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Participatory VISIT REPORT

14.07.2023 - 15.07.2023
ERLANGEN AND NÜRNBERG, GERMANY



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2022-3-DE04-KA210-YOU-000099662



BUSINESS PRIDE



14.07.2023 - 15.07.2023



Date: 14.07.2023- 15.07.2023
Place: Erlangen and Nürnberg,
Germany

Participants

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Miraj Parsana (HIGHLIGHTS e.v, Germany)

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Krystyna Janik (Fundacja Forum Edukacji, Poland)

Elżbieta Kozina (Fundacja Forum Edukacji, Poland)

Anna Chrzanowska (Fundacja Forum Edukacji, Poland)



Day 1

MORNING

The morning session commenced after registration with a dynamic workshop that brought together participants from Germany, Poland and Croatia, focusing on the theme of using entrepreneurship as a means to foster inclusivity and acceptance among diverse communities, with a special emphasis on LGBTQ youth.

Participants engaged in lively discussions, sharing insights and experiences from their countries. They began with presenting the LGBTQ history in their countries, shedding light on the progress, challenges and milestones achieved in promoting acceptance and diversity.



Key takeaways from the discussions emphasized following points:



GERMANY has a long history of LGBTQ+ rights activism, with the first public LGBTQ+ rights protest taking place in Germany in 1867. Same-sex marriage was legalized in Germany in 2017



While there have been positive developments, such as the expansion of adoption rights for gay couples, there is still significant opposition to same-sex marriage in CROATIA

- **Diverse Experiences:** The presentations revealed the diversity of experiences and journeys that LGBTQ individuals have undergone in GERMANY, CROATIA and POLAND. From legal advancements to cultural shifts, each nation showcased a unique path towards recognising and respecting LGBTQ rights.

POLAND has a more challenging environment for LGBTQ+ individuals. The country has faced criticism for measures such as the declaration of "LGBT-free zones"

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Participants acknowledged the importance of understanding and respecting cultural differences while striving for inclusivity, recognizing that a one-size fits all approach may not be effective.

Each organisation needs to create a unique inclusive environment for its LGBTQ+ community, tailored to its specific blueprint, culture, and strategy



- **Intersectionality:** The discussions underscored the interconnectedness of LGBTQ identities with other facets of an individual's identity such as ethnicity, migration status, and socio-economic status.

It is important to recognize and respect the unique experiences of individuals with overlapping identities

- **Entrepreneurship as a catalyst:** By creating economic opportunities and fostering a supportive environment, entrepreneurship has the potential to challenge stereotypes, break down barriers and empower LGBTQ youth to take an active role in shaping their societies.

LGBTQ entrepreneurs have the potential to use their businesses as platforms for advocacy and social change.

- **Hidden Identities:** An important aspect that emerged from the discussions was the tendency of LGBTQ youth to hide their identities within different professional spaces.

Day 1

Afternoon & Evening

After the enlightening morning workshop, the day continued with our participation in the final pitch demo day at the Digital Tech Academy, an initiative by Friedrich-Alexander-Universität in Erlangen. The event proved to be a culmination of innovative ideas and passionate endeavors, bringing together a diverse group of young minds committed to driving positive change through technology and entrepreneurship.

During our visit, we learned that the Demo Day offered a glimpse into the transformative journey that participants had embarked upon from April to July 2023.

We discovered that the program followed a comprehensive Design Thinking model, guiding participants through phases such as SETUP, DISCOVER, DESIGN, VALIDATE + IMPLEMENT, REFLECTION, AND DECIDE.





01

SETUP PHASE: SELF-DISCOVERY AND TEAM FORMATION

Participants embarked on a journey of self-discovery and team building. Challenges were identified, teams were formed, and participants began honing their expertise, laying the groundwork for effective ideation and problem-solving.

02

DISCOVER PHASE: SHARPENING VALUE PROPOSITIONS

Participants embarked on a journey of self-discovery and team building. Challenges were identified, teams were formed, and participants began honing their expertise, laying the groundwork for effective ideation and problem-solving.

03

DESIGN PHASE: CREATING COMPREHENSIVE BUSINESS MODELS

Guided through the creation of business models, participants focused on validation and feasibility. Strategic thinking refined ideas and established solid foundations for entrepreneurial endeavors.

04

VALIDATE + IMPLEMENT PHASE: TRANSITION TO PRACTICE

Participants transitioned from theory to practice, with financial planning and pricing strategies being integrated into projects. This holistic approach ensured that practical considerations were seamlessly woven into the implementation process, setting the stage for the development of sustainable and impactful ventures.

05

DECIDE PHASE (INCLUDING DEMO DAY): CELEBRATING GROWTH AND INNOVATION

The program's pinnacle arrived during the DECIDE phase, where participants completed business designs and presented results during the DEMO DAY. This phase celebrated growth, innovation, and commitment to positive change, while meticulously planning future steps for continued success.

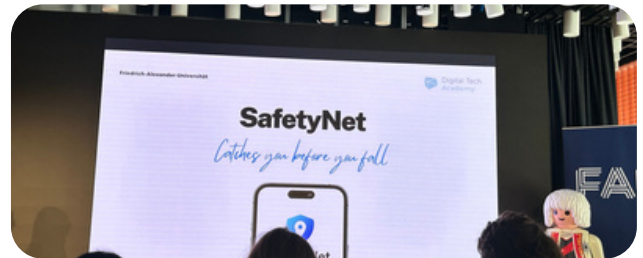


INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODELS

During our visit, we had the privilege of witnessing a range of innovative business models presented, each offering unique and impactful solutions:

SAFETYNET: NAVIGATING SAFE ROUTES

SafetyNet showcased an app designed to share safety routes, ensuring individuals can navigate their surroundings securely.

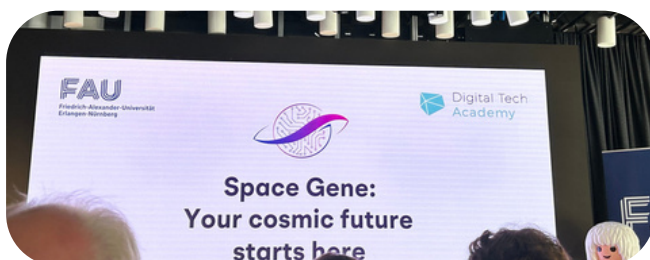


SHARECULAR: RESOURCE SHARING REINVENTED

Sharecular, a SaaS platform, facilitates effective resource sharing, connecting individuals and optimizing resource utilization.

SPACE GENE: EMPOWERING COSMIC ENTHUSIASTS

Space Gene is a non-profit initiative empowering youth interested in cosmic and space exploration, fostering connection and education.



FITME: PERSONALIZED FASHION WITH A TECHNOLOGICAL TWIST

FitMe leverages image sensing technology to recommend clothing that best suits individuals, enhancing the shopping experience.



SPORT BUDDY: BUILDING BONDS THROUGH SPORTS

Sport Buddy, an app, connects youth through sports practices, promoting a sense of community and well-being.



SYNTAX: REVOLUTIONIZING COMPETITION ANALYSIS

Syntax aims to democratize competition and analysis intelligence, making it accessible and transformative.

In Their Own Words:

"The social impact emphasized by Space Gene is a reminder that businesses can contribute positively. We're motivated to amplify our social responsibility efforts."

"The most valuable insight I had is that there are plenty of young talents who are ready to change the status quo and make small but impactful changes in their communities. Every team works on a completely different topic, but every project targets an essential problem and gap in the current world."



Day 2

MORNING

The second day started with focus on a training activity aimed at fostering diversity leadership within entrepreneurship and business growth. Small group discussions were organized with a mechanism of scenario analysis and tasked with developing diversity-centric strategies for addressing challenges and seizing opportunities.



Throughout this activity, the following key elements were emphasized:

- **Inclusive Entrepreneurship**

Strategies: participants actively engaged in thought-provoking discussions and activities designed to foster a deep understanding of creating an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

- **Effective Team Building:** The importance of assembling diverse and collaborative teams was highlighted, with practical exercises designed to enhance youth's ability to build teams that capitalize on individual strengths.

- **Cultivating Innovation:** We focused on cultivating a culture of innovation by encouraging LGBTQ youth to think beyond conventional boundaries. Techniques for fostering creative thinking and problem-solving were shared.

"Cultivating innovation requires encouraging LGBTQ youth to contribute their unique perspectives, which can lead to groundbreaking solutions that resonate with diverse audiences."

- **Strategic Business Expansion:** Participants delved into the intricacies of strategic business growth, exploring ways to leverage diversity as a catalyst for expansion. Examples of businesses that successfully scaled while prioritizing inclusivity were examined.

- **Resilience of a leader:** We all watched TED TALK about Resilient leadership by Janice Kovach and discussed the diversity mindset that brings about transformative leadership

Talking about leadership resilience showed us how important it is to stay strong, especially when championing diversity. It's about facing challenges while promoting inclusivity, setting a lasting example for everyone.

The case study of a LGBTQ-friendly travel business expanding through partnerships reinforced how diversity can be a strategic advantage in growth.



Day 2

Afternoon & Evening

During the afternoon and evening sessions, our focus shifted towards a profound analysis of the effects of the previous day's pitch presentations. Participants engaged in in-depth discussions that how learnings and insights from the previous day can be examined to amplify LGBTQ+ voices especially in business representation and their equal access to economic opportunity.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THESE SESSIONS INCLUDED:

- **Analyzing Pitch Impacts:** During the analysis of pitch impacts, participants recognized the immense potential of digital entrepreneurship as a significant avenue for LGBTQ+ youth.

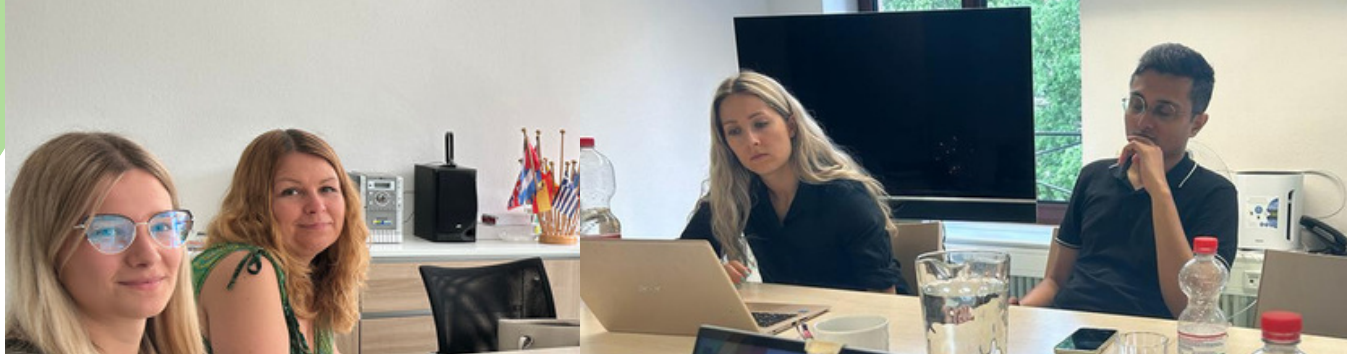
Discussions illuminated how:

Digital platforms provide a unique and inclusive space for LGBTQ+ youth to harness their creativity, innovation, and business acumen. Hence, we need to enhance digital literacy and skills of LGBTQ+ youth for opening doors to online business models.

Digital entrepreneurship can transcend geographical limitations, enabling LGBTQ+ youth to reach a global audience and create meaningful change on a larger scale. Building on the notion of collaboration, organizations explored ways to create ecosystems that foster cooperation between LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs and established businesses.

Social networking tools serve as bridges, connecting LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs to wider audiences, potential collaborators, mentors, and investors. Organizations explored the further functionality of online platform & dissemination tools to be created in the BUSINESS PRIDE project.

The principles of design thinking, could be integrated into entrepreneurship endeavors to enhance user-centric experiences, foster innovation, and address specific challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community.



- **Amplification Strategies:** discussions further evolved into formulating strategic approaches for amplifying LGBTQ+ voices:

--**Visibility and Representation:** The discussions led to the conclusion that elevating the visibility and representation of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs within the business landscape is crucial. It was agreed that concerted efforts should be made to showcase LGBTQ+ success stories through media, conferences, and industry events, fostering greater recognition and acceptance. A particular focus was directed towards examining "The Case for an LGBTQ Paradigm in Social Media" by Thomas Falconer (TED TALK), providing insights into leveraging social media platforms for increased visibility and engagement within the LGBTQ+ community.

--**Access to Funding:** Strategies were outlined to ensure equal access to funding and financial resources for LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs. The discussions concluded that efforts should be directed toward dismantling barriers that hinder economic progress, including exploring grants, venture capital, and crowdfunding options.

--**Mentorship and Networking:** The consensus was that mentorship and networking play a pivotal role in equipping LGBTQ+ youth with guidance, knowledge, and support. Participants concluded that youth are looking for role models and LGBTQ community is plagued by widespread economic inequality.



Conclusion

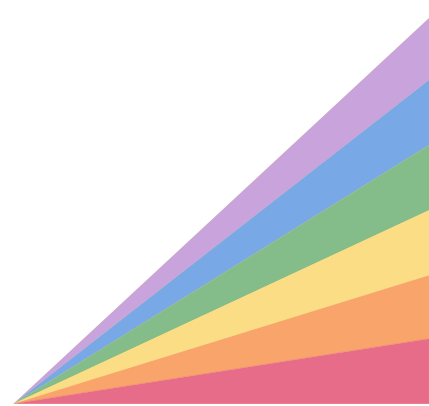
In culmination, our participatory visit has yielded profound insights into the intricate interplay of diversity leadership, LGBTQ+ representation, and entrepreneurial endeavors. The discourse throughout this engagement has underscored strategic imperatives and actionable pathways that hold the potential to reshape the landscape of business growth. By extrapolating the ramifications of innovative business models and digital entrepreneurship, we recognize the catalytic role these facets play in furnishing a nurturing environment for LGBTQ+ youth.

The valuable takeaways from our participatory visit serve as crucial guideposts as we embark on the next phase of BUSINESS PRIDE. Armed with insights from our discussions, we are poised to delve into a comprehensive analysis of the local economic landscape, identifying challenges and uncovering best practices for LGBTQ+ young entrepreneurs. Furthermore, these takeaways are poised to inform the creation of an online platform that will serve as a pivotal connection point, fostering collaboration, networking, and knowledge sharing within the LGBTQ+ entrepreneurial community. With a clear direction forged from our visit, we are primed to pave the way for an ecosystem that champions diversity, propels innovation, and empowers LGBTQ+ voices in the realm of entrepreneurship.



In addition to the aspect of functioning of the LGBTQ community in the business device, it can be used in the business device of the social movement. Both of these issues go hand in hand, the very support given to the ideas and values expressed by LGBTQ people is not indifferent to them, if they do not go hand in hand with personal benefit. In addition, striving for a culture of equality at work for LGBTQ people, it is necessary to propagate about gender and gender identity that homosexual orientation does not affect the norm, but only an equivalent alternative to heterosexuality, and therefore results in a different way. Thus, heterosexual orientation loses its previous status of norm and model, and simply becomes a modal ability.

—FFE, Poland





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