

**Project name:** Democratic Vaccination – Debate Clubs and Deliberative Democracy as a Model for the Development of Democratic Competences and Participatory Decision Making

**Project promotor:** Croatian Debate Society

**Partners:**

- Association of Cities in the Republic of Croatia
- Association of Croatian High School Principals
- Fundatum, Norway

**Project implementation period:** 1.1. 2021. – 30.6.2023.

**Total project value:** € 179,310.00, of which € 140,000.00 was provided through financial support from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway within the European Economic Area and Norwegian grants

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**Link to relevant website:** [www.hdd.hr](http://www.hdd.hr)

**Project summary:**

Low level of awareness of the importance of active citizenship and lack of democratic culture is characteristic of young people in Croatia. The problem is that young people do not have activities that would enable them to proactively develop and advocate for their views. As part of the project, we will expand debate clubs as a successful model of civic education that develops the skills of argumentation, critical thinking, expression, teamwork, sensitizes users to diversity, the importance of human rights and empowers them to informed action. Young people involved in the work of clubs will apply their skills during deliberation activities that will introduce them to informed political participation and give them the opportunity to identify problems in their communities and in cooperation with local government create informed and quality solutions.

Why is this important? The level of civic participation in Croatia is extremely low. Turnout in elections for representatives at all levels of government is low, interest in political issues is low, aversion to political processes is high, and civic initiatives are few. Such an atmosphere does not direct young people towards informed participation in democratic processes. This project provides young people with an educational background and a practical experience of participatory democracy.

How do we help? First, participation in the work of debate clubs will empower young people to act through the development of key skills and the acquisition of knowledge. Second, by participating in deliberative activities, young people will gain practical knowledge about democratic processes and the importance of collaboratively creating quality solutions. This experience will empower young people for future action at local, national and European level.

The project includes training teachers and local volunteers to implement the GOO debate model and support the work of new debate clubs, as well as training of deliberation ambassadors who will be the initiators and participants in the implementation of deliberative activities at the local level.

And what is the result of all this? The project will help young people develop a democratic awareness and civic competences through participation in debate clubs and deliberations. Through participation in project activities, young people will gain practical experience and lasting knowledge that will provide them with a basis for active participation in society in the future.

Through the project we will expand the reach of debate clubs as a successful and reliable model of civic education and create a network of teachers and volunteers trained to implement the development program, which is a step forward in the unresolved and unsatisfactory status of civic education in Croatia.

Also, through the project we will develop a model of deliberative public opinion for application in the context of Croatian local governments adapted to involve vulnerable groups in decision making, which brings together citizens, experts, moderators and local government representatives and facilitates cooperation and solution creation.