



7th Multiplier Event Report

12/02/2019

Brussels

European Business Angels Network - EBAN



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The Venue

The seventh multiplier event was organized in Brussels, Belgium on the 12th of February 2019. The event was organized by European Business Angels Network (EBAN) and Student Entrepreneurs Club of the Solvay Business School and was hosted in the premises of Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) at the Campus Solbosch, Salle Sommeville (Address: Avenue Jeanne 44).

Agenda and the description of the event

The details of the event agenda are the following:

Agenda			
Hour	Time	Topic	Speaker
10.00	00:40	Event registration	-
10.45	00:15	Welcome by EBAN and Student Entrepreneurs Club	EBAN – Jacopo Losso, director of secretariat Student Entrepreneurs Club – Alix Fontaine, president; Léon Lamotte, vice president
11.00	00:30	iStart Context and Approach	Yasar University – Dr. Efthymia Staiou SEEC – Dimitris Bibikas
11.30	01:00	iStart Academies in Practice	South-East European Research Centre – Dimitris Bibikas Instituto Pedro Nunes - Fatima Matias ComoNExT - Maria Cristina Porta Yasar University - Effi Staiou
12.30	00:30	Straight from the horse's mouth: the iStart experience	<i>Mentors:</i> Patrick Bosteels Adriane Thrash Marco Pinheiro <i>Students:</i> Ezgi Yesiloglu Lazaros Onoufriadis Emily Sturilli Guilherme Portugal
13.00	01.15	Networking lunch	-
14.15	00:15	Entrepreneurship for Everyone - Presentation of Student Entrepreneurs Club	Student Entrepreneurs Club – Alix Fontaine, president; Léon Lamotte, vice president
14.30	01:30	Panel discussion: Education in Digital Entrepreneurship: Perspective from European	<i>Panelists:</i> South-East European Research Centre - Nikos Zaharis

		Universities and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Stakeholders	Yasar University - Effi Staiou Angel Investor, CBO Consulting - Christophe Bodin Instituto Pedro Nunes - Fátima Matias ComoNEXt - Maria Cristina Porta StartLab – Virginie Robe Solvay Business School -Jeffrey Delronge <i>Moderator: Jacopo Losso, EBAN</i>
16.00	00:30	iStart VLE platform: live test + Feedback	Yasar University - Effi Staiou
16.30	00:20	Keynote Speech on “Entrepreneurship, A Way of Life”	European Commission - Prof. Rudy Aernoudt
16.50	00:10	Conclusion	EBAN – Jacopo Losso, director of secretariat Student Entrepreneurs Club – Alix Fontaine, president; Léon Lamotte, vice president
17:00	01:00	Networking drinks	-

The event was opened by representatives of the co-organizers: Jacopo Losso, director of secretariat of EBAN, and Alix Fontaine and Léon Lamotte, president and vice president of Student Entrepreneurs Club, who welcomed all the participants and presented the agenda of the event. The 1st session included two presentations. The first presentation was given by Dimitris Bibikas of SEERC who talked about the context of the iStart project and the need to tackle the conflict between the science and practice of entrepreneurship. He then explained the iStart approach of (1) aligning critical and practical knowledge, (2) Link formal and non-formal education, (3) Bridge entrepreneurial culture and firm creation training. He then concluded his remarks by emphasizing that the students of today are the businessmen and women of tomorrow and that far from being banal or common, this is an important thing to keep in mind. The second presentation was given by Effi Staiou, the representative of the project coordinator Yasar University. She talked about the Virtual Learning Environment Platform developed as a part of the project, giving information about its technical development, content, registration process and use. Her presentation also included screenshots of different modules, self-assessment pages as well as an explanation of the module structure.

The next session was a presentation of the 4 DEP Startup Academies organized by the partners, given in the following order:

1. Dimitris Bibikas on the 1st Academy in Thessaloniki, Greece
2. Fátima Matis on the 2nd Academy in Coimbra, Portugal
3. Maria Cristina Porta on the 3rd Academy in Lomazzo, Italy
4. Effi Staiou on the 4th Academy in Izmir, Turkey



Each speaker presented the Academy prepared by their organization, giving information about the premises, structure of the Academy, statistics relating to the age, origins and backgrounds of the participants, discussion points and results. They also informed the audience about the results of the pitching competitions that closed each Academy, and gave brief updates on the students and ideas that participated.

Then, the event continued with an online session through the conference call software Zoom. Mentors and students that participated in each of the Academies were projected on the screen in Brussels. The session focused on the lessons learned for the students and how they were able to benefit from the mentoring services provided. Emily Sturilli from the Lomazzo Academy described her experience with her newly minted start-up breathe. using the ideas born out of the Academy and the skills gained through mentoring, while students Lazaros Onoufriadis, from Thessaloniki, Ezgi Yesiloglu, from Izmir, and Guilherme Portugal, from Coimbra, described how the Academy helped them develop and structure their entrepreneurship skills although they did not pursue the particular ideas they had at the event. The participants all agreed that the Academy approach helped them gain more confidence for pitching their ideas and develop their soft skills. The mentors also agreed with the students on the importance of developing soft skills, with Patrick Bosteels underlining this as the primary goal of entrepreneurship education. Adriane Thrash emphasized the importance of helping students understand the difficult side of entrepreneurship in order to avoid developing too optimistic a view of the venture, while Marco Pinheiro said that there needs to be a serious reflection on how to get students and local business communicating and exchanging useful skills and ideas.

The online session concluded the morning part of the event, and was followed by a networking lunch outside the event room in the hall.



The afternoon part of the multiplier event started with a brief presentation given by the co-organizer Student Entrepreneurs Club about the importance of entrepreneurship education, and the structure of their club as well as the role they play in promoting entrepreneurship among the student body.

The next session was a panel discussion among Nikos

Zaharis, Effi Staiou, Christophe Bodin, Fátima Matias, Cristina Porta, Virginie Robe and Jeffrey Delonge around the theme of Digital Entrepreneurship education. The discussion was moderated by Jacopo Losso of EBAN and aimed to present the audience with perspectives from different stakeholders around the same issue.

Nikos Zaharis and Effi Staiou, representing the academia, discussed how universities can help student entrepreneurs by going beyond established and expected services, and also how to institutionalize start-up training as an academic research strand. During the course of the discussion Effi Staiou also described a practical entrepreneurship class offered at Yasar University that allows students from different disciplines to work together. Breaking silos in terms of study areas in entrepreneurship collaboration was identified as an important priority.

Fátima Matias, representing IPN, talked about challenges related to guiding first-time entrepreneurs and true beginners, saying that while there is a lot of assistance available for established and more experienced entrepreneurs, more could be done to help students trying to develop their first business idea. Cristina Porta of ComoNeXT contributed to the discussed with her views and experience on how networks and network connections can help students with ideas form connections with startups and more established businesses.

A common thread in the discussion was the need to get student entrepreneurs to challenge, test and validate their ideas as fast as possible. “Failing fast” was identified as an important component of learning to avoid mistakes and fine-tuning ideas for the future. Virginie Robe from Start Lab, the Brussels incubator for students and young graduates, talked about the role of such an incubator in getting students to challenge, test and validate their ideas. Christophe Bodin brought an investor’s perspective, talking about the need to educate budding entrepreneurs on how to approach investors and what an investor looks for in a team. He emphasized that with enough preparation, a student during their studies or a young graduate could be perfectly prepared to set up and develop their company.

The panel also discussed such topics as the advantages and disadvantages of gaining work experience before starting one’s own company, and the panelists who took part in the iStart project also talked about what they learned and how they would apply the findings of the iStart project in their future endeavors.

The panel session was followed by a live test of the VLE platform and a feedback exercise. Effi Staiou led the session and guided the student participants through the registration process and helped them navigate the modules, answering their questions and taking down their feedback.

The last session of the day was a keynote address from Rudy Aernoudt, Chief Economist of the European Commission and close collaborator of EBAN. He gave a sharp, effective speech on the necessity to encourage entrepreneurship in Europe and to increase investment to incentivize companies to stay on the continent. Following the keynote address, the partners took a group photo.

A networking reception where the participants and the partners mingled, shared their ideas, questions and feedback closed the day.

Participating Stakeholders

The following stakeholders were in attendance:

- Innovation, Technology and Investment Support (Nina Costa - ndconsult, Hans de With - GNSS Expert, Yanis Fares - Be Angels, Patrick Kedriozza - Boilingrice.com, Leonard M Fertig - Acorn Consulting Group, Ksenija Vangelova Regional Business Innovation Centre Strumica , Linda van Duivenbode - The Extremely Useful Company)
- Universities (Valentijn Venus - University of Twente, 40+ students from Université libre de Bruxelles, UCLouvain and Solvay Business School)
- Public institutions and networks (Justine Koffi (Swisscore), Giovanni Lattanzi and Martina Romano - Institut de Haute Formation aux Politiques Communautaires, Giorgia Olivieri - Startup Europe Regions Network – SERN)
- Associations and NGOs (Keivan Hadji Hossein - Unioncamere Europa, Christopher McInnes - European Association of Development Agencies, Elettra Perfetto - BXL Europe asbl)
- Start-ups and SMEs (Petar Hristov – PowerAd, Dimitrios Petalios – CREVIS)

Feedback from Stakeholders

After all presentations, all participants actively interacted with the partners and gave both comments and suggestions. Stakeholders suggested that exploring more opportunities to create channels of communication between student entrepreneurs and different stakeholders within the startup ecosystem was important. The main concern was how to get such initiatives to have a wider impact. The achievements and lessons learned of the iStart project were appreciated. Combining different methods and using the VLE platform for different, wider activities and outreach efforts was found to be a good idea

Stakeholders also suggested that in the case of the iStart program the opportunity to interact with the international partners and exchange overviews in relevant issues is considered a benefit. The opportunity to get feedback from many different international partners and stakeholders is an invaluable asset.

Finally, all stakeholders replied positively and with enthusiasm about the continued maintenance of the iStart VLE platform and the sustainability of the project results.

Press release from EBAN on the event - <http://www.eban.org/press-release-istart>