



# CIVIC CROWDFUNDING

DRIVING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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REPORT 2024

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Driving Community Engagement for Sustainable Development

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*"The presented report effectively and intelligently combines former theoretical findings and applications. It begins with a succinct literature review and then presents the research results based on three dimensions: roundtable discussions, surveys, and case studies. This is a unique publication. A significant contribution of this report is its cross-country analysis, which is the first of its kind in this field.*

*Moreover, the report shows that civic crowdfunding supports a variety of projects, from basic initiatives to more complex ones. Such a publication was both needed and expected. Thanks to the collaboration of an international team, readers benefit from high-quality knowledge that provides unique insights."*

**Dr. Dominika Kordela,**  
Institute of Economics and Finance  
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*"The EU co-funded report on Civic Crowdfunding makes a pioneering contribution to understanding how community-based financing can simultaneously address funding gaps, strengthen civic participation, and advance sustainable development goals. Its innovative three-pillar framework—Sustainability (raising SDG awareness), Civic Action (empowering community participation), and Crowdfunding (mobilizing financial resources)—transcends traditional financing models by demonstrating the essential interconnections between awareness-building, participatory engagement, and financial mobilization. This holistic approach not only provides theoretical advancement but also offers practical guidance for implementing effective community-led sustainability initiatives across diverse European contexts."*

**Prof. Alona Revko,**  
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## 1. Introduction

**Civic crowdfunding is an essential tool for promoting community engagement and financing projects that address social, environmental, and public needs.**

**The aim of this report is to provide insights into the findings of the SU-CCES! projects' work package, namely the evaluation of the significance of crowdfunding in promoting civic engagement and financing civic projects, as well as the investigation of the sustainability of this funding method.** For this purpose, a systematic literature review on sustainability in crowdfunding and civic crowdfunding was conducted, alongside a questionnaire assessing awareness and attitudes toward civic crowdfunding, as well as roundtable discussions and case studies.

The report is structured as follows. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the project, outlining its aims and introducing the project partners. Chapter 3 presents the results of a systematic literature review on sustainability in crowdfunding. Chapter 4 explores community needs and the potential role of crowdfunding in addressing them. Chapter 5 showcases civic crowdfunding case studies from all partner countries: Austria, Greece, Norway, Poland, and Romania—followed by a discussion of best practices. Chapter 6 examines the main findings from a survey on awareness, attractiveness, and attitudes toward civic crowdfunding conducted in partner countries. Chapter 7 concludes the report by summarizing the key insights from the roundtables and the literature review.

## **Sustainable Communities & Crowdfunding Education Support: SU-CCES!**

SU-CCES is an Erasmus+ funded project that runs from 01/10/2023 until 30/09/2026 and is carried out jointly by six European project partners under the lead of the University of Applied Sciences Krems (IMC Krems). It focuses on promoting sustainable development in local communities through civic engagement and innovative financing mechanisms, specifically crowdfunding. Crowdfunding not only raises funds but also fosters community engagement and awareness of social and civic issues, generating public support. The project aims to leverage this by promoting and teaching community engagement, especially among university students, who are future leaders. Involving students in sustainability initiatives will instill a culture of sustainability and enhance social cohesion.

The project is structured around three thematic pillars:

- I. Sustainability**
- II. Civic Action**
- III. Crowdfunding**

The first pillar focuses on raising awareness about sustainable development goals (SDGs) and promoting sustainability within communities.



The second pillar empowers individuals and communities to participate actively in sustainability efforts through resources like community forums, workshops, and training sessions.

The third pillar mobilizes financial resources for sustainable initiatives via responsible crowdfunding, encouraging communities to fund their projects independently.

By involving students in addressing community challenges, the project aims to deepen their understanding of local needs and equip them with skills to develop innovative solutions. Educational resources and engagement opportunities will foster civic responsibility and support sustainable community development. The project also seeks to educate individuals about crowdfunding benefits and risks, enabling informed participation.

To achieve its objectives, the project plans three core activities: a literature review on civic crowdfunding and social engagement, the development of pedagogical tools including educational materials, training programs, and gamification tools, and the implementation of these tools and programs in real-world settings to evaluate their effectiveness. This approach aims to promote sustainability, foster civic engagement, and provide innovative funding solutions, contributing to more equitable and sustainable communities.

## Work package N°2

### Identifying the Role of Civic Crowdfunding

Work package N°2 “Identifying the Role of Civic Crowdfunding” is led by the University of Gdańsk (UG). Its primary objective is to evaluate how crowdfunding can effectively promote civic projects and sustainability. The work package will deal with best practices, case studies, and strategies for maximizing community engagement through crowdfunding.

#### The main outcomes include:

- systematic literature review on sustainability in crowdfunding and civic crowdfunding,
- survey targeting students and local communities to gauge their awareness and attitudes towards civic crowdfunding
- report summarizing key findings and recommendations.

**Report available online:**  
**[www.su-cces.eu](http://www.su-cces.eu)**





## Project's partners

**Partner organizations originate from five European countries, Austria, Greece, Poland, Romania and Norway, and each have unique scopes of work and expertise relevant for the project.**

### **IMC Krams University of Applied Sciences (IMC Krams) - Leader**

IMC Krams was founded in 1994 and is a leading Austrian institution specializing in management and tourism. It integrates core focuses on business, digitization and engineering, health, and life sciences into its programs, emphasizing intercultural competence, foreign language skills, and a global mindset. IMC Krams has garnered a strong international reputation through participation in numerous European cooperation projects, aiming to find and implement innovative solutions for societal challenges. The Department of Business at IMC Krams, known for its practical and research-oriented education, focuses on business studies, urban and regional economic, cultural tourism, and sustainable tourism development. The university boasts highly qualified professors and a diverse expertise range, including regional economics, entrepreneurship, marketing, and sustainable economics. The university has been involved in many research projects funded by Austrian agencies and the European Union.



University of  
Applied Sciences



## The Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED)

iED is a Greek non-profit, civil society organization dedicated to promoting innovation and enhancing entrepreneurial spirit. Founded in 2005 in Larissa, Greece, iED focuses on providing developmental assistance to vulnerable populations and fostering financial and social development, particularly in health, education, social infrastructures, and human rights. Recognized as a Center of Excellence in European entrepreneurship and a Digital Innovation Hub, iED collaborates with social, academic, and business partners across Greece, the EU, and beyond to achieve its goals. The organization is actively involved in over 250 EU projects, leveraging its extensive network of over 4,200 partner organizations, including SMEs, start-ups, HEIs, and civil society organizations.



**institute of  
Entrepreneurship  
Development**

iED specializes in various fields, such as entrepreneurship, social inclusion, vocational and adult education, green and sustainability initiatives, digital transformation, and innovative business models. The organization offers a wide range of services, including research, training, e-learning platforms, and business guidance. With a team of 50 staff members, including over 20 experienced project managers, iED excels in EU project implementation and dissemination. The organization's award-winning expertise in project management and its role as a certified Center of Excellence and Digital Innovation Hub make it a valuable partner in developing and executing successful strategies for project sustainability and scalability.





## University of Gdańsk (UG)

UG is a prominent academic institution in Poland, with over 50 years of experience in education and research. It is the largest university in the Pomeranian region, hosting more than 24,000 students and 1,800 employees. UG is recognized for its modern and innovative approach, offering a wide range of programs across 11 faculties, including bachelor's and master's degrees in fields such as International Business, Digital Chemistry, and Marine Biotechnology. The university emphasizes practical education methods and maintains strong collaborations with local businesses and global higher education institutions. UG is also part of the SEA-EU alliance, a coalition of six European coastal universities dedicated to promoting education, research, and mobility.



UG excels in scientific research, particularly in sea research, and is involved in numerous international projects. It has secured substantial funding from various European programs, including Horizon 2020, EEA and Norway Grants, and Erasmus Plus. The Faculty of Economics at UG, a leading center for economics and international economic relations in Poland, offers comprehensive education and research opportunities in finance, business studies, transportation, logistics, and sustainable development.

The faculty collaborates extensively with municipalities, regional entrepreneurship incubators, and business entities, enhancing its research impact and fostering practical applications. The university's commitment to high-quality education and research, combined with its strong international presence, makes UG a significant contributor to the project.



## Baltic Institute of European and Regional Affairs (BISER)

BISER, established in 2001, plays a pivotal role in fostering cooperation among academia, public sectors, and businesses within the Baltic Sea Region. Based in Gdansk, Poland, BISER focuses on European integration, sustainable development, and enhancing regional cooperation. With a dedicated team of 15 members, BISER leverages extensive academic expertise and project experience to drive initiatives that benefit local communities and promote regional collaboration. BISER collaborates closely with Gdansk University and other higher education institutions, local authorities, and NGOs, facilitating initiatives that contribute to community development and sustainable growth.



BISER's track record includes leadership roles in numerous EU-funded projects, such as Interreg and Erasmus+, focusing on social entrepreneurship, sustainable development, and regional policy. Notably, BISER has been involved in projects like WeMakeTransition on ecosustainability, the EmPaci project on participatory budgeting, and several Erasmus+ initiatives promoting youth entrepreneurship. The organization's proficiency in project management and its strategic partnerships within the Baltic Sea Region enhance its ability to contribute effectively to the project's objectives. BISER's commitment to sustainable development and its extensive network make it a valuable partner in advancing regional cooperation and achieving project goals.



## Bucharest University of Economic Studies (BUES)

BUES offers a comprehensive range of economic and business disciplines through its thirteen faculties, including economic cybernetics, agrifood economics, international business, marketing, and finance. BUES provides education across all academic levels, with 25 bachelor programs, 78 master programs, 2 international MBA programs, and 10 doctoral schools. Notably, 30 programs are taught in foreign languages. BUES is home to approximately 23,000 students, 3.5% of whom are international, and 10% of the teaching staff are from abroad. The university holds a prominent position in international rankings, securing the top spot among Romanian universities in the Times Higher Education World University Ranking for the past four years and being highly ranked in the QS World University Ranking by Subject.



BUES has a strong international presence with 27 affiliations in global associations and networks. It has established over 250 Erasmus+ agreements and around 300 other bilateral agreements with foreign universities and is currently undergoing the AACSB international accreditation process. Recognized for its real-world impact in entrepreneurial spirit and industrial application, BUES is included in the World's Universities with Real Impact Ranking. The university demonstrates a commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, achieving high scores in gender equality, industry innovation, and poverty alleviation. With extensive experience in managing Erasmus+ KA-2 projects and a proven capacity in digital transformation, curriculum innovation, and entrepreneurial support, BUES is well-equipped to contribute effectively to the current project's goals.



## The University of Agder (UiA)

UiA is a public university in Norway with campuses in Kristiansand and Grimstad. With approximately 2,200 staff and over 14,000 students, UiA offers education through six faculties: Business and Law, Social Sciences, Fine Arts, Health and Sports Sciences, Humanities and Education, and Engineering and Science, as well as a teacher education unit. UiA has over 400 international agreements facilitating student exchanges and research collaborations. The university hosts key innovation labs, including the Mechatronics Innovation Lab, the I4Helse e-health innovation facility, and the Future Materials Norwegian Catapult Centre, and will soon house Norway's first Battery Innovation Centre. In 2020, UiA was designated a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence for its contributions to European studies.



The UiA School of Business and Law, accredited by AACSB, serves over 2,000 students with 120 staff members and offers programs from bachelor to PhD levels, including an EMBA. The School excels in crowdfunding research through its Crowdfunding Research Centre, which undertakes significant projects such as the Nordic Crowdfunding Alliance and the CrowdCulture project. The Centre's work is published in leading international journals and it hosts the Journal of Alternative Finance. Additionally, the Centre offers a pioneering educational program on crowdfunding, collaborates with industry partners, and conducts international training seminars and public advisory services.



## Methodology

**To assess the role of crowdfunding, a multi-faceted approach was utilized. It integrates a systematic literature review, comprehensive surveys, and stakeholder engagement through roundtables and the present report.**

### Systematic literature review

In the first step, a systematic literature review on sustainability in crowdfunding, specifically its application to civic projects was carried out. This review aims to identify and analyze various factors that influence the effectiveness of civic crowdfunding, such as community engagement, social justice impacts, and the practical benefits and challenges of using this funding method. For this purpose, the project team defined the goals, research questions, keywords as well as key issues and problems. A detailed search strategy was developed, including the selection of databases and sources like Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Criteria for including or excluding studies were established to ensure relevance and quality. Relevant studies were collected, and data extraction forms were used to capture essential information from each study, including study design, key findings, and limitations. The collected data was analyzed to identify common themes, trends, and gaps in literature. This included a qualitative synthesis of findings and a quantitative analysis where applicable.

### Case studies

Content analysis included five case studies from partner countries to provide practical insights into successful civic crowdfunding initiatives.

## European Civic Crowdfunding Survey

Following the literature review, a comprehensive survey, the European Civic Crowdfunding Survey, was conducted to gather data on awareness, perceived attractiveness, legitimacy, and attitudes toward civic crowdfunding among students and local communities.

The aim was to collect responses from 500 individuals, with 100 respondents from each participating country. In a preliminary step, a draft questionnaire was developed and subjected to a pilot study to test its validity and reliability. The pilot study was conducted among a smaller subset of participants to refine the survey questions and methodology based on initial feedback and data. The revised survey was then administered across the participating countries, ensuring a broad and diverse dataset.

## Community Needs and Crowdfunding Roundtables

Lastly, the project organized Community Needs and Crowdfunding Roundtables in Austria, Norway, Romania, Greece, and Poland. Participants included local NGOs, community organizations, municipalities, activists, crowdfunding specialists, and platform representatives. The interactive discussions were meaningful and focused on presenting and discussing stakeholder perspectives on civic crowdfunding, addressing key issues related to civic engagement, sustainable development, and crowdfunding strategies. Insights and feedback from these discussions diverged significantly between countries. In the next chapter, the findings and differences will be discussed in more detail.



## 2. Understanding Civic Crowdfunding

### Definition & types of crowdfunding

**Crowdfunding is a method to obtain money from large public, where each individual contributes a small amount. The collection of funds from multiple backers takes place online, frequently without the involvement of traditional financial intermediaries.**

Campaigns and initiatives financed through crowdfunding can have a commercial, social, cultural, humanitarian, political, environmental, and technological background.

There are three main stakeholders in crowdfunding: fundraisers, backers and crowdfunding platforms.

**Fundraisers**, also known as creators or campaigners, are individuals or organizations seeking public funding for specific projects. They benefit from financial support, market validation, customer relationships, cost-effective marketing, and valuable feedback for product development.

**Backers**, or supporters, provide the necessary funds. They gain by influencing product design, future consumption opportunities, and a sense of belonging to certain communities. The terminology varies based on the crowdfunding model, such as donors, sponsors, investors, or lenders.

**Crowdfunding platforms** are internet applications that connect fundraisers with potential backers and facilitate exchanges under predefined conditions. Platforms earn from success fees and additional services. Successful campaigns enhance their reputation and expand their user base. Apart from that, in civic crowdfunding also public authorities play a crucial role as they influence the landscape through regulations to ensure consumer and investor protection (Shneor R., et al., 2020a).

The benefits of crowdfunding extend beyond mere financial support. For project creators, it provides validation of their ideas by gauging public interest and support. It also allows for the building of a community around a project, fostering engagement and loyalty. Crowdfunding campaigns can serve as a powerful marketing tool, raising awareness and attracting media attention, which can be particularly valuable for new or niche projects.

However, crowdfunding is not without its challenges. One significant issue is the time and effort required to manage a successful campaign, including the creation of engaging content, active promotion, and ongoing communication with backers. Especially the all-or-nothing funding model, where funds are only released if the campaign meets its goal, adds pressure to reach targets, which can be stressful and demanding for campaigners. Additionally, the reliance on existing social networks for initial momentum can limit the reach of a campaign, potentially sidelining those without strong pre-existing support networks (Grooch et al., 2020).

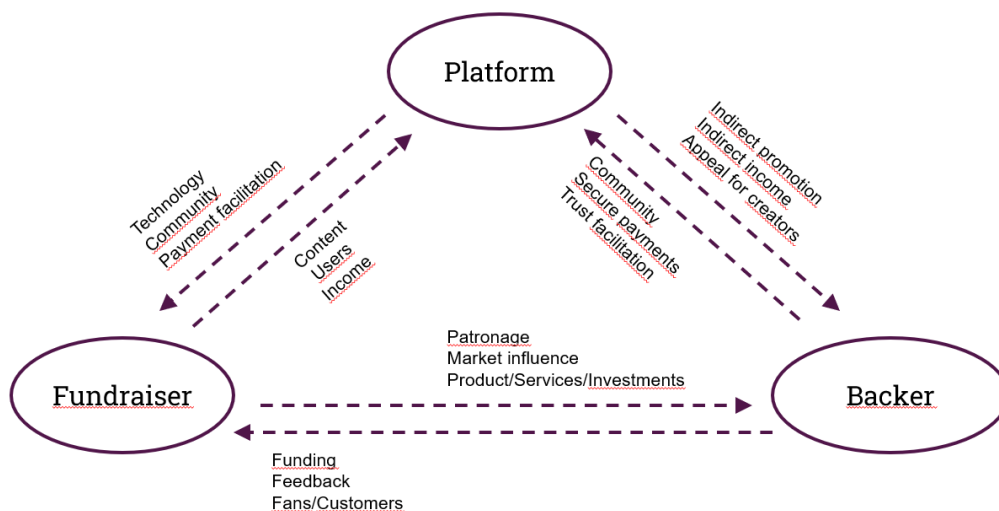
The first crowdfunding model to emerge was **debt-based**, known as peer-to-peer (P2P) or marketplace lending, established by platforms like Zopa and Prosper in 2005. This model includes platforms facilitating secured and unsecured loans to individuals or businesses, sometimes extending to balance sheet lending where the platform funds loans directly. A subset, pro-social lending, combines financial and charitable criteria, often in microfinance, aiming to improve access to financial services for disadvantaged individuals. **Equity-based** models involve individuals or institutions investing in unlisted shares or debt securities issued by businesses, typically SMEs. This model



has diversified to include real estate crowdfunding and community shares, where investments support community projects with or without financial returns.

**Reward** and **donation** crowdfunding models are the most publicly recognized, where individuals fund projects without expecting monetary returns.

Reward models involve pre-sales of products or services, while donation models offer no tangible rewards, driven by funders' sense of contributing to important causes. A variant of donation crowdfunding is patronage, involving subscription-like payments to individuals, particularly relevant for artists. Some platforms combine these models, known as hybrid models, offering extra benefits to funders and fundraisers (Shneor R., 2020b).



## Crowdfunding stakeholders

Source: Shneor R., et al. (2020a)

A crowdfunding campaign includes all the public information provided about a fundraising effort by an individual or organization which specifies all related objectives, plans, conditions, and rewards/expected returns of the project and/or business seeking the funding. It is an innovative in the sense that citizens collectively finance public projects through online contributions, an approach that merges traditional crowdfunding methods, typically used for entrepreneurial and creative ventures, with grassroots community engagement, enabling the funding of local initiatives (Brent & Lorah, 2019).

The campaign's success often depends on effectively communicating the project's goals, benefits, and needs to potential backers, engaging

them both emotionally and intellectually (European Investment Bank, 2020).

Key elements of a crowdfunding campaign include setting a clear campaign goal and funding target, which specifies the amount of money needed and the timeframe for raising these funds (Grooch et al., 2020). Incentives for backers are also a crucial component of crowdfunding campaigns. Depending on the campaign type, these incentives might include tangible rewards, like products or services, or intangible benefits, such as being part of a community or receiving updates on the project's progress (Stiver et al., 2015a).





Effective communication and promotion are vital to the success of a crowdfunding campaign. This involves creating compelling narratives, producing engaging content such as videos and graphics, and maintaining consistent updates throughout the campaign. Promotion strategies typically include

leveraging social media, email marketing, and press outreach to increase visibility and attract potential contributors. The campaign's story should resonate with the target audience, clearly explaining the project's vision, impact, and why it merits support (Grooch et al., 2020).

## Crowdfunding models

| Generic Model         | Specific Model | Example and definition  |
|-----------------------|----------------|---|
| <b>Investment</b>     | Debt           | P2P / Marketplace Consumer Lending - Funders provide a loan to a consumer borrower.<br>Micro-Finance - Funders provide a low sum loan to entrepreneurs who are often economically disadvantaged and marginalized. |
|                       | Equity         | Funders purchase registered securities or equity from a business, mostly early-stage companies.   |
| <b>Non-investment</b> | Reward         | Backers provide funding in exchange for non-monetary rewards or products (common pre-purchase of products).   |
|                       | Donation       | Backers provide funding to individuals, projects, or companies based on philanthropic or civic motivations with no expectation of monetary or material benefit.   |

Source: Shneor R., (2020b)

## Public goods & services

Public goods are resources that are non-excludable and non-rivalrous in consumption. This means that individuals cannot be excluded from their use, and one person's use does not diminish the availability for others. Classic examples of public goods include clean air, national defence, and public parks. These goods are typically provided by the government because their nature makes it difficult to charge individuals directly for their use, leading to under provision if left to the private market (Brent & Chan, 2019).

Public services, on the other hand, refer to services provided by the government to its citizens, either directly or through financing other entities. These services are designed to improve the quality of life

and ensure access to essential needs, such as education, healthcare, transportation, and safety services. Unlike public goods, public services may not always be non-excludable or non-rivalrous. For instance, while education is a public service, it can be excludable if there are tuition fees or admission requirements (Van Montfort et al., 2020; Logue & Grimes, 2019).

Civic crowdfunding has emerged as a novel mechanism for funding public goods and services at the local level. It has been praised for increasing public participation and democratizing the planning process by allowing residents to have a direct say in the projects that are funded and implemented in their communities. However, the reliance on civic





crowdfunding can also highlight inequalities, as areas with more affluent populations are likely to raise more funds for local projects compared to less affluent areas. This underscores the need for careful consideration of how such funding

mechanisms are integrated into broader public service provision frameworks to ensure equitable access to essential services and public goods (Brent & Chan, 2019; Logue & Grimes, 2019).

## Civic Crowdfunding & Community engagement

**Civic crowdfunding describes the financing of projects dedicated to a ‘civic’ purpose, initiated by ‘civic’ initiatives, which includes actions of citizens towards common goals either via public institutions or private initiatives.**

Often these projects are intermediated on online platforms which dedicate themselves to ‘civic’ purposes and stakeholders. The term ‘civic’ itself can refer to the actions of and within cities or municipalities, but also to the actions of citizens towards a common goal (Wenzlaff 2020).

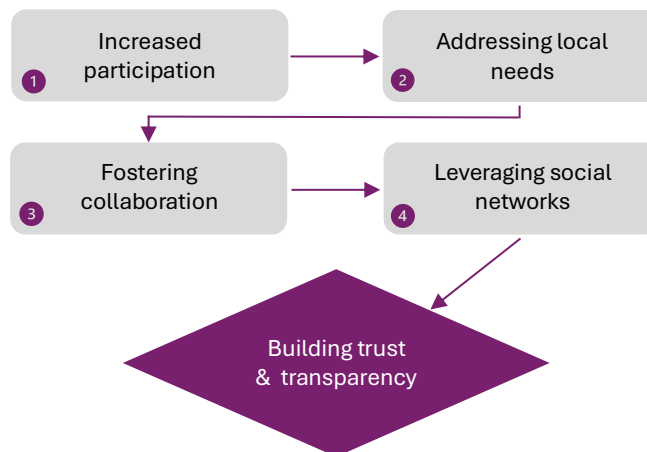
Civic crowdfunding campaigns can be categorized based on the nature and purpose of the projects. One category includes public infrastructure and amenities, such as parks, community gardens, and public art installations, which enhance urban spaces. Another category involves community services and programs, such as youth activities, volunteer initiatives, and local events, focusing on service delivery rather than physical infrastructure (Brent & Lorah, 2019). Additionally, there are projects driven by non-profit organizations aimed at addressing social issues, providing humanitarian aid, or promoting cultural and educational activities, often with a charitable component (Grooch et al., 2020).

The benefits of civic crowdfunding are considerable: It enhances not only community engagement by empowering citizens to participate in urban development and public decision-making processes (Brent & Lorah, 2019), it also enables the realization of projects that might not qualify for

traditional public or private funding. Furthermore, civic crowdfunding can strengthen social capital within communities by involving diverse stakeholders, thereby fostering a sense of collective ownership and responsibility for public goods (Stiver et al., 2015a).

**Local communities per definition, are those living in the immediate vicinity of a crowdfunding project.** They are typically most active in supporting civic crowdfunding campaigns, as they usually benefit most from a positive outcome. These communities often share common challenges or needs, for example a new park, a better traffic concept or educational needs, which civic projects aim to address. Their proximity to the project site allows them to give important, targeted feedback during the implementation phase, ensuring that the initiatives align with local needs and conditions. Moreover, on-going support through maintenance or up-keep can be ensured when including those communities (Stiver et al., 2015b).

Empowering such local communities is an integral part of civic crowdfunding, and can lead to sustainable, transformative change. Through the active participation in the decision-making process of projects, residents feel a sense of ownership and empowerment. Moreover, a sense of unity and shared responsibility is established through a close cooperation between various stakeholders, ranging from businesses to residents and local governments. Social networks should be leveraged to guarantee the success of civic crowdfunding projects and detailed information must be provided regularly to ensure trust and transparency among community members (FasterCapital, 2024).



## Empowering Local Communities

Source: based on FasterCapital (2024)

## Civic crowdfunding & SDG

Sustainable development goals (SDGs) are a set of global targets introduced by the United Nations to address key challenges like poverty, inequality, and environmental sustainability by 2030, aiming to make the world a better place. Leaders from a wide range of countries came together in 2015 to adopt the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. They address a wide range of global challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. The SDGs are interconnected and designed to balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection (United Nations, n.d.). The 17 Goals are:

1. **No Poverty:** Eradicate extreme poverty and reduce overall poverty rates.
2. **Zero Hunger:** End hunger and ensure that all people have sufficient, nutritious food all year round.
3. **Good Health and Well-being:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being at all ages.
4. **Quality Education:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. **Gender Equality:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. **Clean Water and Sanitation:** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. **Affordable and Clean Energy:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.
8. **Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
9. **Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure:** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and



- sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.
10. **Reduced Inequality:** Reduce inequality within and among countries.
  11. **Sustainable Cities and Communities:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
  12. **Responsible Consumption and Production:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
  13. **Climate Action:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
  14. **Life Below Water:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources.
  15. **Life on Land:** Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.
  16. **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable institutions.
  17. **Partnerships for the Goals:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize global partnerships for sustainable development.

|  |   |   |  |  |   |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| <b>1</b> Job skills training programs, support for social entrepreneurship                   | <b>2</b> Agricultural technology for small farmers, school meal programs              | <b>3</b> Well-being awareness, community support groups for new parents | <b>4</b> E-learning platform development, literacy campaigns                                     | <b>5</b> Funding for women's entrepreneurship, gender equity workshops     | <b>6</b> Rainwater harvesting systems, development of sanitation infrastructure     |
| <b>7</b> Solar panel installations, wind energy projects, energy-efficient cooking solutions | <b>8</b> Youth employment initiatives, business incubators, vocational skill training | <b>9</b> Local innovation hubs, equipping community makerspaces         | <b>10</b> Scholarships for marginalized groups, improving accessibility for disabled individuals | <b>11</b> Urban green spaces, small-scale infrastructure projects          | <b>12</b> Waste reduction initiatives, sustainable agriculture, recycling campaigns |
| <b>13</b> Reforestation programs, clean energy transition projects                           | <b>14</b> Beach cleanups, support for sustainable fishing practices                   | <b>15</b> Wildlife conservation efforts, afforestation projects         | <b>16</b> Legal aid for disadvantaged communities, anti-corruption awareness, support            | <b>17</b> Global knowledge-sharing platforms for education and development |   |

Campaign ideas in civic crowdfunding that align with SDG goals

Source: own elaboration



### 3. Crowdfunding and SDGs – key findings from literature

#### *Crowdfunding as a response to sustainable development financing challenges*

**Crowdfunding has emerged as an innovative and rapidly growing method of raising funds for various projects, including those focused on sustainable development. This section explores and describes how crowdfunding can support sustainable goals and what features indicate that it is a proper and efficient tool.**

The Sustainable Development Goals, a set of 17 interconnected global goals, require extensive action in terms of applied economic, educational, and legislative policies, and, apart from government, the involvement of various civil society and the private sector. More importantly, sustainable goals require a large pool of capital, for which the need increases over time.

One of the significant challenges in financing SDGs is the need for more engagement of the private sector's financing (Barua, 2020). The financing gap for sustainable development projects is vast, with most of the funding coming from governments or international organizations, especially in the case of developing countries. However, private sector participation is limited due to inadequate incentive mechanisms, minimal public-private collaboration and implicit cost burden (Barua, 2020). Also, traditional financial intermediaries, such as commercial banks, are profit-driven and operate under the scrutiny of supervisory requirements. In this respect, alternative financing mechanisms like crowdfunding can play a vital role in complementing other sources of financing for SDGs.

So, the first question is why projects that aim to achieve sustainable goals are not attractive enough to get financing through traditional financial channels and intermediaries. Indeed, sustainable or green projects have several characteristics that place them unfavorable compared to conventional investment projects.

These are:

- higher perceived risk due to higher information asymmetries (Ghosh & Nanda, 2010; Buttice et al., 2019)
- more uncertain returns (Foxon & Pearson, 2008) or even lower expected returns due to the involvement of new technologies, postponed cash flows on the one hand, or concentration on other than profit maximization benefits (social, ecological);
- more extended payback periods (Buttice et al, 2019) - sustainable projects often have more extended payback periods due to postponed or more uncertain cash flow;
- regulatory uncertainty and higher exposure to political risk (Foxon & Pearson, 2008): sustainable ventures are exposed to public and political debate, which main actors change in the political cycle;
- hard to express in monetary terms the social and environmental benefits of the projects.

While traditional financial intermediaries are losing interest, crowdfunding can be a possible solution to financing projects characterized by the above-mentioned features. The essence of crowdfunding is to reach a large group of recipients, each of whom will support the project with a relatively small amount. This will allow the risk of the project to be shared among many actors.



Moreover, people participating in crowdfunding campaigns are driven by various financial and non-financial motivational factors (Adamska-Mieruszevska et al. 2024, Sherman & Axelrad, 2022; Stoknes et al., 2021). The latter, go beyond financial returns, such as social, environmental, or civic impact. From this perspective, making a more

quantifiable assessment of the project's benefits becomes possible. Also, this variety of motivations makes accepting the extended payback period more probable. Finally, crowdfunding is driven by individuals. Therefore, the exposure to political risks arising from at least an election cycle is negligible.

## Framing sustainability in crowdfunding campaigns

**In the crowdfunding literature, studies on SDG-oriented projects or so-called green projects have been published in increasing numbers in recent years, confirming the growing interest in this area of research (Böckel et al., 2021; Dinh et al., 2024).**

Nevertheless, systematic studies point out that more attention is paid to non-investment types of crowdfunding ie. donation, reward than to lending and equity type which are more market relevant. This disparity between research interests and real market relevance suggests that researchers may be prioritizing models that are more accessible or more ethically oriented, rather than those driving the majority of financial transactions in the sector. In other words, some parts of the picture of the role of crowdfunding in financing sustainable initiatives might be missing.

Recent studies on SDG-oriented crowdfunding indicate that a number of sustainability issues are addressed in campaigns, and this disparity between social and environmental goals has somewhat faded. Thus, a number of initiatives are being taken up in campaigns that correspond to individual SDG targets. Not surprisingly, one of the points of

interest for researchers has been whether campaigning for sustainable development is a success factor (Ljumović et al., 2021; Prędkiewicz & Kalinowska-Beszczyńska, 2020; Siebeneicher et al., 2022 ) and, if so, which of the SDGs are more promising in this respect (Bade & Reichenbach, 2025; Prędkiewicz & Kalinowska-Beszczyńska, 2020). Regarding the first issue, the results in this respect are not precise. Some indicate a higher probability of fundraising when the campaign is green and sustainable (Ljumović et al., 2021), while others indicate a negative impact of this aspect (Prędkiewicz & Kalinowska-Beszczyńska, 2020 and Siebeneicher et al. 2022).

Some interesting results are provided regarding the type of goal adopted in the campaign. The Prędkiewicz & Kalinowska-Beszczyńska (2020) study suggests that projects which pursue goals related to water have the highest chances of success. On the contrary, the lowest probability of success is projects with the 'energy' category. Also, a recent study by Bade and Reichenbach (2025) confirmed the importance of the SDGs category for crowdfunding financing and revealed that climate action, energy category, sustainable cities and communities, and responsible consumption and production have higher chances of fundraising success. Conversely, campaigns aiming at ending poverty or promoting innovation, and infrastructure tend to attract lower financing rates.



## Key success factors for sustainable crowdfunding campaigns

**Apart from the sustainability orientation, other factors that enhance the chances of raising funding are essential to consider while preparing a new campaign.**

In crowdfunding literature, several studies examined which of the campaign features, characteristics of authors or type of platforms imply financial success (Mollick, 2014; Adamska-Mieruszevska et al., 2021; Koch & Siering, 2019). Several studies also provided a systematic overview of the crowdfunding success factors (Shneor et al. 2020, Liu et al. 2023).

Examination of campaign features is often grounded in signalling theory, which is highly applicable in markets characterized by high information asymmetries. Hence, some of the factors signal the quality of the campaign to the market participants (backers). Following the proposal of Mavlanova et al. (2012), which Kunz et al. (2016) adopted for the crowdfunding context, signals can be divided into three groups based on the project phase: pre-funding (ex-ante), funding, and post-funding. The first group refers to the planning phase and exhibits the level of campaign preparedness before the project is implemented, such as the length and readability of the project description (Adamska-Mieruszevska et al. 2021).

Indeed, factors belonging to this group can be divided into smaller categories, referring to pledging conditions, information disclosure, emotional appeal (Koch & Siering, 2019), fundraiser characteristics, and campaign features, including visual content. In the case of crowdfunding projects, communication with potential backers takes place entirely online. This means that applying persuasive techniques is impossible in this field. Therefore, proper preparation of the campaign is essential for success. Considering that decisions

in this area rest in the hands of campaign authors, inadequate

campaign preparation may indicate a lack of skills, low attention to detail, or carelessness.

### Main pledging conditions cover mostly:

- target amount - the amount of money to be collected, which should be realistic and achievable (Motylska-Kuźma, 2018);
- duration of the campaign - the number of days devoted to money collection; long campaign duration can reflect low fundraisers' confidence in the campaign's ability to reach the target (Kunz et al. 2016; Mollick 2014).

Concerning information disclosure (Koch & Siering, 2019), the most important factors are the following:

- the length of the text in words - a more extended project description provides more detailed information about the project;
- text readability - increases the chances of the text being understood by the recipient and, at the very least, does not require the recipient to have specialised knowledge;
- risk disclosure - unravelling the project risk signals transparency helps to build trust and demonstrates fundraisers' awareness; some balance is needed in this respect as too intense concentration on the risks may indicate low confidence in the project fundraiser ( see more Koch & Siering, 2019);
- frequently asked questions - adding FAQ demonstrates the fundraisers' engagement and limits the time backers pay while searching for relevant answers to their doubts and questions;
- separate website for the project - an additional website allows for higher disclosure of information about the project and authors beyond the standardized information provided on the crowdfunding platform disclosure about the project and authors.





The project's emotional appeal is strongly related to information disclosure. It reflects the fundraisers' passion and engagement in solving the problem undertaken in the campaign. The emotional appeal of a project is evoked through the use of positive/negative language (e.g. as the proportion of positive words in the message) but also through the use of additional visual content:

- the preparation of a video for the campaign - video increases the chances of a successful campaign overall; however, it is worth remembering that poorly thought-out scenarios and low-quality footage can kill any good idea;
- use of images such as photographs and graphical content related to the project - can be an excellent substitute for the lack of video material;
- media coverage - which can serve as an endorsement signal.

Concerning the fundraiser characteristics, essential factors include:

- the size of the fundraiser network - which can be expressed in the number of Facebook friends or Twitter followers;
- fundraiser experience in the field, which demonstrates skills and expertise;
- previous success in crowdfunding—this can be expressed as the number of previous successful campaigns in terms of fundraising but also in terms of the author's fulfilment of promises made during the campaign—the realisation of the product idea, the delivery of the product, the realisation of the festival, etc.
- number of the campaigns backed by fundraiser;
- providing personal information about the fundraiser and disclosing their image enhances transparency; this factor can also be considered part of the information disclosure signals.

The second group of factors refers to the funding stage and mirrors fundraisers' ongoing activities during money collection. Any adjustments made during the campaign or reactions of the online audience are very important. Acting as 'sleeping beauties' during the money collection does not promise the necessary interest of the potential backers.

Among other signals that belong to this group, we can find:

- Facebook shares or likes, which can also be called Facebook buzz (Kunz et al. (2016);
- number of Tweets related to the project;
- number of media notices after the campaign launch;
- number of campaign updates on the website;
- the timeliness and quality of providing answers to comments and questions posted by online audiences.

Also, one crucial element that signals the quality of the campaign is third-party endorsements or certifications. This means that the project demonstrates viability and legitimacy because it is recognized by trusted institutions or individuals. Some crowdfunding platforms label favourite campaigns or indicate the campaign's high quality.

Research confirms the importance of the same factors in sustainable crowdfunding projects. For instance, Berns et al. (2022), analysing campaigns dedicated to 3D printers, identified the positive role of the fundraiser's experience, the number of media mentions, pictures, timeline presence, and lower requested amount to the campaign's success. Moreover, sustainable projects conducted by teams rather than individuals had higher chances of reaching the financial goal.



When it comes to the project description, factors such as the length of the description, clarity of information or presentation of risks are also important. Moreover, the inclusion of prosocial language contributes to success in this domain (Pietraszkiewicz et al. 2017).

Sustainable crowdfunding projects require careful planning and execution to achieve success. Based on the Corsini and Frey review (2024) the literature of factors for campaigns that deliver sustainable products also cover:

- sharing information about donating a portion of the profits to charities
- third-party endorsement
- information disclosure on the degree of positive social or environmental impact;
- including the environmental features to proposed product;
- putting emphasis on environmental sustainability in the title of the project and description.

**The aim is to create content that is transparent and credible, which will foster trust in the fundraisers and the campaign and convince online audiences to support the campaign in terms of money or by sharing information about the project within their own networks.**





## 4. Roundtable Reflections: Community Views on Crowdfunding

**The Community Needs and Crowdfunding Roundtable were designed to bring together a wide range of local stakeholders, including representatives from community, NGOs, organizations, municipalities, local activists, and crowdfunding platforms.**

Its primary objective was to explore the role of crowdfunding in supporting civic projects and promoting civic engagement. Additionally, this forum offered participants the opportunity to share their experiences, challenges, and successes in utilizing crowdfunding for civic initiatives, while also addressing the key components necessary for launching successful crowdfunding campaigns. Participants shared their unique insights, discuss critical challenges, and identified innovative strategies to improve the effectiveness of CF campaigns.

Each roundtable in all participating countries followed a consistent structure. The discussions were facilitated by a moderator who ensured that all participants had the opportunity to contribute. The format was designed to be interactive, encouraging open dialogue while allowing participants to share personal experiences and insights related to crowdfunding initiatives in their contexts. The

sessions were organized into multiple rounds of questions, supplemented with examples and presentations to provide both theoretical and practical perspectives on CF.

To increase participants' understanding of crowdfunding, each roundtable began with a brief presentation introducing the concept of CF. Additionally, during the discussions, participants were presented with both local and international examples of civic crowdfunding campaigns to deepen their comprehension of how CF functions in different contexts. The first round of questions aimed to draw out participants' personal experiences and observations regarding CF. This round also included a discussion on concerns or reservations participants had about civic crowdfunding, and explored the role of public institutions, local governments, or municipalities in such initiatives. In the second round of questions, participants reflected on the examples of civic crowdfunding campaigns that had been presented. This round encouraged a debate on the replicability of these models in local contexts. The final part of the roundtable centered around the relationship between civic crowdfunding and the SDGs, encouraging a discussion on how crowdfunding could contribute to achieving them.



## Country highlights

### Participating stakeholders & countries'

The roundtable discussions were conducted in Romania, Poland, Greece and Austria. They brought together a diverse range of stakeholders from various sectors and countries, reflecting the broad scale of perspectives on CF. Participants included, inter alia, government officials, municipality representatives, members of cultural organizations, NGOs, community organization representatives, and grassroots activists. Each contributed unique insights informed by their experiences and the specific needs of their respective communities.

| Country        | Venue                                    | Participants | Key Stakeholders  |
|----------------|--|--------------|---|
| <b>Romania</b> | Bucharest University of Economic Studies | 37           | University professors, NGO leaders, municipality representatives                          |
| <b>Greece</b>  | JOIST Innovation Park, Larissa           | 40           | Social entrepreneurs, activists, academics  |
| <b>Poland</b>  | European Solidarity Centre, Gdansk       | 44           | Municipality representatives, NGOs, cultural institutions' leaders, university professors |
| <b>Austria</b> | IMC Krems University of Applied Science  | 35           | Community organizations, NGOs, public institutions, local government, private sector      |

#### Austria

Austrian roundtable, conducted on March 7-8, 2024, attracted 35 participants, including community organizations, NGOs, public institutions, local government bodies, and private sector representatives.

#### Greece

The Greek roundtable took place on February 15, 2024, at JOIST Innovation Park in Larissa, with 40 participants from various sectors including local government, public institutions, and community organizations. Key stakeholders included social entrepreneurs, activists, and academics who discussed cultural barriers to crowdfunding in Greece and successful campaigns in support of social enterprises and charities.

#### Poland

The roundtable in Poland, held at the European Solidarity Centre in Gdansk on February 20, 2024, involved 38 participants and on March 12, 2024, six persons, including representatives from local government bodies, NGOs, cultural institutions, foundations and associations, and academia.

#### Romania

The roundtable in Romania, held on February 15, 2024, gathered 37 participants, including representatives from community organizations, NGOs, public institutions, and local government bodies. Key stakeholders included university professors, NGO leaders, and municipality representatives, all discussing the integration of civic crowdfunding into public projects.



## Stakeholder Perspectives on Civic Crowdfunding

### Personal experiences & perspectives

The discussion was attended by people representing different sectors of society and the economy and, more importantly, with varying levels of knowledge of civic crowdfunding. The participants can be broadly divided into groups: those with direct experience running crowdfunding campaigns as fundraisers and those without experience. In addition, not all participants had the opportunity to support campaigns run by others. Thus, the discussion also included people who came with interest, but without experience as a supporter or fundraiser.

We evaluated this diversity of participants positively because it revealed different perspectives on civic crowdfunding, including sharing some expectations, and the meeting also had a strong educational dimension.

### Diverse scope of civic crowdfunding initiatives

When asked about their experience with crowdfunding, participants in the discussion pointed to both small individual projects and more significant campaigns in terms of monetary value that involved a lot of local community involvement. For some projects, raising funds through crowdfunding was required in the process of applying for more funding from the municipality.

Notably, the range of initiatives is quite broad, with educational, cultural, or health projects being quite common. In contrast, projects concerning at least public utilities were only given in Greece. Also in Greece, participants gave the most examples of projects, in contrast to Austria, where participants' experience in this area seems to have been less.

### Selected areas of civic crowdfunding initiatives across countries

| Area/country                              | Romania | Greece | Poland | Austria |
|---|---------|--------|--------|---------|
| Education and culture                     | ■       | ■      | ■      | ■       |
| Health                                    | ■       | ■      | ■      |         |
| Environmental initiatives                 |         | ■      |        |         |
| Social enterprises                        |         | ■      | ■      |         |
| Journalism                                | ■       | ■      |        |         |
| Seniors/ children welfare                 | ■       | ■      | ■      | ■       |
| Local utility infrastructure              | ■       |        |        |         |
| Art, music, cultural heritage restoration |         | ■      | ■      |         |
| Agriculture                               |         |        |        | ■       |



The crowdfunding projects were created by all kinds of fundraisers, starting with individuals who initiate personal fundraising efforts, such as journalism. NGOs, including charities or foundations, play a significant role by conducting targeted campaigns for social causes, including healthcare, education, and electrical exclusion. For instance, in Romania, one NGO member described how they successfully obtained community support for the goal of connecting 50 families to the electricity network. Additionally, social enterprises address socially beneficial business models and initiatives. Some entities acted as facilitators of social action, as they organized social funding not for one campaign but for various projects.

However, it is not only under the type of fundraiser that one can analyze the projects the participants have experience with. Civic crowdfunding initiatives discussed during roundtables on various dimensions are given in table below. For instance, projects vary in terms of the initiative's origin, with grassroots projects being the most prevalent. For instance, a Romanian project conducted by NGO aimed at connecting 50 families to the electricity network. On the contrary, a crowdfunding campaign may also be initiated to meet formal requirements and obtain considerable funding from other financing programs or municipalities. The latter was a positive experience for a Polish library, which, together with an NGO, led a campaign to finance electronic book readers for library users. The library had to collect 10% of the project's budget from other sources to prove that the project was needed. In some sense, the library was pushed/encouraged to use crowdfunding as it delivers funding and provides social proof.

**For example, the "Social Accumulator" from Poland raises money through its website and then allocates the funds to community projects submitted by different groups, including neighbors, seniors and children. Thus, it also acts as a facilitator of civic crowdfunding project.**



## Dimensions of civic crowdfunding initiatives

| Dimension               | Examples of initiatives from project partner countries   |  |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Initiative's origin     | grassroot - connecting a community of 50 families to the electricity network (Romania)                                   | / public institution - financing electronic book readers for users of library resources (Poland)       |
| Geographical scope      | local – financing vacation for children from low-income families (Austria)   | / regional or national - building a hospital, involving communities across country (Romania)           |
| Fundraising channels    | crowdfunding platform - raising funds for the foundation's own causes on a platform "Bursa binelui" (Romania)            | / social media/ direct donations - raising funds on Facebook for a people with a rare disease (Poland) |
| Funding amount          | small sums - providing financial support and materials for children (Greece)   | / large sums - building a hospital (Romania)   |
| Number of beneficiaries | small - raising funds for a friend with a rare disease (Poland)  | / large - raising funds through an intermediary organization for community-led projects (Poland)       |
| Outcomes tangibility    | tangible - developing an online platform for women's mentorship in Greece; restoration of a historical building (Greece) | intangible - supporting an independent community newspaper (Greece)                                    |
| Impact nature           | social – fulfilling seniors' dreams (Poland)   | / environmental - fundraising for legal action against environmental pollution in Greece (Greece)      |
| Timeframe               | one time financing - supporting a musician in album release (Greece)   | / long-term (recurring) – partial financing of activities undertaken by an international NGO (Austria) |



## Dimensions of civic crowdfunding

**Crowdfunding projects also varied in terms of beneficiary reach and geographical scope, from small-scale local initiatives, such as targeted support for individuals or specific community groups (e.g., providing vacations for low-income children in Austria or ensuring funding for medical treatment for individuals in Poland), to large-scale nation-wide campaigns, like the hospital construction project in Romania.**

Participants who served as fundraisers in civic initiatives utilized crowdfunding through established crowdfunding platforms, social media sites, and direct donations from communities, friends, and families. For some projects, participants exerted the advantages of more than one channel of collecting funds to raise chances of success. Moreover, it was also pointed out that crowdfunding platforms are more specialized in some countries, allowing for better tailoring to a particular project/fundraiser.

For example, two Romanian platforms, "Bursa binelui" and "Galantom", were indicated as they both focus on social causes and community projects. The "wspieram.to" platform was mentioned in Poland, which specialized in cultural and creative projects, and as a contradictory example, "zrzutka.pl". The latter platform allows for all kinds of campaigns and has become a dominant player in the crowdfunding market in Poland. Greek participants also shared the need for more specialized entities in crowdfunding market participants.

Prior civic crowdfunding projects undertaken by roundtable participants also varied concerning the **tangibility of outcomes**, with some projects delivering measurable results, such as connecting 50 families to electricity in Romania. In contrast, others focus on intangible impacts, like supporting

independent journalism in Greece and Romania to spread information and raise public awareness. Similarly, the impact can be **social** or **environmental** (e.g., raising money for legal fees to sue a company for environmental pollution in Greece). Additionally, the **duration** of campaigns ranges from one-time single campaigns to more long-term initiatives. Not all experiences were positive, and several examples of unsuccessful campaigns and mistakes in structuring campaigns were mentioned. In Poland, a representative from a local community care home shared frustrations with a poorly executed campaign during which external collaborators misrepresented the needs of seniors. Also, during meetings in other countries, some participants pointed to the need for greater transparency in the allocation of funds raised during the campaign or in evaluating the campaign's effectiveness.

Moreover, concerning the chosen platforms, the difficulty in raising awareness about a specific project and its objectives was critical for successfully mobilizing funds, especially in 'overcrowded' with projects platforms where numerous projects compete for attention and financial support. For this reason, the benefits of celebrity participation, including so-called celebrities or the involvement of others in the campaign, were pointed out. A successful Facebook fundraiser to support a friend suffering from a rare disease was cited as an example. The campaign was implemented in Poland, and fundraising effectiveness increased with the support of a well-known media figure.

As the perspectives of crowdfunding were discussed, in the short term, several participants showed interest in launching a crowdfunding campaign. It was also true for those participants with no prior experience as a fundraiser. In Austria, for example, the possibility of using crowdfunding for a project aimed at supporting the political



education of young people was indicated; in Poland, the purchase of specialized book collections, while in Greece, participants expressed interest in protecting public spaces and funding social enterprises.

During the discussion, various projects suitable for funding using civic crowdfunding were identified. The most commonly identified were **small, local initiatives** where the needs of local communities, such as health, education and environmental protection, can be realized. Initiatives aimed at providing support in case of natural disasters, as well as social, health and children-oriented projects, were enumerated to be highly suitable for crowdfunding. Participants clarified that such projects induce an 'act of compassion' and a strong desire to help, leading to greater community involvement. On the other hand, it was also stressed that projects must be attractive enough to build financial backing within communities. This last element suggests that tiny projects that are not interesting and unimportant to a broader audience will fail.

In addition, an essential theme of the discussion shared by all countries was the view that citizen crowdfunding is not a way to exempt the state from providing services, especially in the public health sector or emergency services.

Participants emphasized that projects that engage emotionally and induce trust are more likely to succeed because these are the main motivating factors for backers. Transparency, communicating as much as possible tangible results, and updating the campaign website were cited as essential elements in convincing people to support a project because donors want to ensure that their donations are used effectively and positively impact communities. For fundraisers, the nature of the platform on which the project is being published plays a significant role. Participants in Poland and Greece pointed to the need for better management of content and projects made public on platforms, including perhaps creating a system to prevent fraudulent activity. Fundraisers also point to the importance of culture. In Greece, for example, projects that are in line with local values tend to gain more popularity.

**Crowdfunding is recognized in all partner countries as a tool for civic projects, where not only funds are raised, but also community involvement can be increased. The projects completed through crowdfunding are highly diverse in many ways, from small local initiatives to complex and sophisticated projects with far-reaching impacts. Crowdfunding, especially for those individuals working in associations and NGOs, is an important funding source for activities that public institutions do not adequately address.**



## Country highlights

### Austria

In Austria, crowdfunding is seen as a complement but certainly not a replacement for services provided by the state. Crowdfunding is perceived to be a suitable way of financing small local projects that other sources, including public funding, cannot adequately fund

### Greece

A number of civic crowdfunding initiatives of different natures have been implemented in Greece. Projects often focus on social goals, such as supporting children's health, protecting the environment, supporting cultural activities, or restoring historic buildings. Successful campaigns are strongly believed to resonate emotionally and be in line with local cultural values to gain widespread support.

### Poland

In Poland, civic crowdfunding is a form of funding for various initiatives. Gaining attention and standing out from the many other projects submitted on platforms, which often have little social value, is a significant challenge for campaign initiators. Better management of the content presented on the platforms, the entry requirements or creating a platform dedicated to civic crowdfunding would help. Legal uncertainty and complexity are among the most critical factors discouraging fundraisers, highlighted by those in the public sector.

### Romania

In Romania, crowdfunding is a universal tool for financing projects, from small-scale local to nationwide initiatives. It has been utilized in building necessary public infrastructure, supporting educational and social projects, together with fostering community involvement. The crowdfunding market is less developed compared to wealthier countries like the UK. However, there is growing optimism about its future role in resource mobilization in Romania.





## Concerns & reservations

**One of the most common barriers to the effective campaigns, particularly those reaching many people, is the low level of trust. While trust sometimes was framed differently across roundtables, it emerged as a key theme.**

Specifically, potential backers - labelled as the CROWD - indicated that trust in the campaign initiator and the project itself is critical for success. Crowdfunding typically takes place online, with fundraisers often being individuals/entities outside the close social network of backers, sometimes also located in different regions. This online nature is both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, it allows campaigns to reach a broad audience quickly, but on the other hand, it becomes a challenge, especially in societies with low general social trust. Therefore, the questions, i.e. is the fundraiser a real person or an actual entity, which were raised during meetings, are perfectly natural. In this context, the expectations of a high degree of transparency in presenting the goals of the campaign, exact structure of spending the funds, showing the progress of the ongoing campaign in real time, can be perceived as the expressions of a desire to control in the environments market by low trust. Campaign supporters want certainty about how the money raised will be spent and that the campaign goal will stay the same over time. Trust also emerged regarding crowdfunding platforms. The importance of the security of the transactions carried out in the payment system or the security of the personal data provided was pointed out.

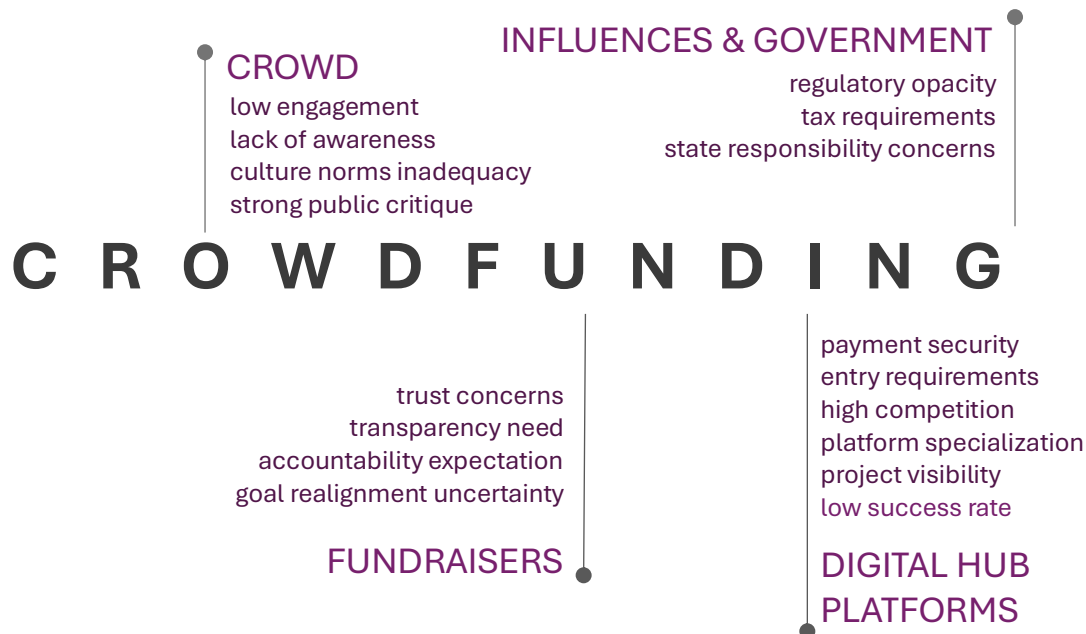
Potential fundraisers also indicated that the opacity of crowdfunding regulatory solutions and their complexity is sometimes discouraging in undertaking such initiatives. Thus, the level of uncertainty toward regulatory provisions, also in

case of entities from public sector, induces a feeling of uncertainty and being potentially held accountable, e.g. fiscally.

In addition to the problem of trust and the regulatory environment, further concerns about creating a campaign are related to the campaigns' relatively low success rate and the high competition between projects published on platforms. Participants indicated that some projects made available on crowdfunding platforms are unreasonable and that more transparent conditions for entering the platform are necessary. Participants also pointed out that it is difficult for civic projects to compete on a single platform with business-oriented projects and even more so with donation projects for treating patients with rare diseases. Therefore, separate categories of civic projects on platforms or creating separate platforms for civic projects would heighten the visibility of civic projects.

Another raised concern was the potential effect of civic crowdfunding on the government's role in society, specifically, the risk of shifting accountability away from governments. In particular, the risk of public services becoming increasingly dependent on private financing and individual donations was emphasized. Such a development could lead to the 'privatization' of sectors that should remain under public management. This concern is related to the belief that paying taxes is just enough and that the government should provide all services. Therefore, civic crowdfunding might be sometimes perceived as taking additional money from citizens for services the government should supply.

Also, it was pointed out that running a crowdfunding project exposes the fundraiser to public criticism, which can be strong from the online community. On the other hand, sometimes, much-needed projects do not gain the community's interest, which may be related, for example, to the inadequate preparation of the campaign and low awareness and knowledge of crowdfunding among potential backers.



Key concerns across crowdfunding stakeholders

Source: own compilation

**Crowdfunding enables diverse supporters to connect, but it faces major challenges related to trust, transparency, and regulatory complexities. This is particularly true in low-trust environments where fundraisers need heightened accountability and clarity.**



## Country highlights

### Austria

Austrian participants emphasized that essential services—such as traffic management, green spaces, and emergency responders—should remain the government's responsibility. Thus, civic crowdfunding campaigns should not substitute adequate government services, and the potential risk of privatizing essential public services through crowdfunding should be considered. On the other hand, rebuilding civic responsibility was stressed, making the audience feel more engaged and aware of the benefits coming from civic crowdfunding.

### Greece

Greek participants indicated concerns about fundraisers' credibility and transparency in how funds are used as factors hindering social engagement in crowdfunding. They also accentuated that public services should remain the government's responsibility. Finally, the need for education on crowdfunding and a culture of civic engagement were mentioned as factors enhancing the future development of civic crowdfunding.

### Poland

Polish participants highlighted the low success rate of civic crowdfunding campaigns. They related this issue to the difficulties backers face in distinguishing meaningful projects from many trivial initiatives. Additionally, worries were realized regarding the competition between civic crowdfunding campaigns and civic budgets—the initiatives conducted in many cities in Poland. The latter is potentially contributing to bureaucratic inequities. Finally, institutions representing the public sector, i.e. libraries, stressed the risk of legal and administrative barriers and reputational concerns, making crowdfunding even more challenging.

### Romania

In Romania, the discussion highlighted the lack of trust, the need for transparency in projects and fundraisers, and the belief that certain essential services should remain government-funded. Participants stressed the need for clearer communication about where donations go and for public education to foster a culture of giving and civic engagement. Restrictive platform requirements and competition pressure were also indicated as factors lowering the chances of campaigns' success.



## Involvement of public institutions in civic crowdfunding

**Public involvement in civic CF has gained increasing attention in recent years, as it may play an important role in encouraging community engagement and promoting the co-creation of public services.**

Public institutions can adopt various approaches to increase their role in civic CF, which may include different levels of financial and non-financial support. In particular, their involvement may take one of several forms:

- **Sponsorship** – the public institution runs its own civic campaign.
- **Match-funding** – the local authority financially supports the most successful crowdfunding campaigns (in terms of amounts fundraised or the number of backers from the public)
- **Facilitator** – the local authority non-financially supports civic crowdfunding projects, including planning permission, expertise support, legal oversight, etc.
- **Platform provider** – the local authority creates a dedicated civic crowdfunding platform.

Although civic crowdfunding allows public institutions to help bridge the gap between limited public budgets and the growing demand for public goods and services, their involvement is not without controversy. On the one hand, they can provide validation and support for community initiatives; on the other, it can lead to growing bureaucracy and perceived inefficiency in money allocation.

Findings from roundtables conducted in partner countries reflect both opportunities and challenges

in integrating public institutions with civic crowdfunding. In particular, four areas of issues were raised in this context.

- I. Bureaucratic barriers**
- II. Trust and transparency**
- III. Grassroots focus**
- IV. Public-private partnerships**

### Bureaucratic Barriers

One of the most frequently cited challenges in civic CF, across various countries, is the burden of bureaucracy and complex legal frameworks, which are viewed as significant barriers to the involvement of public institutions in civic CF. Concerns have been raised about whether such involvement would simplify or further complicate the process. It has been noticed that sometimes public involvement may cause lengthy administrative procedures that slow down project progress. Several Austrian participants expressed concerns that the public sector's involvement could slow down projects with unnecessary administrative procedures. They stressed the importance of keeping CF community-driven and minimizing public sector interference. Moreover, in most countries participants noticed, that, even when not the case in reality, public institutions are often perceived as slow-moving, potentially discouraging backers, particularly younger ones.

An important example given was participatory budgeting in Poland, where local activists are theoretically meant to use public funds if their projects gain popularity among citizens. In practice, however, bureaucratic procedures have often made this nearly impossible. It was noted that municipal projects often get bogged down in red tape. In contrast, civic crowdfunding empowers communities to bypass this, but without institutional support, scaling up remains a challenge.



Additionally, it has been suggested that local governments are in a better position to support CF than central governments. Local authorities could potentially help reduce bureaucratic obstacles, though trust issues would need to be addressed for this approach to succeed. The need for government bodies to focus on simplifying bureaucratic processes rather than controlling projects has been emphasized. This perspective has been echoed in all partner countries, advocating for institutional support in the form of platforms that could validate and promote local projects without imposing additional bureaucratic burdens.

### Trust and Transparency: A Central Concern

In all partner countries, the lack of trust in public institutions presents a significant challenge to collaboration in CF. This issue is particularly noticeable in countries characterized by low institutional trust, such as Poland and Romania. In these contexts, mistrust of public institutions not only discourages potential backers but also makes fundraisers wary of engaging with public entities, fearing that promises made by these institutions may not be fulfilled. This sentiment is especially strong in Poland, where skepticism toward national institutions has been identified as a key factor limiting the success of larger civic CF initiatives. The lack of confidence in public institutions hampers both backers' willingness to contribute and fundraisers' willingness to collaborate, creating a barrier to scaling civic projects. Similar attitude was also present in Austria, where participants highlighted the role of transparency in CF. They expressed a preference for crowdfunding over traditional donations to large organizations, as they believed CF provided clearer insights into how funds are used.

Trust plays a crucial role in enabling effective partnerships between civic organizations, public entities, and the successful gathering of funds. Transparency in how funds are managed and utilized is essential for building this trust. Public institutions, on one hand, must demonstrate reliability and openness to increase confidence,

which could lead to greater participation and more successful CF efforts. However, the issue appears to run deeper, as in most partner countries, mistrust of public institutions is ingrained in society and extends far beyond the context of CF. This broader lack of trust affects not only collaboration in crowdfunding but also other areas of public engagement, making it a systemic challenge that must be addressed.

Despite these concerns, participants from Poland, Romania and Greece agreed that local governments could play an important role by providing platforms or co-financing options for civic projects. It is noticed that local authorities are part of the community. Their endorsement can help break down trust barriers and ensure projects succeed. Often, participants noted that citizens tend to trust local governments more than the central government. If it's something local, people are more likely to feel connected to it and they know their community leaders. Central government feels distant.

### Grassroots Focus: Community at the Core

Taking above into account, one key takeaway from the discussions among specialists and experts interested in CF was the importance of maintaining a grassroots focus in civic crowdfunding. Participants across countries emphasized that public institutions should act as facilitators, not controllers, of crowdfunding projects. The strength of civic crowdfunding lies in its bottom-up nature. People support causes they feel connected to, and public institutions should enhance this, not overshadow it. Importantly, participants from Austria, emphasized that, while CF could help bypass bureaucratic hurdles, it should not become a substitute for government-provided services. CF should be used for small, community-driven projects rather than large-scale public services, which are the responsibility of the government.



The key seems to lie in balancing community control and institutional involvement. In Romania, for example, many civic projects, such as community-driven efforts to provide electricity to underserved areas, have relied on crowdfunding as a means of empowering local populations. The involvement of public institutions could boost these efforts, but without the risk of compromising their grassroots essence.

### **Public-Private Partnerships: Unlocking New Opportunities**

Despite concerns and potential disadvantages of involving public entities in CF, the potential for collaboration between public institutions, companies, individuals, grassroots organizations, and NGOs emerged as a major theme in the discussions. Partnerships were seen as, potentially and if managed in a proper way, offering essential funding, credibility, and visibility to civic crowdfunding projects. Participants emphasized, however, that public institutions should focus on providing tools, platforms, and logistical support while leaving control of the projects in the hands of the communities. Public institutions should empower, not control, CF projects. Crowdfunding has the potential to transform communities, but it must remain a movement by the people, for the people. Governments could play a vital role by offering platforms that allow communities to design, manage, and promote their CF initiatives with minimal interference.

Another frequently desired form of collaboration mentioned was match-funding or partial funding for projects initiated and led by grassroots organizations. For instance, in Romania, the Dăruiește Viață Hospital, a green hospital funded by over 350,000 individuals and 8,000 companies, was highlighted as a successful case of private-public cooperation. Public institutions provided partial funding and logistical support, while the core of the project remained community-driven, demonstrating the effectiveness of such partnerships.

In addition to match-funding, another form of collaboration could be public-private partnerships where public institutions collaborate with local businesses to sponsor civic CF projects. This could involve offering tax incentives to companies that contribute to crowdfunding efforts or creating dedicated grants for civic projects supported by both public and private entities.

**The involvement of public institutions in civic crowdfunding offers significant potential for growth, but it must be managed carefully to preserve the grassroots and community-led nature of these initiatives. Public institutions can help streamline bureaucratic processes, increase transparency, and provide partial funding or logistical support. However, their involvement must not overwhelm the community's role in driving these projects.**



## Country highlights

### Austria

In Austria, participants acknowledged the potential benefits of public institutions' involvement in civic crowdfunding but were cautious about the risks of government interference. They highlighted that CF should remain a tool for grassroots, community-driven projects and should not be used to replace essential public services. Austrian participants were particularly concerned about the role of bureaucracy, noticing that public institutions often slow down projects with administrative complexities. However, they also saw opportunities for public-private partnerships, where governments could offer support through platforms or logistical assistance, without overshadowing the community-led nature.

### Greece

Greek participants emphasized that the lack of trust in government institutions often hinders collaboration. However, local governments were viewed as more approachable and trustworthy than central authorities. Experts from Greece expressed a preference for local governments to support CF initiatives, noting that local authorities are closer to citizens and more attuned to local needs. Furthermore, local governments could play a crucial role in promoting transparency and ensuring the responsible use of funds. In Greece, local governments could provide platforms or offer services that enhance transparency, such as co-financing projects or supporting promotional efforts.

### Poland

In Poland, concerns have been raised about the credibility of some CF platforms, high competition on the most popular and the high failure rates of civic campaigns. Despite limited involvement from public institutions in CF initiatives so far, experts noted growing interest in how these institutions could participate. Currently, public institutions in Poland are generally seen as passive players in CF. However, roundtable discussions suggested that public bodies could act as validators for crowdfunding initiatives, helping to enhance trust, at least to some extent. Similar to Romania and Greece, there is potential for Polish public institutions to offer platforms and logistical support, especially for smaller, community-based projects, to boost credibility and increase the likelihood of success.

### Romania

In Romania, the role of public institutions in supporting civic crowdfunding initiatives is a subject of debate. Romanian participants expressed mixed feelings about public institutions' involvement in crowdfunding. While it was acknowledged that public bodies could serve as guarantors of credibility, concerns were raised about maintaining the grassroots nature of civic projects. A major challenge identified was the bureaucratic hurdles imposed by the current legal framework, which often slows down or complicates project implementation. On another note, some experts see public-private partnerships as potentially valuable, particularly if the government focuses on providing partial funding while allowing communities to take the lead in realizing projects. Examples of green projects, such as sustainable hospitals, demonstrate how crowdfunding and public authorities can collaborate for mutual benefit, balancing institutional support with community-driven efforts.





## Civic crowdfunding & SDG

**Civic crowdfunding is frequently recognized as a valuable tool for advancing the SDGs. Although local communities often raise funds for smaller, localized projects, also the implementation of SDGs often begins at the local level.**

As such, CF can play a key role in mobilizing resources for initiatives that align with global sustainability goals. In particular, among the SDGs that could potentially align with CF in partners countries, are:

- **Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11):** CF is often used to support projects that make cities and communities more sustainable. Here are initiatives such as urban greening, sustainable transportation, and renewable energy installations (e.g., solar panels). These efforts often involve local communities in creating greener, more sustainable urban environments.
- **Climate Action (SDG 13):** Many CF projects focus on environmental sustainability, addressing the need for climate action, such as community-driven reforestation efforts or renewable energy projects. Civic crowdfunding projects may try to address pollution, improve waste management, and reduce carbon emissions.
- **Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3):** Health-related civic crowdfunding campaigns are common, particularly in countries where public

healthcare is underfunded. Crowdfunding has been successfully used to build or improve healthcare facilities, provide medical supplies, or support individuals in need of medical treatment. A notable example includes the use of CF to fund hospitals or specialized medical equipment.

- **Quality Education (SDG 4):** Civic crowdfunding also plays a significant role in improving access to education, particularly in marginalized communities. CF projects in this area often aim to reduce educational inequalities and target underfunded communities or groups.

Based on the specialists and experts' opinions, several areas and challenges of SDG and CF alignment were identified:

- **Scaling local initiatives**
- **Partnership within ESG**
- **Long-term sustainability of projects**
- **Community engagement and ownership**

CF has proven effective in addressing local issues, but scaling these projects to have a broader impact on the SDGs may be challenging. Participants voiced concerns that CF projects, while valuable for raising awareness of specific issues, are generally too small to make a significant contribution to the SDGs on a national or global scale. Many CF initiatives are small-scale and focused on the communities where they originate. For instance, projects like building local infrastructure or providing basic services are impactful but may not easily translate into large-scale solutions applicable to different regions or countries.





Several participants from different countries emphasized the potential for aligning CF initiatives with corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs to attract more investment and help overcome scalability challenges. In Greece, for example, projects addressing social issues such as health and environmental sustainability were identified as strong candidates for partnerships with companies whose CSR initiatives align with these goals. Such projects can also align with the European Union's focus on ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) reporting, which encourages companies to invest in socially beneficial initiatives. This synergy between CF, CSR, and SDG goals can help scale up successful projects while ensuring alignment with sustainability objectives.

Another significant challenge for CF's role in advancing the SDGs is ensuring the long-term sustainability of these projects. While

crowdfunding can provide the initial capital to launch projects, maintaining them requires ongoing resources that extend beyond the scope of the initial campaign. For example, while funds might be raised to build a school or establish clean water access in a community, the long-term operation and maintenance of these services demand consistent attention and resources. Similarly, funding might be secured to install solar panels, but it is a complex issue to ensure that these initiatives will continue to deliver benefits over time.

Lastly, the success of CF projects also centers on community engagement and ownership. SDG-related projects that resonate with local concerns and are driven by grassroots efforts tend to achieve better outcomes. CF projects must be in line with local concerns to succeed. However, sustaining participation and interest can be challenging, particularly in areas with limited access to crowdfunding platforms or low financial literacy.

**Civic crowdfunding has the potential to make a significant contribution to the achievement of the SDG by mobilizing communities and resources for local solutions to global challenges. CF initiatives that align with SDGs can help address issues such as poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and health. However, for CF to reach its full potential in advancing the SDGs, challenges related to scalability, sustainability, community engagement, and transparency must be addressed.**



## Countries highlights

### Austria

In Austria, participants recognized that CF has the potential to contribute to several SDGs, particularly those focused on sustainability and community well-being, such as SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 13 (Climate Action). Examples discussed during the roundtable included projects related to environmental protection, such as financing greener urban spaces and promoting renewable energy. However, participants also expressed concerns about the long-term viability of these projects, noting that while CF can raise awareness and provide initial funding, maintaining such initiatives is challenging. CF projects must not overpromise their ability to address systemic issues like climate change.

### Greece

Greek participants emphasized the potential of CF for supporting vulnerable communities and environmental initiatives. Projects such as supporting refugee housing or creating green public spaces align with SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 11. Greece's economic challenges have led to an increased reliance on grassroots initiatives, but scaling these projects to have broader impacts remains a key concern.

### Poland

In Poland, CF has been used to support a variety of SDG-related initiatives, from education to environmental protection. Projects aimed at creating sustainable urban infrastructure or improving access to education for marginalized groups reflect SDG 4 and SDG 11 goals. However, participants noted challenges in distinguishing credible projects from less serious ones on popular platforms.

### Romania

In Romania, CF has been used effectively to address both environmental and healthcare challenges. One notable example is the Dăruiește Viață project, where over 350,000 individuals contributed to building a hospital, addressing gaps in healthcare infrastructure (SDG 3). Romanian communities have also used CF to support green projects such as tree planting and urban greening, aligning with SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). However, challenges remain in ensuring these projects can scale beyond their local context.



## 5. Case Studies in Partner Countries

### Overview of Methodology for Case Study Selection

The selection process for the case studies focused on ensuring a diverse and representative sample of crowdfunding projects across various sectors, regions, and models, with at least one case from each partner country: Austria, Poland, Greece, Romania, and Norway. The key elements included:

- **Sectoral diversity:** Projects were chosen from fields such as renewable energy, healthcare, culture, and social services, demonstrating crowdfunding's adaptability across different industries.
- **Geographic representation:** Case studies were selected from partner countries, ensuring at least one case study per country.
- **Crowdfunding models:** A mix of donation-based, reward-based, debt-based, and hybrid models was included to illustrate different funding approaches.
- **Project scale:** Both small and large initiatives were selected to represent a range of project sizes.
- **Alignment with SDGs:** Most projects aligned directly with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 7 (Clean Energy), SDG 3 (Health), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities).

Data was collected from crowdfunding platforms, project reports, and media coverage. Each case study was analyzed based on project goals, crowdfunding strategies, community engagement, civic impact, success factors and alignment with SDGs, to ensure comparability.

### Case studies summary

| Name   | Country | Model                       | Description   | SDG Alignment     |
|--|---------|-----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| <b>Photovoltaic System Hitzendorf</b>                    | Austria | Debt-based crowdfunding     | Renewable energy project involving solar power systems for community benefit. | <b>7 &amp; 13</b> |
| <b>A Small Bus for Big Travels</b>                       | Greece  | Donation-based crowdfunding | Funding a minibus to enhance mobility for individuals with autism.            | <b>3 &amp; 10</b> |
| <b>Afterthought - A Point of View Towards the Future</b> | Norway  | Donation-based crowdfunding | A cultural initiative focusing on community art and engagement.               | <b>11 &amp; 4</b> |
| <b>Collection for Nesøya Activity Park</b>               | Norway  | Donation-based crowdfunding | Creating a community activity park to promote outdoor activities.             | <b>11 &amp; 3</b> |
| <b>Slavic Mythology Museum</b>                           | Poland  | Reward-based crowdfunding   | Establishing a museum dedicated to Slavic mythology and culture.              | <b>4 &amp; 10</b> |













## civic crowdfunding case study

<https://www.gemeinwohlprojekte.at/de/projekte-unterstuetzen/details/projekt/73/>

**Country: Austria**

**Project Title: Bürgerstromanlage Hitzendorf (Photovoltaic system Hitzendorf)**

-  <https://www.gemeinwohlprojekte.at/de/projekte-unterstuetzen/details/projekt/73/>
-  Project location: Hitzendorf (municipality), Styria (state), Austria
-  Fundraising goal: 150.000 €
-  Amount gathered: 103.000 € - The missing funds for the full investment sum were raised by citizens from Styria who contributed directly to the project.
-  Initiator: SUREnergy GmbH (energy company, limited liability company)
-  Categorization field: renewable energy
-  Project timeline & fundraising period: 01.01.2018-14.08.2018 (fundraising until 26.07.2018)
-  How money was collected (platform, website, etc.): platform
-  Crowdfunding model: debt-based crowdfunding
-  Number of backers: 32.



**Project's overview:** SUREnergy GmbH has installed several photovoltaic (PV) systems in Hitzendorf, including on various agricultural, private, and commercial buildings. Their latest project on a farm rooftop will generate enough electricity to power approximately 45 households, with the electricity fed into the public grid. Interested citizens can purchase PV modules, which SUREnergy GmbH then leases back, providing annual returns. After up to 20 years, the PV system will transfer to the farm's owner.

**Background / context:** The PV system feeds the entire amount of electricity into the public grid, which covers the consumption of about 45 households. Thereby, the project supports the renewable energy transition, mitigates negative effects of the greenhouse gases, relieves power grids by providing the required energy locally and creates regional jobs.

### Brief budget description

Detailed reports containing budgeted and actual costs for described items are available on the crowdfunding page and can be downloaded. The cost breakdown includes investment costs such as planning and preliminary costs, the PV modules and all construction costs, as well as running costs such as roof rent, sale & lease back rents, insurance, etc. Project key figures are also listed.

### Rewards

Local residents and other interested parties can participate in the solar power plants in the form of a sale-and-lease-back model supported by the Province of Styria. The citizens buy solar modules from the PV systems and the operators lease them back from the citizens. An investment is possible from 1,000 euros (equivalent to 4 modules). The rental income that investors can expect is 2.5% of the invested sum per year.





## Civic dimension in the project

The project has a civic character because it involves local citizens directly in the funding and ownership of renewable energy infrastructure. By allowing individuals to invest in and lease back solar modules, the project fosters a sense of community involvement and collective responsibility for sustainable energy solutions. The common good offered is clean, renewable energy. Moreover, the community is supported economically through the electricity supply and the support of local employment in the form of maintenance and operational roles. These benefits enhance regional economic stability and promote a healthier, more sustainable environment for the community. Civic participation and community ownership are promoted through the sale-and-lease-back model, where local citizens can purchase solar modules and lease them back to the operator. This model ensures that citizens are directly involved in the project. Also, after 20 years, ownership of the PV systems is transferred to a local family. The project aligns with principles of civic engagement, community participation, and social responsibility by engaging citizens in meaningful ways, allowing them to contribute to and benefit from renewable energy initiatives. Social responsibility is addressed by tackling environmental concerns and promoting sustainable development. The project addresses collective interests and concerns within the community through the promotion of environmental sustainability by reducing reliance on fossil fuels, helping to combat climate change. Economic benefits arise from job creation and potential financial returns on investments. Moreover, the community is less dependent on external energy sources.

## Relationships within the campaign

Backers are engaged through transparent communication. Only one update by the initiators was provided, on 30.07.2018, mentioning the amount of energy already produced. Photos of the

completed plant and final reports were provided. Project supporters are mentioned by name on the crowdfunding platform, there is however no comment section (at least none are visible without signing in). It is not clear from the presentation on the crowdfunding platform whether the backers gave feedback and how this was responded to.

## External cooperation & community engagement

The project received cooperation and support from Land Steiermark (local government), which supported the sale-and-lease-back model. Beyond financial backing, there was no other community support but the project received a lot of attention and positive feedback on the “Hitzendorfer Erntedankfest” (the local harvest festival) and was mentioned in the municipal newspaper.

## Implementation & implications

The project has been successfully implemented, and its current status indicates operational success. Post-campaign, there have been reported results showcasing the effectiveness of the PV installation. Specifically, it has been noted that the system has already produced a significant amount of electricity, contributing to local sustainability efforts. Detailed financial reports, a final report and photos are available on the website.

## Implication for SDG

The project mainly addresses two Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy and Goal 13: Climate Action. By installing solar panels on the roofs of agricultural premises, the project enhances local capacity for clean energy production, which reduces dependency on fossil fuels and promotes sustainable energy sources. Moreover, it helps to curb carbon dioxide emissions and thereby contributes to the mitigation of adverse climate change impacts.



## Key Takeaways

The company has already implemented several photovoltaic systems in other municipalities in a similar fashion, so the risk of failure due to economic/technical reasons is not considered high. Through the crowdfunding platform, 103.000 € from the required 150.000€ was raised, the remaining amount came from contributions by citizens from Styria. The chosen sale-and-lease back crowdfunding model has proven effective in engaging local citizens. Alternative crowdfunding models, such as equity crowdfunding or donation-based models, may not be as suitable in this case.

Equity crowdfunding could complicate ownership structures and governance, while donation-based crowdfunding might not provide sufficient incentives for backers. The platform <https://www.gemeinwohlprojekte.at/> seems to have been a good fit, as the project corresponds exactly to the type of community projects that the platform wants to support. Although the financing target was not quite reached, it is unclear whether this would have been the case on other platforms







## civic crowdfunding case study

<https://www.autismthessaly.gr/product/ena-mikro-leoforeio-gia-megala-taxidia/>

**Country: Greece**

**Project Title: A Small Bus for Big Travels: Bridging Distances,  
Uniting Communities**



<https://www.autismthessaly.gr/product/ena-mikro-leoforeio-gia-megala-taxidia/>



Project location: Larissa city, region of Thessaly, Greece



Fundraising goal: **40.000,00 €**



Amount gathered: **41.387,00 €**



Initiator: Association of Parents, Guardians, and Friends of Individuals with Autism (non-profit)



Categorization field: Society & health



Project timeline & fundraising period: Started 02-03-2023 / Ended 28-11-2023



Money collection method: Custom platform build in website



Crowdfunding model: Donation based



Number of backers: > 3000.





**Project's overview:** The idea for this project was born from an urgent need for a minibus to ensure the children under the care of the association reliable transportation. The aim was also to raise awareness about the work of the Association of Parents, Guardians, and Friends of Individuals with Autism, and to foster social inclusion and acceptance of individuals with autism within the local community. To maintain full control and ensure transparency of the campaign, a crowdfunding campaign has been created on the association's website. The word about the campaign was spread through all available channels, including social media, as well as, tied to significant events like the 1st Marathon for Autism held in Larissa on the 2nd of April 2023. This event was organized in collaboration with the Association of Greek Gymnastics and Athletic Clubs – Thessaly Branch. All the proceeds from marathon registrations were directed towards the crowdfunding effort. Runners, students, workers, businesses, and families were invited to run for autism, transforming the marathon into a community-wide celebration. There were more than 1500 participants of all ages coming together for this noble cause. Through this initiative, various public entities were involved, including the Municipality of Larissa, the Region of Thessaly, and the Central Union of Municipalities and Communities of Greece, they covered some of the marathon's expenses, ensuring the event's success. Large companies also stepped in to cover various organizational costs such as medals and t-shirts. Many encouraged their employees to

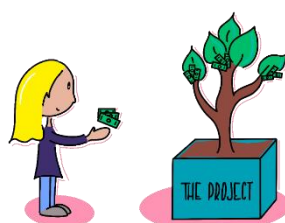
participate, sponsoring numerous group registrations, further amplifying the sense of community.

Transparency, direct communication, and the unwavering support of the public became the cornerstones of the campaign, building a foundation of trust. The success of the project reinforced the message that together, we can bridge distances and unite communities.

**Background / context:** The Association of Parents, Guardians, and Friends of Individuals with Autism of Larissa was striving to meet the evolving needs of growing children. A small minibus to ensure the safe and reliable

transportation of the beneficiaries of our facilities "CHARA I" Day Center and the "Eleftheria" Boarding House was urgently needed. The small minibus is not just a means of transportation but a tool for inclusion and participation of the children in the community.

**Brief budget description:** Before starting the campaign, various offers from car dealerships regarding the purchase price of the minibus were obtained. Based on them, the crowdfunding goal was set at 40.000 euros. The information provided to the public included the specific purpose for which the money collected during the campaign would be used.





## Civic dimension in the project

The project offers several common goods to the beneficiaries, including: (1) **Improved Accessibility:** By providing a minibus, the project ensures that individuals with autism have better access to medical services, educational programs, and social activities. (2) **Enhanced Quality of Life:** The project contributes to the overall well-being of beneficiaries by facilitating their participation in community life. (3) **Social Inclusion:** It promotes the integration of individuals with autism into mainstream society, helping to reduce stigma and foster a more inclusive community.

It actively involves the community in several ways: (1) **Crowdfunding Campaign:** Instead of seeking private donations from large companies, the project opted for a community-based crowdfunding campaign, inviting local residents to contribute and become stakeholders. (2) **Collaborative Events:** The integration of the project with major community events, such as the 1st Marathon for Autism in Larissa, encouraged broad participation and fostered a sense of communal effort. (3) **Transparency and Direct Communication:** By maintaining an open and transparent crowdfunding platform, the project ensured that contributors were informed and engaged throughout the process.

The project significantly contributes to the public good by: (1) **Addressing Transportation Barriers:** It directly tackles the lack of accessible transportation for individuals with autism, a critical concern for their health, education, and social integration. (2) **Fostering Community Solidarity:** By uniting various segments of the community – from local government to private citizens – the project strengthens social bonds and collective responsibility. (3) **Raising Awareness:** Through its activities and outreach, the project raises awareness about autism and the importance of inclusive practices, fostering a more informed and compassionate community.

### Elements of the Project that Align with Principles of Civic Engagement, Community Participation, and Social Responsibility

- **Inclusivity:** The project promotes the inclusion of a marginalized group, aligning with civic engagement principles that advocate for equal rights and opportunities for all community members.
- **Community Involvement:** The extensive involvement of local residents, businesses, and public entities reflects strong community participation and a collective effort to address a social need.
- **Social Responsibility:** The project's focus on enhancing the lives of individuals with autism underscores a commitment to social responsibility and the welfare of all community members.

## Relationships within the campaign

The campaign engaged with backers and supporters in several ways throughout the fundraising process: (1) **Personalized Communication:** The campaign prioritized personalized communication with backers, ensuring that they felt valued and appreciated for their contributions. (2) **Community Events:** By linking the campaign with community events like the 1st Marathon for Autism, supporters were encouraged to participate actively, creating a sense of community involvement and ownership. (3) **Social Media Interaction:** Regular updates and interactions on social media platforms helped maintain a constant connection with backers, making them feel like an integral part of the project.

Regular updates on project's progress were offered via crowdfunding platform, social media, and email newsletters. Ensuring transparency in how the funds were used and the progress made towards the project's goals built trust and credibility. Detailed reports and financial transparency were key aspects of maintaining backer trust. Photos and



videos documenting the journey, such as preparations for the marathon or the initial use of the minibus, were shared to keep backers visually engaged and emotionally connected to the project.

#### Building Long-term Relationships

1. Post-Campaign Engagement: The relationship with backers did not end with the fundraising campaign. Regular updates on the implementation of the project and its impact on the community were provided even after the campaign concluded.

2. Recognition and Appreciation: Public recognition of backers through media, social media shoutouts, newsletters, and special mentions in events helped in maintaining a positive and ongoing relationship. Additionally, small tokens of appreciation (such as thank-you cards) were provided to major supporters.

## External cooperation & community engagement

#### *Cooperation and Support from Institutions and Organizations*

The project received support from various public and formal institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and numerous foundations. This support was instrumental in providing resources, expertise, and legitimacy to the campaign. You can find the sponsors here <https://www.autismthessaly.gr/oi-xorhgoi-mas/>

Volunteers participated in activities ranging from administrative support to on-ground execution of project tasks. Beyond formal volunteer programs, there was widespread informal support from the community. Local newspapers, sites and radio stations frequently reported on the project, focusing on its relevance to the community and the

environment. The project also gained attention from national media outlets, which helped in attracting broader support and recognition.

The campaign's website served as a central hub for media notices and documented the project's journey, challenges, and successes.

## Implementation & implications

#### *Key Developments*

**Fundraising Goal Achieved:** The campaign met its financial target, raising the €40,000

**Vehicle Purchase. Additional Support:** The vehicle company agreed to cover part of the registration expenses. **Press Release:** Upon achieving the goal, a press release was issued to inform and thank the community for their support. **Website Updates:** Throughout the project, the campaign's website was regularly updated

#### *Celebration and Community Engagement*

**Vehicle Delivery:** On the day of the vehicle's delivery, the board of directors visited the dealership.

**Follow-up Press Release:** A follow-up press release was prepared and distributed to all media outlets.

#### *Mechanisms for Transparency and Accountability*

**Regular Reporting:** Detailed progress reports were published quarterly, outlining activities, and outcomes. These reports were available to all through our site.

**Donation Acknowledgment:** For each donation made through the platform, the association sent a donation receipt and a thank-you letter to the donor. The letter explained how the funds would be used and emphasized the importance of the cause.

**Social Cohesion:** By bringing community members together around common goals, the project has fostered a greater sense of unity and collective purpose.

**Awareness:** The project raised awareness about autism.

**Model for Future Projects:** The success and transparency mechanisms of this project serve as a model for future community-driven initiatives.



## Implication for SDG

The project demonstrated a strong alignment with several key Sustainable Development Goals. By focusing on the transportation needs of individuals with autism, the project addressed critical areas necessary for their well-being, health, education, and social inclusion.

### *SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being*

The project directly contributes to ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for individuals with autism. By providing transportation for individuals with autism, it enhances their access to healthcare services, recreational activities, and social integration opportunities, thereby improving their overall well-being.

### *SDG 4: Quality Education*

Facilitating transportation for individuals with autism supports their access to educational institutions and programs tailored to their needs. This ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

### *SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities*

The project aims to reduce inequalities by ensuring that individuals with autism have equal access to transportation and services. By addressing the mobility challenges faced by individuals with autism, the project promotes social inclusion and reduces disparities in access to essential services.

## Key Takeaways

Several factors could influence the success or failure of the project:

**Control and Transparency:** Creating a custom platform on the association's website <https://www.autismthessaly.gr/product/ena-mikro-leoforeio-gia-megala-taxidia/> was a critical success factor. It allowed complete control over the funds and ensured transparency. This minimized the risk of fraud and ensured that all donations were properly accounted for and managed by the association.

**Avoiding Third-Party Fees:** By not using a third-party crowdfunding platform, the project saved on commission fees, ensuring that more of the donated funds were available for the project itself. This made the fundraising effort more cost-effective.

**Banking Challenges:** One of the significant challenges faced was the reluctance of systemic banks in Greece to open accounts for crowdfunding purposes, as they were not familiar with the concept. After thorough research, the association found a solution by using an online Greek bank that provided the necessary tools for handling financial transactions. This was crucial for overcoming initial delays and starting the campaign effectively.

**Platform Choice:** The decision to use a custom platform hosted on the association's website proved to be the best solution. It provided full control over revenue and ensured transparency. This approach minimized the risk of exploitation by ensuring that no external parties could fraudulently solicit donations on behalf of the project.

**Trust and Reputation:** Trust Guarantee: Choosing own website for the crowdfunding platform served as a trust guarantee. The community and donors who are familiar with the association and its work felt more confident contributing through a platform they recognized and trusted. The association's established reputation and transparency reassured donors that their contributions were being used responsibly.



<https://www.spleis.no/project/237456>

## civic crowdfunding case study

**Country: Norway**

**Project Title: Afterthought - a point of view towards the future**

-  <https://www.spleis.no/project/237456>
-  Project location: Island of Røst, Nordland county, Norway
-  Fundraising goal: **NOK 335,000** (approx. EUR 28,000).
-  Amount gathered: **NOK 361,257** (approx. EUR 31,050).
-  Initiator: private business (joint stock company) in partnership with local non-profit organization
-  Categorization field: Renovation and development of local landmarks
-  Project timeline & fundraising period: 42 days
-  How money was collected: campaign published on the Spleis.no platform
-  Crowdfunding model: Mixed reward and donation
-  Number of backers: 272.



**Project's overview:** The restoration of the old water tower on Røst Island, giving it a new life and a new identity to the delight of the population of Røst and for people who visit the island. The tower is to appear as a sculpture in the landscape and must have a simple function as a lookout point. It will also be arranged as a writing room for writers.

**Background / context:** A concrete water tower built in the 60's was standing unused, neglected, and rundown in otherwise beautiful nature surrounding. The idea was to turn an eyesore into a landmark serving as a renovated and nicely designed observation tower renamed "afterthought" for the use of local inhabitants and visitors. The name was

a tribute to an earlier suggestion of turning the place into a space for a local thinktank.

**Brief budget description:** No clear explanation of how money will be used.

**Rewards:**

1. Everyone who supports gets their name on a sign which will be mounted on the tower.
2. Those supporting with NOK 10,000 or more, get you're their company name or the private backer's name engraved on a small plaque on the steps up to the tower.





## Civic dimension in the project

By repurposing and renovating an unused local asset for the benefit of locals and visitors, society avoids waste, protects cultural and natural heritage, and provides open access to safe and inclusive public spaces, while creating a more pleasant living environment. To achieve this, locals and other interested individuals were invited to contribute to the funding of the project and enjoy free access to it once complete. Furthermore, the renovated asset is then owned by a local non-profit, and all income from donations and other uses of the asset are used for ensuring its maintenance as a public space.

## Relationships within the campaign

The project engaged with prospective and existing backers both via its own Facebook page and the campaign page on the platform. On the platform there were three updates about project progress during the campaign. While content and updates were also shared on the Facebook page. It received media attention already prior to the launch of the campaign thanks to securing support from several local and national key stakeholders. And continued to receive attention during and after the campaign.

## External cooperation & community engagement

The total project budget was set at NOK 3,825,000. The project managers got NOK 3,500,000 in funding from a local bank (SpareBank 1 Nord-Norge) national cultural presentation fund (Kulturminnefondet), Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage (Riksantikvaren), and a non-profit organization (Bergesenstiftelsen).

The project manager bought the asset from local municipality for NOK 1 and will sell it back for same sum to local non-profit organization (Ettertankens Venner) to maintain its upkeep, after project completion. Any profits from the project will be transferred to the same non-profit organization for the upkeep of the landmark. The landmark, once

reopened, will be freely open to the public. The project received much media mentions and coverage on local (i.e., Avisa Lofoten, LofotenPost, Avisa Nordland, Ringerikes Blad) and national (NRK, Aftenposten) channels and newspapers.

## Implementation & implications

Follow-up: As of Spring 2024, the project is in the last stages of construction with the expectation of a formal opening in Summer 2024. Updates about project construction progress are made periodically public on the project's Facebook page with 1,600 followers.

## Implication for SDG

The project aligns with SDG 11 concerning sustainable cities and communities and SDG 12 concerning responsible consumption and production. By repurposing and renovating an unused local asset for the benefit of locals and visitors, society avoids waste, protects cultural and natural heritage, provides access to safe and inclusive public spaces, while creating a more pleasant living environment.

## Key Takeaways

- Successful private-public partnership project (combination of national fund, local public funds, and local commercial entity support).
- Public support in crowdfunding for complementing public and private support of larger institutions to achieve necessary overall budget goal.
- Project received much media exposure in local and national outlets, which helped attracting attention to the project from near and far.



## civic crowdfunding case study

<https://www.spleis.no/project/207784>

**Country: Norway**

**Project Title: Collection for Nesøya Activity Park**



<https://www.spleis.no/project/207784>



Project location: Island in the municipality of Asker, Norway.



Fundraising goal: **NOK 300,000** (approx. EUR 25,800).



Amount gathered: **NOK 330,450** (approx. EUR 28,400).



Initiator: Non-profit association



Categorization field: Health & recreation for children



Project timeline: August 2022- fundraising, July 2023- construction and opening

Fundraising period: January 2022 - September 2022.



Money collection method: Campaign published on the Spleis.no platform.



Crowdfunding model: donation.



Number of backers: 320.





**Project's overview:** Establish an activity park on Nesøya for children and young people offering free access to anyone. The park covers an area of 800 m2, and includes infrastructure for exercise with Scooters, Skateboard, Bicycle, Roller skates, Parkour, Ski, and Snowboard.

**Background / context:** Nesøya Activity Park was founded by parents of children in Nesøya and the surrounding area who want a gathering point for self-motivated physical activity that strengthens the psychosocial upbringing environment, builds cohesion, and gives the children motivation.

**Brief budget description:** No clear explanation of how money will be used.

**Rewards:** No rewards offered to small scale donors; however, larger scale donors were offered some tokens of appreciation: contributions of NOK 30,000 recognized with engraved names on the park's contributors' sign; contributions of NOK 100,000 recognized with engraved names on special dedicated signs placed on the concrete surfaces; for contribution of NOK 300,000 park will be named after the contributor with acknowledgement engraved in the concrete surfaces themselves.



## Civic dimension in the project

A group of parents who voluntarily mobilize to create an activity park for local children in support of their health and social well-being. The project involves local residents, businesses, and financial institution for improving quality of life for local residents. By offering public access to facility, children of all socio-economic groups and backgrounds can enjoy the space and interact with others in a more inclusive and healthy way.

## Relationships within the campaign

The project engaged with prospective and existing backers both via its own Facebook page and the campaign page on the platform. On the platform there were three updates about project progress during the campaign. While content and updates were also shared on the Facebook page. Reach was also facilitated by sharing related information on the local sports club social media accounts.

## External cooperation & community engagement

The project managers got NOK 1,850,000 in funding from a savings bank's social fund (sparebankstiftelsen DNB), local business, and crowdfunding from local citizens (accounting for NOK 330,450 out of the total). The project was run in collaboration with the local sports club (Nesøya Idrettslag). The initiators ran a survey among local school students and found strong interest in the

project, while some locals expressed concerns about possible resulting noise pollution. The case caused some public discussion in a local newspaper, which again triggered local engagement and support.

## Implementation & implications

Follow-up: The project was successfully funded, built, and now open for the public to enjoy and use.

## Implication for SDG

The project aligns with SDG 11 concerning sustainable cities and communities and SDG 3 concerning good health and well-being. By building a publicly open activity park for children that wish to engage in physical activity. Such engagement strengthens the psychosocial upbringing environment, builds social cohesion, offers equal opportunity for locals to enjoy facility, gives the children motivation, while improving their health and well-being overall.

## Key Takeaways

- Public support in crowdfunding for complementing private support of businesses and foundations to achieve necessary overall budget goal.
- Local media coverage, even if critical, helps mobilize local counter-reactions in favor of projects.
- Partnership with local stakeholders important for information dissemination and reach to wider public.



<https://polakpotrafi.pl/projekt/muzeum-mitologii-slowianskiej>

## civic crowdfunding case study

**Country: Poland**

**Project Title: Slavic Mythology Museum**

-  <https://polakpotrafi.pl/projekt/muzeum-mitologii-slowianskiej>
-  Project location: Owidz, pomorskie voivodeship, Poland
-  Fundraising goal: **20000 PLN**/ c.a. 4700 €
-  Amount gathered: **30612 PLN**/ c.a. 7200 €
-  Initiator: Stowarzyszenie Wspólna Ziemia The Ecological and Cultural Association "Common Earth" that was established 1996 (NGO, association). It's goal is to "protect nature, promote pro-environmental and civic attitudes, organise cultural events, monitor the activities of local authorities, and initiate and support youth and volunteer activities".
-  Categorization field: culture
-  Project timeline & fundraising period: 23.02.2017-08.04.2017 (fundraising until 08.04.2017)
-  How money was collected: platform Polak Potrafi (the platform does not operate anymore)
-  Crowdfunding model: reward crowdfunding
-  Number of backers: 380.



**Project's overview:** The Museum of Slavic Mythology is dedicated to comprehensive historical and cultural education. Its activities include exhibitions, artistic events, scholarly publications, and engaging museum lessons. The Association strives to promote knowledge about the beliefs and spiritual culture of the ancient Slavs.

**Background / context:** The Museum is being created in Owidz, near the larger city Starogard Gdański. This is a cultural project that is being carried out in partnership with the NGO "Stowarzyszenia Wspólna Ziemia" and the local government cultural Institution. The Museum is a part of a larger project called "Grodzisko Owidz"

that encompasses six hectares of land. In this area, where the aim is to recreate a Slavic settlement and mythology museum that will attract visitors and will popularise knowledge of the pre-Christian spiritual culture of the Slavs in a modern and original way.

**Brief budget description:** The authors of the campaign have published basic information about the budget on the campaign webpage. It clarifies that the first stage of the Museum of Slavic Mythology, spanning an area of approximately 150 m<sup>2</sup>, has been valued at PLN 65,000, opting for a more economical version. As the goal of the campaign was lower the authors clarified that PLN 45,000 has already been secured from other financial sources – exactly supporters who were sympathetic to this initiative



## Civic dimension in the project

The initiative is classified as civic as its objective is to encourage the community to safeguard and advance the cultural legacy of the ancient Slavs. Through the involvement of almost 300 backers and the search for further donations, it utilizes public involvement and joint endeavor to accomplish a common cultural objective. This inclusivity and dependence on community backing showcase its civic character.

As for the community goods, this project enables the preservation of Slavic cultural heritage, especially mythology, which is unique and quite complex regarding beliefs. As the Slavic heritage is not covered to a more considerable extent in the formal educational program in Poland, this project provides an excellent opportunity for diverse groups to get acquainted with the history of their land. The Museum conducts research, preserves cultural heritage, provides public exhibitions, and organizes various events. It also provides a physical community space - for cultural and educational activities benefiting the broader community. It should also be noted that visitors can discover which local traditions still alive today, such as the drowning of Marzanna, are connected with old Slavic beliefs. These myths can be explored in detail at the museum.

The project is organized by the non-profit association Stowarzyszenia Wspólna Ziemia and the local government cultural institution. Therefore, the budget for organizing the Museum was more significant than the money supposed to be collected during the online crowdfunding campaign. Nevertheless, the campaign ensured inclusivity as it invited people from this particular area and people from other regions in Poland interested in Slavic history to contribute. It also was a transparent campaign as it clearly defined the purpose of collecting money and indicated other sources of financing. This project was also publicized in other media channels, so its outreach was more extensive, and the awareness of this initiative allowed for better recognition. Also, as the

Museum provides educational tools, books and exhibitions and preserves local heritage, it enhances community participation.

The project contributes to the public good as it encompasses value for education – it enhances knowledge about Slavic mythology and history. Moreover, as the Museum organizes exhibitions it preserves cultural heritage of the Slavic's and region as well. This project strengthens the community connection and identity with its history.

## Relationships within the campaign

Supporters are involved by being able to leave comments and post updates. The first one is published on the first day of the campaign, followed by updates after significant events, such as exceeding half of the required fundraising amount and additional support from a private company. As part of the updates, the authors also published 2 short films in a form of mockumentary featuring a witch (Baba Yaga) and mysterious Aquarius. A mockumentary is often satirical in which fictional characters or settings are presented as a documentary film.

## External cooperation & community engagement

The project was carried out in cooperation with the local community cultural institution. The project authors were transparent about the fact that they were mainly seeking funds from grants but also wanted to use crowdfunding for part of the project implementation. As an association, they also provided a link with information about the possibility of supporting the project by donating one per cent of their income tax to the association, which is legal in Poland and probably also helped them to raise additional funds. The timing of the project coincided with the possibility of submitting a tax return. In addition to financial support, the project's authors received in-kind donations from a private company, which they used in an auction and received support from an artist from another region



of Poland. Among other things, the project was written about on the website of University of Gdańsk as part of the local radio station MORS, and even before the collection itself, on the local website of National Geographic. It can therefore be said that the authors have succeeded in disseminating information about the collection through various channels.

## Implementation & implications

The campaign gathered the necessary funds. On the campaign website, the Authors indicated the date of starting its first operation, and they succeeded. The Museum operates efficiently and is organized in Grodzisko Owidz, as indicated during the campaign. The Museum concentrates on Slavic mythology, and visitors have a unique opportunity to get acquainted with this inheritance while watching the interactive and modern exhibition and with a guide. Also, the Museum is planning and organizing various events with themes relating to pre-Christian beliefs and rituals, such as 'Flower headbands in Grodzisk' (Wianki na Grodzisku), 'Baba Yaga Festival', 'Mythology Festival', 'Forefathers' (Dziady) and 'Generous Evening' (Szczodry Wieczór). It is especially active during the summer season. It offers exciting events for people who want to get more knowledge or spend more time in the free area that resembles the region's ancient history. The website of the Museum is updated on a regular basis.

## Implication for SDG

The project aligns with Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 11. SDG 4 is the Quality Education. The project provides educational tools, books and exhibitions about Slavic mythology and cultural heritage. SDG 11 is the Sustainable Cities and Communities. As the project preserves cultural heritage and creates a community space, it promotes community engagement, cultural and historical education.

## Key Takeaways

One should enumerate the factors that contributed to the success of this project.

**Clear Vision and Purpose:** The project was well-defined. It was supposed to create a Museum of Slavic Mythology to educate the public about Slavic spiritual culture and mythology. This clarity can attract backers who are interested in history and culture.

**Community Engagement:** The project aimed to engage the local community by preserving Slavic traditions, which can, in some sense, foster a sense of ownership and local pride.

**Unique and Niche Appeal:** As the first Museum of its kind in Poland and Europe, the project has a unique appeal. This novelty can attract enthusiasts of mythology and history from a broader geographic area. Moreover, it also helps to discover the almost forgotten roots of local traditions, as Slavic mythology (not Greek or Roman) is not included in educational programs in Poland.

**Transparent Use of Funds:** The allocation of funds was clearly defined. Crowdfunding funds constituting a small portion of the budget: The idea of creating the larger Slavic space with Grodzisko Owidz and the Museum needed much money, which was collected through various donations. The campaign authors clearly indicated that the funds from crowdfunding would contribute to the Museum and that they ensured other sources of financing.

**Strategic Partnerships:** This project ensured cooperation with local government cultural institution and association.



**Trust enhancement:** In the campaign, the names of individual people responsible for coordinating the project from the Association and Gordzisko Owidz sites were published along with contact details in case of more specific questions. This, along with detailed information on the project budget and goal, added credibility to the activities undertaken.

**Effective Promotion:** Interesting project description, regular updates, and promotional films on the YouTube channel helped reach a wider audience. The chosen reward crowdfunding model proved effective in collecting funds. Contributors received rewards, some of which did not incur additional campaign costs, such as museum tickets. Although the chosen platform is no longer operational, it was very popular in Poland at the time and had a significant reach. Other types of crowdfunding, such as equity or debt, were not suitable for this kind of project, as museums are not profitable enough to pay back the requested rate of return.
















The pictures are taken in the hospital built by Dăruiește Viață at Marie Curie Hospital, with the support of over 350,000 individual donors and 8,000 companies. Source: Dăruiește Viață | Credit: Cătălin Georgescu.

## civic crowdfunding case study



**Country: Romania**

**Project Title: 'Building Hope: the first national children's hospital for cancer, critical illness and trauma'**

-  <https://www.daruiesteviata.ro/investeste>
-  Project location: The hospital was constructed in Bucharest as a new wing of the renowned 'Marie Curie Hospital'
-  Fundraising goal: no precise amount was set, the aim was to raise as much as possible to build and equip the hospital, with an estimated budget of 53 million Euros
-  Amount gathered: over 53 million Euros with ongoing fundraising efforts to equip the hospital, support additional medical projects and to build an expansion to the hospital, including a medical campus
-  Initiator: NGO 'Daruieste Viata', which is led by Carmen Uscatu and Oana Gheorghiu
-  Categorization field: Health care
-  Project timeline & fundraising period: ongoing with no set duration
-  How funds were collected: on a continuous basis through the NGO's crowdfunding platform, through SMS donations, corporate sponsorships, bank transfers, and income tax redirection in accordance with applicable legislation
-  Crowdfunding model: donation-based
-  Total number of supporters: 350,000 individuals and 8,000 companies





**Project's overview:** The project originated in 2015 with the desire to improve the treatment conditions at the Pediatric Oncology Department of the Marie Curie Hospital in Bucharest. The NGO decided to build a new, three-story clinic dedicated solely to the Onco-Pediatric Department. From the medical team's requirements, and the extraordinary support from funders, the NGO was able to expand the project. It started as a clinic and evolved into a fully equipped hospital. The new facility encompasses around 12,000 m<sup>2</sup>, with nine floors and more than 140 beds, a thermal plant, an ozonation station, and a data center which serves both the new and old building of the Marie Curie Hospital. The building accommodates the first Radiotherapy Department for children in Romania (two treatment rooms bunkers), an Intensive Care Unit with private patient rooms, a modern operating block with five operating rooms, Oncology Department, a Hemato-Oncology Department including five sterile transplant rooms, a Department for Neurosurgery and a Department for general surgery. With the project's expansion, the estimated required investment increased from 8 to 16 million Euros for the buildings structure. Subsequently, the total investment (construction and equipment) was estimated around 53 million Euros. The project is now expanding: the NGO is transforming the Marie Curie Hospital into a comprehensive medical facility. While children with cancer require 21st century treatment standards, all hospitalized children deserve the same level of

care regardless of their background and condition. For this reason the initiators have decided to add another building to accommodate all specialization areas from the Marie Curie Hospital, allowing the original building to be repurposed and used for parent accommodations, a cafeteria, study spaces, etc.

**Background / context:** For the first time in Romania, an NGO built a hospital from scratch, entirely financed from donations and sponsorships, whereas the Romanian State has not built any pediatric oncology facilities in the last fifty years. The Children's Hospital offers multidisciplinary care for children with serious illnesses and is now operational. The initiative will continue to grow with the development of a medical campus, ensuring that all Marie Curie pediatric patients have access to top quality treatment.

**Budget highlights:** The needs were outlined, but no exact details were given for each phase of the construction and equipping process. Companies donated significant amounts of money or offered preferential rates and pricing to the NGO. The rates were well below the market value, whereby they cannot be disclosed to protect these conditions.

**Rewards:** Everyone who donated received a 'share', as symbolic proof of their financial contribution to the project, which can be viewed on the Dăruiește Viață website.



## Civic dimension in the project

By providing health services to children aged 0-18, the project addresses the collective concern of healthcare across all age groups. It is worth noting that children are entitled to free health care services in Romania.

The project aims to deliver a merit good healthcare, intended to benefit all sick children across the country. The project has successfully gathered attention with a significant outreach including 350,000 individuals and 8,000 companies. It has become a social movement – people felt empowered to do what the State was unable to do. Therefore, civic participation was achieved through financial contribution. However, the new hospital is being managed and run by the state.

## Relationships within the campaign

The initiators provide symbolic “shares” to all funders as a token of appreciation. The donations can be viewed by typing the person or the company name on the website, where the donated amounts are publicly displayed. The project initiators maintain a strong media presence and are highly active online to keep everybody updated on the progress. TV stations have also reported the achievements of the NGO during different stages, e.g. the website continuously presented pictures of the construction, and a virtual tour can be made to see what the hospital looks like.

The website also presents a variety of videos, one section on the website is dedicated to success stories ‘The Children who tell the story of the hospital’ – pictures and ongoing news are uploaded regularly. Medical campaigns can be posted on the website to share success stories. The project initiators are very well connected to the corporate world, keeping everybody informed about the progress and seeking further financial support to extend the project and add a second building

## External cooperation & community engagement

The initiating NGO received wide support from citizens and companies. The community got involved through financial contributions, word-of-mouth, volunteer work of the *Dăruiește Viață* NGO. The website and other channels (media, online platforms) are continuously kept up to date to reflect the project development and progress. News was published in newspapers (offline and online) and the project had TV appearances on a regular basis.

## Implementation & implications

The platform (website) presents comparisons of both conditions. Previous conditions: A pediatric oncology ward with 31 beds, shared toilets, located on the same floor as the ENT department. Children with cancer underwent surgery in the general surgery unit, and the intensive care unit served both oncology and other patients. The building, built in the 1970’s, lacked modern medical protocols and a multidisciplinary approach. What the fundraised investment brought: Radiotherapy (two treatment rooms located in the basement, as well as patient preparation areas), space for a new MRI and a new CT scanner, with dedicated areas for anesthetizing pediatric patients. The oncology department (for both outpatient and inpatient care) on the ground and first floor, hematology-oncology, including rooms and five sterile rooms are located on the third floor. The facility also features departments for surgery, neurosurgery, intensive therapy with private rooms, and an operating block with five operating rooms. Additionally there are spaces dedicated to relaxation, like a cinema and a library, with a multidisciplinary care approach. Each room has its own private bathroom. The hospital went into operation the beginning of 2024 and the children were transferred from the old to the new building.

**Multidisciplinary approach in pediatric patient care.** Currently in Romania there is no



multidisciplinary approach in the treatment of young patients with serious health issues. The new hospital will benefit from a multidisciplinary team, including an international scientific board and a tumor board to conduct a thorough analysis and provide recommendations for further care.

**21st Century Medicine:** The hospital represents a facility for the future, where advanced technology enhances procedures and creates welcoming environments for families, where children can experience their childhood while battling illness. The hospital will benefit from protocols to reduce the risk of infections, state-of-the-art equipment, appropriate spaces, dedicated to patients and their relatives as required by European standards (separation of children according to age and condition, areas for parents, areas for spending time - cinema, radio studio etc.) and ongoing training for medical teams (including training outside the country for the Radiotherapy Department team).

**Innovation and technology:** The hospital is a good example for the Romanian authorities, also in terms of efficiency, through digitization of the medical staff's activity and the implementation of a BMS system for resource efficiency.

**International partnerships:** The hospital benefits from support and training from one of the most renowned hospitals in the world - Prinses Máxima Centrum in the Netherlands (the largest pediatric oncology clinic in Europe) and St. Jude Research Hospital in the USA (one of the largest pediatric oncology hospitals in the world).

**Friendly and safe environment:** The hospital is a place that restores hope and confidence for sick children and their families. Here, parents will discover a secure and comforting environment, reassuring them that every possible effort is being made for their children's well-being.

**The architectural concept:** "We set out to change the concept of hospitals through this project. When children arrive at the hospital, they will dive into a play area featuring themed rooms, an outdoor

terrace, a library, a gym. These areas will offer a variety of activities to keep them entertained and engaged. The theme of this concept is called "The Tree of Life" – where children can experience different worlds. The radiotherapy treatment room will be an underground water world, or a hedgehog's burrow. An app will also be available, so children have contact to the outside world when they are in the hospital. Our aim is for both children and parents to free themselves up from anxiety." (Project architect, Raluca Șoita, Tesseract Architecture)

The NGO's will submit yearly reports, that are transparent and accountability on how much funds are raised, and the expenses revealed. The entire society and community benefits from this project, as children from all over the country may be admitted to this hospital. Many citizens contributed towards this project, driven by the belief that every child deserves the best possible care and hospital conditions. They realize that a loved one could require the services offered at this hospital.

## Implication for SDG

The project aligns with SDG no. 3 – Health & well-being.

## Key Takeaways

The success was ensured by the urgent need in the community – all citizens and companies agreed that there was a need for building the children's hospital. The NGO promoted the project through both offline and online channels and media, gaining adhesion from the community in the entire country. Sponsors felt empowered through the slogan 'Together we build a hospital', not to mention the wide range of payment methods, as well as tax deduction schemes for sponsorship through companies. The donation model was wisely selected, as a profit driven private hospital would not have gathered such a substantial number of contributions. The platform belongs to the NGO and all the information is present on this website, where each sponsor can be found through a simple search typing their name.



## Key lessons from the case studies

### Community Engagement

- **Local involvement:** Successful CF initiatives closely depend on the involvement of the local community. When people feel directly connected to a project, they are more likely to contribute, both financially and in terms of engagement. For example, the Hitzendorf Photovoltaic Project (Austria) engaged local citizens in purchasing solar modules through a sale-and-lease-back model. This gave locals not only a financial stake in the project but also a sense of ownership over the renewable energy infrastructure being created.
- **Volunteer and in-kind support:** Besides financial contributions, the participation of volunteers and local businesses offering in-kind support may reduce costs and reinforce community bonds. In Nesøya Activity Park (Norway), local businesses provided in-kind support by donating materials and services, which helped reduce the project's overall costs. Additionally, the involvement of volunteers in planning and constructing the park strengthened the sense of community ownership.
- **Building social capital:** CF projects often build strong social capital by mobilizing volunteers, local businesses, and community members. CF projects serve not only to meet material goals but also to strengthen relationships within the community and raise awareness for important causes. For example, the Autism Bus project (Greece) benefited from widespread community support beyond financial contributions.

### Public and private partnership

Partnerships (public and private) in CF are crucial for increasing the reach and impact of projects.

Despite controversial if public entity is involved, in general, these collaborations allow CF initiatives to access a broader range of resources, combining the strengths of public support, private funding, and community engagement. The Røst Water Tower Renovation (Norway) is a prime example, securing funding from public sources, like the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage, and private institutions, such as SpareBank 1 Nord-Norge, alongside strong community backing. Similarly, in the Slavic Mythology Museum project (Poland), the local government played a supportive role by collaborating with the NGO leading the campaign, reinforcing the project's credibility and resource base. These partnerships provide not only financial support but also expertise and legitimacy, enhancing the project's chances of success.

### Sustainability in CF projects

Often CF projects align directly with SDGs, increasing their appeal by addressing important global and local issues. These projects not only solve community-specific issues but also contribute to broader sustainability goals. For example, the Hitzendorf Photovoltaic Project (Austria) supported SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) by installing solar panels that provided electricity to local households. Similarly, the Dăruiește Viață Hospital (Romania) contributed to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by building a children's hospital for serious illnesses like cancer. The Autism Bus project (Greece) addressed SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by offering transportation services to children with autism, ensuring they had access to social and educational opportunities and The Slavic Mythology Museum (Poland) aimed to preserve Slavic cultural heritage, contributing to SDG 4 (Quality Education) by promoting knowledge of traditions and mythology.



## Tailored Financial Models

There is no single successful model or platform type for CF campaigns. Choosing the right model can be challenging for any CF project, but it is more important to select a model or platform that aligns with the project's specific characteristics and purpose, rather than focusing on the fact that it is civic crowdfunding. For example, the Hitzendorf Photovoltaic Project utilized a debt-based crowdfunding model, where backers purchased solar panels and leased them back to the project. In contrast, the Slavic Mythology Museum employed a reward-based model, offering contributors incentives like museum tickets or books. While most projects rely on existing crowdfunding platforms, such as the Røst Water Tower project some, like the Autism Bus project, created their own crowdfunding platform. This custom model allowed the fundraisers to avoid platform fees and interact directly with backers and ensure that every donation was maximized for the project's success.

## Media and publicity

In civic crowdfunding projects, media coverage plays an especially important role, even more so than in non-civic crowdfunding. It helps raise awareness, increase credibility, and extend the project's reach beyond the immediate community. This broader exposure can attract a wider pool of potential backers, including those who may not be directly connected to the community. Successful campaigns often utilize both local and national media to enhance visibility and legitimacy. For example, the Røst Water Tower Renovation (Norway) received significant media attention, both locally and nationally, which was crucial to its successful funding. Local outlets, such as Avisa Lofoten, and national platforms like NRK, helped raise awareness, drawing attention from outside the immediate area.



## 6. Awareness, Attractiveness, and Attitudes toward Civic Crowdfunding – Highlights from the Survey

### Survey methodology

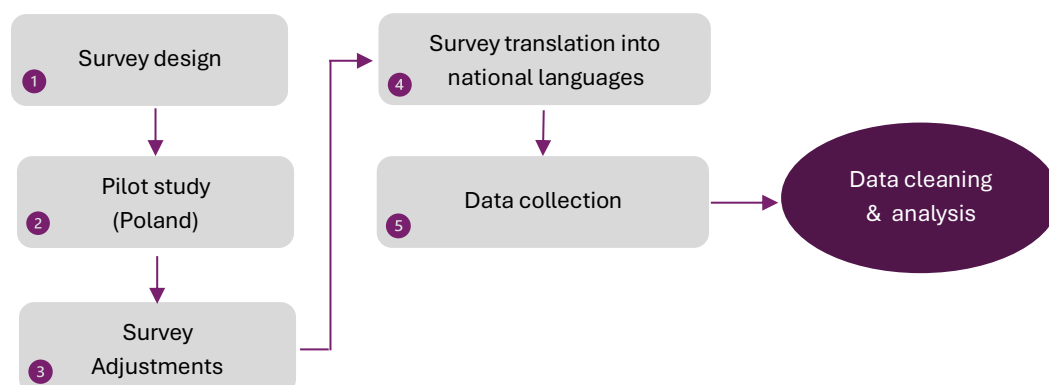
The survey aimed to investigate several topics related to civic crowdfunding, explicitly focusing on initiatives to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The survey design allowed to explore broad range of factors related to crowdfunding and crowdfunding contribution intentions, i.e., awareness and attitudes, which have also been examined in earlier studies (Shneor & Munim, 2019; Baah-Peprah et al., 2024; Shneor et al., 2024). Furthermore, in the survey, we investigated participants' preferences regarding specific types of SDG-related civic projects and examined the preferred crowdfunding models among respondents, such as donation-based or rewards-based.

Our study involved several steps. First, we designed the survey in English. In the second step, we conducted a pilot study in Poland with a small group of fluent English speakers to test the questionnaire. This pilot study ensured that all necessary topics were covered and that only minor linguistic corrections were needed (step 3)

before the survey was translated into the national languages (step 4).

Data was collected online using Unipark-Questbank, provided by IMC Krems (step 5). Each Project Partner aimed to recruit at least 100 participants from students and local community members. All language versions were made available, allowing respondents to select either their local or English language. This approach also gave foreigners in partner countries access to the survey. By standardizing the data collection process, we ensured consistency in the technical setup and minimized potential variations in data entry.

We estimated that the survey would take 10-15 minutes to complete. Before starting the survey, participants received information about the study's purpose and had to provide their consent to participate. No personal identifying information was collected, and the study remained fully anonymous. However, we collected demographic data, such as age, gender, education level, and information regarding the respondents' employment status.



Stages of the survey research



## Measures

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. In the first part, basic concepts, such as crowdfunding, civic crowdfunding, SDGs, or public services and goods, were explained to the survey participants. This ensured a better understanding of the survey's subject.

In the second part, attention was focused on key elements related to civic crowdfunding. We investigated whether respondents had heard about civic crowdfunding earlier and were aware of this way of collecting money. Awareness of a particular concept or behaviour is crucial for understanding it and serves as a necessary step in taking action in civic crowdfunding. The urgency of raising awareness among backers has already been raised in crowdfunding research by Fanea-Ivanovici (2019). The civic crowdfunding awareness part was based on the Abdallah and Kajuna study (2023).

In this part of the survey, we also investigated respondents' attitudes. Following literature, attitudes are defined as inner evaluations toward civic crowdfunding, which may be favourable (positive) or unfavourable (negative) (Heizen & Goodfriend, 2022; Shneor & Munim, 2019).

In the third part of the survey, we assessed the perceived attractiveness of civic crowdfunding, and the level of legitimacy associated with it. We also asked respondents whether they viewed the donation or the rewards model as more effective in civic crowdfunding. Additionally, participants evaluated the attractiveness of five specific civic campaigns to achieve SDG goals. The descriptions of campaigns used in the study are presented in table. While the campaign's ideas were tailored specifically for this study, the descriptions were purposefully kept close to reality. Finally, respondents assessed which SDG goals were related to the presented campaigns.

In most of the constructs/statements, we employed a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 represents "strongly disagree" and 7 represents "strongly agree". The options were as follows: 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – somewhat disagree, 4 – neither agree nor disagree, 5 – somewhat agree, 6 – agree, and 7 – strongly agree. In other words, respondents indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with a specific statement.





## Campaigns descriptions used in the survey



### Library renovation

To aim is to refresh the children's area of the library. It is now over 10 years old and in need of renovation, to make a more welcoming environment, create interest for the users and attract more young readers and learners.



### Peace & Love festival

The local Peace & Love festival is a charitable, open air performing arts/community awareness event, promoting community cohesion, diversity awareness, crime prevention and community safety. The 2024 festival aims to be a whole community event that promotes the endless endeavor of seeking peace, togetherness and harmonious living. This will have tremendous outcomes for the present and future for stable community relations.



### The local Flyover

We want to turn a concrete flyover into an amazing urban park - a vibrant place full of life, trees, shops, exhibitions & joy. Help us bring our vision to life! We will take an existing structure and create an urban walkway/park that costs less its proposed demolition



### Electric Mower For Cricket Club

Purchasing a robot mower will cut emissions and noise pollution. It will free up capital and time to invest in the provision of youth sport while also being better neighbors in our village. We are seeking funds to purchase an appropriate robot mower which offers a more environmental (both noise & emissions) method of caring for the village playing field for locals outside cricket to enjoy.



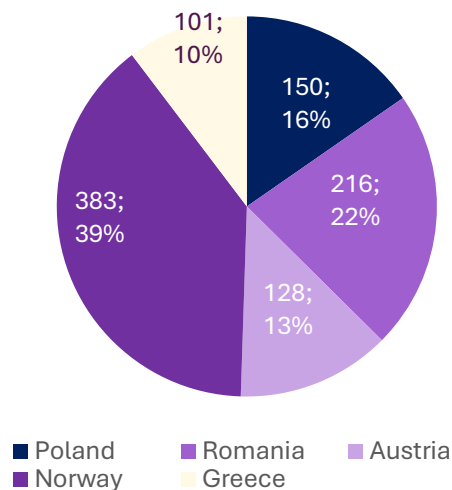
### Cultivate Local Area

We will collect green waste from the local community and process this within a purpose-built biodigester to produce liquid fertilizer and compost. These products will be re-used on the site supporting a growing system that will produce vegetables, herbs and salads within a mix of open and hydroponic growing systems.





## Demographics

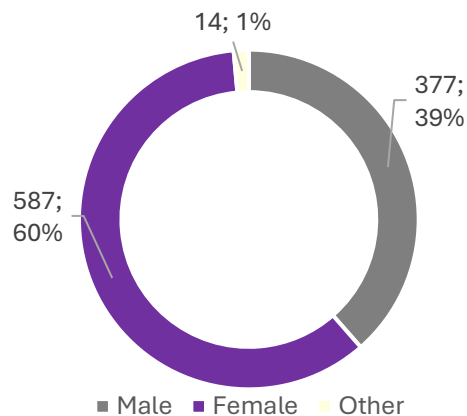


The target of collecting at least 100 responses per country was significantly exceeded, with a total of 1075 responses given by participants in the survey. After data cleaning, we retained 978 valid responses. Norway received the highest number of responses (383), accounting for 39% of the total sample, while Romania was the second in terms of responses (216), comprising 22% of the total sample.

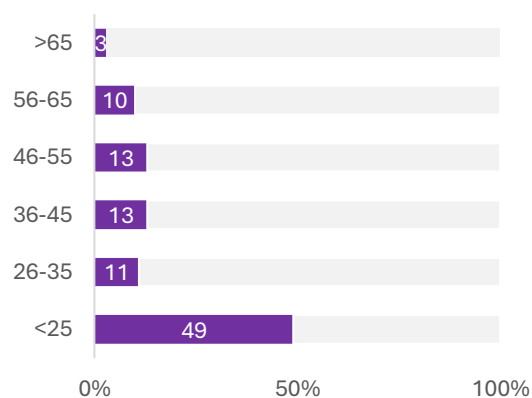
In terms of nationalities the numbers change indicating diverse national origin and cultural backgrounds with 35% identifying as Norwegian, 21% as Romanian, 15% as Polish, 10% as Greek and finally 6% as Austrian. The remaining 110 respondents comprising 10% of the total sample is much diverse.

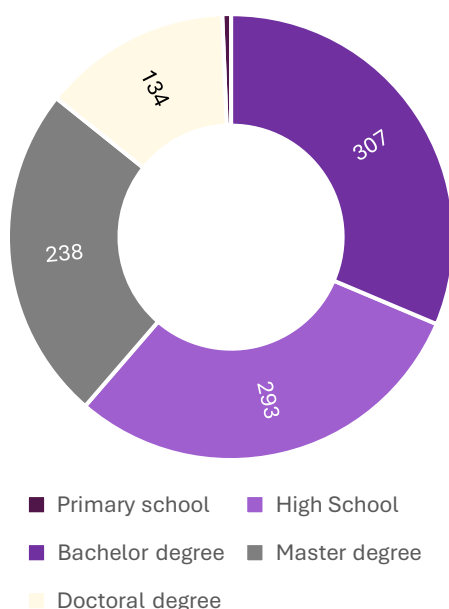
## Sample distribution by partner country

### Sex



### Age groups





## Education

A wide variety of life phases and work experiences are represented in the final sample, consisting of 587 females (60%) and 377 males (39%). The age range spanned from early adulthood to middle age, with nearly half of the respondents (49%) falling within the 18–25 age group. The mean age of participants was 33.7 years, with a median of 26.5 years. The remaining 51% of participants were almost evenly distributed across the 26–35 (11%), 36–45 (13%), and 46–55 (13%) age brackets.

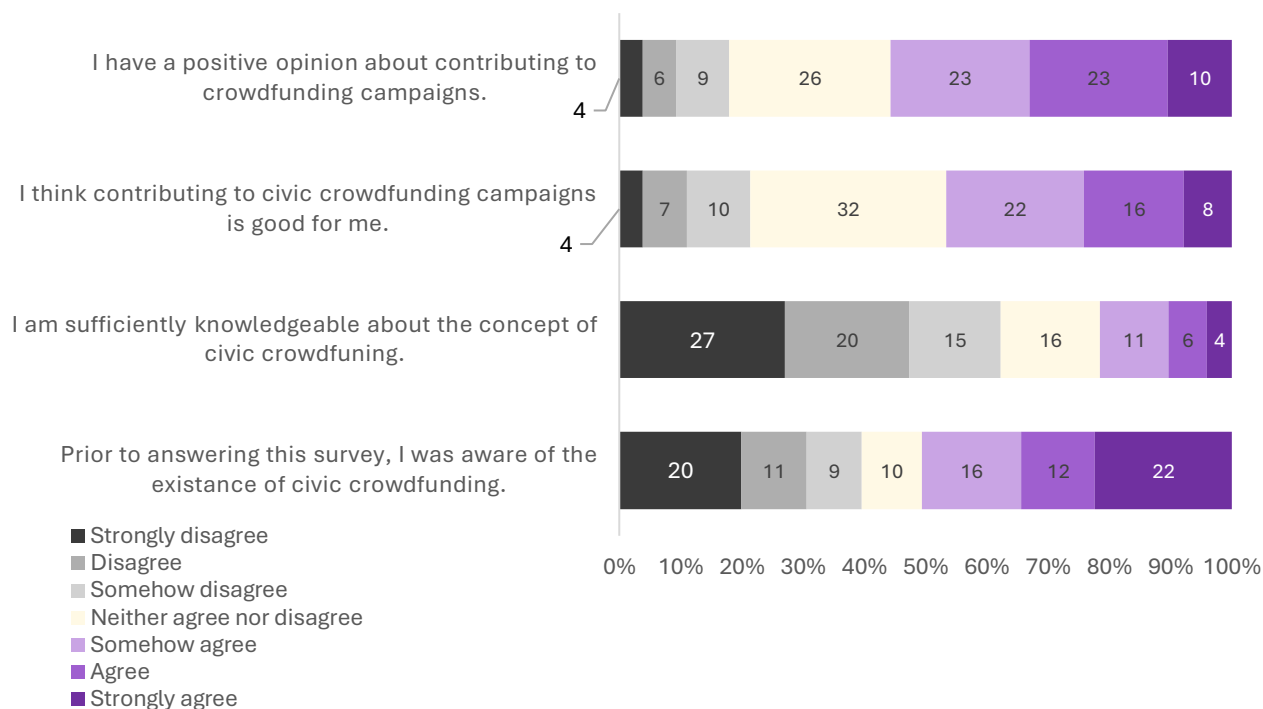
Regarding educational background, most participants were highly educated, with 31% holding a bachelor's degree and 24% possessing a master's degree. Moreover, almost half of the respondents (47.1%) reported being fully employed, while 31% identified themselves as unemployed. Furthermore, 17.7% indicated they were partially employed, and 8% reported being self-employed.

## Civic Crowdfunding: Awareness & Knowledge

If crowdfunding is meant to be an effective financing solution for projects addressing the needs of local communities, a sufficient level of awareness of civic crowdfunding should be in place. Awareness and knowledge of crowdfunding are important factors for market development (Shneor et al., 2023, p. 36). Indeed, lack of awareness and insufficient knowledge prevents fundraisers from effectively utilizing civic crowdfunding. It also reduces the chances of securing funding for civic projects, as potential backers may not learn about them. To address this issue, respondents were asked whether they were aware of civic

crowdfunding before participating in the survey and to evaluate their knowledge of the subject (Fig. 6.5). More than half of the respondents reported being aware of civic crowdfunding before the survey, with 22.3% strongly agreeing and 12.1% agreeing with this statement. At the same time, almost 40% of respondents disagreed, including 19.9% who disagreed strongly.

Furthermore, fewer respondents expressed confidence when asked about their knowledge of civic crowdfunding. Only 21.1% reported having sufficient knowledge on the topic, including 4.0% who agreed strongly. In contrast, a larger share of respondents strongly disagreed, accounting for 27.1%, highlighting the urgent need to enhance public knowledge of civic crowdfunding.

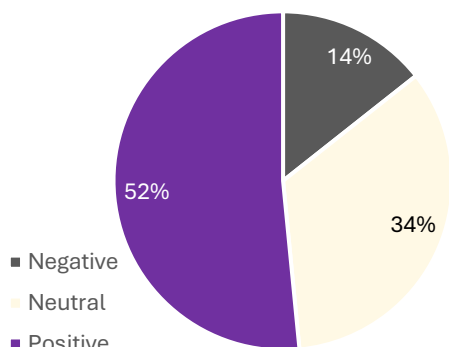


## Civic crowdfunding awareness and attitudes toward crowdfunding

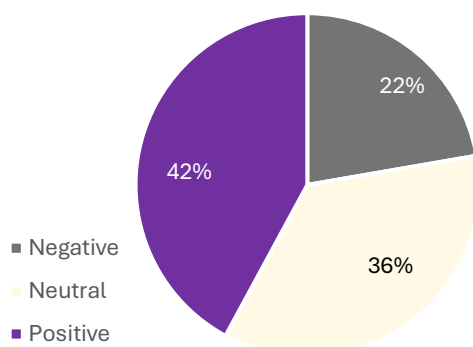
### Attitudes toward civic crowdfunding

Crowdfunding provides the opportunity to support those projects that individuals deeply care about. The decision to support the project financially depends on individual preferences and needs. Most people participating in the survey expressed a positive attitude towards civic crowdfunding. Indeed, 55.7 % of participants agreed with the statement, “I have a positive opinion about

contributing to crowdfunding campaigns’, while only 18% disagreed. Moreover, 46.6% of the survey participants believe that civic crowdfunding also brings personal benefits for them. Civic crowdfunding is seen as a tool for fulfilling a direct need, providing a service, and experiencing a sense of empowerment by enabling projects that carry significant meaning for the community.



General opinion on civic crowdfunding initiatives



Are civic crowdfunding initiatives interesting?

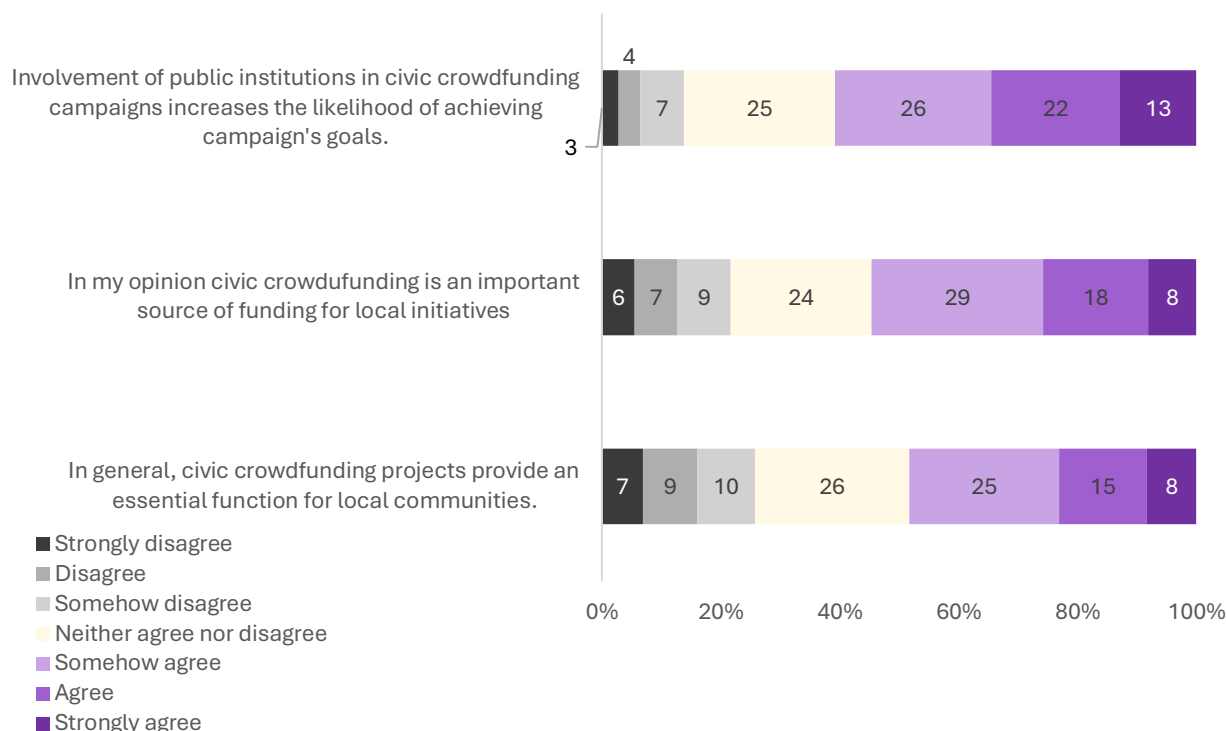
In addition, most respondents (52%) have a favorable opinion of civic crowdfunding initiatives, with only 14% viewing them negatively (Fig. 6.6). Additionally, the highest percentage of people (42%) find these initiatives interesting (Fig. 6.7). It is worth noting that responses described here are general evaluations of crowdfunding initiatives—general attitudes, rather than an evaluation of specific cases, which will be explored in the next section.

Interestingly, many people have a neutral stance on civic crowdfunding initiatives (34%). Furthermore, 36% of respondents are indifferent to whether these projects are interesting (36%) and also whether it is suitable for them to support the campaign (32%). This suggests that while the surveyed participants have a favorable opinion of civic crowdfunding, many struggle to recall specific initiatives and probably have not supported them thus far. Therefore, it might be challenging for them to determine how interesting civic initiatives genuinely are.

Respondents have a favorable view of using civic crowdfunding to support local initiatives (Fig. 6.8). Indeed, over 48% of respondents agreed that crowdfunding projects provide essential functions for local communities. Similarly, more than half of the participants (54.7%) believe that crowdfunding is an important source of financing for local initiatives. It means that participants appreciate the possibilities offered by civic crowdfunding.



## Legitimacy of civic crowdfunding



### Respondents' opinions on legitimacy of civic crowdfunding

#### Public institutions involvement

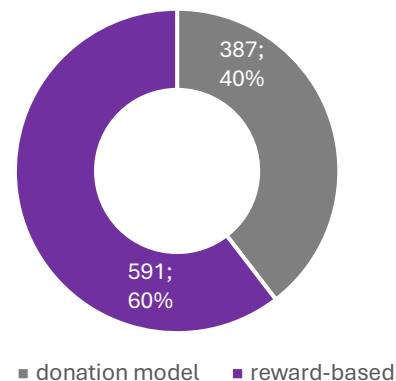
Respondents perceive the collaboration between public institutions and civic crowdfunding as beneficial for achieving community goals and hold expectations of fostering partnerships between civic crowdfunding stakeholders, such as crowdfunding platforms, public institutions, and local fundraisers, to effectively address community needs.

**More than 60% of participants agreed that public institutions' participation increases the likelihood of securing necessary funds for civic crowdfunding campaigns.**



## Crowdfunding models

The respondents shared also their opinions on which crowdfunding model is more effective for projects addressing the needs of local communities. The results reveal a preference for reward crowdfunding. In this model, supporters receive small rewards for their financial contributions, such as thank you cards, T-shirts, etc. This preference is surprising because reward-based crowdfunding is generally more suitable for commercial projects, where rewards serve as a form of presale. In contrast, donation-based models typically better align with charitable or local community projects.



## Civic crowdfunding & SGD

To measure attractiveness of civic crowdfunding in specific context the respondents were presented with examples of campaigns. These campaigns were evaluated through four statements, with the distribution of responses summarized in table below. The statements were as follows:

1. I have positive feeling toward this campaign.
2. In general, I think it's a very good campaign.
3. In general, I like this campaign.
4. In my opinion, this campaign is interesting.

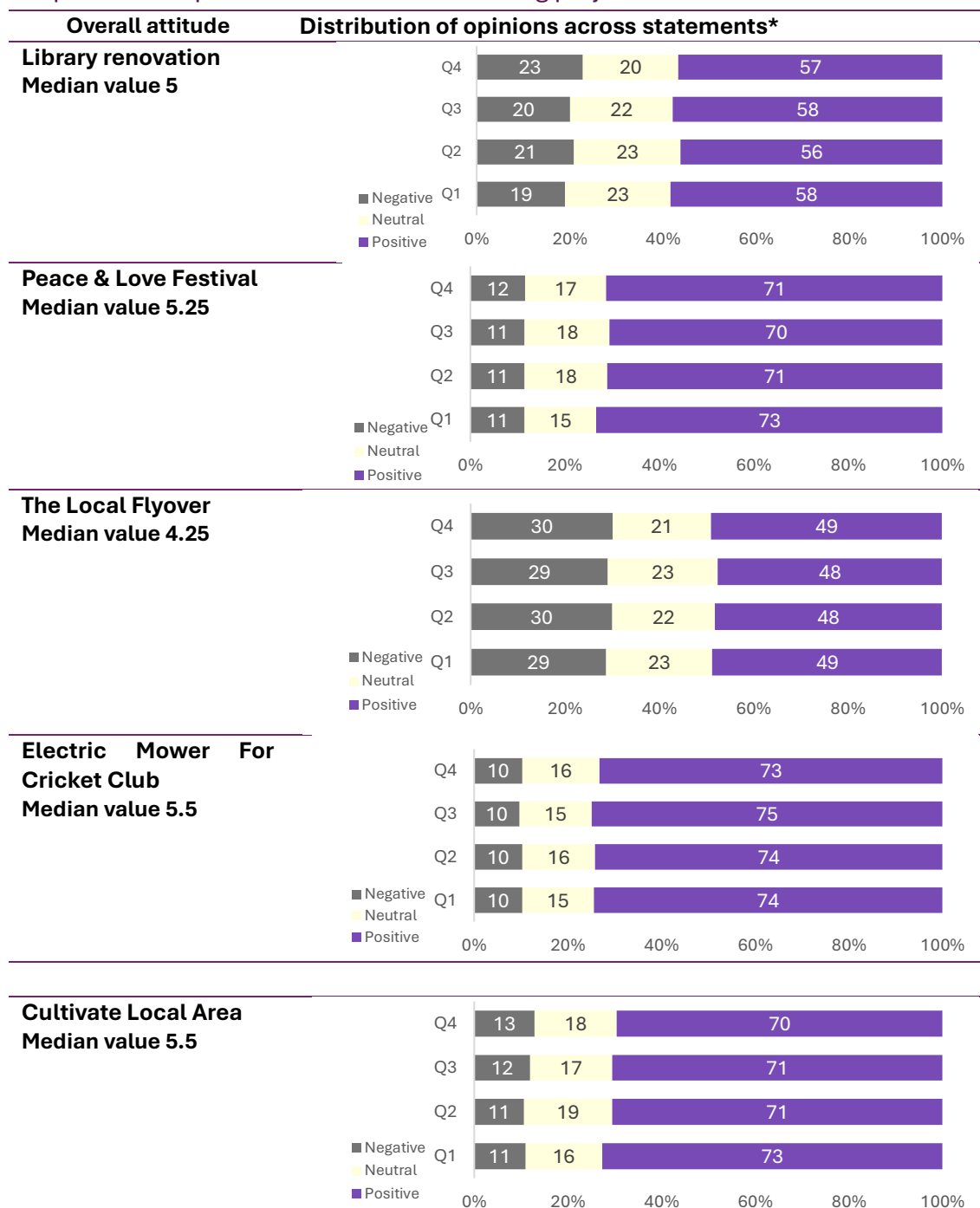
It is important to note that survey participants were only provided a brief description of each campaign and were not influenced by details about campaign location and the number of supporters. This approach allowed us to assess how much the idea resonates with respondents rather than how likely respondents think the idea was to be financed.

The themes of the campaigns varied to address the diverse needs of local communities. In these statements, the 7-point Likert scale was used, where 1 represents “strongly disagree” and 7 represents “strongly agree”. The responses also allowed for calculating the overall attitude toward the specific campaign.

The results show that all presented campaigns were evaluated favorably. In each statement, the positive opinions held the largest share, starting at nearly 50% in the case of 'The local flyover' and reaching 75% in the case of 'Electric mover for the Cricket Club'. Notably, 'Electric Mover for Cricket Club' and 'Cultivate Local Area' emerged as the top-rated campaigns, with median scores of 5.5. Thus, these two campaigns resonated highly with the respondents.



## Respondents' opinions on civic crowdfunding projects



\*Q1- I have positive feeling toward this campaign. Q2 – In general, I think it's a very good campaign. Q3 In general, I like this campaign. Q4 In my opinion, this campaign is interesting.





|       | Library<br>renovation | Peace & Love<br>Festival | The Local<br>Flyover | Electric Mower<br>For Cricket Club | Cultivate<br>Local Area |
|-------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| SDG1  | 35.3                  | 9.1                      | 9.1                  | 21.4                               | 20.8                    |
| SDG2  | 22.3                  | 10.4                     | 9.0                  | 30.3                               | 7.2                     |
| SDG3  | 33.3                  | 30.8                     | 22.1                 | 31.3                               | 18.1                    |
| SDG4  | 15.7                  | 9.8                      | 9.6                  | 13.8                               | 60.3                    |
| SDG5  | 46.7                  | 9.5                      | 9.8                  | 11.2                               | 14.7                    |
| SDG6  | 13.0                  | 14.0                     | 17.3                 | 31.1                               | 9.3                     |
| SDG7  | 11.9                  | 13.7                     | 36.7                 | 25.6                               | 8.4                     |
| SDG8  | 15.0                  | 19.3                     | 18.8                 | 22.4                               | 19.6                    |
| SDG9  | 12.4                  | 36.1                     | 30.0                 | 27.5                               | 17.0                    |
| SDG10 | 43.1                  | 12.6                     | 10.8                 | 15.3                               | 27.9                    |
| SDG11 | 19.4                  | 43.3                     | 41.5                 | 45.3                               | 21.9                    |
| SDG12 | 13.3                  | 18.9                     | 23.2                 | 43.9                               | 13.1                    |
| SDG13 | 13.5                  | 26.7                     | 37.7                 | 44.5                               | 10.3                    |
| SDG14 | 12.2                  | 14.9                     | 15.4                 | 26.7                               | 9.4                     |
| SDG15 | 15.6                  | 37.1                     | 31.5                 | 39.3                               | 11.6                    |
| SDG16 | 51.8                  | 13.1                     | 11.3                 | 14.5                               | 19.6                    |
| SDG17 | 38.9                  | 24.1                     | 21.2                 | 26.7                               | 26.9                    |

### Heatmap of responses – SDGs in civic campaigns (in % of responses)

Participants were also asked to indicate which of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aligns with various campaigns. Respondents were allowed to select multiple SDGs. Moreover, the respondents were presented with the topic of SDG but not with a detailed explanation of how to understand the particular goal.

The results reveal that while some projects are associated mostly with one SDG, others are perceived to address multiple of them. For example the 'Library renovation' campaign resonated highly with 'No Poverty', 'Gender Equality', 'Reduced

Inequalities', and SDG16, which is 'Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions'. On the contrary, the campaign 'Cultivate Local Area' was strongly associated with 'Quality Education' and moderately with 'Reduced inequalities'.

Some associations are surprising. For example, a high percentage of participants indicated that SDG 9, which is 'Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure', aligns with the 'Peace & Love Festival' campaign. It may indicate some difficulty in recognizing the underlying aim of the particular SDG.



## Country highlights

### Austria

128 participants

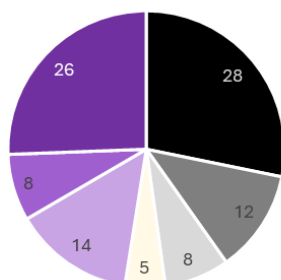
68% female

37% employed

| Sample     |     |      |                          |    |      |                           |     |      |
|------------|-----|------|--------------------------|----|------|---------------------------|-----|------|
| Variable   | n   | %    | Variable                 | n  | %    | Variable                  | n   | %    |
| <b>Sex</b> |     |      | <b>Education</b>         |    |      | <b>Place of residence</b> |     |      |
| Male       | 41  | 32.0 | High School              | 81 | 63.3 | Rural / small town        | 25  | 16.7 |
| Female     | 87  | 68.0 | Bachelor degree          | 45 | 35.2 | Urban / major city        | 125 | 83.3 |
|            |     |      | Master degree            | 1  | 0.8  |                           |     |      |
|            |     |      | Doctoral degree          | 1  | 0.8  |                           |     |      |
| <b>Age</b> |     |      | <b>Employment status</b> |    |      | <b>Place of origin</b>    |     |      |
| <=25       | 119 | 93   | Self employed            | 4  | 3.0  | Rural / small town        | 70  | 54.7 |
| 26-35      | 6   | 5    | Fully employed           | 8  | 6.1  | Urban / major city        | 58  | 45.3 |
| 36-45      | 2   | 2    | Partially employed       | 38 | 28.8 |                           |     |      |
| 46-55      | 1   | 1    | Unemployed               | 82 | 62.1 |                           |     |      |

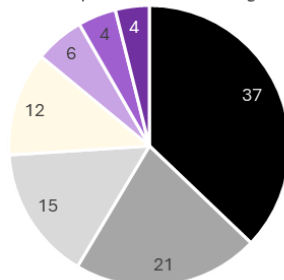
#### Crowdfunding awariness

Prior to answering this survey, I was aware of the existence of civic crowdfunding



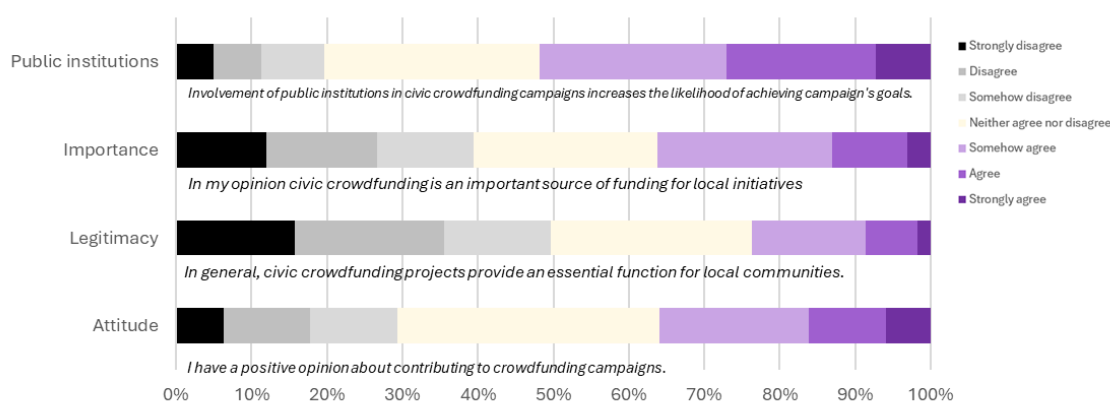
#### Crowdfunding knowledge

I am sufficiently knowledgeable about the concept of civic crowdfunding.



45% heard about civic crowdfunding

17% well-informed on civic crowdfunding



64% believe civic crowdfunding is an important source of funds for local communities

55% have a positive opinion about civic crowdfunding

59% think public institutions increase campaign success



## Greece

101 participants

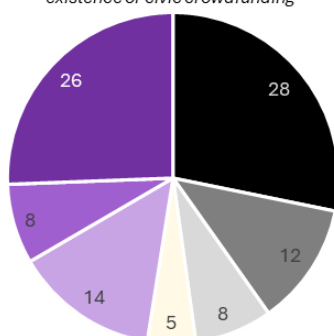
62% female

92% employed

| Sample     |    |      |                          |    |      |                           |    |      |
|------------|----|------|--------------------------|----|------|---------------------------|----|------|
| Variable   | n  | %    | Variable                 | n  | %    | Variable                  | n  | %    |
| <b>Sex</b> |    |      | <b>Education</b>         |    |      | <b>Place of residence</b> |    |      |
| Male       | 36 | 35.6 | High School              | 1  | 1.0  | Rural / small town        | 12 | 11.9 |
| Female     | 63 | 62.4 | Bachelor degree          | 6  | 5.9  | Urban / major city        | 89 | 88.1 |
| Other      | 2  | 2.0  | Master degree            | 38 | 37.6 |                           |    |      |
|            |    |      | Doctoral degree          | 50 | 49.5 |                           |    |      |
| <b>Age</b> |    |      | <b>Employment status</b> |    |      | <b>Place of origin</b>    |    |      |
| <=25       | 8  | 7.9  | Self employed            | 17 | 16.3 | Rural / small town        | 35 | 34.7 |
| 26-35      | 30 | 29.7 | Fully employed           | 68 | 65.4 | Urban / major city        | 66 | 65.3 |
| 36-45      | 28 | 27.7 | Partially employed       | 11 | 10.6 |                           |    |      |
| 46-55      | 24 | 23.8 | Unemployed               | 8  | 7.7  |                           |    |      |
| >56        | 11 | 10.9 |                          |    |      |                           |    |      |

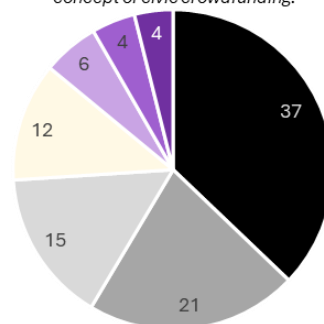
### Crowdfunding awareness

Prior to answering this survey, I was aware of the existence of civic crowdfunding



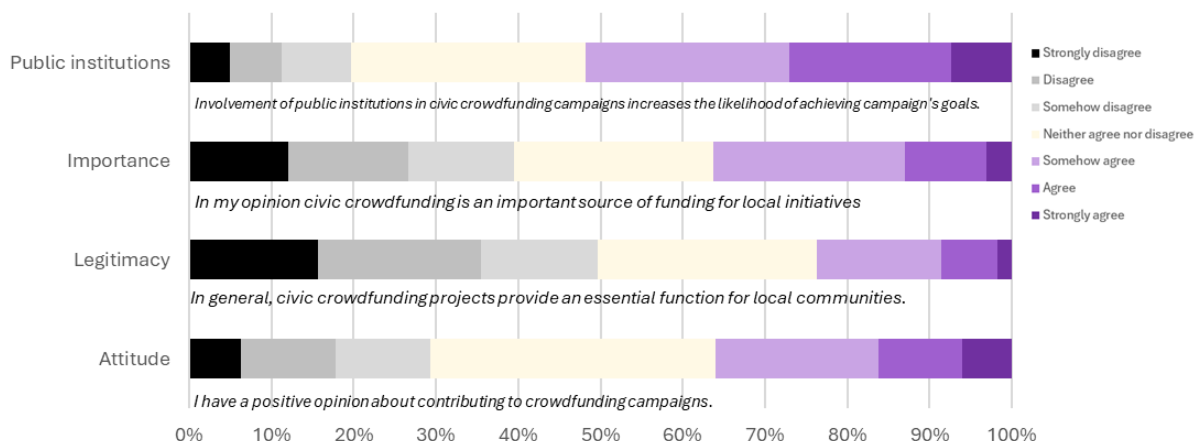
### Crowdfunding knowledge

I am sufficiently knowledgeable about the concept of civic crowdfunding.



66% heard about civic crowdfunding

50% well-informed on civic crowdfunding



76% believe civic crowdfunding is an important source of funds for local communities

78% have a positive opinion about civic crowdfunding

72% think public institutions increase campaign success



## Norway

383 participants

58% female

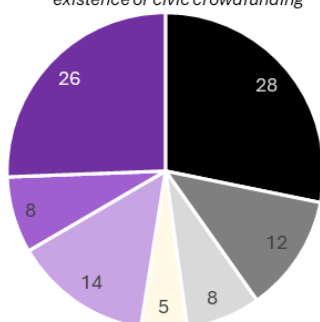
97% employed

### Sample

| Variable   | n   | %    | Variable                 | n   | %    | Variable                  | n   | %    |
|------------|-----|------|--------------------------|-----|------|---------------------------|-----|------|
| <b>Sex</b> |     |      | <b>Education</b>         |     |      | <b>Place of residence</b> |     |      |
| Male       | 154 | 40.2 | High School              | 4   | 1.0  | Rural / small town        | 155 | 40.5 |
| Female     | 221 | 57.7 | Bachelor degree          | 12  | 3.1  | Urban / major city        | 228 | 59.5 |
| Other      | 8   | 2.1  | Master degree            | 80  | 20.9 |                           |     |      |
|            |     |      | Doctoral degree          | 166 | 43.3 |                           |     |      |
| <b>Age</b> |     |      | <b>Employment status</b> |     |      | <b>Place of origin</b>    |     |      |
| <=25       | 12  | 3.1  | Self employed            | 17  | 4.3  | Rural / small town        | 220 | 57.4 |
| 26-35      | 71  | 18.5 | Fully employed           | 326 | 82.3 | Urban / major city        | 163 | 42.6 |
| 36-45      | 82  | 21.4 | Partially employed       | 41  | 10.4 |                           |     |      |
| 46-55      | 99  | 25.8 | Unemployed               | 12  | 3.0  |                           |     |      |
| 56-65      | 90  | 23.5 |                          |     |      |                           |     |      |
| >65        | 29  | 7.6  |                          |     |      |                           |     |      |

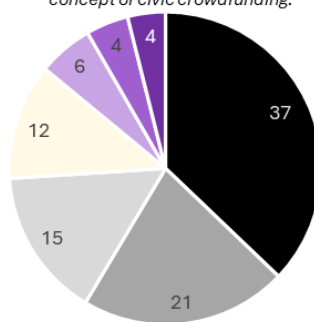
### Crowdfunding awareness

Prior to answering this survey, I was aware of the existence of civic crowdfunding



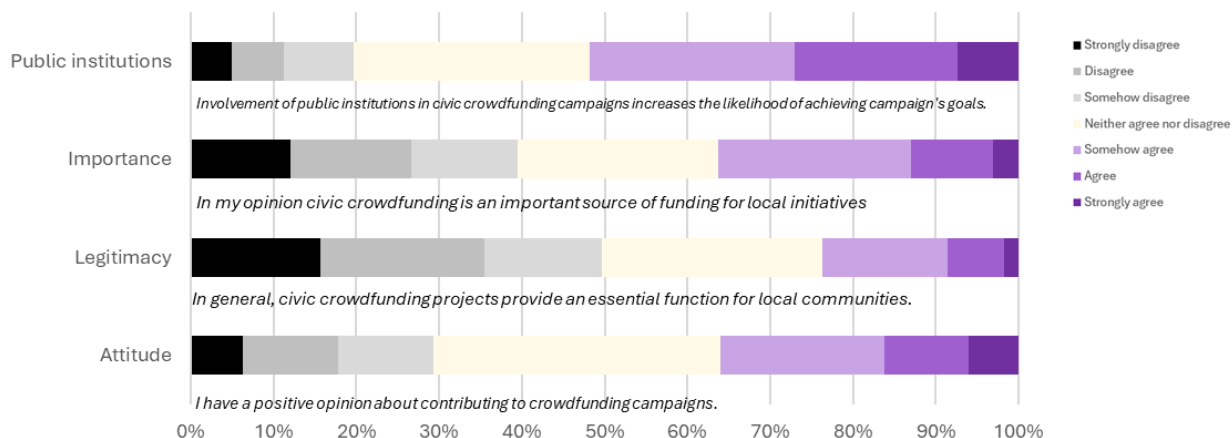
### Crowdfunding knowledge

I am sufficiently knowledgeable about the concept of civic crowdfunding.



48% heard about civic crowdfunding

14% well-informed on civic crowdfunding



36% believe civic crowdfunding is an important source of funds for local communities

36% have a positive opinion about civic crowdfunding

52% think public institutions increase campaign success



## Poland

150 participants

64% female

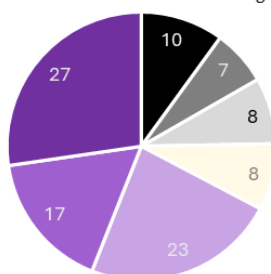
> 50% employed

Sample

| Variable   | n   | %    | Variable                 | n  | %    | Variable                  | n   | %    |
|------------|-----|------|--------------------------|----|------|---------------------------|-----|------|
| <b>Sex</b> |     |      | <b>Education</b>         |    |      | <b>Place of residence</b> |     |      |
| Male       | 51  | 34.0 | High School              | 81 | 54.0 | Rural / small town        | 25  | 16.7 |
| Female     | 96  | 64.0 | Bachelor degree          | 57 | 38.0 | Urban / major city        | 125 | 83.3 |
| Other      | 3   | 2.0  | Master degree            | 10 | 6.7  |                           |     |      |
|            |     |      | Doctoral degree          | 2  | 1    |                           |     |      |
| <b>Age</b> |     |      | <b>Employment status</b> |    |      | <b>Place of origin</b>    |     |      |
| <=25       | 140 | 93.0 | Self employed            | 20 | 12.5 | Rural / small town        | 54  | 36.0 |
| 26-35      | 2   | 1.0  | Fully employed           | 30 | 18.8 | Urban / major city        | 96  | 64.0 |
| 36-45      | 7   | 5.0  | Partially employed       | 52 | 32.5 |                           |     |      |
| 46-55      | 1   | 1.0  | Unemployed               | 58 | 36.3 |                           |     |      |

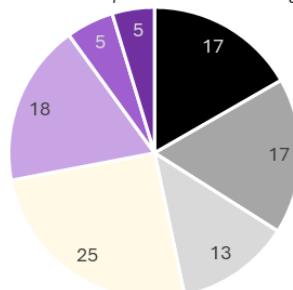
### Crowdfunding awareness

Prior to answering this survey, I was aware of the existence of civic crowdfunding



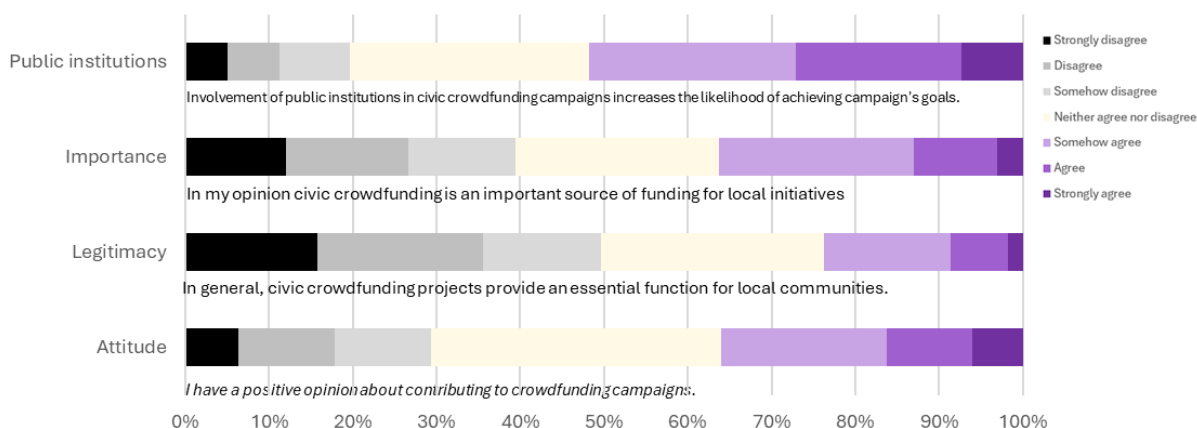
### Crowdfunding knowledge

I am sufficiently knowledgeable about the concept of civic crowdfunding.



67% heard about civic crowdfunding

28% well-informed on civic crowdfunding



65% believe civic crowdfunding is an important source of funds for local communities

56% have a positive opinion about civic crowdfunding

70% think public institutions increase campaign success



## Romania

216 participants

56% female

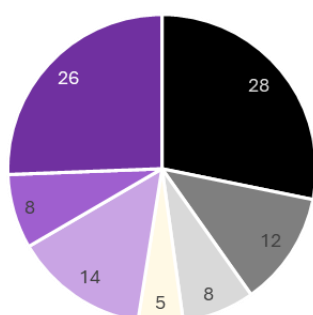
35% employed

Sample

| Variable   | n   | %    | Variable                 | n   | %    | Variable                  | n   | %    |
|------------|-----|------|--------------------------|-----|------|---------------------------|-----|------|
| <b>Sex</b> |     |      | <b>Education</b>         |     |      | <b>Place of residence</b> |     |      |
| Male       | 95  | 44.0 | High School              | 1   | 0.5  | Rural / small town        | 31  | 14.4 |
| Female     | 120 | 55.6 | Bachelor degree          | 11  | 52.3 | Urban / major city        | 185 | 85.6 |
| Other      | 1   | 0.5  | Master degree            | 87  | 40.3 |                           |     |      |
|            |     |      | Doctoral degree          | 11  | 5.1  |                           |     |      |
| <b>Age</b> |     |      | <b>Employment status</b> |     |      | <b>Place of origin</b>    |     |      |
| <=25       | 202 | 94.0 | Self employed            | 19  | 8.5  | Rural / small town        | 71  | 32.9 |
| 26-35      | 3   | 1.0  | Fully employed           | 29  | 13.0 | Urban / major city        | 145 | 67.1 |
| 36-45      | 8   | 4.0  | Partially employed       | 31  | 13.9 |                           |     |      |
| >46        | 3   | 1.0  | Unemployed               | 144 | 64.6 |                           |     |      |

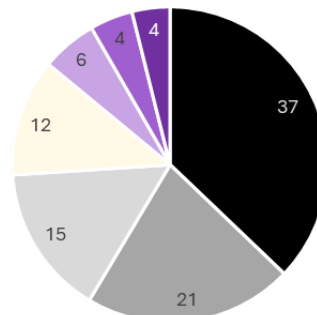
### Crowdfunding awareness

Prior to answering this survey, I was aware of the existence of civic crowdfunding



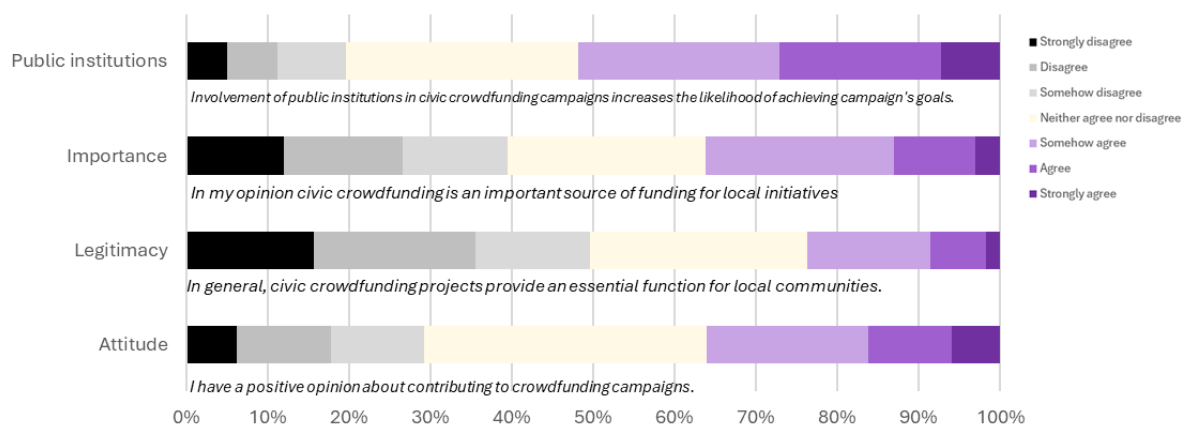
### Crowdfunding knowledge

I am sufficiently knowledgeable about the concept of civic crowdfunding.



41% heard about civic crowdfunding

20% well-informed on civic crowdfunding



64% believe civic crowdfunding is an important source of funds for local communities

59% have a positive opinion about civic crowdfunding

65% think public institutions increase campaign success



## 7. Crowdfunding as a financing tool: Best practices & recommendations

**Awareness and education:** Public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives should be prioritized to enhance understanding of civic crowdfunding as an important tool for community engagement and project funding. These initiatives should emphasize the benefits of crowdfunding, including its ability to mobilize resources for public goods and foster collective action. Workshops, seminars, and online resources can be used to build capacity among potential fundraisers and contributors, especially in underserved communities where the understanding of crowdfunding mechanisms remains limited.

**Trust and transparency:** At the core of all civic crowdfunding initiatives to overcome trust deficits commonly observed among potential backers and public institutions. Clear guidelines on fund allocation, regular updates on project progress, and the establishment of accountability measures are vital. Platforms should incorporate features that presents detailed budgets, real-time progress tracking, and tangible impact reporting to reassure backers about the efficacy and legitimacy of their contributions.

**Public-private partnerships:** Public institutions should collaborate with private entities and grassroots organizations to co-fund and support civic crowdfunding projects. Match-funding arrangements where public bodies match the amount raised through crowdfunding campaigns can amplify impact while encouraging citizen participation. Public institutions should act as facilitators rather than controllers in crowdfunding projects. They should provide Logistical support, such as planning permission or platform creation and work on simplifying bureaucratic barriers. Additionally, and if possible, projects should avoid reliance on civic crowdfunding to fund essential public services.

**Localized and grassroots efforts:** Successful campaigns are often deeply rooted in the community, addressing specific local concerns. Governments and platforms should support projects that resonate with local values and cultural contexts, as they are more likely to gain financial and emotional backing.

**Campaign creators:** Civic crowdfunding campaigns should prioritize small, tangible goals that directly resonate with the specific needs of local communities. They should address issues that matter most to the immediate audience. Additionally, campaigns should be culturally relevant, ensuring they align with the values and traditions of the target community. This cultural resonance not only broadens appeal but also enhances the campaign's credibility and relatability. To maximize impact, campaign creators must strike a balance between emotional appeal and clear, measurable outcomes. While emotional storytelling can inspire action and commitment, providing measurable objectives ensures transparency and builds trust among backers.

**Crowdfunding platforms:** Crowdfunding platforms play a crucial role in the success of civic initiatives. Platforms should help in the process of enhancing projects through tailored categorization systems that help potential backers find projects that align with their interests. Additionally, promotional tools, such as targeted advertising and feature highlights, can significantly improve the reach and impact of campaigns. Security is another critical aspect for crowdfunding platforms. Implementing robust measures to protect transaction integrity and safeguard user data is essential for fostering trust. Ensuring the privacy and security of backers and campaign creators alike will encourage broader participation and support. Finally, platforms should provide training tools for both campaign creators





and backers. Educational resources, including workshops, webinars, and user guides, can empower creators to design effective campaigns and equip backers with the knowledge to make informed contributions.

**Campaigns alignment with Sustainable Development Goals:** Civic crowdfunding campaigns should be explicitly linked to SDG targets to attract broader support and ensure alignment with global sustainability efforts. Fundraisers should highlight the social, economic, and environmental impacts of their projects to resonate with diverse audiences.

## CIVIC CROWDFUNDING PROJECTS: BEST PRACTICES

### Community Engagement

- Local communities as active participants in the decision-making process.
- Grassroots initiatives: increased ownership and trust.
- Storytelling to emotionally connect with backers.

### Transparency and Trust

- Clearly stated campaign goals, fund allocation, and progress updates.
- Well-known platforms with robust systems.

### Collaboration

- Partnerships between public institutions, private organizations, and NGOs.
- Match-funding and co-financing models.

### Platform Optimization

- Crowdfunding platforms specialized in civic crowdfunding.
- Clear entry requirements and categorize civic projects for visibility.

### Education and Awareness

- Educate communities about crowdfunding benefits and methods.
- Resources for fundraisers, such as guides and workshops.

### Scaling Success

- Align campaigns with SDGs for broader appeal.
- Crowdfunding to complement, not replace, public services.



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