UpGranT
Updating the Grand Tour
Memory and Invention of the European Built Environment

Description of Project n. 2023-1-IT02-KA220-HED-000158377

Many European townscapes bear concrete evidence to the co-identities shaped over centuries of circulation and exchange of people and ideas. The Grand Tour (GT), a journey into Europe with Italy as a key destination, was a custom for several generations of architects and artists, which climax in the early modern period triggering the construction of a cultural European horizon long before the EU was a political and economic entity.

Identifying the GT as a legacy, UpGranT proposes to restore travel (informed mobility) to the core of EU architects’ education, an informal learning pathway fostering student-centred learning practices, self-motivation, while exposing apprentice architects to diversity and otherness, still fundamental for a thorough understanding of the European built environment.

Integrating life-fed learning frameworks and digital tools UpGranT ventures to bridge the GT into the future.

The consortium covers five geographical and cultural contexts. Cities of the partner countries are framed as dialectically experienced by architects — prominent figures of the past, practicing architects, and off-radar personalities — who filtered their travel experience into their built work. Sharing criteria of selection and interpretation, the project focuses on travel outputs and itineraries, interpreting relevant works.

Partners will jointly undertake 4 Grand Tours with Porto testing reading keys and teaching tools with students from all institutions.

Objectives:

- Experimenting an in-situ pedagogical model, i.e. learning by travelling, from real buildings, experiencing affinities among EU townscapes.
- Moving beyond a preset idea of EU identity by including contemporary architecture, and bringing to the fore the negotiations and conflicts that are an integral part of it.
- Showing the potential of architecture as a trigger to shift from STEM to STEAM, therefore design education as a crucial way of thinking.
- Addressing varied categories of learners: individuals from different age groups with an interest in architecture, professional, experts or consultants; students and academic staff interested in replicating the UpGranT experiment.
- Increasing architectural literacy, particularly on the understandings of modern architecture and its diverse contextual interpretations.

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