH YOUR SUSTAINABLE IDEA