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What is STEAM COACH

Technology is more than just math, it's imagination, too



Anne-Linde Jansen

Persistent stereotypes, a lack of relatable role models, and learning environments that don't resonate with them, these are just a few reasons why girls and women often turn away from pursuing a career in technology or science. "And even if they do choose a STEM-related study, the chances of them actually working in that field later on are slim." The European project STEAM Coach aims to change that. Anne-Linde Jansen, project leader Education & Labor Market at Brainport Development, explains more.



Girls are interested in technology, but too often they don't see themselves reflected in it.



"I was one of the few women when I enrolled in a technical degree program at TU Eindhoven after high school," Anne-Linde recalls. "I also noticed how teachers in secondary school treated girls interested in technology differently." Luckily, she had support too teachers who encouraged her and a father who gave her a little push "in the right direction." Now, she brings her technical background into her work at Brainport Development. "You don't necessarily have to work for a large company. There are many more ways to apply your technical talents."

And that's exactly the goal of the Erasmus+ project STEAM Coach: to break stereotypes and approach technology from multiple perspectives. Anne-Linde explains, "Research shows that girls are interested in technology, but they drop out because they don't relate to today's typical role models or because the learning environments don't suit them well." She also sees differences across countries: "In the Netherlands, we've made great strides in gender equality, but math anxiety still remains a major barrier for girls."



Coaching instead of traditional outreach

This project focuses on coaching, not just information sessions. The goal is to strengthen girls' self-confidence and sense of identity. "Coaches who are close to young people and offer a realistic and inspiring image can help break stereotypes and boost girls' confidence," Anne-Linde says. These coaches can be teachers, but also parents or professionals from the industry.

STEAM Coach In Brief

- Erasmus+ project focused on: Partnerships for vocational education and training
- Partners: Brainport Development, Mindshift Skills Hub, Internationaler Bund, Bimec Ltd., AMUEBLA
- Developing gender-sensitive coaching methods
- Creating a digital learning environment for coaches, mentors, and professionals
- Designing a development pathway for organizations, focused on inclusion and diversity
- Establishing a European network of schools, companies, and organizations
- Organizing technology bootcamps and coaching programs in five countries
- Running awareness campaigns on gender diversity in technology

The project team is currently working on developing a coaching methodology, toolkit, and e-learning modules. "This joint European approach allows us to learn from each other, share knowledge, and scale up," Anne-Linde says. That Brainport is involved on behalf of the Netherlands is no coincidence: "In a region with such a high density of innovation, the demand for new technical talent remains enormous. That's why there are already several initiatives here focused on this theme. But this project truly offers a new perspective," she adds. "We're showing that technology isn't just about math, it's also about social impact, imagination, and creativity."



Technology isn't just about math — it's also about social impact, imagination, and creativity.



The project, which targets girls aged 10 to 22, is expected to increase enrollment in vocational and applied sciences programs (mbo and hbo). "In the coming months, I hope that the knowledge we've gained together with regional and national experts will be translated into daily practice so that ultimately, more girls will choose this fantastic sector with full confidence."

