

# commonfare



## Collaborative platforms and precarity: Lessons from Commonfare

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## WHAT IS COMMONFARE?

- A bottom-up, cooperative approach to social welfare, or „welfare of the common”, based on:
- Proper management (including reappropriation) of the common(s)
- Unconditional, universal basic income
- Alternative monetary circuits (Fumagalli and Lucarelli, 2015)

## WHAT IS COMMONFARE.NET ?

- An online, collaborative platform that gives substance and meaning to the concept of „Commonfare”
- The result of three years of research, design and community outreach as part of the PIE News project, financed by the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme of the European Union
- Interdisciplinary, and participatory design approach with pilots in Croatia, Italy and the Netherlands

## COMMONFARE PROJECT PARTNERS



UNIVERSITY  
OF TRENTO - Italy  
Department of Information Engineering  
and Computer Science



Abertay  
University



# Collaborative Platform through Participatory Design

## Research phase:

- 20 focus groups, 235 people, 3 countries
- Qualitative and quantitative research with precarious workers from Croatia, Italy, and the Netherlands
- Qualitative survey, and focus groups focusing on experiences of precarity, and the spillover effects of employment precarity on social, cultural, psychological and other aspects of welfare

## Participatory Design phase:

- Identifying needs of target groups
- Focus groups, interviews, design workshops

## Roll out and experimentation phase:

- Responding to needs identified in research phase,
- Experimenting with user interface, trust, and
- Digital currency, social wallet, group wallet





## Qualitative research with young, precarious workers

- N=72, qualitative survey and focus groups
- Avg. annual gross income between €5.001,- 10,000.
- In the last 12 months, majority was not able to save, majority experienced sometimes or frequently not having enough money to buy needed clothing, to pay for travel costs, to pay for utilities, to pay for a cultural event, to go to a birthday party of a friend, to go to a restaurant with friends
- 77% defined their status as: „neither poor nor rich”, 13% „poor”, 10% „very poor”
- **Who do you currently live with?**
  - 47/74 (64%) of participants live with their parent(s),
- **If you are not satisfied with your living conditions, why do you not move?**
  - High rental prices
  - Insufficient income
- **When you have financial problems, who do you turn to?**
  - I turn to my family (92%)
- **Which cultural activities have you reduced or stopped because of lack of income?**
  - Buying books (33%), going to concerts (20%), workshops (15%)



## Consequences of employment and income insecurity

- Inability to plan and develop a career
- Inability to buy a home
- Inability to start or plan a family responsibly
- Discourages investing in further education
- Inability to travel, take vacations, plan trips in advance,
- Negative impact on social life, because it costs money to have one
- Feelings of self-blame, inadequacy, low self esteem
- Depression, anxiety, pessimism, apathy, hopelessness for the future
- Who do you talk to about these issues? Nobody.
- „I don't want to be a complainer” ; „People will think I am lazy”, „Many people have it a lot worse”; „Ok, I may live with my family and cannot afford to do the things I like, but at least I am not hungry and digging through garbage.”

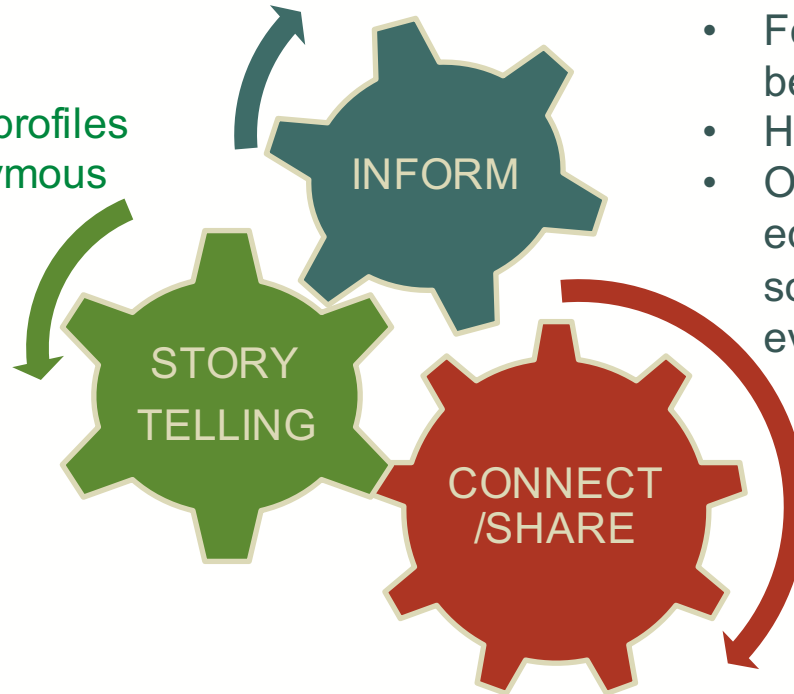


## State institutions and policies

- **From 1 to 10, how protected do you feel by state policies and programs?**
- Income support: 2 ; accomodation support: 1 ; healthcare: 6
- **What kind of services or policies would help improve your situation?**
  - Services for continued professional development
  - Financial support for young or new employees
  - Reduced rates for utilities (reduced cost of living)
  - Universal basic income for all
  - Education grants
  - Increases in minimum wage
  - Anti-corruption policies
  - Free cultural and social events
  - Someone to talk to about these problems

# Commonfare Platform

- Individual & group profiles
- Story-telling, anonymous
- Best practices

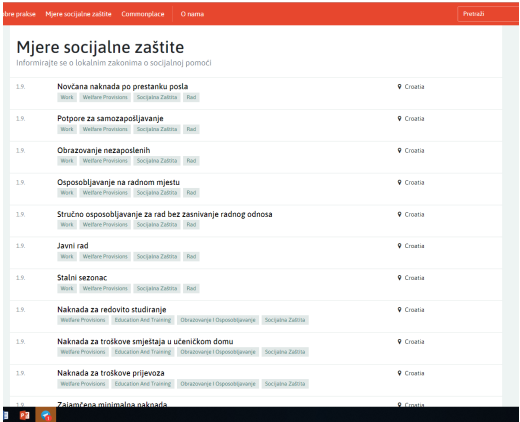
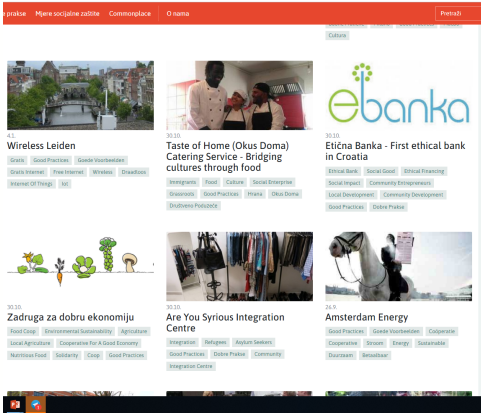
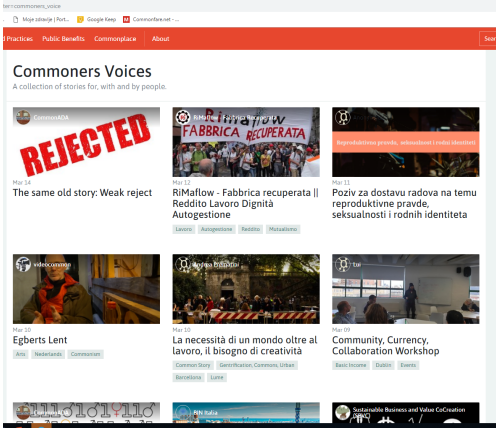


- Formal welfare benefits
- How to's & Q&A
- Opportunities for free education, workshops, social and cultural event

- Online exchange of resources, info & skills
- Digital currency
- Social wallet



# Collaborative Platform through Participatory Design



Inform, inspire & connect through:

- Welfare provisions
- Commoners Voices
- Good practices





# Commonplace

- *Exchange of services, goods, & skills*
- *Place to voice one's needs*
- *Commoncoin digital currency and social wallet*
- *Experimenting with Universal Basic Income through Commoncoin (every month you get 1000 cc to use in the commonplace)*
- *Commonshare – in place of rating system*



The screenshot shows the Commonfare website interface. The header is red with the Commonfare logo and navigation links: Glasovi Commonera, Dobre prakse, Mjere socijalne zaštite, Commonplace, and O nama. A search bar is on the right. Below the header is a dark green banner with the text "Commonplace" and "Gdje razmjenjujete robu, usluge i znanja". Below the banner is a list of service listings under the heading "Najnoviji oglasi".

Service Title	Location	Author	Price Range (cc)
Pomoć oko kuće	Zagreb	11.3, autor/ica ofjupqhs788	100,00 cc - 400,00 cc
Trazim osobu za kuhanje obroka tri puta tjedno	Split, Hrvatska	31.1, autor/ica Komonerka	100,00 cc - 1.000,00 cc
Nudim uslugu medicinske masaže	Donja Stubica	31.1, autor/ica Ratibor	0,00 cc - 1,00 cc
trazim nekoga da mi posudi knjige Elene Ferrante	Zagreb		0,00 cc - 1,00 cc

# CHALLENGES

- *Precarity vs. Security (supplementing vs. substituting)*
- *Small improvements in welfare, but not systemic change*
- *Overcoming apathy and learned helplessness*
- *Online vs. offline engagement*
- *Local vs. international*
- *Individual vs. community approach to solving problems*

