

“The City as a Classroom”

a HUB-IN Innovation Education Program

User manual



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Table of contents

1. What is “The City as a Classroom”?	5
2. Context	6
3. Purpose and objectives of the program	7
4. Participant profile	9
5. Duration of „The City as Classroom” program	12
6. Detailing of activities	14
6.1 Workshop 1 - Working with a map / Treasure Hunt	18
6.2 Workshop 2 - Know the place	18
6.3 Workshop 3 - Summer School	22
6.4 Workshop 4 - Feedback	26
7. Team roles	28
8. Partner roles	30
9. Assessment of results	32
10. Branding and communication	33
11. Budget information	34

Documents attached:

1. Study – Towards a balanced use of the public space
2. Presentation of the Summer School
3. Pedagogical materials
4. Design Kit Manual
5. Results of the Summer School
6. W4 student survey results



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1. What is “The City as a Classroom”?

The HUB-IN “*Hubs of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for the Transformation of Historic Urban Areas*” European project is an initiative funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 program, aimed at supporting the regeneration process of the Historic Centre by following principles of sustainability, combating touristification, capitalizing on heritage and preserving local specificities.

Along with the City of Brasov, the pilot group of cities includes: Angoulême (France), Belfast (Ireland), Genoa (Italy), Lisbon (Portugal), Nicosia (Cyprus), Slovenska Bistrica (Slovenia) and Utrecht (Netherlands).

The educational innovation program “The City as a Classroom” is the maturing stage of the HUB-IN project and proposes an idea accelerator in the field of tactical urbanism, in which pupils and students develop prototypes of urban furniture in situ, in the historical area of Brasov, inside the former fortification walls. The innovation program is an experimental one and involves an iterative process of analysis and reflection. It uses elements of the Design Thinking methodology and goes through the following stages: ideation, prototyping, testing and pitching.

The program includes:

- training through workshops;
- thematic mentoring according to the needs of the participants (entrepreneurship, urban regeneration, architecture / design, lighting);
- knowledge of resources for the production of new works (space / materials);
- ideas presentation session held before a jury composed of relevant actors, including furniture manufacturers who could invest in replicating the objects / urban furniture;
- context for their showcasing in the public space.



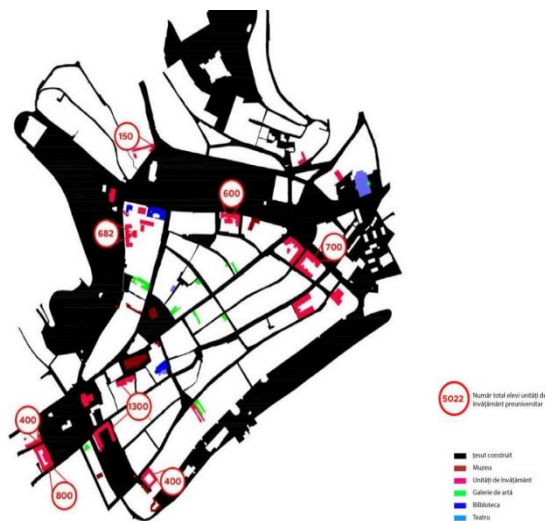
2. Context

The HUB-IN “Toward a balanced and inclusive use of the public domain in the Historical Urban Area” preliminary study revealed an unexpectedly large number of pupils and students who come daily to the area.

The Historical Centre of Brasov is unfavourable for the over 5,000 students of all ages who visit it daily, a number that exceeds the population of residents. In particular, adolescents are neglected in the planning and use of public space. The city centre suffers from an acute lack of public furniture and infrastructure that would encourage educational or outdoor activities. The situation is aggravated by the predominance of the HoReCa industry: 3,700 seats at terraces in 2023, in contrast to only 50 public benches.

Students are thus limited to touristic areas and cafes, where they have to spend money to spend time, being deprived of an authentic experience of medieval Brasov. This context creates a sense of alienation and non-belonging in relation to the urban space. In addition, teachers face difficulties in capitalizing on the space for innovative pedagogical activities, such as outdoor lessons. In the long run, this situation favours unsustainable tourism.

Touristification leads to the relocation of residents and the takeover of the public space by businesses, with destructive effects on social cohesion and the preservation of historic buildings. To prevent this decline, it is essential to reconsider priorities in the management of public space, with a focus on the educational and social needs of young people and the preservation of cultural heritage.



3. The purpose and objectives of the program

The HUB-IN innovation educational program “The City as a Classroom” encourages the formation of a dynamic community of pupils, students and teachers, eager to revitalize and transform the little-used spaces in the citadel into educational and cultural areas. The long-term goal is to balance the way locals, tourists and traders interact with the public space, whilst also providing a practical platform for education.

In 2023, the first edition of the “The City as a Classroom” educational innovation program was organized, aimed at developing an accelerator of tactical urbanism projects, involving over 40 pupils and students and 9 mentors. They explored the citadel area, collected data, identified 4 potential locations for interventions, proposed and built at least 12 prototypes of urban installations, tested them in the field and, subsequently, these prototypes were transformed into permanent interventions.

The main objective is to test ideas for revitalizing under-used public spaces, within the project accelerator, which includes 3 workshops and a Summer School. Another goal of the program is to raise awareness and generate involvement among the users of the Historical Centre of Brasov regarding the interventions and urban regeneration methods in the public space.

The program is based on an innovative co-creation methodology, and the practical part is based on a design kit that allows participants to build and test prototypes in the public space.



4. Participant profile

The graduate of the program “The City as a Classroom” is a young person that has been instilled with the natural desire to contribute to the improvement of the environment, having the necessary skills to turn ideas into reality. These young people show interest in areas such as architecture, urbanism, urban design, product design and others related to the evolution of the city. In its 2023 edition, the program involved more than 40 pupils and students in an active *learning by doing* and *trial and error* process, which has included stages of analysis, ideation, design, prototyping and testing.

The program benefited from the experience of 9 mentors specialized in urbanism, architecture, object design, urban design, public strategies and policies, pedagogy and urban theory. The interaction with these mentors has added a valuable dimension to the learning process. The direct involvement of at least 120 people from among users of the Historical Centre of Brasov brought diversity and relevance to the project, ensuring that the proposed solutions were adapted to and well-integrated with the needs and expectations of the local community.

We aim to contribute to finding a balance between private and public spaces designed for relaxation, between touristic amusement and the daily life of the inhabitants, between entertainment and educational opportunities, between events that attract only adults and activities that may interest and involve children, families and schools. While tourism is very important for the city, in order to achieve a functional balance in the Historic Centre, a participatory urban regeneration effort is required to increase the welfare of the community that uses it.

4.1 Selection of participants

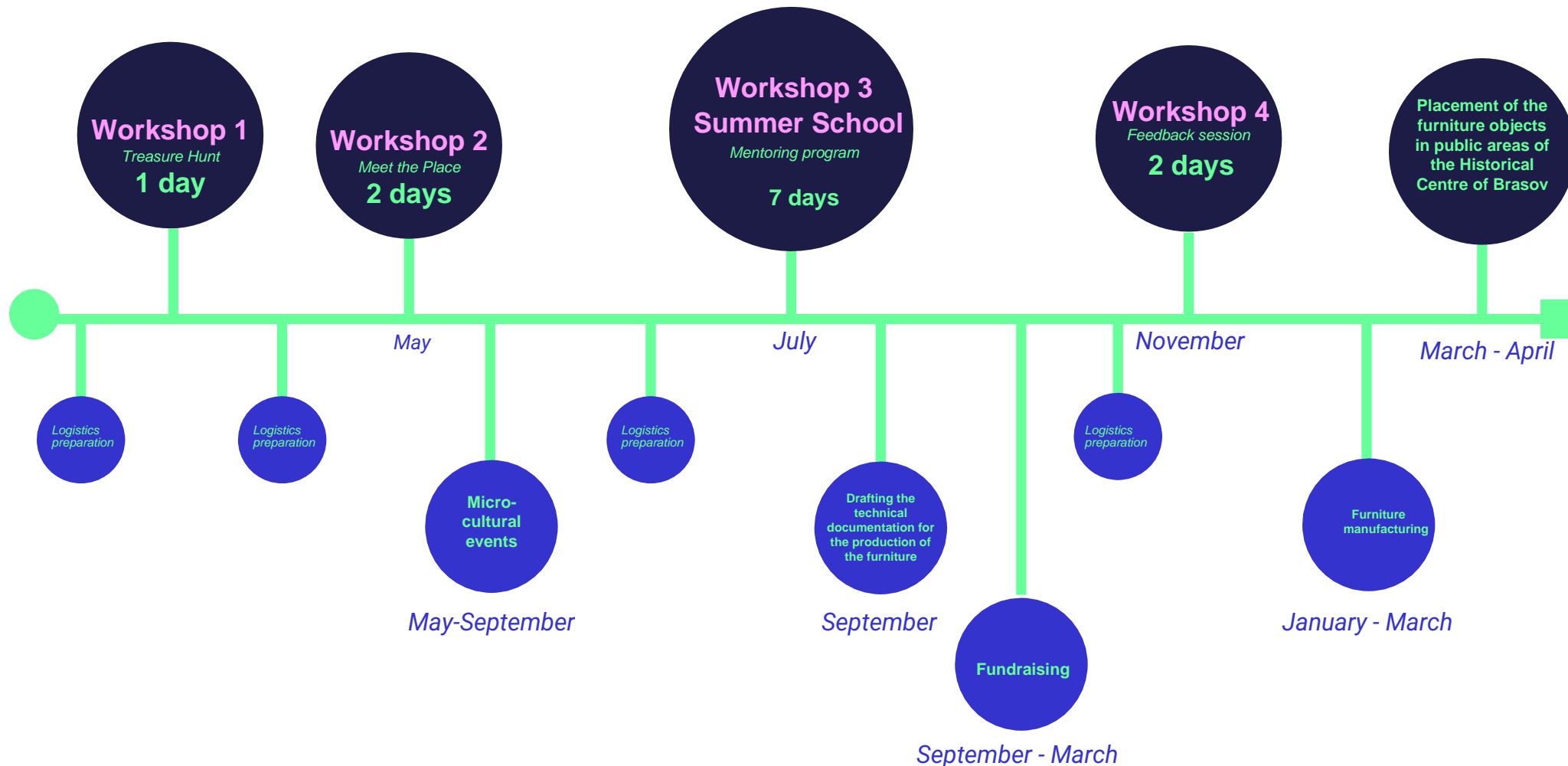
In the first phase of the selection process, a questionnaire in the form of a map was used, on which the future participants were asked to delimit routes and points of interest in the area designated for the study. We called this process the “mute map”, and it had the following structure:

- What are your favourite spots? Where do you spend your time in the citadel and what do you do there? What other places do you know of where other high school students go?
- Draw your paths through the citadel or around the citadel. For example: when you go to school and when you return home, when you take a walk with your colleagues, or when you have some spare time between school and your extracurricular activities, which you spend in the area. Or, when you're not in school, although school is not over yet, what path do you take?
- Are there places in the Historic Centre that you have not been to, streets you have not explored, or passages you have never entered? Can you identify them on the map?
- Technique: coloured pencils. Any other information was welcomed. The participants were free to add written indications or small drawings to the map.



5. Duration of “The City as a Classroom” program

approximately 12 months



The program also included a workshop in which the participants acquired notions of budgeting and one on the topic of organizing cultural events for preparing the “activation” of the pretext objects through a series of micro-events. The purpose of these events was to increase the community’s acceptance of these objects and to promote them.

6. Detailed activities

6.1 Workshop 1 - Working with the map / *Treasure Hunt*

Duration: 1 day

Number of participants: 30 pupils/students organized into 4 teams

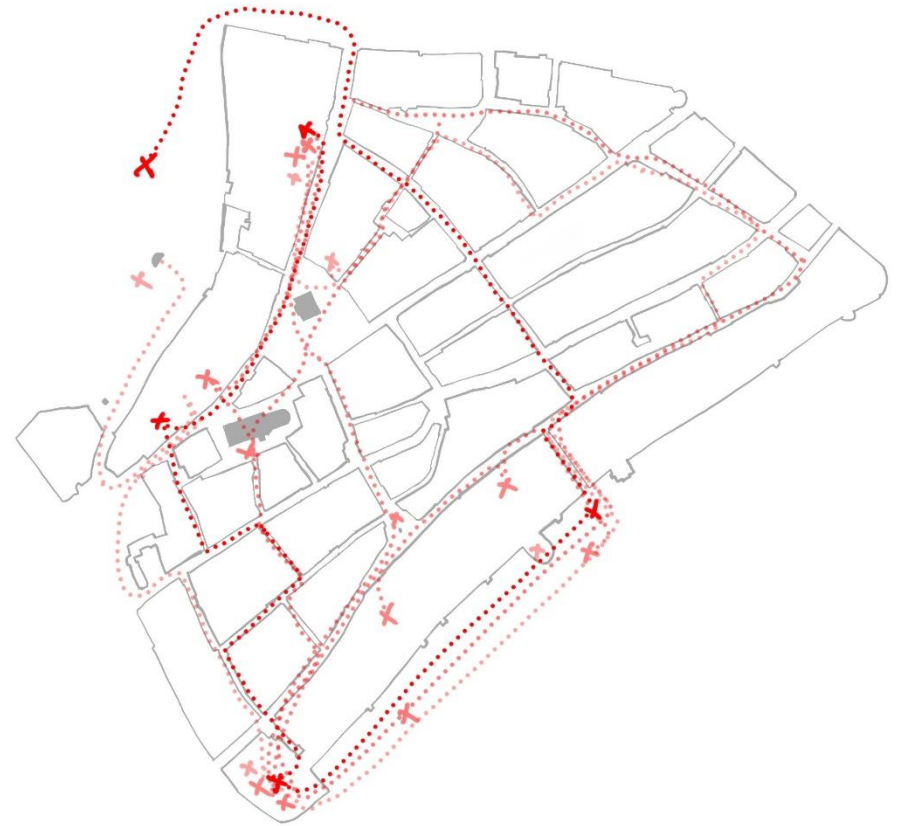
Number of mentors: 4, one for each team

Skills acquired:

1. Communication skills required for field investigations.
2. Investigative skills and intelligence gathering in the urban space, in a historical area.
3. Skills of documenting socio-cultural phenomena.
4. Photographic documentation of architectural objectives.
5. Initiation into the history of the medieval citadel of Brasov (spatiality and social structure).

The workshop aimed to explore the citadel of Brasov, with an emphasis on less known or hidden architectural-cultural elements. The participants followed 4 routes related to the formative ethnic-religious communities: Saxons / Evangelicals, Hungarians / Catholics, Jews / Mosaic, Romanians / Orthodox. The process had an exploratory nature, being based on the concept of treasure hunting, involving map interpretation and interaction with residents through direct contact. At the end, the groups presented their findings and experiences, highlighting personal stories, historical data and connections to the visited areas. This process stimulates curiosity and builds links based on field experiences, providing information about urban organization typologies and the use of spaces. By exploring these layers of information, participants gain knowledge that will serve as the basis for a second workshop, focused on a more detailed research of the 4 squares and their neighbouring areas.

Here, the participants analysed the public space, searched for patterns of use and imagined scenarios of appropriation, contributing to the further development of their knowledge and skills.





6. Detailed activities

6.2. Workshop 2 - Know the Place

Duration: 2 days

Number of participants: 24 pupils/students organized into 4 teams

Number of mentors: 4, one for each team

Skills acquired:

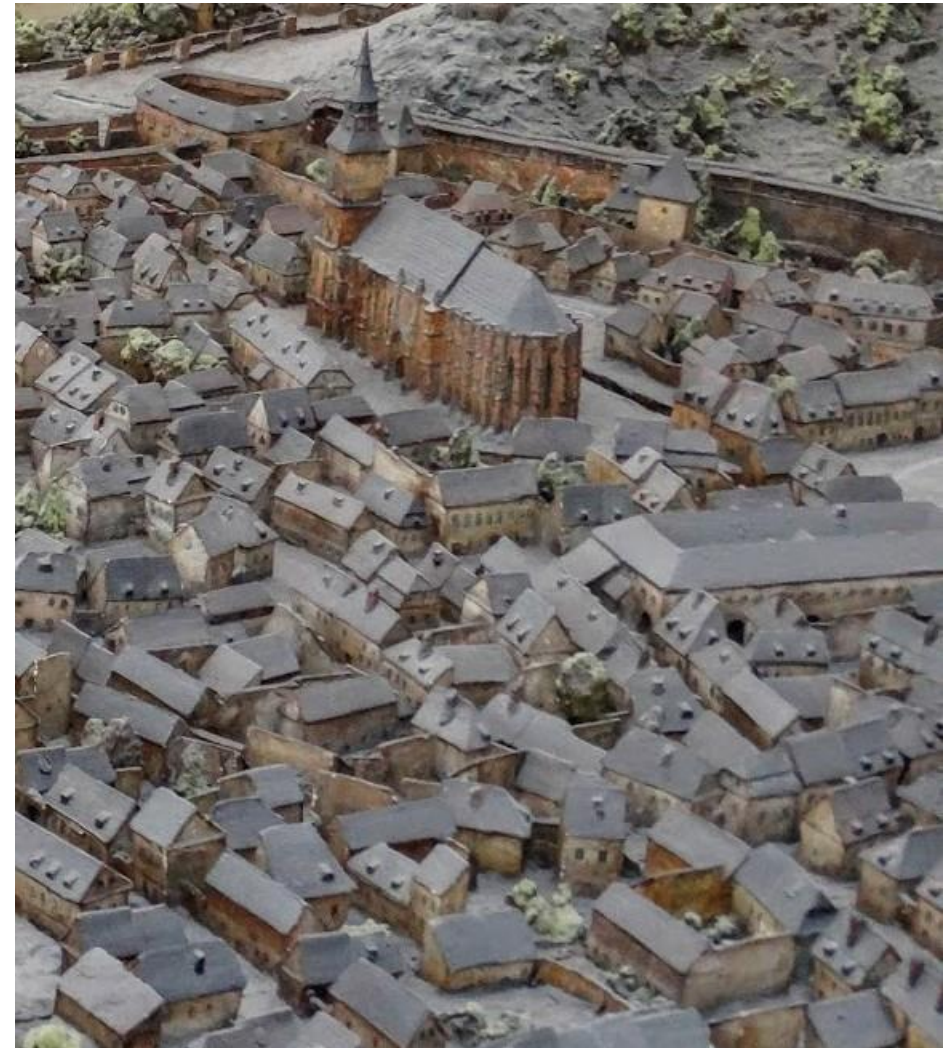
1. Working with historical documents to reconstruct the history of a place.
2. Historical field investigation of a space (photographic and drawing documentation of the characteristics of a space).
3. Functional analysis of a space (sunshine, methods and directions of travel).
4. Social analysis of a space - in situ interviews (locals/visitors).
5. The formulation of a problem/potential/design theme or design objective.

In the Middle Ages, the old city of Brasov was likened to a large house, made up of many small houses. Each inhabitant owned a house of his own and a small part of this large house, which belonged to the whole community. The streets and squares were familiar to everyone, and each inhabitant had his favourite angles and routes. We invite the participants to look at the citadel as members of a “big house”, co-owners of the same space, the city.

The purpose of the two-day workshop was to help the participants learn how to develop a relationship with a certain place in the city, how to become fond of it and get to know it in depth. Getting to know a place involves dedicating our time to receiving information, impressions, and experiences. The participants explored and learned to connect with the studied space, to discover the elements that define it, its atmosphere and the people who populate it. The workshop proposed investing time in clear objectives such as exploring and getting to know the surroundings. The participants tried to penetrate various spaces that delimit the studied area, to understand the functions of these spaces and learn who uses them, who lives in them. Interview forms were used to record the answers and create a small archive of the project.

An important aspect is to identify things, situations, objects or spaces that are not obvious on the plans, taking advantage of the historical plans and the city model present in the Weavers Bastion (Bastionul Țesătorilor). The participants will observe and note aspects such as how spaces are used by people, shaded and sunny areas, the general atmosphere and the way in which the various areas of the square are used.

Finally, the perspective of the comic, tragic, satirical and ironic came to light by transposing the studied square into a theatrical setting.





6. Detailed activities

6.3 Workshop 3 - Summer School

Duration: 7 days

Number of participants: 24 pupils/students organized into 4 teams

Number of mentors: 9, with different specializations

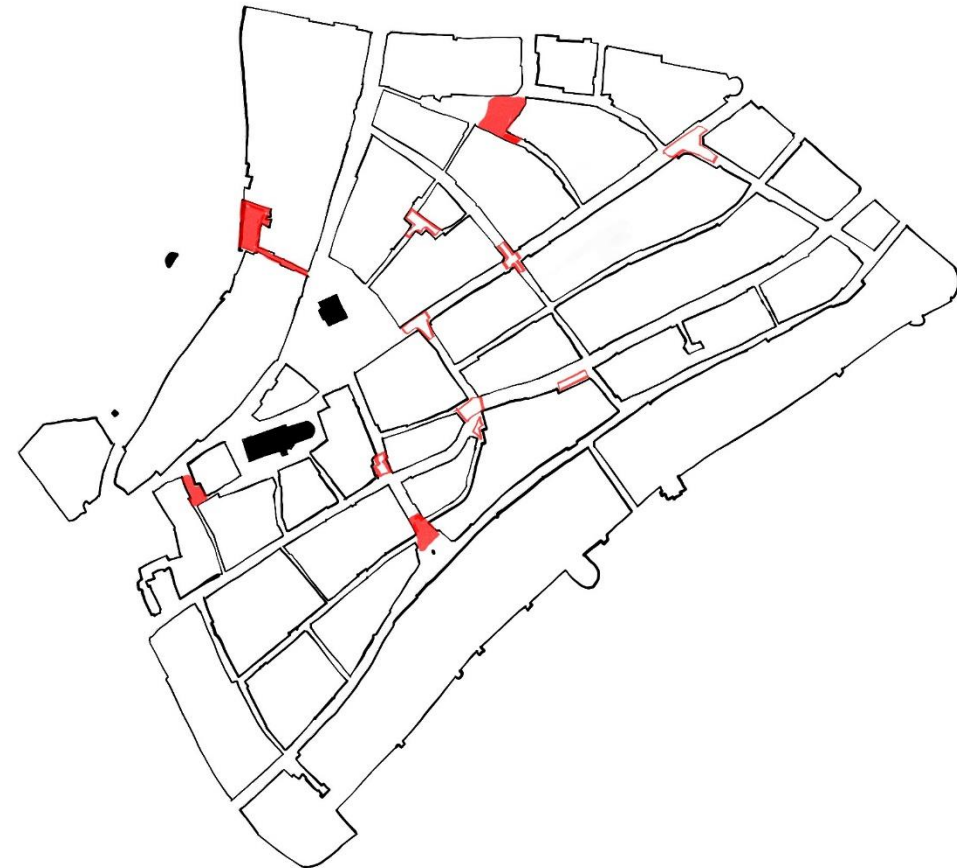
Skills acquired:

1. The primary analysis of an urban space (traffic, accesses, points of interest, sunshine).
2. Collecting data from an urban space (e.g. quantitative data, qualitative data).
3. Construction of different objects, based on the design kit.
4. Making sketches and presentations for mentors and the public.
5. Introduction into the topic of public and architectural lighting.
6. Introduction into the topic urban regeneration.
7. Entrepreneurship models.
8. Public presentation.
9. Constructive criticism.

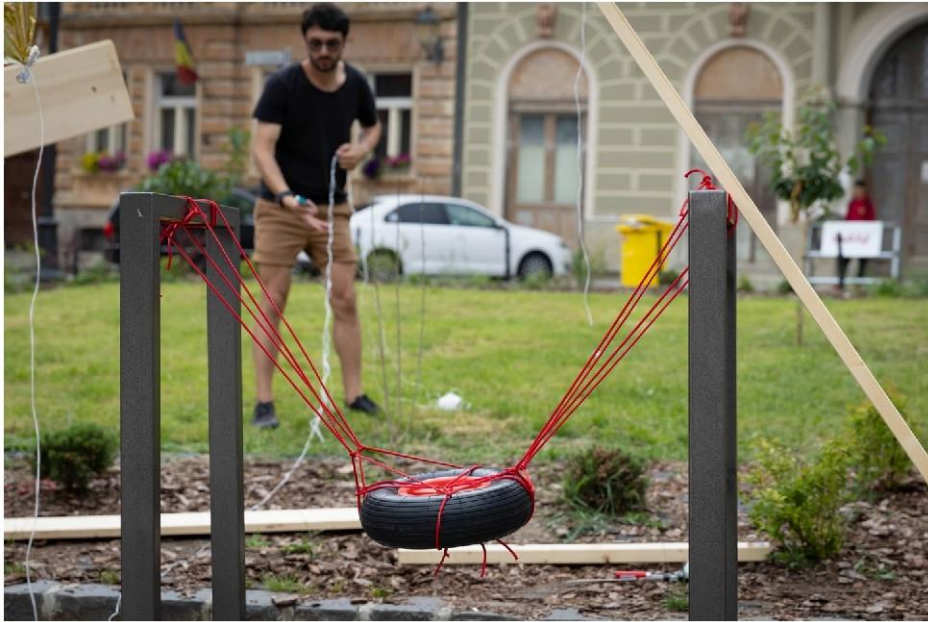
The third workshop took place in the form of a Summer School that lasted 7 days and had as main objective the design and implementation of pilot projects, in public spaces in the medieval citadel or its surroundings. The Summer School was the most substantial moment in the project, when the participants directly experimented with public spaces and, more importantly, observed and analysed their effects on locals and visitors alike.

The program started with 2 days dedicated to theoretical courses and presentations of local, relevant projects. During this time, the participants learned basic notions of architecture and design, about the history of the city and the medieval citadel, but also about the adventures and projects of local entrepreneurs. The second part of the Summer School was dedicated to design itself and to working with the Design Kit. The 4 teams, together with their mentors, made concrete proposals for improvement, discussed them, tested them and improved them. The best solutions were discussed together with the mentors and the rest of the group, and on the last day of the Summer School the participants created the final proposal. The working team analysed and documented how passers-by are affected by the proposed installation. The final moment of the Summer School was reserved for an official presentation within the City Hall of Brasov. The four teams presented their projects to a jury made up of local professionals, developers, representatives of the local business environment and the local public administration.

Educational objectives: Acquiring problem solving skills through design. The graduate of the “City as a Classroom” program is a young person who has cultivated their natural desire to get involved in improving their environment, and who has learned certain basic skills they would need to implement their ideas.



□ SPAȚII URBAŢE POSIBILE PENTRU URMĂTOARELE EDIȚII
■ SPAȚII URBAŢE TRATATE ÎN EDIȚIA 2023



6. Detailed activities

6.4 Workshop 4 - Feedback and budgeting

Duration: 1 day

Number of participants: 24 pupils/students organized into 4 teams

Number of mentors: 2, each having been assigned two teams

Skills acquired:

1. Familiarity with basic principles of object design (properties of building materials, ergonomics, economic considerations, aesthetics).
2. Familiarity with the stages and content of a fundraising process (budgeting, drawing up a pitch presentation, identifying potential funders).
3. Public speaking.

The fourth workshop officially concludes the educational program "The City as a Classroom". The purpose of this workshop was, on the one hand, a reflection on the entire educational process, but also a review of the exercises and materials used throughout the year. The participants, together with the mentors, discussed possible improvements to the design kit and the associated manual, as well as the activities carried out in the first two workshops, with the aim of adjusting and improving them.

This activity was followed by the presentation of the results of the design process, through which the design team of HUB-IN Brasov ensured the transition from the prototypes developed during the Summer School to final projects to be placed in the public space.

Through this exercise, the participants enriched their design knowledge by observing how objects they had created themselves and which were still very familiar to them were subjected to several filters - of long-term use resistance, material durability and aging, costs, aesthetics and ergonomics.

The last part of the workshop was dedicated to initiating the fundraising process and identifying financing possibilities. The participants learned to make a production and maintenance budget, to draft a presentation and to identify funding sources.

Upon the completion of the workshop, it can be said that the participants have undergone a full Project Based Learning (PBL) cycle, from understanding a need or problem to implementing the solution.



7. Team Roles

Project Manager - Supervises the development of the pedagogical methodology, communicates with the partners and the funder, supervises the project-related communication to the general public, manages the budget and carries out payments, drafts the intermediate and final reporting documents.

Project Manager Assistant - participates directly or advises on project management activities, prepares technical and financial reporting documents to be presented to the funder, develops and maintains the relationship with partners and the funder.

Urban Design Specialist - contributes to the development of the pedagogical methodology, the development of project communication materials, participates in project management activities and prepares reporting documents to be presented to the funder. Attends all activities a mentor.

Urban and Architecture Pedagogy Specialist - contributes to the development of the pedagogical methodology, to the drafting of project communication materials, takes part in project management activities and prepares the reporting documents to be presented to the funder. Attends all activities as mentor.

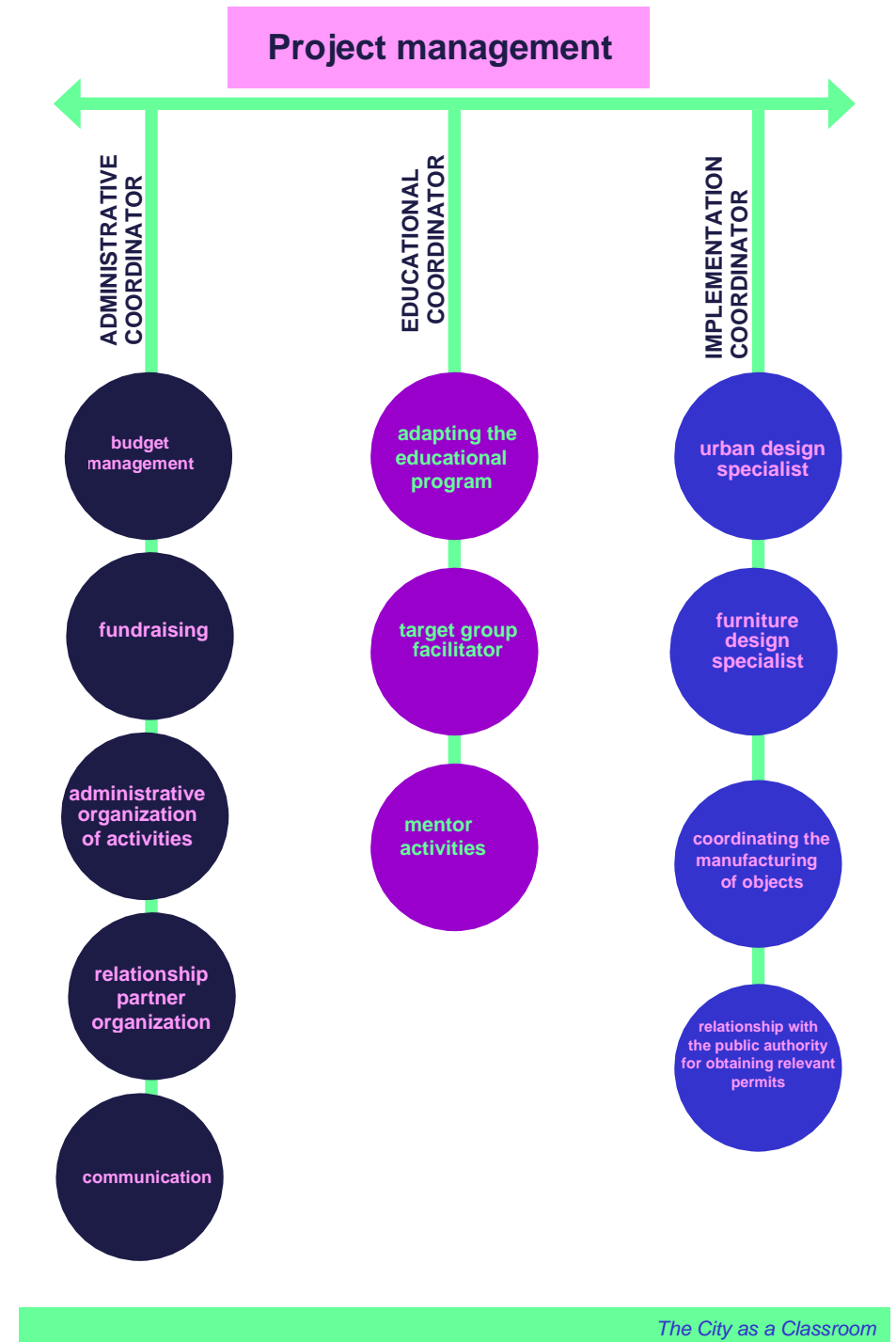
Participatory Design and Object Design Specialist - contributes to the development of the pedagogical methodology, is responsible for the development of the content for project-related communications in the media, takes part in project management activities. Attends all activities as mentor and is responsible for designing the final objects.

Strategy, Public Policy and Urban Design Specialist - contributes to the development of the pedagogical methodology, to the drafting of the materials necessary during workshops and attends all activities in the project as mentor.

Pedagogy, Wooden Constructive Systems Specialist - contributes to the development of the pedagogical methodology, prepares the materials necessary during the workshops and participates, as a mentor, in all the activities in the project.

Educational Program Design and Construction Technology Specialist - contributes to the development of the pedagogical methodology, prepares the materials necessary during the workshops and participates, as a mentor, in all the activities in the project.

Target Group Relationship Facilitator - contributes to the development of the pedagogical methodology, manages communication with the working group (pupils/students). Attends all activities as mentor.



8. Partner roles

“The City as a Classroom” aims to bring together organizations from several fields of activity, which share an interest in education and the public space, from different cities or different areas of interest in cities.

The project initiation will be taken over by a public, private or non-governmental organization, which will ensure the coordination of the project activities, including the obtaining of the necessary financial resources and the formation of the consortium of organizations involved in the development of the educational program. The organization of the project is supported by three key areas, namely education in architecture, private organizations with interests in the intervention area and public institutions that facilitate access to objectives of historical interest and contribute to obtaining the necessary permits for carrying out the activities.

Partner organizations in the field of **architectural / urbanism and furniture design education** will provide mentors for the proposed activities and contribute to the development of the pedagogical methodology, to the realization of the materials necessary during the workshops and take part, as consultants, in all the activities of the project. These organizations can be pre-university or university-level educational institutions, NGOs in the field of pre-university education that develop programs in partnership with public institutions, pupil or student organizations interested in activities in the public space and civic group or non-governmental organizations that have experience with tactical urbanism projects.

An important component of the project is **the relationship with the authorities**. The program is aimed exclusively at the public space and, for this reason, the partnership with the public authority, namely the city hall and / or the county direction of culture, which will indicate the areas where interventions can be made and will facilitate the obtaining of permits, is essential. Another type of partner are cultural institutions, such as museums, theatres, cultural community centres, etc., which will facilitate the access of participants to objectives of patrimonial interest.

The private actors with a direct interest in the intervention areas are HoReCa-type entities, traders, etc., operating in the relevant areas. They know the areas very well and can be a constructive partner in developing the educational program.

Project management

An organization or institution with experience in the management of projects implemented together with the local public authority

Implementation of the educational program

Organization specialized in architectural and urbanism education

Organization/ institution in contact with the target group

Architecture or urbanism organization specialized in projects carried out in the public space

Local public organizations

Local authority represented by the City Hall or an attached company

Local organizations that allow access to objectives of historical or heritage importance

Local Professional Organization (local OAR)

Local private organizations

Professional organizations with an interest in the intervention area (merchants, students, HoReCa, etc.)

Private organizations with an interest in the intervention area (restaurants, shops, hotels, etc.)

Private organizations - potential sponsors

9. Assessment of results

The assessment of the results was carried out through careful planning of the evaluation methods and tools. The planning was followed by the collection of data (qualitative and quantitative) and their interpretation. The results of the data interpretation will be included in an assessment report.

List of indicators recommended to be considered:

RESULT: Improving the attractiveness and social inclusion for the local communities.	
Result indicators	<p>Changing the perceptions of the community, through a “before” and “after” opinion poll aimed at the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Historic Centre is a good place to live. • The need to direct tourists to other places (to free the crowded areas in the Historic Centre); • The Historic Centre offers a sense of identity / belonging; • The Historic Centre is a favourable place for families; • Art / cultural opportunities are an advantage of the Historic Centre; • Assessment of issues related to the state of urban furniture, the behaviours of adolescents and young people, the ability to organize cultural events, the ability to attract and organize events.
	<p>Changing the community's commitment to public squares, including in terms of perceptions regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental sustainability in the Historic Centre; • The quality of the lighting in the Historical Centre; • Measures to mitigate climate change; • The Historical Centre as a place for the community; • Involvement in artistic and cultural events; • Congestion of public spaces; • Knowledge of public and free rest areas (benches, etc.); • Time of stay; • Demographic characteristics of visitors in public squares and the reason behind the visit.
	<p>Precise assessment of the prospects for community involvement in public squares through QR codes, including perceptions of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the furniture objects create a space for the locals; • Demographics: discerning whether it's mostly tourists or locals.
RESULTS: Improved skills for future generations (participatory planning and design, etc.).	
Result indicators	<p>Changes in perception and skills among pupils and students involved in the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquiring knowledge of how lighting contributes to public safety; • Acquiring knowledge of how lighting designers help to call attention to elements of heritage; • Acquiring architectural lighting design skills; • Acquiring skills related to the development of a map for an area for urban planning purposes; • Changes in perception regarding heritage sites in Brasov; • Acquiring interviewing skills; • Acquiring field skills in heritage sites; • Plans for employing these skills in the future (careers, etc.); • Unexpected positive or negative consequences; • The number of hours/classes organized around the furniture items; • The number of students who attended the outdoors classes; • Number of students who took part in workshops and the Summer School; • The number of events attended by students; • The number of presentations made; • The number of prototypes tested; • The number of mentors involved in mentoring; • The number of participants (pupils or citizens, etc.) who learned about architecture, tactical urbanism, lighting, following the education and awareness-raising events;



10. Branding and communication

The overall voice of our brand is compassionate, authentic and focused on our brand's values: authentic and inclusive; people-centred, relaxing, seeking physical and psychological well-being; sustainable and resilient. Not very energetic, but very strong. In HUB-IN Brasov, sustainability, creativity, cooperation and tradition are at the heart of the brand.

At the presentation of the HUB in the local community, HUB-IN Brasov implements a set of standard communication activities (conference and press release, articles on social media and on partnering websites), as well as thematic tours to showcase to journalists in more detail the idea of our HUB and the activities of HUB-IN Brasov. On-site visuals take a minimalistic and interactive approach in the form of QR codes.

Activity	Target group	Description
Creation, preparation and dissemination of promotional materials	Authorities Key actors involved	Preparation of visual materials and other communication materials. Location of visual elements in the HUB and dissemination of other relevant communication materials. Sending direct messages to the representatives of relevant stakeholders.
	General public	Preparation of visual materials and other communication materials. Placement of visual elements in the HUB and dissemination of other relevant communication materials to be distributed on social networks.
	Tourists	Adapted leaflets/posters or other printed materials to be distributed in the Citizens' Information Centre and the Tourist Information Centre, in the museums of the Historical Centre, as well as on social networks and on the relevant websites.
	Students/ Pupils	Leaflets/posters or other printed materials to be distributed in universities and schools, as well as on social networks and relevant websites.
Launch conference	Public administration Relevant stakeholders: experts involved in various project activities, representatives of relevant associations, local innovators, residents, students.	Venue: The Council Room of the City Hall Local Council. The list of stakeholders will be defined when the concept of the event is defined.
Thematic tour	Press/ Journalists	In order to give journalists all the attention necessary for them to achieve a complete understanding of the concept of HUB-IN Brasov, a separate event will be organized in the form of a thematic tour. Residents and tourists will be able to organize such tours themselves based on the information provided on site (QR codes).
Press release and articles on social media	General audience	
Treasure hunt in the Historic Centre	Pupils/students	This action will be adapted to the two target groups using various historical and cultural information related to Brasov, using the visit to the area as a pretext to raise awareness of the results of the HUB-IN project and its general objectives.



11. Budget information

Recommendation for the composition of the budget:

Human Resources:

- Project Manager (12 months - the entire duration of the project)
- Educational Coordinator (3 months)
- Architect / Urbanist - Urban and Furniture Design (3 months)
- Target Group Relations Facilitator (36 hours)
- Summer School Mentor X 4 persons (140 hours)

Direct costs:

Workshop materials / Summer School prototypes and final objects

- Design Kit
- Consumables
- Graphic materials provided to participants

Summer School Administrative Costs

- Rent for the educational sessions' venue (10 days)
- Team transportation
- Transportation of the materials necessary for the Summer School
- Meals for the participants and the team (10 days)
- Accommodation for the Summer School mentors and team

Communication:

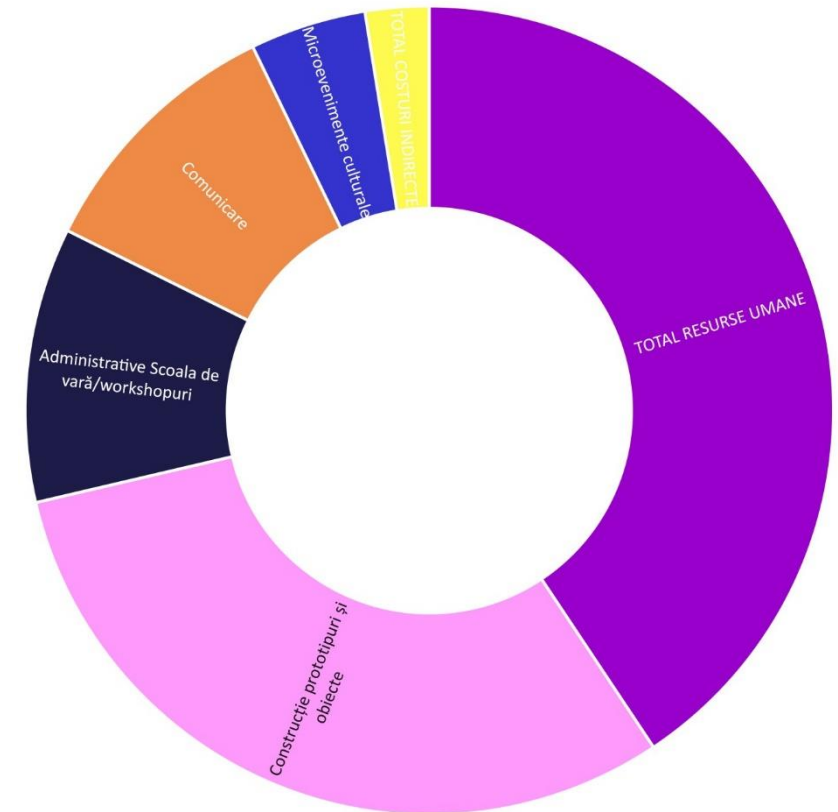
- Graphic design of various materials
- Promotional materials
- Photography and video services
- Online communication services

Micro cultural events

- Artistic concept of the micro-cultural events
- Event costs (equipment rent, venue rent, etc.)

Indirect costs

- Fundraising campaign
- Logistical and administrative costs of the organization



“I think this experience has made me realize that I have more courage than I thought, courage to communicate with the people around me, to be bold and knock on people’s doors and even enter people’s yards when I really want to find something. It taught me to use a map, to orientate better.” (participant, 17 years old)

“This experience has taught me not to pass mindlessly by a place I thought I already knew, because history can be hidden even in the most unusual of places.” (participant, 16 years old)

“This experience has taught me about the cultural treasures hidden in the yards of the people in the Brasov Citadel area and how much information can be learned from the locals and local authorities.” (participant, 16 years old)

“Coordinating with yourself and others. Understanding the old mentality. Use of old technologies. Preserving and re-using these old technologies. The unity of the Brasov community. Communicating with the team. Creating close bonds between friends. Discovering new qualities. Managing time and goals. Development of new senses. Understanding buildings and their role in society.” (participant, 17 years old)

“I learned to follow the details and see beyond appearances. I would never have thought that each house is unique in its own way, but paying attention to details I wouldn’t normally have looked at I came to realize it. I also managed to explore this city so thoroughly that it changed my view of the city I thought I knew.” (participant, 17 years old)

“The facade of the abandoned synagogue. I would never have expected to find something so spectacular behind a relatively trivial gate.”
(participant, 16 years old)

“I liked best the practical part of this project, studying and using the kit received. I found it interesting in how many ways you could combine those parts to create different objects and how much the small details of the joints, for example, mattered when trying to stabilize an object.” (participant, 17 years old)

“I liked that we were given the opportunity to create something for our city, together with people I have a lot in common with.”
(participant, 17 years old)