Co-funded by the European Union

Europe's Civic University Alliance

CIVIS Alliance – Open Lab Project

Impact Assessment Report

01 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Title of the project Contemporary Childhoods/Youths (CON-CHY)

Project coordinator Universidad Autonoma de Madrid (UAM)

Universities involved UAM, UB, NKUA, PLUS, EMU - Mozambique

Hub theme Cities, spaces and mobilities; Digital and Technological transformation]

Duration of activities May 2025 - July 2026

Place of the activities UAM, PLUS, EMU. Costs related to activities outside of the EU covered on other than CIVIS2- funds.

02 – PARTNERS/TARGET AUDIENCE

Number of internal and external stakeholders involved in and impacted by the project

INTERNAL (All CIVIS universities)				EXTERNAL (All CIVIS cities/regions)	
Academics	Researchers	Students	Admin personnel	Citizens	Other - please specify
10	1	NA	1	41	5 (Non-CIVIS Academics/ Researchers)

Non-university associations and organisations that have been involved in the project. *[Please include for each one their (1) name, (2) country and (3) a very brief description (museum/business/public authority/high school/NGO etc.)]*

ASSOCIATIONS/ORGANISATIONS		
Name	Country	Description
Centro de Estudos Urbanos - CEURBE	Mozambique	NGO
Asociación EOF (Equipo de Orientación Familiar)	Spain	NGO

03 – PROJECT IMPACT

Social dimension

The activities significantly strengthened knowledge exchange and fostered meaningful international collaboration by bringing together participants from five higher education institutions: **Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM, Spain), National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA, Greece),**

Paris Lodron University of Salzburg (PLUS, Austria), Eduardo Mondlane University (EMU, Mozambique), and the University of Bucharest (UB, Romania). In addition, academics from other universities in the localities where fieldwork for the project was conducted have participated, such as Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Madrid, Spain) and Wutive University and Pedagogic University (Mozambique).

This diverse partnership created an interdisciplinary (psychology, educational sciences, geography, geoinformatics) and intercultural learning environment in which participants explored the theme of *Contemporary Childhood and Youth* from multiple educational, cultural, and societal perspectives. The involvement of institutions from different European countries, together with a partner from Africa, enriched discussions by enabling the exchange of experiences regarding childhood, youth, education, community engagement, and research practices across diverse social and cultural contexts.

The programme also contributed to the promotion of equal opportunities and inclusion by creating an open, collaborative, and respectful learning environment in which all participants were encouraged to contribute their perspectives. Particular attention was given to participatory approaches that value dialogue, shared expertise, and equitable participation, reinforcing the project's commitment to inclusive international cooperation.

Within this dimension, the **University of Bucharest (UB)** contributed primarily by supporting the methodological design of the research conducted by the partner institutions. UB actively participated in both the online project meetings and the face-to-face meeting held in Madrid, providing expertise and feedback on research design, participatory methodologies, and the implementation of research activities.

The **University Salzburg** contributed in the development and implementation, providing a study site, In this context a crowdmapping application including storymap and dashboard to present the collected data was created. This information enriches other data collected in Salzburg to contribute to the implementation of a child- and youth-friendly city Salzburg.

With regard to this dimension, **Eduardo Mondlane University (EMU)** participated in the implementation, providing a study site, and also translating/adjusting the method to fit the EMU context. This allowed data collection as well as it strengthened the relationship between EMU and the surrounding community, by mapping the institutional factors contributing to the gentrification, while promoting a cooperation to tackle this challenge. Above all, a partnership with a local NGO, named CEURBE, was established to further studies aiming to strengthen the linkage/connection of the university with the communities. Furthermore,the involvement of students prompted one of them to write her own monograph on social and community psychology.

The **Universidad Autónoma de Madrid** team participated in the implementation of participatory fieldwork with children and adolescents in collaboration with a local association that leads socio-educational programs for young people and families at social risk in central Madrid (Asociación EOF). Fieldwork in Madrid has involved collaboration and the support of cultural organizations such as the Centro Cultural La Corrala UAM - Museo de Artes y Tradiciones Populares and La Casa del Cura (Ayuntamiento de Madrid),.

The Madrid meeting also created an important opportunity for strategic discussions regarding the future development of the collaboration. In particular, partners explored potential avenues for extending the research on urban spaces and childhood to the Romanian context, identifying opportunities for comparative studies and the adaptation of the existing methodological framework to local educational and community settings. These exchanges laid the groundwork for future joint research initiatives while strengthening the consortium's shared methodological approach and reinforcing long-term academic collaboration.

Cultural dimension

As part of its dissemination strategy, the University of Bucharest (UB) organised a knowledge-sharing event on 8 June, aimed at increasing awareness of both the Open Lab initiative and participatory research methodologies. The event targeted Master's and PhD students from the Faculty of Psychology and

Educational Sciences, providing an opportunity to engage early-career researchers with innovative approaches to research involving children and young people.

The lecture was delivered by Prof. David Poveda (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid), an expert in participatory and ethnographic research with children and youth. The session introduced participants to the theoretical foundations and practical applications of participatory methodologies, illustrating how these approaches can be implemented in educational and community-based research. By presenting examples from international research projects, the event facilitated the transfer of knowledge from the CIVIS partnership to the local academic community.

In addition, UB actively contributed to the preparation of a joint conference proposal for the **AGIT Conference**, developed in collaboration with the project partners. This initiative extended the impact of the Open Lab beyond the project activities themselves by facilitating the dissemination of its research outcomes to the wider international academic community. This conference presentation and publication took place in July 2026 and also involved a visit from Madrid researchers to the iDEAS:lab at the University of Salzburg and collaborative work with other CIVIS Open Lab projects.

Salzburg also used the developed materials and presented the corresponding results in different situations such as Long Night of Researchers (24/April/2026) and several school workshops (e.g. related to GIS day). Work in Madrid also involved interventions in public space that culminated in a street art festival and action led by participating young people (12/June/2026) and the production of a collaborative video-documentary available online and that has been shared with other community organizations.

EMU organized focus groups, both in and outside the Campus premises, as a strategy to collect relevant data about the surrounding community members´ view about the dynamics of their interaction with the university while disseminating knowledge related to the university culture. Later on, this allowed concrete actions aiming to widen the cultural path connecting the university and the surrounding communities. Under this vision, local youth were invited to "a day as university student" to experience the university cultural environment and dynamics. Additionally, a community leader was invited as a key speaker to an academic conference where he shared knowledge about the concerns of the surrounding community while absorbing elements of the university culture. All these actions targeted widening the cultural path and communication with the surrounding communities, initiating a new approach to overcoming the long-lasting communication barriers between both.

Added value for the beneficiaries

In Maputo this project opened the communication gates, and helped to reshape the way the community viewed their relationship with the Campus space and the services that the university offers. The intervention reduced perceived barriers related to prejudice among the community, expanded the quality and quantity of interactions allowing the young people from this research group to develop a sense of ownership or belonging towards facilities such as the library and free-access wi-fi. In Salzburg, the project has strengthened existing collaborations between local secondary schools, Salzburg students and The iDEAS:lab at the University of Salzburg. It has also up-skilled the high school students in the use and implementation of collaborative geomapping tools. Fieldwork in Madrid involved close collaboration with a local NGO and enhancement of the socio-educational programming of the association, a strengthening of existing collaborations between UAM and Asociación EOF.

Relevance to the context

For the University of Bucharest, the speech given by David Poveda, beyond its immediate educational value, the event strengthened the sense of belonging to an international academic community by enabling participants to interact with researchers involved in the CIVIS alliance and the Open Lab initiative. It also raised awareness of ongoing international collaborations and created opportunities for future participation in joint research and educational activities. Through these actions, UB reinforced its role as a bridge between local academic needs and broader European and international research networks, contributing to a more connected, inclusive, and globally engaged research environment.

This project laid the university at the intersection with other higher education institutions to tackle similar challenges, and heightened the sense of belonging to the international academic community. To EMU this project revived the notion of cooperation with the community, approaching it as a partner and not a place to harvest data only. A growing sensibility will allow the EMU to adjust the efforts to respond to the needs of the community. Above all, the university may have found the appropriate strategy to push forward and force changes that will impact the context through increasing accessibility of the university to the surrounding community and the transfer of technology and service availability.

The project has also strengthened collaboration between academics of the participating CIVIS universities which has spilled over to other Open Lab projects and research proposals, such as the MSCA PartiCIVIS project in which several researchers of this project are involved.

Explain how the project has fulfilled the goals and objectives of the European project CIVIS2 (Erasmus+, 2022 - 2026)

The original proposal of this relatively short Open Lab project had two general goals:

> (1) To document and identify alongside children and youth their everyday dynamics of inclusion and exclusion from urban public spaces (Cresswell,1996) in local community settings (i.e. young people's neighborhoods, leisure places, daily mobilities and socio-educational contexts).
>
> (2) To create and implement with children and youth performative intervention devices (Sanchez-Criado and Estalella, 2023) that raise social awareness of exclusionary dynamics in contemporary urban contexts.

The actions and deliverables of the three case-studies have met these goals. The participatory field work in Salzburg, Maputo and Madrid has documented alongside children and youth local participation dynamics of young people in public space. In addition, particularly the case studies in Madrid and Maputo have examined in detail micro-dynamics of exclusión of young people from public space in two local contexts. In the case of Maputo, in relation to how the UEM campus structures the presence and exclusion in the public spaces of the campus of young people from surrounding communities. In the case of Madrid, the project has allowed young people at social risk to document and reflect on the impact of touristification pressures on their daily lives and participation in the neighborhood.

The three case studies have also developed tangible performative outputs showcasing these results. In the case of Salzburg an interactive digital storymap that described the research `process and provides access to the collaborative survey results: (https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/ec076b73f824412d8d1408d6d7ce8ecb). In the case of Madrid a collaborative video-documentary synthesising the work conducted by the participants in Madrid (https://www.infanciacontemporanea.com/2026/03/11/mlsn/). In the case of Maputo, a series of short-videos have also been collaboratively produced by young people from the surrounding neighborhoods and shared through locally. In addition, place-based ephemeral events were organized in these three localities showcasing the results of the project, an event in the long night of research in Salzburg, a campus visit/action in Maputo and arts street-fair/intervention in Madrid.

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