



# CREST

CREATIVE REPURPOSING OF EDUCATIONAL SPACES FOR  
INNOVATIVE STUDENT-CENTRED ENVIRONMENTS

# IO1 Mapping the existing participatory practice and models of repurposing educational buildings and spaces

## Two essential pillars:

- 1) Analysis of existing information on SCL environments.
- 2) Assessment of actual stakeholders' needs.

## Steps:

- 1) **In-depth analysis and evaluation** of the existing SCL environments in the field of HE.
- 2) Identifying, grouping and describing existing **good practices** of repurposing educational buildings and spaces;
- 3) **Literature review** on the training & methodological models regarding enabling SCL environments;
- 4) Analysis of the best **digital tools** that support this process and adaptation of selected ones for the needs of the project.
- 5) Assessing the learning environment from the user's perspective, evaluating **students' needs** by using participatory methods and empowering them to provide insights for creation of relevant CSL environments.
- 6) **Data analysis**, sense-making and suggestions provisions, recommendations, and guidelines for the development of a user-friendly, adaptable and widely accessible model. Forming effective and integral prototypes is an intense process focused on the context, relevant trends and internal culture of different learning environments.

## CONCLUSIONS / FINDINGS

- **Active learning methods** were widely used and appreciated by students, as they helped them understand and consolidate knowledge better than traditional teacher-centered methods.
- Focus group participants frequently mentioned independent work, research projects, discussion and debate groups, peer mentoring schemes, the ability to choose their courses, and practical experiences such as fieldwork or internships as the **most beneficial approaches** to discover new insights and deepen their knowledge in the study subject.
- Computer assisted learning for more practical disciplines **lacked interactivity** and some key elements that could only be delivered through in-person classes.
- Participants felt that their current university **spaces were not particularly SCL-friendly and could be improved.**

### Points to consider:

- **Physical needs** of students (e.g. drinking water stops, leisure rooms, good lighting, adaptation to those with visual or mobility impairments)
- **Working hours** of university facilities should also be longer, perhaps even around the clock, to adapt to dynamic students' needs.
- SCL spaces should be designed in a way that encourages and promotes **communication and collaboration** between students in a flexible way.
- For good SCL design it is important to consider leisure spaces where students can socialize, spend their free time, and **build community** around them.

# IO2 Model for repurposing of educational buildings and spaces for HE institutions

The main aim was to at design, test and enhance a model for the repurposing of educational buildings and spaces for HE institutions.

The repurposing of buildings and spaces was developed with the concepts of:

- **student-centred learning** (small and non-hierarchical groups, bi-directional, intra and extra-mural learning)
- **and learning ergonomics** (focusing on the well-being of users) in mind)

It was designed in collaboration with educators and employees at the involved universities.

## Steps:

- In-depth analysis of IO1
- Identifying potential buildings and spaces for the piloting scheme
- Designing and discussing the piloting schemes.
- Executing the piloting schemes.
- Conducting analyses of the piloting schemes and collecting feedback (students, educators, other employees of HE institutions)

# IO1 Model for repurposing of educational buildings and spaces for HE institutions

## CONCLUSIONS / FINDINGS

- The main finding was, that if we change the space (and technology), the pedagogy must follow.
- Changes must be planned carefully, and the stakeholder groups should be included in a broader way.
- The users of the space must have influence over its design.
- Traditional classrooms have evolved, space matters and is highly influenced by pedagogy and technology.
- Flexibility of the new learning environments is crucial; it reduces costs, enables usage of different pedagogies, and can address different users.
- Teachers are, besides students, the main stakeholder group; architects must focus on users and pedagogies, and less on design.

# IO3 Manual for the implementation of the model

Aim of the manual is to challenge traditional pedagogical models and provide **new methodologies for a more inclusive, creative, and student-centered learning process**. It provided guidelines on how this can be adapted to different cultural environments and contexts.

**Target group** (users of the manual) are HE institutions, while the target group for the specific training for the implementation of the developed model are teachers, facilitators/managers and students.

CHC developed a programme for the training on the basis of the content from the manual.

The training will in addition consist of specific aspects for community building and management together with tips and tricks **on how to maintain the community engagement and create not only a sustainable space but also a sustainable community using it**.

The training is planned to be piloted in Ljubljana and Kaunas.

## IO4 Policy recommendation for the public authorities to support participatory processes in terms of repurposing of public buildings and civic spaces

The report “**The Future of Cities**” of Research Centre (JRC), and supported by DG REGIO outlines key challenges of the European cities: One of them is how to better involve and connect people living in towns and cities with urban development, planning and managing of public buildings. The report also states that almost half of all buildings in Europe are **over 70 years old** and suggests that to increase sustainability and high quality of life, it is necessary to upgrade or retrofit buildings.

- Recommendations provide university leaderships, local authorities (municipality and city/towns leaderships) and policy makers with concrete proposals on **how to develop a framework** for planning and implementation of inclusive and participatory processes which support meaningful role of various stakeholders in procedures that lead up to repurposing of buildings and spaces.
- Divided into 3 pillars;

## **Municipalities**

**1.1.** Municipalities should develop and put in place proven policy mechanisms and innovative participatory tools, budgeting, encompassing the processes of planning, experimenting, building and using of unused or neglected public buildings in order to streamline their transformation into community centres and in that way straighten social, cultural and economic capital;

**1.2.** Municipalities should create and make widely available various support mechanisms (Open source databases, training programmes, work-based learning schemes, Community of practitioners events, financial incentives etc.) for students of related and relevant studies to create joint initiatives;

**1.3.** When repurposing abandoned buildings, municipalities should continuously include / make available opportunities to all potential beneficiaries, such as HEIs and other educational institutions, civil sector organisations, business sector and final beneficiaries - the residents, through all stages of the process: from the design of the space (5 key principles of student-centred space design) and throughout the planning and development processes in order to maximise the functionality and future use of space;

**1.4.** When considering the processes of designing student-centred educational spaces, municipalities should take into account the experiences (good practices) on the regional, national and European level, and take active steps to ensure cooperation with stakeholders (municipalities) within regional, national and European level in order to exchange of practices, initiate joint planning as well as mainstreaming of common initiatives to ensure successful development and implementation;



## Higher Education Institutions

**2.1.** Higher education institutions should initiate and sustain strategic exchanges of knowledge, experiences and joint initiatives with other educational sectors (primary, secondary, VET) in order to implement the CREST Model for repurposing of educational buildings and spaces and become agents of change for transformation, thus increasing the rate of successful implementation of the CREST model for the stakeholders and final beneficiaries;

**2.2.** Higher education institutions should continuously invest in an exchange of information with their students and staff in order to sustain a constant feed of information for the improvement of services provided. Such topics as competence development of professors and staff through micro credential programs over-time, inclusion of various work-based learning as well as service learning programmes, and the constant feedback of adaptations needed will, in turn, increase the quality not only of programmes and curricula but also increase its outreach to community development.

**2.3.** HEIs should act as cultural custodians by maintaining and revitalising cultural inheritances of the political community, but also giving it direction; as such, HEIs should seek assistance from local and regional experts in the field of pedagogics, urban methodology and cultural activities as well as engaging students from the beginning of their university studies, in order to fully realise the principles of student-centred education spaces design and ensure their ease of use and adaptability to future challenges in learning;

**2.4.** When co-developing student-centred educational spaces, HEIs should, during the process, ensure that the 5 key principles of making spaces student centred should be enforced at all stages of the development process, these key 5 principles being: flexible spaces, encouragement of collaboration, tech-friendly solutions, improving student comfort and focus, and connecting study spaces to public spaces;

## Non-Governmental Organisations

**3.1.** With its expertise, innovation capacities and outreach capacity, Non-Governmental Organisations shall act as a bridge between educational institutions and the policy makers in order to promote and enhance creative, inclusive and participatory approaches in repurposing or development of public spaces, ensuring the needs of the students are met all the way;

**3.2.** Non-Governmental Organisations with the expertise in education, community based initiatives and citizen mobilisation should actively seek information on the ongoing initiatives for the repurposing of the buildings for educational purposes in order to gain a new possibility of directing their work towards the activation of community-based initiatives in repurposing public spaces;

**3.3.** Non-Governmental Organisations must advocate for the use of innovative solutions when mapping, creative repurposing and using public buildings. In this regard, the application of various solutions encompassing IT solutions, compatibility with certain aspects of learning ergonomics, creation of friendly environments, flexibility, mobility and connection to public spaces should be ensured when developing student-centred educational spaces in order to ensure the sustainability and durability of spaces developed;

**3.4.** Non-Governmental Organisations working within the field of Service Learning should use their expertise in order to encourage the positive exchange of opportunities between municipalities, HEIs and students, enabling them all to participate in the different stages of design and development of the student-centred spaces; by streamlining the processes of service learning when designing student-centred spaces, the NGOs shall provide a positive environment for long-term involvement and collaboration between municipalities, HEIs and Students;

**THANK YOU**