

## **Timisoara City Hall organized at the final conference of a European project dedicated to transdisciplinary education**

**May 2023**

Timisoara City Hall organized on Friday, May 19th, starting at 10:00, the final conference for disseminating the results of the project **"EXPLORE + creative explorations of curiosity for transdisciplinary innovation, STEAM and social learning"**. The conference took place in the FITT building (Youth House), 19 Arieș Street, halls 03-04, on the ground floor.

Launched in the autumn of 2021, in Chemnitz, Germany, the project included joint training and mobility events, which aimed to develop local and regional policies in the field of education, but also to increase the level of involvement of young people in movements that promote European youth goals. Activities included study visits, the development of STEAM educational activities, and science fairs. Collaborations between schools, cultural agents and civil society have contributed to the development of a toolkit as an open source of learning following the STEAM model.

STEAM model is an educational method that uses science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics as access points for the development of dialogue and critical thinking of students.

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During the final dissemination conference, both good practices from the countries participating in the project and useful information from Timisoara were presented, focusing both on the aspects of support – including financial ones – granted by the municipality of Timisoara, through the structures created specifically for this purpose, and on the practical aspects, at the level of training of young people, by combining theory and science with experiment and practical applications.

The conference was opened by the project manager, Ovidiu SIMONETTI, who – after a short introduction to the explore+ project theme – passes the word of the director of the Community Relations Department within Timișoara City Hall, Alexandru AVRAM, who integrated the scholastic aspects with the new strategies for the young people of Timisoara, as well as for their education.

During the entire event, the participants were able to benefit from the experience of moderator Victoria MARTIN, assistant manager within the project.

The first one to speak was Teodora BORGHOFF whom presented the support provided to the local educational system through the Timisoara Project Center. Through the programs developed, implicitly through the funding provided, the Center represents a reference element at local level regarding the stimulation of young people and those who work with young people, in order to combine the theoretical aspects with the practical ones.

Since many of the activities carried out in Timisoara, especially during 2023, where the city is the European Capital of Culture, benefit from the support of local volunteers, Cristina POP, general coordinator of local volunteers, briefly presented the way of working with them, the way of supporting and stimulating them, as well as other aspects that she faced during the daily activity carried out with them.

After a short break, in which the participants benefited from the opportunity to relate and get to know each other – for a coffee and a snack – the conference was resumed, the first item on the agenda being the presentation of Grace HENNIG, the coordinator of the entire project.

It presented both the general idea of the project, the context in which it was born, while presenting the activity of solaris, the German legal entity that initiated the entire concept that led to the realization of the EXPLORE+ project.



Ingo VOIGTLÄNDER, a trainer within the project, continued the presentation. In addition to the general aspects regarding the use of STEAM techniques, he insisted that the implementation of this type of learning does not always require very expensive resources, nor it is difficult to identify.

The exhibited scale models were supported by the presentation made using minimal resources or even reusable materials.

On behalf of Latvian partners, the first speaker was Oskars KAULENS – Director, history teacher of Friendly Appeal Cesis State Grammar School, one of the oldest and highest rated schools in Cesis.

The school's activity is intertwined with that of the Educational Space Center, a location where students have the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned at a theoretical level, thus completing their practical training. As head of the Center, Miks DZENIS spoke to the conference participants about turning young people's dreams into reality, a reality often on a small scale, using scale models, but a reality that will always cause them to dream about the stars, new galaxies, as well as reaching them.

With maximum interest from the participants was received the presentation of João VARGUES, Executive Commissioner at the Zero Museum, a Portuguese structure focused on experimental art and practical experiences.

The presentation of the partners ended with that of the School Group entitled Agrupamento de Escolas Pinheiro e Rosa, professor André LARA RAMOS managing to keep alive the continuous interest of the listeners. Structured a little differently from the Latvian school already presented, the work in this Portuguese school group is based on the same steam principles, of combining science, technology, engineering and art, with mathematics.

At the end of the conference, in full compliance with STEAM principles, applied throughout the entire EXPLORE+ project, a presentation of the School of Initiation in Robotics, Brainery Roboschool, took place.

Iasmina GLIȘA and Bogdan POȘA, the coordinators of Brainery Roboschool, along with the children and young students presented both the theoretical aspects on which the daily activity is based, as well as the practical ones, the point of interest being represented by the practical demonstration of the robots in motion.

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The entire event was attended by over a hundred people. However, few were those who left before the practical demonstration of the robots made and programmed by the young participants.

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The project has achieved several objectives of the European Capital programme, as well as common EU-wide objectives of cooperation in education and training (ET 2020). For Timisoara, it represented an opportunity to actively involve the community in capitalizing on the title of European Capital of Culture (CEC), through dialogue and open collaboration.

The project was financed through a grant worth 276,410.00 EURO, within the Erasmus+ European Union program. The project implementation period was June 2021 – May 2023.

The project partners are: solaris FZU, in cooperation with the city of Chemnitz (Germany) - which will become the European Capital of Culture in 2025, AE Pinheiro e Rosa and Museu Zero, in cooperation with the city of Faro (Portugal), Friendly Appeal Cesis State Grammar School, Cesis Municipality (Latvia) and, of course, Timisoara (Romania).

*More information about the project:*



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<https://www.primariatm.ro/proiecte-cu-finantare-europeana/proiectul-explore-creative-explorations-of-curiosity-for-innovative-transdisciplinary-steam-and-social-learning-explore-explorari-creative-ale-curiozitatii-pentru-inova/>

<https://www.exploreplus.eu>