

## Pitch on the New European Bauhaus by Eszter Dávida

[KÉK](#) (Hungarian Contemporary Architecture Centre) is an independent professional institution focusing on architecture, built environment, urban development and their relation to the communities for 15 years which puts it to a determining role in today's Central-European architecture culture. According to **our vision the future of our cities** and architecture is determined by the following key areas: Digitalization and technology, Sustainability, Participation and Educational impact and development. Accordingly these are the areas which resonate the New European Bauhaus as well;

- It is crucial to **implement new technologies into our cultural system** and urban spaces to support cities and citizens **to create more liveable cities. The more we understand** and involve **our digital knowledge the more habitable** and smarter **settlements we get**. KÉK contributes to this work of creating more digitized, innovative and challenge-resistant cities by experimenting digitalization in new ways like in cultural use.
- We have a wide range of eco-friendly, smart technologies and methodologies which we still do not really use on an ordinary basis when it comes to the different scales of the cities, however establishing a sustainable environment is crucial for the individuals and its communities as well. Therefore **KÉK highlights sustainable features** not just **in the level of projects** like community gardening but **during the process of each program by creating methodologies and best practices**.
- The importance of citizens is often tend to be missed when it comes to architecture and cities. The power of the engagement of local communities have been in constant focus in the professional work of KÉK. **Involve participatory methods and the strength of communities** do not **depend on** the budget or scale of development but **the commitment of participants. Architecture and our urban environment is a common issue** therefore we believe in **the importance of local communities and it will be scaling up** (not only for urban development purposes but) in times like a pandemic.
- Education is highly crucial when it comes to our environment (natural or built). **When citizens understand their cities better, this is when they can contribute to a smarter and livable environment**.

A tangible experience we have related to these common values is the realization and implementation of the Interreg DANUrB (Danube Urban Brand) project which started in 2017 and still going. It is an international project with more than 20 partners from 7 countries with the aim of revealing the tangible and intangible heritage of the Danube in order to create a 'Danube Promenade to strengthen sustainable tourism and regional culture'. The Danube region is highly interesting since its common history, culture, gastronomy, strengths, regional identity, built heritage, intangible heritage share many similar aspects although currently

tourism and communities living along the Danube underusing these potentials.

Our project was basically an immerse research of hidden potentials in order to create a strategy and build regional networks, but in the contrary of other similar projects in the DANUrB we made a huge effort on the realizon of activities, to [really implement methodologies](#). Therefore we implemented more than 60 pilot events in more then 20 settlements along the Danube such as educational programs for kids and families, cultural festivals to strengthen local identity, building camps to involve local resources, empover local cultural and financial network through participatory processes.

As a bottom-up organisation (foundation) and professional institute I was leading this work in KÉK concerning the involvement of stakeholders from different countries and the realization of pilot events. A tanglibe, real impact as the result of our work is that in many perhieric situation along borders we succeded the twin towns to create a bilingual cultural event together based on their common heritage for the first time ever after the heavy historical events after the 1900s (as it was the case for example in the border of Sturovo, Slovakia- Esztergom, Hungary and Vidin, Bulgaria-Calafat, Romania).

In this particular project we realized that the best chance for this region is to create a network based on sustainable tourism, where local people and communities can contribute and strengthen their local identity, and we did all that with design tools based on participatory process and collaboration.

I think it resonates a lot with the aims of the New European Bauhaus. As mentioned above the importance and involvement of citizens and local communities can be crucial not only because their knowledge can be a key element when it comes to development, but the engagement towards common goals, knowledge about our cities, culture and build environment. It is highly true when it comes to sustainability not only in the original meaning but also in an extended way related to other aspects of urban life (sustainable city structures, tourism, workplaces, processes etc.)