



THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

Born in 1997 and raised in the village of Marin in NW Romania, Patricia Marina Toma realized she is interested in developing her artistic skills (photography and painting) early on.



She pioneered an inclusive local festival to unite the rural community and preserve the cultural heritage of Marin despite logistical barriers and lack of urban resources. The festival had three editions, growing with each one between 2016 and 2019. She conceived it as a participative event for the community, an event which would tell their story. The festival included diverse cultural activities: the reenactment of a local wedding ritual in traditional costumes, tastings of local gastronomy, exhibitions and educational workshops with children.

Post-pandemic, she partnered with an NGO securing national funding for art-based education projects benefitting children and women in Marin and surrounding areas. Artists and trainers from across Romania convened in Marin to lead workshops in storytelling, illustration, theatre, photography, documentary filmmaking, and textiles.

Patricia has the particular sensibility of lending her ear – and her camera lens – to those most vulnerable in rural communities: children, women, seniors. Her recent innovative photography project “People of the village” focused on capturing the life stories of the elders in villages and resulted in an itinerant photo exhibition which was displayed in more than 7 locations across Romania.

THE INNOVATION IMPACT

Patricia’s innovations have brought educational activities to children in a village where all education institutions have been shut down. The culturally sustainable approach she has taken ensures their access to education through art, an alternative to the existing institutional approach to education. She curated collaborations emphasizing inclusive education methods, imparting diverse skills beyond artistry to children. These activities have impacted how the children perceive themselves and the world, teaching them to value their own creativity, learn about their emotions and how they collaborate with others.

Her photography storytelling projects focusing on the rural elderly fill a void in Romanian society by enriching it culturally, but also socially by giving visibility to a category of the population which is usually made invisible, with direct impact on their lives and wellbeing.

USEFUL LINKS

[Patricia Marina Toma](#)
[MarinArt. Cultural, Educational and Artistic Centre](#)
[The Blue House from Marin](#)