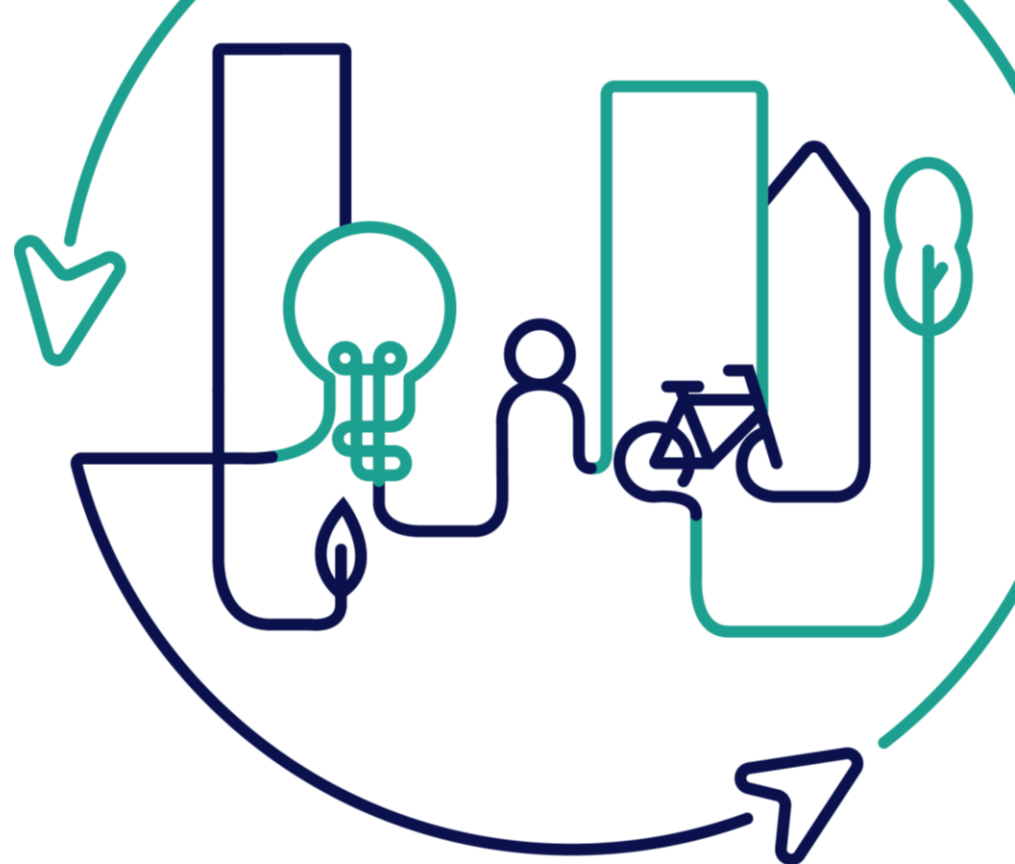


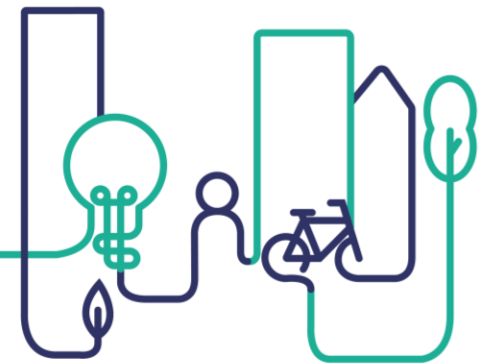
EUROPEAN U R B A N INITIATIVE



Co-funded by
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FROM CHALLENGES TO SOLUTIONS: UNLOCKING NEB POTENTIAL WITH COLLABORATIVE TOOLS

Learning from the ROD Creative and Learning Space



Co-funded by
the European Union



Session Plan

10:30

Introduction

10:35

Presentation by Valentin Toc

10:55

Questions & Comments

11:00

Group Activity

11:40

Feedback

11:55

Wrap-up & Close



Session Aims

1

To reflect on the 'how' of NEB. How to practically align your project with NEB values and principles.

2

To share the experience of the ROD Creative and Learning Space in overcoming challenges in their renovation project, aligning with NEB

3

To share and try out a practical tool from the NEB toolbox aimed at supporting stakeholder engagement and co-creation.

4

To promote participant discussion and exchange on NEB challenges & opportunities.



**Let's hear from
Valentin & ROD
Creative and
Learning Space**

Limerick, Ireland - 2024



ROD - CREATIVE AND LEARNING SPACE

TRANSFORMING SPACES, BUILDING COMMUNITY

*A Journey of Participatory
Urban Transformation*

by Valentin and Ana-Maria Țoc

ABOUT US

Valentin
father of Simeon

I love to support, build and launch new concepts and projects (NGOs & businesses).

Strategic consultant
Business Mentor and advisor
Tech Startups Mentors
Educational programs Architect - alternative schools, incubators, bootcamps, accelerators.

Supporting local Artisans and businessess Family focused events
Community builder and community centered programs

Founder of Bonom.org - crowdfunding for educational projects

Ana-Maria
Mother of Simeon and bff with my husband

I love to help people find their passions, discover their path and believe in their biggest dream.

I love to organize meaningful experiences, tell stories and bring people together.

Organizer of cultural and community events

Specialist in communication
Communicator on social media
Supporting local artisans
Community builder
Founder of ROD & Autohtonii
Events presenter





FROM HEATING SPACES TO WARMING HEARTS & SOULS

we transformed an eyesore into a community heart



WHAT IS ROD?

ROD is a 300 sqm creative and learning space repurposed from an abandoned heating station in *Piatra Neamț, Romania*

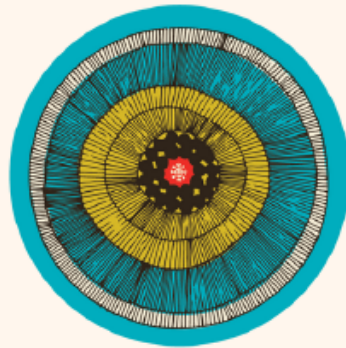
Our Mission

To create a place where people learn practically how to be better humans and how to do good through stories, design, nature, meaning, community, creativity, and experiential learning



MEANING

ROD = *FRUIT, HARVEST, RESULT*



ROD
SPAȚIU CREATIV ȘI DE ÎNVĂȚARE

Initial Phase

Identified abandoned heating station with strategic location

Built partnerships with:

Mayor's office and City Council (space provision)

County Council (renovation co-financing)

Local NGOs

Local parishes

Business community

Architects and designers



ROD is supported and activates under the umbrella of The Deanery of Piatra Neamt, Iasi Christian Orthodox Diocese

Total investment:
260,000 EUR
from multiple sources

Implementation

Renovation focusing on sustainability and local materials

Design emphasizing warmth, inclusivity, and functionality

Creation of distinct spaces for different community needs

Creation and developing of the concept to integrate creativity and learning

Organising projects and events according to the ROD concept.





SPACE CONFIGURATION



8 dedicated rooms
for specific activities:

- Children's room with chalk-painted walls for unrestricted creativity
 - Library for reading, relaxation, and work
 - Workshop space for crafts and hands-on learning
 - Meetups & networking room
 - Volunteer spaces - chill, meet & play
 - Two large event or training halls
 - Small kitchen
- + Outdoor small park with 3 trees





Co-creation with the community and volunteers



ROD CORE PROGRAMS

- School of Good Deeds
 - Roditor Festival - indoor festival
 - Gate to the Village Project - role-model program
 - Peeple on Hogas Street - local artisans festival & fundraising event for a good cause
 - Workshop & Meetups Series - weekly or monthly
 - Volunteer Program
 - Community Blood Donor Program
-
- During the first 6 months of the pandemy we joined the local support initiative and became the central logistic and storage place for medical products and devices.



Key Challenges & Solutions



Challenge 1 - Participatory Process

Need to engage diverse stakeholder groups

Solutions

Created multiple entry points for participation

Volunteer programs for youth and adults

Co-design workshops for space utilization

Community-led programming

Regular feedback sessions

Space design - open, light & earthy colors, white/glass doors, warm lights

Community building activities or events



Challenge 2 - Multi-level Engagement

Coordinating between different stakeholders

Solution

- Create innovative projects or concepts
- Partners selection - learn when & why to say no
- Values & mission alignment
- Established clear communication channels
- Regular meetings
- Transparent decision-making processes
- Shared responsibility model
- Clear roles for different partners

Challenge 3 - Transdisciplinary Approach

Integrating different expertise and perspectives

Solution

Creative & passionate team members

Created collaborative contexts

Expert volunteer community - selection & training

Cross-sector partnerships

Knowledge sharing events

Learn by doing contexts - experiential learning



ROD

FUTURE EVOLUTION



Scaling Plans

Regional expansion to other cities - 2025

Development handbook and ROD methodology

Creation of transferable model

Growing the team

Launching new projects

Key Focus Areas

Documentation and systematization of successful approaches

Training programs for new locations

Building network of supporting & interested & likeminded partners

Strengthening financial sustainability

Beautiful

Ambitions: I - Activate, II - Connect, III - integrate

Context Re-Activation and Sensory Experience

ROD space is improving physical and mental well-being by designing with local materials, comfort (e.g., materials, light, air), and sensory richness (visual, tactile, auditory). Is a good example in creating the spaces aesthetically engaging by creating a harmonizing concept with the cultural and natural environment in mind.

Collective Experience and Sense of Belonging

Created a space that foster community cohesion and reflect the diversity of Piatra Neamț and Neamț county. We include interactive installations that tell local stories or involve the community in co-designing features, spaces and events.

Creation and Values integration

Integrates social values through experiences that are habit transforming.



New European Bauhaus
beautiful | sustainable | together



Working Principles - how to do it based on ROD experience

Together

AMBITION I - to include. AMBITION II - to consolidate

Inclusion and Accessibility

Ensure accessibility for all community members, focusing on marginalized groups (low income or from rural area) in the region. We highlight affordability and equality so ROD can establish inclusive programming and physical accessibility, like providing subsidized or free access for low-income children.

Community-Led Design

Allow local voices & youth to guide programming and space usage. This approach helps prioritize diverse perspectives and needs.

Sustainable

Ambition I - Repurpose, Ambition II - Close the loop

Preservation and Repurposing

As ROD is repurposing an old heating station, minimizing resource consumption, and adopting sustainable materials can reduce environmental impacts

Circular Economy

Recycling building materials (bricks from the old building were donated and repurposed in other constructions). We used furniture designs created by local carpenters that extend the facility's lifespan.

Participatory Process

Use community consultation and co-creation workshops to actively involve stakeholders in design and decision-making, empowering them to take part in shaping the project and its future

Multi-Level Engagement

Forge connections across local government and community groups to enhance collaboration at various governance levels, creating a shared vision for ROD's impact in Piatra Neamț.

Transdisciplinary Approach

Integrate knowledge from architecture, environmental design, and social work by involving experts, artists, artisans, businesses, and locals to create multidisciplinary solutions tailored to community needs.



ROD demonstrates how participatory urban transformation can

- Convert unused spaces into vibrant community assets
- Create meaningful social impact through creative education
- Build sustainable community engagement models
- Bridge urban-rural divides
- Preserve and promote local culture and traditions



SO, WHO WANT TO GO FROM HEATING SPACES
TO WARMING HEARTS & SOULS????

Thank you for inviting us and listen our story!

tocvalentin@gmail.com

Linkedin, Facebook or Instagram





**Questions
&
Comments**



**Group
Activity**

> **TO START...**
STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

Communities of policy-makers, implementers, civil society, researchers, private sector representatives, cynics, doubters need to become part of the creation of outcomes. NEB must engage with streamlining and realigning flows of value around the realities of people and place.

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

HOW DOES IT WORK

- Discuss briefly on your current projects & select one as an example to use for this activity (5 minutes)
- Brainstorm potential stakeholders freely using the sticky notes & flip chart (10 minutes)
- Discuss and amend using the guiding questions at your table (15)
- Map the stakeholders on the grid (10)
- Appoint a rapporteur to provide feedback.
- Engage with Valentin throughout for any comments or questions.



Feedback

RAPID FEEDBACK

- Was it a useful exercise? How likely are you to use it in future projects?
- Did any interesting or enlightening considerations emerge from the discussion?
- Did the exercise help identify previously overlooked or underrepresented stakeholders?



**What's next
for you?**

12:00

Plenary Discussion & Reflection

12:40

Applying NEB Beyond THRIVE

12:50

Closing

13:00

Lunch

Thank you

