

Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy

@ The Social Economy at the Core of Transitions

Liège, Belgium | 12-13 February 2024

YEPA Fireside Chats

YEPA held a series of discussions during the conference where we delved into the experience of being a young entrepreneur from ideation to implementation to scale-up. The Fireside Chats provided an opportunity to hear more about their entrepreneurial journeys, how they overcame the challenges that arise and how they found their “Y”. The discussions were very insightful and touched on the importance of young people in navigating the social, economic and environmental challenges of today and tomorrow.



Championing Inclusion: Fostering the Entrepreneurial Spirit for All with Fernando Jardim (351 Portuguese Start-up Association) and Helen Shymanski (OECD)

This Fireside Chat highlighted the importance of cultivating an environment where the entrepreneurial spirit can thrive. Fernando Jardim emphasised that fostering this entrepreneurial spirit requires a collective effort – “It takes a village to raise an entrepreneur”. Policy makers can help to prepare the “village” by ensuring supportive legal frameworks are in place and the regulatory environment is navigable as well as facilitating access to support measures (e.g. access to finance, mentors, role models, training schemes, etc). By creating a conducive environment for entrepreneurship to flourish, young people will be more empowered to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations.



Young Minds at Work: Revolutionising the Digital Medical Sector with Laura Fierro Varela (Youth Business Spain), Leander Märkisch (Jugend Gründet) and Philippine Laroye (European Commission)

This Fireside Chat delved into the current experience of young entrepreneurs in the digital medical sector. The discussion highlighted the different approaches to entrepreneurship with some young entrepreneurs participating in support programmes – financial and non-financial – while others chose to engage directly with venture capital investors to fund their entrepreneurial projects in a field that requires upfront capital. They also discussed the pivotal role that digital innovation is playing in their sector and how the future technical advances in AI will impact the medical sector.



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Navigating Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainability with Tereza Pažinová (Young Entrepreneurs Association of Slovakia), Angela Ivanova (Association of the Bulgarian Leaders and Entrepreneurs) and Amal Chevreau (OECD)

This Fireside Chat provided insight into the intersection of business, social impact and environmental responsibility. The panellists shared their experiences creating their businesses, highlighting why they gravitated towards businesses that centred on providing innovative solutions to environmental issues. They highlighted the need to not only deliver a viable product to the market but also to educate their potential client base on why their proposed alternative options are needed and provide positive overall impacts compared to current market products.



Start-up Sparks: Making Digital Tech More Socially and Environmentally Responsible with Augustin Courtier, Léa Faust (both from Latitudes) and Julien de Beys (European Commission)

This Fireside Chat highlighted key issues in digital technologies and invited the audience to reflect on the use of public data and online privacy. The discussion also explored how Latitudes - a non-profit organisation that provides trainings, consultation and events on how to make digital technologies more socially and environmentally responsible - is not only pushing to reinvent the tech sector but also the work environment of start-ups. The panellists shared how the start-up has consciously shifted the way they approach work and how they have tailored their work environment to create a positive and support atmosphere for all team members.



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Empowering Young Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow through Inclusive Community Building with Ahmed Hadi (Aalto Student Entrepreneurship Society), Joni Rakipi (ETH Entrepreneur Club) and Helen Shymanski (OECD)

This Fireside Chat explored the need for young people in entrepreneurial ecosystems, notably the role of students. The conversation highlighted how young people are searching for more meaningful and impactful work with many looking towards business creation as a means of finding their purpose. The panellists discussed their own experiences as presidents of entrepreneurship associations at their respective universities and how they were able to engage with the larger entrepreneurial ecosystems through their entrepreneurship networks, allowing them to access mentors, financing and opportunities in their local (and national) entrepreneurial ecosystems. They highlighted the need for policy makers to build, invest and engage in inclusive entrepreneurial communities to foster the entrepreneurial spirit among young people and to support students in starting sustainable businesses.

ABOUT YEPA

The OECD-EU Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy (YEPA) is a policy-learning network. The YEPA aims to strengthen youth entrepreneurship policies and programmes by raising knowledge about the barriers faced by young people in entrepreneurship and facilitating exchanges between policy makers, young entrepreneurs and experts on “what works” in youth entrepreneurship policy.




MORE INFO:



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