

“Digital Platform for Varese” Providing schools with computers and the Internet

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An online platform to provide and ask for computers, Internet connectivity and free digital solutions to support Varese’s school community: the non-profit conference TEDxVarese is continuing to support schools in Varese Province during this time of closure ordered by the authorities, to contain the coronavirus. To ensure equity and continuity of access to education, the **TEDxVarese team**, in collaboration with the Territorial Schools Office in Varese, the Varese School Association and other organisations, has launched the “**Digital Platform for Varese**”, which brings together free digital solutions provided by local companies, associations and private individuals, to reduce the cultural, social and economic impact of the coronavirus on the school community in Varese.

The platform responds to **a real need**: in recent weeks, teachers and students have had to adapt a lot to the new situation, and have often had to do so using the available resources. As a result, a lack of internet connectivity to be able to carry out the lessons remotely, and of working digital devices to do homework and study activities has emerged. Thanks to the initial responses from local organisations, about one hundred computers and an Internet connectivity activation service are already available. Fifteen laptops have been lent, free of charge, by the TEDxVarese team itself. Fifty computers and laptops have been donated by the **Joint Research Centre of the European Commission in Ispra**. The **telecommunications company and internet service provider, EOLO**, has made available a team of contractors, who are ready to work throughout the province to bring high-performance Internet connectivity, free of charge, for six months via radio. The platform is constantly being updated and solutions can be requested or suggested.

The initiative is **the evolution of TEDxVarese’s first contribution from a few weeks ago**, when it had made available fifteen PCs to integrate remote learning, together with a platform of a variety of multimedia content, to enrich the children’s learning experience.

“The response to our first act of solidarity made it clear to us that, at a time of forced changes like the one we are experiencing, the resources available often highlight inequalities even more, and for this reason, that we could do something in our area,” said **David Mammano, the organiser and licensee of TEDxVarese**. “With the will to have an even greater positive impact, we decided to establish the Digital Platform for Varese, inspired by the digital solidarity work done by the Minister for Innovation and Digitisation, making it available to the provincial school community, with ready-to-use solutions that make it possible to distribute devices and activate Internet connections where needed. The initial response locally was certainly encouraging and these solutions provide valid additional support to what schools are already doing to deal with the situation.”

di Translated by Alexandru Miron Ionut (Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook)

