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ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF DIGITAL FABRICATION

FABLAB ZAGREB • PEOPLE • PLACES • POLICY

Technology as a Social Obligation

FabLab Zagreb and the fight against digital poverty

PEOPLE • PLACES • POLICY • CONCEPT NOTE • 2026 • ZAGREB

Not a technology organisation that does social good — a social organisation for which technology is a tool.

Technology as a Social Obligation

FabLab Zagreb and the fight against digital poverty

Across Europe, the gap between those who benefit from new technology and those who do not is widening. For FabLab Zagreb, this is not a side effect of progress to be tolerated — it is a form of poverty in its own right, and one worth fighting directly.

When access to technology depends on where you were born or what you can afford, the gap is no longer personal — it is structural. Closing it is a social obligation, and the means of closing it is infrastructure.

A THESIS IN THREE MOVEMENTS

PEOPLE

Empower people

Capability

Strengthen creative confidence and practical skill, with deliberate priority for those furthest from access — by distance, age, income, or ability.

PLACES

Open the spaces

Infrastructure

Transform abandoned heritage into open, inclusive spaces where knowledge, skills, and generations meet and new ideas are made.

POLICY

Sustain it over time

Obligation

Treat democratic access to technology as shared European infrastructure — a condition for cohesion, not a reward for it.

WHO WE ARE TALKING ABOUT

A deliberately broad definition of less-privileged

FabLab targets a wide definition of the less-privileged — and for all of them it is an instrument of personal empowerment and the democratisation of access to technology.

Geography — islands, rural & remote

Economics — technology priced out of reach

Age — disconnected from new tools

Physical ability

Lack of institutional support

THE SPATIAL ARGUMENT

Abandoned spaces as a social demand

An empty building in a small coastal town is, on the surface, a technical problem of unused square meters. FabLab insists on reading it differently: as a social demand. Behind every abandoned space is a community with fewer jobs, fewer reasons for young people to stay, and a measurably lower quality of life.

THE PROOF AND THE INVITATION

Grobnik, transformed in 2025/26, shows that the model works: a renovated space becomes local infrastructure of access. FabLab Zagreb invites European institutions and partners to treat access to technology as what it truly is — shared infrastructure, and a social obligation.

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Tehnologija kao društvena obveza

FabLab Zagreb i borba protiv digitalnog siromaštva

Diljem Europe, jaz između onih koji imaju koristi od novih tehnologija i onih koji nemaju sve je širi. Za FabLab Zagreb, to nije nusproizvod napretka koji treba tolerirati — to je oblik siromaštva sam po sebi, i vrijedan izravne borbe.

Kada pristup tehnologiji ovisi o tome gdje si se rodio ili što možeš priuštiti, jaz više nije osoban — on je strukturalan. Zatvaranje tog jaza društvena je obveza, a sredstvo za njegovo zatvaranje je infrastruktura.

TEZA U TRI POKRETA

LJUDI

Osnažiti ljude Sposobnost

Jačati kreativno samopouzdanje i praktične vještine, s namjernim prioritetom za one najudaljenije od pristupa — po udaljenosti, dobi, prihodima ili sposobnostima.

MJESTA

Otvoriti prostore Infrastruktura

Transformirati napuštenu baštinu u otvorene, inkluzivne prostore gdje se znanje, vještine i generacije susreću i rađaju nove ideje.

POLITIKE

Održati kroz vrijeme Obveza

Demokratski pristup tehnologiji tretirati kao zajedničku europsku infrastrukturu — uvjet za koheziju, a ne nagradu za nju.

O KOME GOVORIMO

Namjerno široka definicija manje privilegiranih

FabLab cilja široku definiciju manje privilegiranih — i za sve njih je instrument osobnog osnaživanja i demokratizacije pristupa tehnologiji.

Geografija — otoci, ruralno i udaljeno

Ekonomija — tehnologija nedostupna po cijeni

Dob — odvojenost od novih alata

Tjelesne sposobnosti

Nedostatak institucionalne podrške

PROSTORNI ARGUMENT

Napušteni prostori kao društvena potreba

Prazna zgrada u malom obalnom gradu površinski je tehnički problem neiskorištenih kvadrata. FabLab inzistira na drugačijem čitanju: kao društvena potreba. Iza svakog napuštenog prostora stoji zajednica s manje radnih mjesta, manje razloga da mladi ostanu i mjerljivo nižom kvalitetom života.

DOKAZ I POZIV

Grobnik, transformiran 2025./26., pokazuje da model funkcionira: obnovljeni prostor postaje lokalna infrastruktura pristupa. FabLab Zagreb poziva europske institucije i partnere da pristup tehnologiji tretiraju kao ono što on doista jest — zajedničku infrastrukturu i društvenu obvezu.

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