



## **PROJECT PROPOSAL SUSTAINABLE REGENERATION OF A FORMER MILITARY HOSPITAL**

# **INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY CENTER (ICC)**

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**INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY CENTER**  
Proposal for a sustainable conversion of a former military hospital

**PROPOSAL FOR A SUSTAINABLE CONVERSION OF A FORMER  
MILITARY HOSPITAL IN ZAGREB, VLAŠKA STREET.**

**Name :** Interkulturni društveni centar  
**Location adress:** Zagreb, Vlaška 87  
**Country:** Croatia  
**Current use:** Abandoned  
**Past use:** Military hospital  
**Ownership:** City of Zagreb  
**Area:** 11.923 m2, gross building area 12.130 m2



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### ABSTRACT

The old Military hospital in Vlaška Street in Zagreb is a former barrack built in 1833. The hospital was abandoned during the 1980's, as was its funding, resulting in the complex being in very bad condition and almost entirely abandoned and unusable today. The oldest part of the complex, the street facing building, is listed in the National Register of Cultural Property, and the idea of this project is to reconstruct the back building and the connecting wing for the implementation of its plans, because the street facing building is already intended for several educational institutions (music and ballet schools).

The project proposal focuses on repurposing the former Military hospital based on an intercultural social centre model as a new institutional model for the utilisation and management of public infrastructure intended for trans-disciplinary and trans-sectoral cultural needs, need of civil society organisations and other fields of society, as well as local communities. Social-cultural centres are and can be important places for community gatherings and active involvement of local communities in various activities. They are places of social integration and through the development of different intercultural programmes aimed for different social minorities, they help to achieve their higher visibility in societies, to actively include them in their communities and to promote their rights. Social-cultural centres can also be a generator of civil entrepreneurship, thus adding to social involvement and employment as well as overall socioeconomic development of a society, like for example ufaFabrik in Berlin, a unique art, cultural and sustainable future concepts laboratory built by the group of young artists and activists that 1979. occupied the premises of the former Universum-Film studios in Tempelhof district.

The goal is to create an institution which utilises a new type of institutionalised infrastructure management for the local community based on a hybrid model of public-private partnership. This would be a mixed-type institution, founded by the local government and the local community which would ensure the stability of the institutional framework similar to the one of public institutions, guarantee long-term utilisation of public infrastructure and allow the users to be actively involved in its management in the form of horizontal self-organisation and the variety of contents and programmes.

A direct benefit this model would have for the society is creating synergy and strengthening the social capital of the local community by linking together and creating a network of various cultural, civil society and local community stakeholders through inter-sectoral connectivity and integration of different groups of society. Social involvement and strengthening of social capital will also be achieved through promoting and enabling of social entrepreneurship, which is an integral part of this model, as well as educational programmes and content which promotes the concept of lifelong learning.

The former Military hospital, as an abandoned complex, is more than just an aesthetic problem. It is also an environmental problem because further devastation of the complex would inevitably result in an irreversible degree of devastation and the inability of its renewal in the future. This project would stop this negative process and redirect it toward reconstruction and infrastructural development. As a preliminary step, before the actual reconstruction, a more detailed analysis

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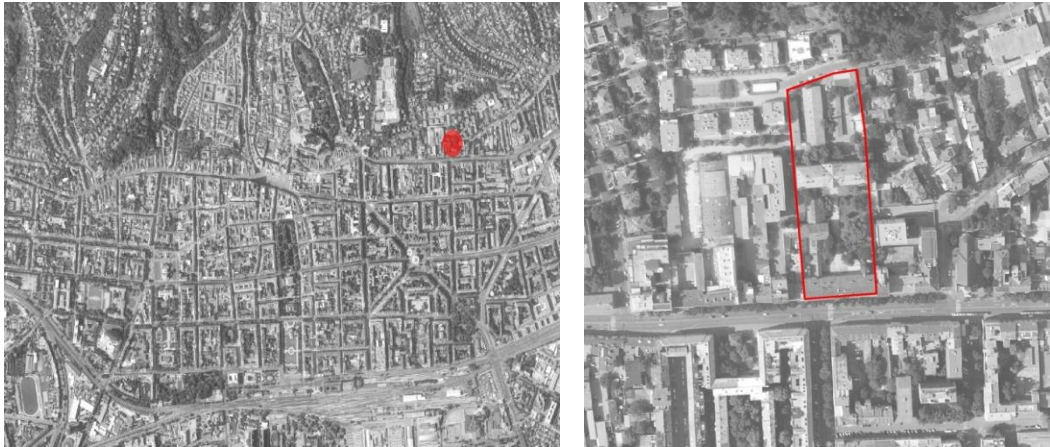
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of the general location condition should be conducted in order to gain better insight into the possibilities for repurposing it and whether it would be cost effective. In technical terms, repurposing the complex would require a complete reconstruction of the buildings and the proposed model contains the concept of sustainability not just in a social sense but also in the environmental sense which includes energy efficiency of the buildings, energy efficiency planning, renewable energy sources and implementing sustainable plans for waste management and water use on location. This direct positive impact on the environment, the development of eco-awareness, the impulse for consideration and implementation of sustainable approaches in the local community and various educational activities and programmes that this centre would provide, will serve as a good example for this type of model.

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## 1. ANALYSIS OF THE LOCATION'S CONTEXT

The former Military Hospital, the subject of this redevelopment project, is located in the heart of the city of Zagreb. The surface of the lot where the former Military Hospital complex is situated is 11 923 m<sup>2</sup>, of which 320m<sup>2</sup> is occupied by the existing buildings.



Picture 1. Center of Zagreb with the proposed location

The project proposal for redevelopment of the former Military Hospital in 87, Vlaška street is directed towards social and cultural purpose with interdisciplinary approach where one wider circle of actors will be included, from cultural and civil society scene, to the local community.

The construction lot where the intercultural center is planned according to GUP (General Urban Planning of Zagreb) is located in areas of public and social purpose, and the lot is marked as a city project in the category of buildings of public and social purpose of minimal urban significance, which means that the architectural program must promote environmental values of urban planning and possibly enrich open city spaces.

The wider area around the city center is densely populated by the oldest population in the city and is currently the most tourist attractive city zone. In the mapped area, there are police, health center, catering facilities, textile shops, delicatessen, household appliances furniture stores, cosmetics shops, hostels, dozens of apartments, many hairdressers, antique stores and galleries. Craftsmen are seldom present and a relatively large number of shops are empty.

There are several educational institutions in this part of the city, but there are no theaters, museums and cultural and social spaces in general. Most of the buildings were built in the 19th century, they are not adequately maintained and are energy-inefficient; waste sorting was reduced to several containers, and most of the day the concentration of traffic is high.

However, a few years ago, specific design, artistic and service commercial activities have emerged in this area, occasionally associated with project initiatives such as the *Design District Zagreb 3* festival, which promotes the visibility of these contents and is supported by the City of

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Zagreb through a support program for the creative and cultural industries; all in anticipation of their contribution to the development of the economy and society as a whole. Although there has not yet been any change in the structure of the population or the ownership of residential space in the immediate neighborhood, these facilities noticeably intensify a daily activity, attract new actors / businesses and gradually change the picture of the neighborhood.

We are considering this project of reconstruction and redevelopment of the former Military Hospital, the prevailing infrastructure management model for the needs of the local community in Zagreb and Croatia is based on public cultural and social institutions. Over the last decade, civil society actors, especially in the cultural field, have established and run a number of independent cultural and social centers on the periphery of the system. There is also anarchist legitimate squatting culture proclaiming autonomous zones as spaces that provide conditions for existence of communities that want to work outside the model of public and civil-social institutions. Each of these models has its shortcomings: public cultural and social institutions have secured conditions of action, but often fail to provide neither representative nor serviceable functions; independent institutions operating in the civil-social context are funded on a project basis, which is why they can hardly provide a short-term perspective for the existence of an independent infrastructure, while the squatting culture cannot count on the long-term sustainability of such infrastructure.

Furthermore, the smaller number of independent cultural organizations in Zagreb are operating in the spaces owned by the city or the Government, all in specific contractual circumstances regulating their use with a range of free usage with paid costs to the commercial rent and the obligation to pay the entire amount of space maintenance by market conditions. Due to the lack of alternatives, most of them, however, operate in rented commercial office spaces. Lack of funds imposes a reduction in the typology of used spaces to mainly offices, which are used primarily as the headquarters of organizations with mainly administrative and service purposes. This is particularly problematic when organization is engaged in performing arts such as dance and theater or when organizing larger public events (space for performance projects, rehearsals, informal education, residency programs and international cooperation programs). At the same time, the daily activity of the organization is constrained because of the inability to adequately involve external users in the home environment, and the realization of more demanding programs becomes the part of market circumstances' domain. Additionally, many organizations do not have adequate working space at all, and existing resources are not sufficient for current program needs. Hence the need for creating a hybrid model which will use the advantages and avoid the shortcomings of the three previously mentioned infrastructure management models for the needs of the local community in Zagreb and Croatia.

At the end of 2008, through an innovative programming and management model, *POGON* - the Zagreb Center for Independent Culture and Youth, a hybrid institution in civil-public partnership, managed by the City of Zagreb and the SU Operation City - was established. In the process of advocating, the Operation City insisted on the polilocation character of the institution, and the premises proposed by the City were some of the abandoned factory complexes such as the former industrial complexes *Jedinstvo*, *Badel*, *Uljara*, but in the process of founding the City gives only the *Jedinstvo* space and office space in *Mislavova* street. The establishing of a pioneering institution with an innovative model of programming and management has only met



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the needs of the civil scene, but this model is nevertheless a success for the establishment of future institutions of this type in Croatia.



Picture 2. View on the junction building

## 2. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY CENTER MODEL –what, how and who would use the center

This project proposes the conversion of the former Military Hospital premises in Vlaška Street according to the Intercultural Social Center - ICC model that *UPGRADE Platform by the Association Operation City* develops as a new form of public space realized through a new and socially responsible institutional model of public infrastructure use and management through civil-public partnership focusing on the needs of cultural initiatives, civil society organizations and other fields of social activity and the local community.

This socio-cultural center is thought as a meeting space for active inclusion and cooperation in the local community, which contributes to the visibility and social integration of minorities through intercultural programs. Besides, such projects contribute to the community through participatory management and inclusive transdisciplinary public programs design: by creating new jobs, creating new forms of social life, and its potential to influence the design of new habits of citizens in the realm of ecological sustainability. While creating a new social value they as well provide the possibility of continuous development of a certain urban area.



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In addition, the purpose of this model of use and management is to expand the meaning of category of social purpose in general urban plan by introducing a non-profit and socially useful form of production, which would enable self-sustainability and independence of the center. As a generator of social entrepreneurship, the center is able to significantly contribute to social inclusion, employment and the broad socio-economic development of the community.

### 3. SOCIAL AND ECONOMY NEEDS

The social needs identified in this analysis are in line with the socio-economic circumstances and eminences of the development of the modern society in the direction of sustainability. They are manifested through the need for accommodation and more effective management of the activities of organizations that can contribute to such development - different socially oriented, profitable and unprofitable cultural organizations and initiatives. There is also the need for the space for start-up companies that can contribute to the development of the economy, social entrepreneurship and innovation, which represents the promising new branch of the economy. The new form of exploitation of abandoned industrial, military, infrastructural and other public spaces is responsible and sustainable use of existing resources and it provides the possibility of continuous development of a specific urban space and as such is one of the key items Urban Agenda For the EU 4 has recognized in the cities' development.

A key role in the realization of this project will be the cooperation of the City and the civil sector through the model of civil-public partnership. In addition to ensuring a greater and more inclusive approach to cultural and artistic activities, it enables the exploitation of space as a place where social integration is acquired. Through the development of various intercultural programs, the visibility of minority groups increases, their active inclusion in the community is encouraged and their rights are affirmed. This model not only would improve the level of good management, but also would enable better social control and a fairer access to common and public resources. At the same time, taking advantage of existing facilities and space ensures the preservation of irreplaceable and quantitatively fewer green areas, thus meeting the environmental needs.

More specifically, the social needs that could be satisfied by becoming a function of this location were recognized within the civilian sector in Zagreb, whose key problem since the beginning of its development in the 90's was the issue of providing space for the activities of associations, non-profit clubs and initiatives.

### 4. PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT MODEL

This project proposes the establishment of an institution that applies a new institutional form of infrastructure management for the local community based on the hybrid model of civil-public partnership. It is a mixed type institution, established by local authorities and civil society, which ensures the stability of an institutional framework such as public institutions, the long-term use

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of public infrastructure and the involvement of the users of activities and programs of the ICS. A development of the management model and the content itself is thought through horizontal self-organization management (for example via plenum that decides on all strategic issues, roundtables, trainings, workshops, focus groups) and involvement of the local community from the very beginning of the project development, that would enable the diversity of content and programs.

As mentioned in the *UPGRADE Platform*, it is necessary to achieve a transversal link between different actors of culture, civil society and the local community, intersectoral linkage of civil society organizations with local authorities, as well as conditions for open, non-club social integration of different social groups. Part of this is, for example, the concept of sharing common resources, such as work equipment. Also, experts involved in the reconstruction and conversion project of the Military Hospital during project development should have an advisory role and in contact with citizens or users of future programs convert their wishes and needs into constructive solutions while simultaneously influencing the innovation of the institutional model of governance.

### 5. SPACE ORGANIZATION AND TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Proposed objects for a conversion are yard and linking wing with their different spatial characteristics (size of the rooms, relations to the yard etc.) having possibilities to satisfy different needs and functions of the future social center.

Larger, yard building would accommodate and fulfill requirements for a activities of various formal and non-formal organizations using the space full time or part time according to the plan of use created by program coordinators in the center .

Ground floor and attic is planned as multifunctional and destined for a beneficiaries having the need for a periodical use of community center resource. In this space multifunctional halls would be placed (dance, theater, film, public events, concerts, etc.) with smaller spaces for a part time individual or group work but open for a public and to all beneficiaries. In the same time during the various public cultural events and shows center would be open to public.

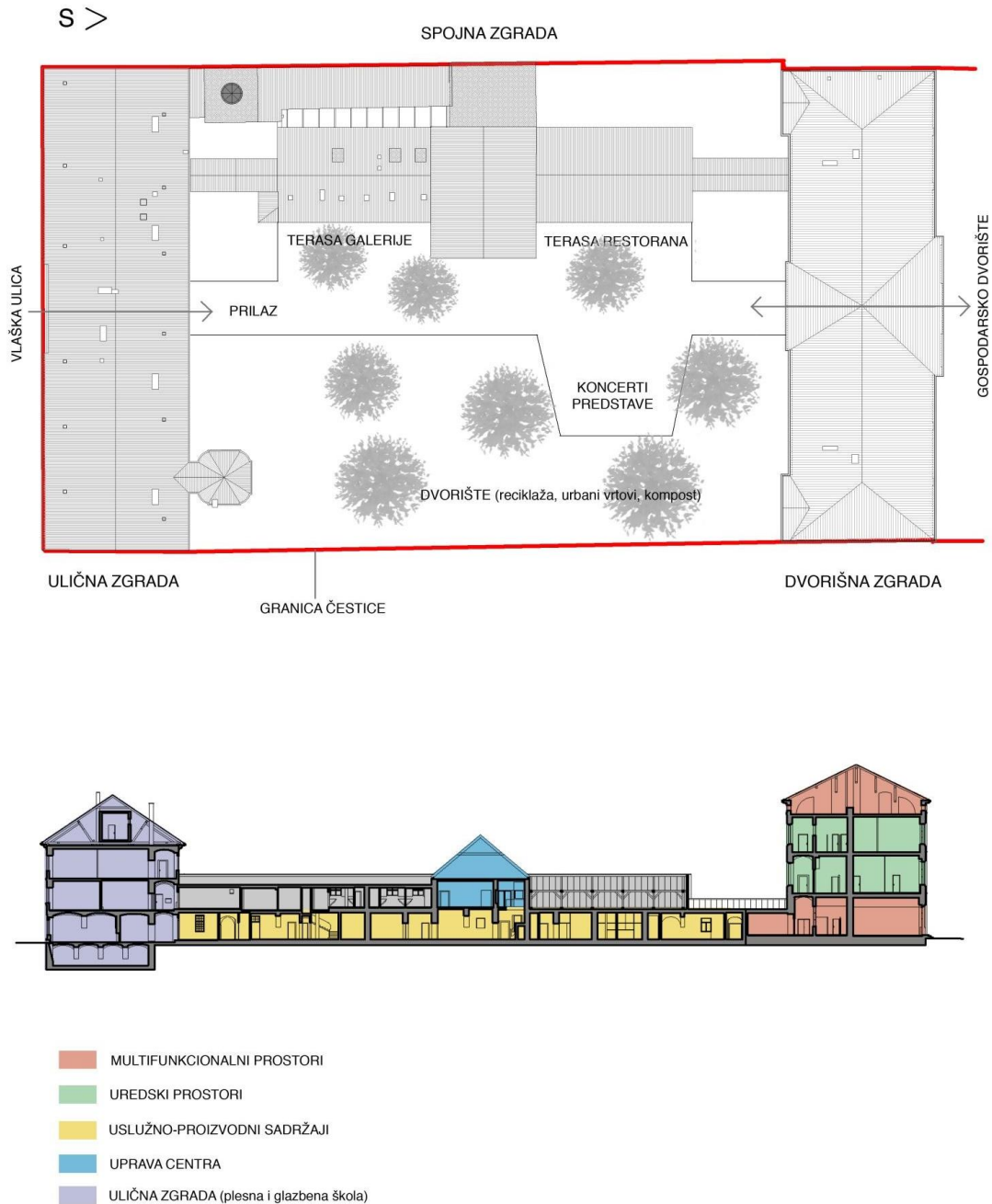
The rest of the building (1st and 2nd floor) would function as working space with offices for full time beneficiaries - organizations in the community center renting the space and using it independently for a longer period.

In the linking building beside the community center management located on the 1st floor, various service and production facilities would be located: restaurant, art studios and galleries, workshops (social entrepreneurship) , souvenir shops with items from workshops from the ICC etc. All of these facilities in the ground floor of the linking building would be in the direct interaction with the central yard and park which would additionally encourage the use of the Centre as a public space, and therefore increase the number of visitors and beneficiaries on a daily basis.

Technically, proposed buildings will be reconstructed in details. According to previously chosen architectural project facade will be renovated with thermal insulation such as replacement of old windows and doors. Interior will be renovated and adjusted for a new function and needs of the

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ICS. Complete replacement of power and water installations will be carried out, and after the analysis of existing heating installations it will be decided what to use in the future heating installation.



Picture 3. Proposed use of the spaces

ULIČNA ZGRADA - street oriented building  
 DVORIŠNA ZGRADA - yard building  
 SPOJNA ZGRADA - junction building

MULTIFUNKCIONALNI PROSTORI - Multipurpose use  
 UREDSKI PROSTORI - office space  
 USLUŽNO-PROIZVODNI SADRŽAJI - service

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and production facilities

UPRAVA CENTRA - management offices of the ICC

### 6. ENERGY EFFICIENT RENOVATION

Renovation and conversion process include energy renovation of the building, therefore planning the energy efficiency, renewable energy sources use and sustainable waste and water management. Along with the direct positive impact on the environment also raising environmental awareness and encouraging rethinking and application of sustainable approaches in the local community will act as an added value through the education, activities and programs delivered in the ICC.

The vision of the energy renovation is following the overall idea of space conversion and reaches out for the energy self-sufficiency of the given location. Two possibilities are proposed concerning energy renovation: basic and advanced.

Basis renovation means application of technical solutions on the building, emphasizing energy efficiency measures. Advanced renovation includes also the use of renewable energy sources for a space heating, and for the production of electricity. This way location could become energy independent, selling the surplus of electricity to the electric distribution grid based on market conditions once established.

Overall energy use is planned to be lowered below *150 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>* annually, and share of renewables to minimum of 30%.

Plants and trees will be planted on the existing green areas resulting in the creation of more suitable microclimatic situation.



Picture 4. Yard building facade

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### 7. FOOD PRODUCTION – RESTAURANT – COMPOSTING

The Centre will contain a communal restaurant in order to establish a food production-consumption cycle and allow for organic waste composting. One portion of the inner courtyard and potentially glasshouses in the back courtyard can be used as a permaculture garden for growing a portion of the products to be used in the restaurant.

Another portion of the courtyard can house a composting area for recycling and reuse of green and brown organic waste produced on site. The produced humus can be used to fertilize the vegetable garden as well as all other green areas in the courtyards.

In addition, a biogas system could be implemented in order to convert a portion of the waste into biogas and use it for certain purposes (e.g. cooking in the restaurant).

### 8. THREE PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY: SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC

| SOCIAL  | ENVIRONMENTAL   | ECONOMIC  |
|---|---|---|
| Public-private partnership as a way to manage the Centre and participatory management within this model | Energy efficient planning and reconstruction of buildings, use of renewable sources, implementation of sustainable waste management (recycling, composting, biogas production etc.)   | The potential for long-term funding of this institutional model through the EU funds, investing in infrastructure through the European Social Fund and the T6 mechanism of the Integral Territorial Investment instrument |
| Systemic participatory development and model improvement based on experience and recognized needs       | New form of managing abandoned industrial, military, infrastructure and other public property spaces, responsible and sustainable management of existing resources which insures the preservation of irreplaceable and sparse green areas | Development of other forms of funding as well as self-funding – through model development and its practical application it is possible to develop social entrepreneurship models and social co-operatives                 |
| Inclusiveness: social integration, strengthening of the position of                                     | Development of environmental consciousness of users   | Development of the partial self-funding model by renting out space or   |



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| minorities, promotion of socially equitable relationships and strengthening of social capital in general | and incitement of consideration and application of principles of sustainability in the local community | charging fees for the use of space to specific user categories |
|--|--|--|

### 9. COSTS – total investment, operative costs, financing sources

This “Simple Business Plan for Non-profit Intercultural Social Centre” developed as an exercise in the COMPASS course predicted the following cost groups:

- investment costs, meaning the investment value of the refurbishment of the buildings, and
- an operational period cost of the premises once reconstructed.

It is estimated that following amounts should be invested into redevelopment / renovation of the courtyard building, the gross area of 5200 m<sup>2</sup> x 450 € / m<sup>2</sup> and connecting wings, the gross area of 1500 m<sup>2</sup> x 450 € / m<sup>2</sup>. Altogether, gross investment in the buildings would be some € 3000000. The equipment to be installed in the kitchen, multi-purpose hall, furniture, lighting, toilets, etc. could costs some € 500 000.

The Intercultural Social Centre is rather big establishment that provokes significant operation and management cost. For the wages of the employees of “a-new-form-foundation” 10 employees (1 janitor, 2 cleaners, 1 accountant, 5 program coordinators, director), some € 171.500 / year should be secured.

For the material expenses utilities, repairs, travel expenses, office supplies, professional development, etc., some € 237.500 / year should be secured

Expenditures for & program activities of the organizations operating in the ICC are to be financed from their own budget. The Centre users that are able to make certain outside income are obliged to pay for the usage of the rental space in the ICC. Therefore, those amounts are neutral to our Budget / Cash Flow.

Rental income continues to be used for the implementation of various socially beneficial programs, particularly those that are intended for socially disadvantaged groups. For the purpose of this BP, we might assume that the same amount would be balanced in between of the receipts / income and the spending / cost amount for financing above mentioned social programs.

City of Zagreb, apart from enabling a free of charge usage of this public spaces, is possible source of co/finance the project with different international / European Funds.

Over € 1 billion a year are allocated to association projects by the Commission directly, in the

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field of external relations for development cooperation, human rights, and, in particular, humanitarian aid (which accounts for € 400 million). Other important allocations are awarded in the social (€ 70 million), educational (€50 million), and environmental sectors within the EU.

ESF – European Social Fund ESF offers grants for project which aims to support the improving of employment and social inclusion. It is aimed at supporting a generation of spaces of participation, as a development program of revitalization of space in the public domain through a partnership of civil society organizations and local communities. In the first phase it includes:

- Financing of development programs of (social) cultural centers ie. CSOs' programs that contribute to the community development
- Implementation of CSOs' programs carried out in the private owned premises
- Financing of small-scale adaptation interventions

Getting EU Funds involves a formal framework, a working method and instruments. Therefore, we intend to use the tools such as factsheets, templates, samples and forms that will support us during the whole process of applying for the resources.

### **ITI - Integral Territorial Investment**

This territorial and sectoral integration according to European Social Fund criteria is aimed at creating functional urban spaces. As Republic of Croatia in the first phase focuses on the mapping of needs at the local level in order to define the project, for the project of Vlačka intercultural centre it is important to participate in these activities. The mechanisms of ITI in Croatia are carried out through a number of different specific objectives; the project we are working on could fall within two sectoral fields:

- T6 – Brownfield: Defined as former industrial and military land; designated funding: €80.000; should be assessed through register of brownfields; for now implies only physical reconstruction of space – infrastructural investments
- T10 – design and implementation of educational projects for the development of the city: Designated funding: €5.000 At the moment three former industrial locations in Zagreb are already participating in the first phase implementation. Selection and dynamics of realization of the specific brownfield depends on its size: in that sense Vlačka location has some advantages. Nevertheless, it is crucial to conduct a static study of the premises. In the next few months it is important to advocate the inclusion of this brownfield location through consultations with the ministries in charge and simulations of financing and implementation of projects.

There is a possibility of combined funding: a project can be financed through the ITI to develop the area, and the ESF for investments in the “soft” infrastructure.

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Picture 5. COMPASS team on the location