

**CAAP -  
Association  
Centre for alternative and  
autonomous production,  
social enterprise**



Maribor, Slovenia  
[www.caap.si](http://www.caap.si)  
<https://www.facebook.com/centercaap>

**CAAP is an NGO operating as a research and support organization** for the development of new economies, **social economy** (social enterprises and especially cooperatives), innovative social and environmental practices, and creative use of community spaces. In the years 2011 to 2020, CAAP participates as a professional support for the incubation, start-up and development of more than 60 social enterprises and organizations, half of which are cooperatives. Thus, CAAP has been functioning as a supportive environment for the social economy since its founding in 2011, and in addition to supporting all forms of social enterprise, **specializes in developing cooperatives**. CAAP had received several awards for the work; (1) Charter of the Municipality of Maribor in 2013, (2) diploma of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia for non-technological innovation TKALKA - Community Development Centre 2015; (3) SPIRIT Slovenia – Public Agency for Entrepreneurship, Internalization, Foreign Investments and Technology and Ministry of Economic Development and Technology - award for the best coworking in Slovenia (TKALKA) 2015; and (4) has the status (Ministry of Public Administration) acting in the public interest in the field of new social practices. CAAP is also considered as one of the most successful sustainable results of the project “Maribor – European Capital of Culture 2012” since it was founded as part of activities of this project in years 2011-2012 and successfully sustained after the end of the ECOC project.

Throughout its actions and engagement **CAAP** is well integrated into the local community and environment and identifies challenges and opportunities in its environment through **bottom-up approach**. In order to respond successfully to both, CAAP's competent, adaptive and enthusiastic team provides training, education and consulting in the areas of cooperatives (and social entrepreneurship) and related fields for individuals who wish to set up or already work in cooperatives and other membership organizations with social enterprise status.

**CAAP** activities are aimed at developing the local environment based on the revitalization of social processes, through strengthening self-organization and empowering communities. CAAP's mission is visible through **three key activities**:

(1) **facilitating social processes** towards the development of socially innovative practices, products and cooperative and social enterprises;

(2) **research, education, training and counselling in the field of social and solidarity economics** and new social practices, with a key focus on cooperatives;

(3) **advocacy** and strategic planning for the development of the cooperative society in Slovenia and by linking it with the European and global cooperative movement.

**Long-term goals of CAAP are:**

(1) establishing a national eco-system for promoting co-operative society in the country and become coordinator and central professional organization in this ecosystem;

(2) contribute and support cooperatives through expertise and networking to form a national cooperative union (a new federation parallel to the existing agricultural cooperative union in Slovenia);

(3) together with other supporters of the co-operative society in Slovenia, develop and operationally launch a "co-operative school" at the faculty level (as a program at one of the existing faculties or an independent school);

(4) becoming an entry point or an intermediate link between cooperatives and the international environment for entering international markets and integrating with other cooperatives in the EU; CAAP has a goal to become associative member of CECOP-CICOPA EUROPE.

**Dr. Karolina Babič** is an expert associate of CAAP. She holds a PhD in philosophy. Her field of expertise are cooperatives and social and solidarity economy and social innovation. She is also a member of the Council for Social Economy - a professional and advisory body for the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. In 2018 she was co-editor of the Solidarity Economies book issued by Journal for the Critique of Science, Imagination, and new Anthropology in Slovenia. She is also a higher education lecturer for social economy at private business school Doba Faculty in Maribor. (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/karolina-babi%C4%8D-327a1289/>)