

Raising awareness on SDGs using drones in mountain schools

“Education Up High” is a project originating from mountain schools in Romania. By using drones, professors have the opportunity to teach in a different way and to associate words with images in order to raise awareness on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Education with drones in 3 mountain schools

“Educatie la Inaltime”, literally “Education Up High” in English, is a project started in Romania in 2019 in the mountainous County of Hunedoara. The project aims at using the drones to teach differently. Through this technology, teachers can run a live and online lesson from the very place that is the subject of the lesson.

During the first year of the project, in 2019 - 2020, pupils from three rural schools from the County of Hunedoara were for instance connected with Irina Constantinescu, Geography Teacher who delivered the class live from the mountainous county of Buzău, from the Ulmet’s trovants (stones from Romania that form a geological phenomenon because they are considered to be alive and can grow and multiply). Pupils were also connected with Cristina Dudan, biology teacher, live broadcasting from the Făgăraş mountains at 1700 meters above sea level, where she introduced children to the issue of deforestation. Adirana Balaj, history teacher, also taught live from Adamclisi where the eponymous battle took place in 101 A.C. and where a memorial is built.



Credits: Educatie la Inaltime

For these live classes, professors also became co-creators and presenters of the lesson. They were assisted by media professionals, who were in charge of filming with drones. The drone technology is used to film from above and to include in the lesson images of landscapes or places mentioned by the teacher in voice-over.

In the second phase of the pilot project, pupils also learned to promote their region using technology and media. They attended filming and editing workshops and made short movies about their area, the values, traditions and heritage of their mountain communities.

In class promotion of the SDGs

After the success of the pilot project, “Education Up High” was extended to the entire national territory of Romania for the school year 2020 – 2021, which also occurred in the COVID-19 context with many closed schools and an increased need for distance learning.

The core objective remains unchanged: bringing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to life through live lessons, transmitted by drone from different regions of Romania by local teachers.

MORE INFO



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Here is an overview of some of the lessons and how they introduced the SDGs:

- “[Lesson 2: reducing inequality](#)” was recorded from the County of Maramureş; its relation to SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), the class questioned children about the role of education in reducing socio-economic inequalities.
- “[Lesson 3: life on land](#)”, live from the Bucegi massif in the Carpathians. In this live class, Irina Constantinescu, geography teacher, and Alexandru Colţoiu, Director of the Bucegi Natural Park raised awareness on SDG 15 (life on land). The lesson aimed to familiarise students with the interdependence of living organisms in a special ecosystem (forest), taking as an example the fauna and flora of the Bucegi massif, and to encourage children to strengthen their connexion with nature.
- “[Lesson 5: sustainable communities](#)” live from Făgăraş, in Transilvania, focused on the eponym SDG 11. With the intervention of several local stakeholders, the lesson demonstrated how natural and cultural heritage can be promoted by local communities as a model of sustainable development.



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The live lessons are streamed on both Zoom and YouTube, allowing students to ask questions to the teacher verbally or via chat. Each lesson is broadcast live, then recorded, edited, and made available online for free for use by any school. Lessons target pupils between 9 and 14 years old.

More lessons will be developed from September to December 2021. New professors will join the team and were selected upon their motivation for the project.

Although the project was extended nationally, it remains a useful tool for education in the mountains both to:

- Promote access to innovative education material, including in smaller schools located in mountainous areas;
- Raise awareness among all pupils, including in mountainous areas, on the Sustainable Development Goals and on the role of mountains in reaching them, through classes recorded from mountain massifs and communities.

Resources and governance

The pilot project "Education Up High" was launched by Marius Toader and Adrian Robe, television and documentary producers with careers spanning over 20 years, specialising in the creation of original content. The pilot project was carried out with the support of the Dacica Foundation, the Romanian Government's Department of Sustainable Development and the Carolina Creative Neighbourhood Association (a community of young people from Alba Iulia promoting the creation innovative programmes to improve teaching in Romanian schools, through non-formal methods and with the help of technologies.) In 2019, the pilot project was awarded within the Romanian competition for

innovation in education “[RoSmart](#)” organised by OMV Petrom, which distributes a total of 500.000 euros among all winning projects.

“Education Up High” is now also supported by Aspire Teachers, an association working to improve impact education in Romania and to exchange good practices among teachers. Their vision is « to bring an excellent teacher in front of every child in Romania ». The association has taken the lead over the project to upscale the initiative from the pilot phase in the Hunedoara County to the entire national territory. For the new school year, another session of “Education Up High” will run from September to November 2021. It will be supported by the Romanian Government's Department of Sustainable Development and implemented by Insemne (a newly created NGO by Marius Toader and Adrian Robe, the two media professionals who initiated the project) Other institutions have joined the list of partners, like the Montessori movement or the Transylvanian college.



Innovative aspect

The "Education Up High" project successfully brings technology at the service of education in mountainous areas. The diversity of topics and the pedagogical dimension can improve children's knowledge of the SDGs. The many lessons recorded from mountain areas can also promote the sustainable development of the mountains among future generations.

For more information, please contact:

Blandine Camus, Communication & Policy Officer

communication@euromontana.org

+32 2 280 42 83

www.euromontana.org

