



THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

Born in Bucharest, Gabriela Cotaru immigrated with her parents right after the 1989 events, spending her youth and finishing her studies in technical drawing in Germany. However, upon meeting her husband in 2003, they began envisioning a personal and cultural project in Hosman (Hârtibaciu Valley, Sibiu County, Transylvania). Their first step was buying the old derelict mill in the village and restoring it so that bread could be produced there. This was also the first step in establishing the Old Mill Hosman Collective, as the mill served as collaboration opportunity with a baker couple. With the Old Mill as their inspiration, they were aiming to bring culture to the village and create a rural economic point.

While they first established a small company to implement the activities and interventions, in time due to the bureaucracy and the type of activities they wanted to carry out, they opted for an NGO/association. Gabriela and her husband established the Sustainable Hosman Association, focusing on cultural activities in their village.

THE INNOVATION IMPACT

Many of the projects implemented by Gabriela – such as Transylvanian Women's Week at the Barn (2019), Digital Centre for Women (2021), and the current ongoing recurrent meetings with more than 70 entrepreneur women from the Hârtibaciu Valley, are aimed directly at women, and creating women's networks, safe and supportive spaces.



Through each project, new collaborations are created, ensuring the continuity of these initiatives within the local community. The projects establish social spaces which empower women to initiate personal projects or advance their ideas in an otherwise conservative social context. Gabriela, the collective and their partners managed to create a space where women can express themselves and be heard. They have succeeded in women connecting with and supporting each other, creating a network where women can meet, empower one another, and foster mutual support. The entrepreneur women's network allows women of the Hârtibaciu to step out of their homes and engage in activities that strengthen their personal and professional growth while challenging gender stereotypes.

USEFUL LINKS

[Old Mill Hosman](#)
[Digital Centre for Women](#)
[Open Landscape Forum](#)
[Transylvanian Women's Week 2019](#)