

EMPATHEAST

THIS CONNECT: rethinking social good 2016

Empathy driven social change in Eastern Europe

November 11 • 13
Vratsa

The first forum for empathy-driven social innovation in Eastern Europe - EMPATHEAST - is an international event in a non-conference format that brings together various forms of interaction: lectures, performances, workshops for kids and adults, discussions, role plays and urban art installations. Through innovative methods for collaboration between different sectors, it connects people of different ages, backgrounds, interests and countries.

EMPATHEAST 2016 is an island in an ongoing crisis providing space and time for people-centered and people-led experiences, systems and environments. EMPATHEAST seeks to bring about social good through the understanding that our main asset is being **CONNECTED** – not technically, but across disciplines, across ideas - forming a new quality of human relations. It creates time and space to foster intuitive approaches and citizens-led decision making that can redesign the environment around us.

The third edition of the Forum will take place between 11-13 November in the town of Vratsa, located in the Northwestern region of Bulgaria known as the poorest in the EU. The main objective of EMPATHEAST is to co-create radical new systems of acceptance, human-centered innovations towards the wellbeing of people and communities and to firmly put Bulgaria and the Balkans on the world map of social and cultural innovation and social entrepreneurship. As a region dealing with a dysfunctional economic, social and education system on a daily basis, the Balkans are a unique ground where social innovation can solve old challenges in a new way by borrowing tools from the fields of culture, art and education. Simultaneously the region finds itself in a vacuum in which social entrepreneurship and innovation are lagging behind. This is particularly relevant to Bulgaria's Northwestern region, whose challenges will inspire participants to design innovative solutions.

Through both local and international examples EMPATHEAST aims to demonstrate how the concept of social good can be linked to sustainable models possessing the real potential to reduce poverty and cultural isolation. In bringing together empathy, efficiency and quality social impact they can transform our societies. In the form of lectures, workshops, discussions, installations, games, concerts and art performances, this year's EMPATHEAST will be centered around the topic of **CONNECTEDNESS** – between different sectors, ideas as well as among us as people – in the areas of economics, politics, education, art and culture, IT and tech, traditions, and national identity. Inbetween all these areas we are looking for the 'social glue' that connects us and serves as a counterpoint to the modern processes of disconnectedness and mistrust.

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WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE 2016 EDITION:

HANDS ON! APPLYING SOCIAL INNOVATION TO LOCALLY RELEVANT TOPICS

Throughout EMPATHEAST we create working social innovations through play and exploration. Previously unthinkable connections, that help solve crucial challenges facing our societies today, can be inspired: How can 3D modelling and augmented reality enable ordinary people to share their visions for changes in the urban environment? What is the result when you connect urban youth with elderly households in rural regions? The participants in the Forum are practically-oriented – they involve the guests in games and workshops, aiming to share experience in solving various challenges and leaving behind readily applicable practices that can benefit the local community.

ART INNOVATION CHALLENGE

The Art Innovation Challenge is an Ideas Factory Initiative for socially-engaged art. Artists working in different spheres are presented with a challenge – a mission to creatively transform the urban environment around a certain topic. They involve the town in performances, exhibitions, installations and games, thus communicating the core message of empathy and awakening public interest about relevant topics.

SOCIAL IMPACT HACKATHON

How can IT and new technologies become investors in social good? Young programmers from the region will present their solutions to the pressing issues of the day facing our societies. In partnership with Vratsa Software & Software University.

CATAPULT

Ideas for social enterprises, cultural initiatives and various social innovations will be presented in front of an audience for the first time in search of support and feedback. They have been initiated as part of Baba Residence and the Social Innovation Challenge projects and have been developed with the assistance of Ideas Factory mentors.

ANIMATION PARTICIPATION

EMPATHEAST visitors, curious onlookers and passers-by will have a chance to join this collaborative effort. It is designed as an open participative process in order to connect the experiences of dozens of people and express them in animated form. We will have a chance to witness the products of their imagination in the stop-motion animation films that they will co-create with Kristina Gatsova during a multi-day workshop.

SEE VRATSA THROUGH THE EYES OF A LOCAL!

Our brave idea is to introduce the Forum's guests to the perspectives of local residents, who will share their impressions of what makes their town unique and valuable. In this way we aim to challenge some of the myths and stereotypes for the Northwestern region as a source of predominantly negative statistics. **And much more: lectures, discussions, screenings, performances, evening events.**

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GUESTS AND LECTURERS AT EMPATHEAST 2016:



Adeshola Tunde Adefioye, [Urban Woorden VZW](#) & KVS, Belgium Dramaturg in the Brussels City Theatre and initiator of Urban Woorden – a youth theatre project encouraging self-expression and empowerment of marginalised youth.



Ed Santman, [Changes and Chances](#), Netherlands
C&C chairman, realizes projects at the intersection of art, education and society aiming at vulnerable people such as prisoners, drug addicts, young at risk or homeless people. In many projects the arts are used as a tool to develop life skills and employability skills.



Joris Jaccarino, [BEPART](#), Italy
Cofounder of Bepart - a social innovation start-up using Augmented Reality to involve locals in reimagining the urban environment. He teaches at the University of Milan in the field of visual sociology and film.



Jason Nardi, [Banca Etica](#), [RIPESS Europe](#), Italy
Jason is an activist for ethical finance and is active in a number of organisations in the sphere. He has campaigned for a number of causes ranging from anti-discrimination/migration rights, water rights and commons, participatory budgeting, finance for (local) development, etc.

More: Ohi Pezoume and Solidarity for All (Greece), Angel and Reneta Georgievi (Software University, Bulgaria), Junior Achievement, Bulgaria, Move BG, Bulgaria and many others!

Learn more about previous **EMPATHEAST** editions:

https://issuu.com/ideasfactorybg/docs/present_empatheast_new_web

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