



Young Innovations **Europe**

**YOUNG
PEOPLE
BUILDING
EUROPE**



Dear Readers,

we hope that Young Innovations Europe continues to inspire and amaze you with its stories of ingenuity, courage and action!

The team is as excited as ever to discover new ideas, bring you innovations and create dialogue around a youth-imagined Europe! So much so that in the past few months we could not stand idle, and have started brainstorming other ways to bring you interesting bits, facts, inspirational stories and news... you'll hear from us shortly about what's brewing at YIE.

Oh, and yes, we would love to hear from you as well...so keep sending us your stories, your inventions, your comments and help us shape a new Europe for all.



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Young Innovations Europe is a project of Youth Action for Change (YAC), a global, youth-led organisation inspiring and empowering young people to become active agents of change in their own communities and the world at large



If you want to get involved, tell us about an innovation or for general enquiries, please send an email to: info@younginnovationseurope.org



GETTING TO THE TOP CAN BE FUN!

FIND PROFESSIONAL EVENTS WORLDWIDE WITH STUDENTEVENTS.COM

by Jonathan Friedman

STUDENTEVENTS.COM IS AN ONLINE HUB FOR PROFESSIONALLY-RUN STUDENT COMPETITIONS, SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES HOSTED WORLDWIDE.

The online platform was founded in 2010 by Jonathan Friedman, who, alongside a dedicated team, believes that events are becoming rapidly popular with leading global firms as an innovative means of recruitment. Jonathan explains: "Students can easily get recruited - it is almost like a back-door-entry into jobs. When students are struggling to land their first position in the ever growing competitive market, these types of student events can give them a jump start."

In today's competitive job market, very large numbers of students are competing for single openings within companies; they are bending over backwards to make their CVs stand out from the crowd. Current economic conditions mean that companies are flooded with job applications that are never processed, meaning many applicants are not even being considered. How can companies be certain that they attract the best candidates to their job vacancies? How can applicants be sure that their CV and cover letter show their competences, aptitudes and skills? All of these factors influence the need for a change in modern day recruitment.

To address this issue, companies are organising competitions and seminars led by top HR managers. Their goal is to scout talent in a competitive, practical

and result-driven environment. During these specially-designed events, students have the opportunity to be exposed to future employers, to network and to face the possibility of recruitment based on their performance and innovation during the event. Recruiters have the chance to employ students who catch their eye. Moreover, many companies encourage innovation by inviting students to develop business plans or solutions for engineering problems. And students can be awarded with financial investments for their ideas, an internship or recognition at renowned conferences. Events are also excellent for companies' branding strategies which are of critical priority to leading firms.

Practical knowledge and experience is also becoming more and more sought after by companies according to the team at



Interns at the office



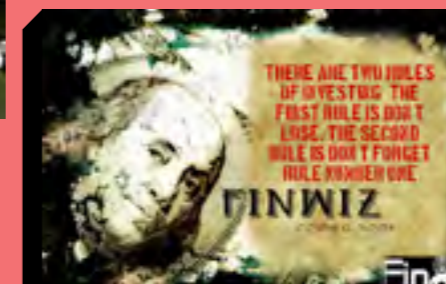
Celebrating engineers



Student Events interns



Student Events interns



The rules of the game

StudentEvents.com. The platform enables job-seekers to come into contact with large firms organising seminars where selected students are invited to attend practical workshops and network, with the highest performing students often offered an internship. Events such as these allow students to fast-track the employment process or simply gain valuable experience in a competitive environment, measure their skills against other motivated participants, and expand their CVs with participation and success.

StudentEvents.com updates its online database with nearly 100 international events per week. Many of the events take place online, making worldwide participation possible. The events on *StudentEvents.com* are classified according to study field, study level, region, and type,

allowing students to search easily for events according to their interests. All the relevant and important information is available on the event page where students can also find whether they are eligible for an event or not. *StudentEvents.com* hopes to motivate students to participate in events as often as possible by keeping an updated list of articles with tips like how to succeed at certain events and how to work in teams, as well as interviews featuring winners worldwide.

StudentEvents.com sees the potential of events as a leading way of recruitment, start-up investment and experience. Not only does the *StudentEvents.com* team believe that events are beneficial, the team knows they're also fun!



Jonathan Friedman

Jonathan is the founder and CEO of *StudentEvents.com*. He has a BSc in International Business Administration and MSc in Finance and Investments. Jonathan participated in many student competitions, conferences and seminars throughout his study and started *StudentEvents.com* hoping to encourage students worldwide to participate in events as often as possible.

RESOURCE BOX

StudentEvents.Com
www.studentevents.com
jonathan@studentevents.com

Other resources:

Mladiinfo
 More competitions and workshops
www.mladiinfo.com

European Job Day
 The perfect opportunity to meet new faces and explore possibilities offered by the European labor market
ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?lang=en&catId=9470&myCatId=9470&parentId=20&acro=news&function=newsOnPortal –

Michael Dwatkins
 Find out how to impress your manager in the first 90 days in the new job
www.michaeldwatkins.com

LET'S ALL PAINT!

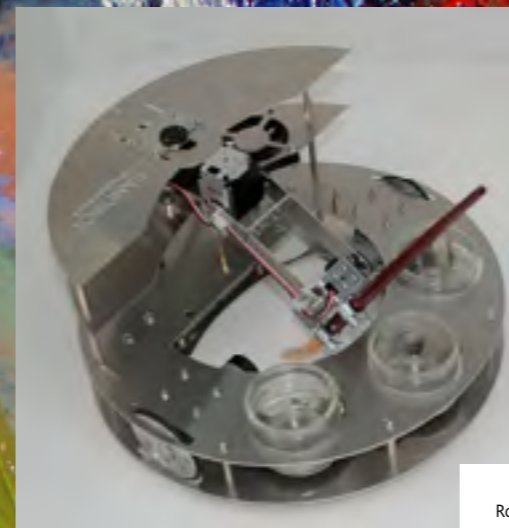


Vincent Thiberville



HOW A YOUNG GUY WITH AMBITIONS MAKES PAINTING POSSIBLE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

by Fizza Hasan



Robot Painter

IMAGINE A PAINTER WHO IS NOT ABLE TO HANDLE A PAINTBRUSH ANYMORE. THAT WAS THE FRAILTY ÉDOUARD MANET SUFFERED FROM TOWARDS THE END OF HIS LIFE. A REFERENCE TO THE FAMOUS PAINTER IS ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS TO CATCH YOUR EYE ON THE *HANDBOT* WEBSITE. FOR VINCENT THIBERVILLE, THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND *HANDBOT*, IT'S ABOUT CONSERVING AND EXPANDING THE POSSIBILITIES IN ART.

Handibot is the third generation of robots created by Vincent Thiberville. The main component of this gadget is the microcontroller, which makes the human-robot interface possible. Where is the connection to Manet, you ask? Well, the robot is essentially an arm holding a paintbrush that can dip into three paint pots that are part of the robot's body. There are two ways to interact with and use Handibot: by using a remote (radio) controller or by directing its movement using computer software.

The idea of Handibot first came to Vincent when he was introduced to the artist Francis Simon who was suffering from polyarthritis. Vincent, with his interest in robotics, immediately thought of giving one of his robots a paintbrush. After this first prototype, with which Francis Simon painted a number of canvases, Vincent made a few other prototypes gradually adding features to make them useful to people with a wider variety of disabilities.

The young Frenchman says it has not been hard for him because robotics is his passion. He has been building robots since he was 14 years old, but now he is finding most value in his work because it is directly benefitting others. Vincent's early talent was spotted at school where he gained his baccalaureate with honours and took first prize in Electronic Engineering. But that was just the beginning: he can now be proud of two global awards, fifteen national prizes and more than a dozen media features. With the help of his sponsors, Handibot will become a regular feature in some organizations and institutions.

Vincent's project has received support from numerous quarters. *Antropia*, the brainchild of French ESSEC Business School, helps with the business and social aspects of Vincent's project. As an engineer with little business background, Vincent finds it to be a huge help. Ernst & Young's *Fondation d'Enterprise* provides additional entrepreneurial support such as human resources and legal know-how. Vincent also participated in International Youth Foundation's social entrepreneurship workshop. And now they have offered him a yearlong fellowship.

Vincent encourages other young entrepreneurs like him to join forces. His message: if you have an idea share it. Talk to your school about it and to prominent residents of your city. Look up people and organizations working in your field; send them emails describing your plan. Don't hesitate (but be tactful). Work with others rather than alone, because things are bound to move along faster that way.



Some painting examples



Fizza Hasan

Fizza Hasan attends Bennington College in Vermont, USA and studies a strange mix of politics and philosophy.

RESOURCE BOX

Handibot
www.handibot.fr
vincent.thibs@gmail.com

Other resources:

International Youth Foundation
www.iyfnet.org/iyf-programs

YouthActionNet Fellowship
www.youthactionnet.org

Antropia by ESSEC Business School
antropia.essec.fr

Fondation d'enterprise, Ernst & Young
www.fondation-ernst-young.com

Dreamshake, a social network for young innovators
www.dreamshake.com

Ashoka Foundation
www.ashoka.org

GIVING GIRLS A CHANCE

10 EUROPEAN STUDENTS AND THEIR DREAM FOR ETHIOPIAN WOMEN

by Ieva Kuneviciute

A volunteering experience in Ethiopia in 2005 for the Austrian medical student Wenzel Walstein-Wartenber was the starting point that eventually led him to found *Project-E*.

Wenzel was volunteering in an orphanage in Ethiopia where he encountered Ethiopian girls trapped in a vicious cycle: after leaving the orphanage at the age of 18, many of the girls had no place to live, or continue their education, and so for many working the streets as prostitutes was the only route. For Wenzel, this was a heart-breaking reality and he was impelled to explore the possibilities for improving Ethiopian girls' opportunities.

Two years later, Wenzel together with brother Moritz - a student of International Management - founded *Project-E*. Market research, conducted in cooperation with Ethiopian institutions and businesses in

2007 indicated a lack of well-trained office assistants and thus, the two brothers set out to build a vocational training school with a very ambitious goal - to produce the best office assistants in Ethiopia.

Today, about 25 full-time members work voluntarily for the NGO in Austria and Germany and *New Life Community College (NLCC)* is the first programme of *Project-E*. Inaugurated in October 2009 in cooperation with an Ethiopian NGO, *New Life Community Organisation*, the founders of NLCC hope the partnership will guarantee a long-term future for the project.

But, how do you set up a training college? Not easily is the answer. It took two years to develop an educational programme and build the College. For the final four months in the lead up to inauguration, volunteers worked intensively on the

facilities, selected staff and carefully chose the first ever students for the new course. Cooperation with *New Life Community Organisation* smoothed over the bumps in the construction process and relations with local authorities would have been much harder without NLCO.

NLCC is based on three fundamental elements: educational excellence, market-orientation, and communal bonds, and underpinning it all is the vision of empowerment for disadvantaged women. Candidates are selected on academic merit and their access to learning opportunities is also evaluated.

A fundamental part of *Project-E*'s output is awareness-raising. Volunteers and members of the *New Life Community Organisation* in Ethiopia visit orphanages and childcare programmes to present the college's concept and vision.

For the application process candidates are invited to visit NLCC for an open doors day. Candidates must also take an exam in English and face two interviews. Later, a social worker from NLCC will visit girls in their homes to evaluate their living conditions and background. The final decision is a joint one made by *Project-E* and NLCO members and every year the school accepts 15 new students.

Secretarial Science and Office Administration is a 3-year-long practice-oriented educational programme taught in English taught by Ethiopian teachers. Students learn business English, professional office behaviour and computer sciences such as the basics of PC-use, MS Office programmes, and e-mails, as well as how to use a typewriter - a common feature in an Ethiopian office. Students apply their new skills during internships and they are also able to develop soft skills such as communication and business etiquette.

Volunteers ensure the smooth process of communication between the European offices and staff in Ethiopia. And they also gain hands-on experience in Ethiopia. Sarah Kröcher is head of PR for *Project-E* in Germany. Responsible for organising internships and fundraising, Sarah visited many Ethiopian companies to set-up students with internship placements and

find local financial partners. "It was very different for me," she remarks, "Germans usually are very straightforward while for Ethiopians it takes longer to make a decision."

Currently NLCC far exceeds the standards of national education in Ethiopia and it is regarded as one of the best training programmes for executive office assistants in Ethiopia. Importantly, friendship and team spirit are the main values in the programme.

"I joined this college because I want to change my life. Another dream of mine is to help destitute girls who are in the same situation as I was," says Mastewal Walegn Kasshun, who will be one of the first to graduate from NLCC in the class of 2012. Alumni can look forward to another exciting opportunity: They will be provided with an opportunity to teach in the College.

Currently NLCC is fully financed by *Project-E*. Most of the financial support comes from private donations, federal institutions and government ministries, as well as prizes, such as the *Social Impact Award* for social organisations in Austria. However, the goal of *Project-E* is to make NLCC self-sustainable and fully independent from European financial aid by 2016.



Ieva Kuneviciute

Ieva Kuneviciute holds a BA in Political Science from Vilnius University and currently lives in Italy, where she is reading for a Master's degree in Human Rights and Democratisation. Ieva has been volunteering for NGOs since she was 15, with a focus on cooperation for development, international security and human rights. She is passionate about travelling, photography and literature.

RESOURCE BOX

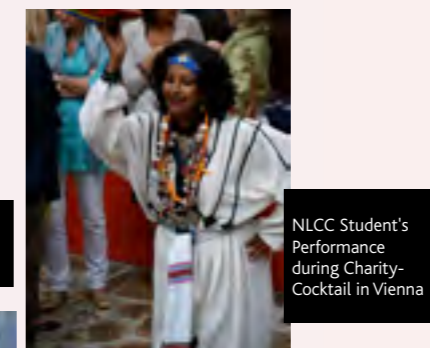
Project-E
www.project-e.eu
info@project-e.eu

Other resources:

WEAVE
WEAVE is committed to teaching women to become socially, economically and politically empowered
www.weave-women.org

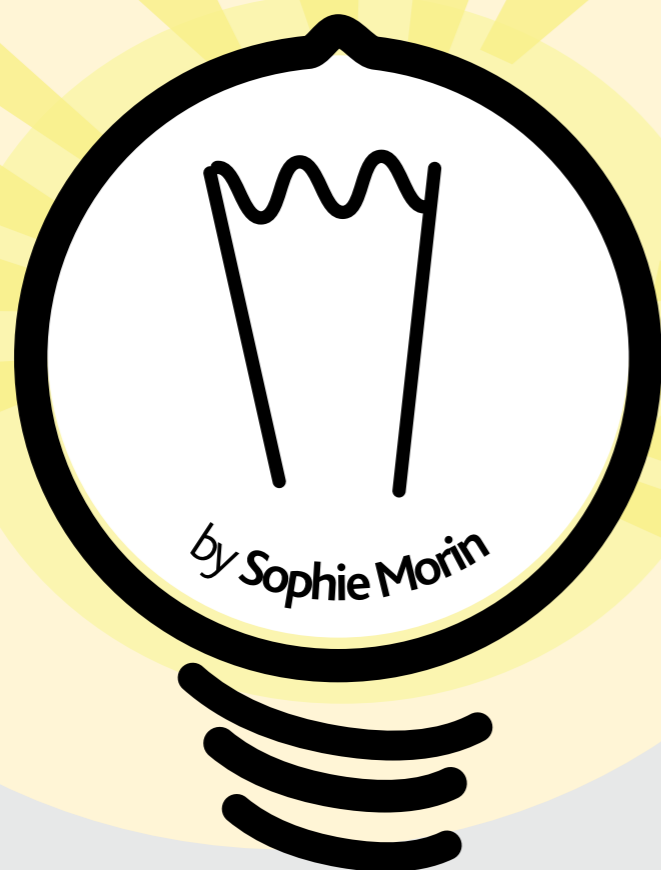
GirlUp:
Girl Up envisions a world where all girls around the world have the opportunity to become the next generation of leaders
www.girlup.org

GirlEffect
Because girls are uniquely capable of investing in their communities and making the world better
www.girlffect.org



UNICEF INNOVATIONS LAB KOSOVO

Turning impactful ideas into reality



WITH MORE THAN HALF OF ITS POPULATION UNDER 25 YEARS OLD, KOSOVO HAS THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN EUROPE.

Despite significant progress after the height of the 1999 conflict, socio-economic indicators still lag far behind those of the rest of the continent. More than 70% of young people are unemployed and many youth lack the means to participate effectively in society. Through its three pillars; *By Youth for Youth (ByFy)*; *the Design Center (DC)*; and *Youth Advocacy Platform (YAP!)*, the UNICEF Innovations Lab Kosovo aims to strengthen and empower youth in Kosovo by using new and emerging open

source and social media technologies.

The idea behind the Lab was to create a space where young people would feel able to come to share and develop ideas that encourage creativity, cooperation and innovation. After almost one year of operations, the Lab has grown into a dynamic space with a contagious energy. Open to young people from Kosovo between the ages of 16 and 29, the Lab serves as an enabling and participatory environment for youth to collaborate with social entrepreneurs and mentors, acquire technological expertise, and address the problems of their communities. The Innovations Lab has also begun to

serve as a bridge between young people and Kosovo's institutions in order to increase collaboration and communication between sides. The Lab presents a unique opportunity for young people who want to change something in their community and beyond; to build their capacities as leaders; to gain new experiences at the national and international level; to meet new people and turn their ideas into reality.

ByFy is the 'process-oriented' component of the Innovations Lab, focussed largely on transferring the skills required for successful project management to Kosovo's young people in a creative, sustainable way, where failure is accepted in exchange for

lessons learned. And youth are coming up with diverse ideas, such as mapping polling stations to inform people where they can vote; creating an art project for students with visual impairment; or bringing young people from different communities together through an art workshop using recycled products.

The Design Center, meanwhile, is the 'results-based' component of the Lab. It aims to leverage mobile and open source technologies; UNICEF's experience from projects in other countries; and the enthusiasm of tech-savvy youth to help solve problems identified by public institutions in Kosovo working with children- and youth- issues. In general, problems arise from a lack of data collection systems; information-based decision making; and poorly designed software that does not focus on user needs. Partnerships with local universities have been established, enabling students to gain practical working experience in the Lab and address given institutional problems in return for study credits. Furthermore, a partnership with a local mobile phone operator will allow partners to deploy a RapidSMS data collection system as a solution for various challenges faced, in particular by the health institutions in Kosovo.

A hub for both grassroots social advocacy and central-level engagement for Kosovo youth, the newly-introduced Youth Advocacy Platform (YAP!) will seek to provide a 'third space' to link innovative young social entrepreneurs and those with technical expertise, with experts in advocacy, social policy, technology, business and design. This network will enable YAP! to offer youth further opportunities to develop advocacy-oriented skills, resulting in creative, high-impact public campaigns and viable web-based tools to address key social issues identified by the youth themselves (rather than Kosovo's central institutions). Designed to 'meet youth half way', YAP! aims to support Kosovo's youth in identifying, meaningfully articulating and directly addressing key policy issues. It will enable young people to choose the issue and the response (rather than being assigned specific institutional problems to address) and further develop their technological and advocacy skills. At the same time, YAP! will organize a variety of creative public advocacy events and will offer ongoing trainings at the Innovations Lab for youth in both formal advocacy (debate and negotiation, issue-framing,

policy modeling, etc) and 'alternative' advocacy (such as street art and political theatre). By learning new tools and methods it is hoped that young people will be nurtured in pro-active, evidence-based activism and civic engagement.

Housing some of Kosovo's 'brightest' youth, the Innovations Lab seeks to provide diverse opportunities and a dynamic environment for Kosovo's young people to directly engage in the issues that are important to them and drive the positive social change that they envisage for their communities.



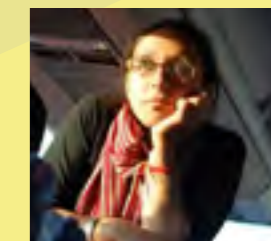
Young People mapping the public facilities of Kosovo



Debate on Tobacco-Free Schools between youth and representatives of health institutions



Young People expressing their opinions on topics touching them



Sophie Morin

Sophie Morin has been working at the Lab since April 2011. She has been involved in mentoring, monitoring and project management and she brings with her experience of youth in participatory learning from throughout Europe and South Africa.

RESOURCE BOX

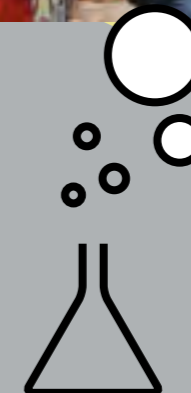
UNICEF Innovations Lab Kosovo
www.facebook.com/KosovoInnovations
kosovoinnovations@gmail.com

Other resources:

UNICEF in Kosovo
www.unicef.org/kosovo

Sandbox
 Offers fellowships and supporting networks to youth with ideas and willing to make an impact
www.sandbox-network.com

The Hub
 Co-working spaces fostering innovation, exchange and entrepreneurship
www.the-hub.net



MOVIES ON THE ROAD

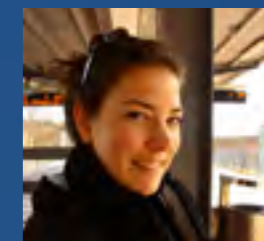
MOVIEMIENTO

makes movies travel by Liska Bögeholz



Movimiento is also behind *Shoot and Run* - a 48-hour film contest held every month. For the last ten months, the organisation has challenged filmmakers to create short films within 48 hours. Each month, a certain Berlin district has been chosen by the organisers as the theme, and films have had to be shot in the style of a certain genre. Filmgoers in August were treated not only to August entries but to the winning films from the previous ten months.

Movimiento continues to drive cinematic change. During September, Movimiento presented short films at outdoor screenings in France. *Le rêve roulante or the rolling dream* follows the themes of dreams, utopia and reality in films. The organisation is always open for cooperation for tours or even just single screenings and it offers a platform for aspiring filmmakers throughout Europe.



Liska Bögeholz

Whilst reading cultural studies at university, Liska got involved with Movimiento for the Moving Parks Screenings. Afterwards she helped to organise the Shoot and Run contest. Once she finishes her Bachelor's degree this year, she hopes to continue her voluntary work and interest in films and film festivals in a paid capacity somewhere.

If you go to Berlin you'll probably end up in a famous area called Friedrichshain at some point. Make sure you visit Boxhagener Platz. The chances are that you'll find *Kinomobilny* parked somewhere in this market square.

Kinomobilny is a special employee of the organisation *Movimiento*. A little caravan it may be, but *Kinomobilny* embodies something much more than that. Parked outside the offices of *Movimiento* on Boxhagener Platz, this vehicle is the spirit of *Movimiento's* travelling short film festivals and it has visited some special places along the way.

Movimiento is an organisation founded in 2003 aiming to offer a platform for young filmmakers to show their films to wider audiences. Since its beginnings, *Kinomobilny* has travelled in South and Central America, the Baltic Sea and countries throughout Europe. Internationalism is one of the main drivers of *Movimiento's* cinema-loving international team.

The distinctive blue and white *Kinomobilny* offers food and refreshments to audiences who flock to *Movimiento's* films. One of the latest examples of *Movimiento's* thirst for bringing young filmmakers to new audiences came last summer in Berlin. *Moving Parks – Short Films on the Wiesen* was the first time *Movimiento* chose not to screen films in different cities around Europe, but stay in one city. The catch was that every day the team shifted to a new public park, hosted a different theme and screened an unseen film.

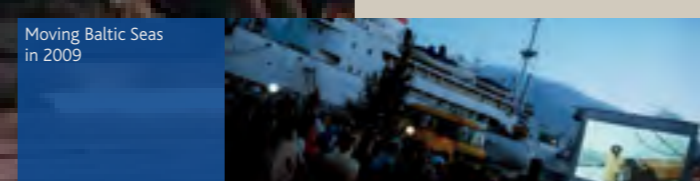
Movimiento travels not only by road but by sea too. With a sailing ship and lots of tailwind, the *Moving Baltic Sea* travelling film and environmental festival sought to encourage cultural and environmental cooperation amongst youth. The two-month journey in 2008 took in five countries beginning in Germany and dropping anchor for the final time in Russia. Along the way - in 6 different Baltic Sea ports - from Poland, to Kaliningrad, Latvia and Estonia, *Movimiento* organised four-day festivals to celebrate youth filmmaking, cooperation and environmentalism.



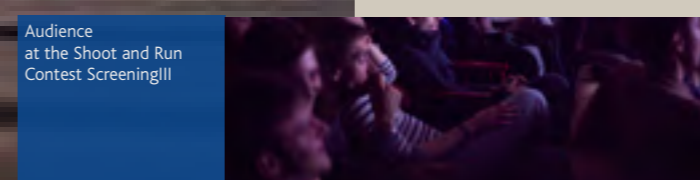
Verena from Movimiento with jury members at a Shoot and Run competition



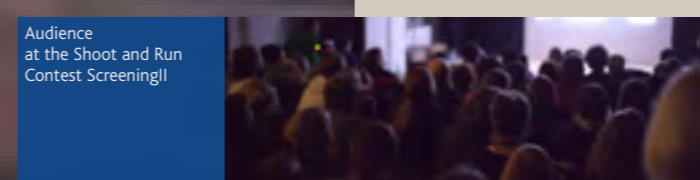
Audience at the Shoot and Run Contest Screening



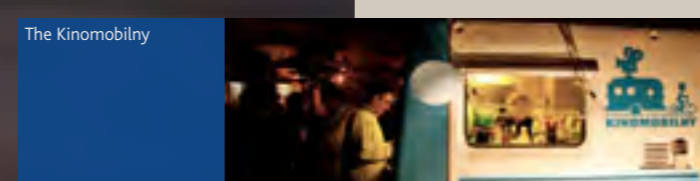
Moving Baltic Seas in 2009



Audience at the Shoot and Run Contest ScreeningIII



Audience at the Shoot and Run Contest ScreeningII



The Kinomobilny

RESOURCE BOX

Movimiento
www.movimiento.org
contact@movimiento.org

Other resources:

Student Films
www.studentfilms.com/eve

Breaking ground
 A platform for European film students and their films
www.breakingground.eu/page

Film Challenge
 Find inspiration as you rate your favourite movie
filmchallenge.org/Films/

NFFTY
 NFFTY is the largest and most influential youth film festival in the world. You can still send your own movie!
www.nffty.org

The Movie Maker Contest
 Take part in the The Movie Maker contest held by Desitara and you could be well on your way to get your dream fulfilled.
www.desitara.com/talent/contest/The_Movie_Maker_Contest

EUROPEAN STUDENT THINK TANK

DO STUDENTS CARE ABOUT BRUSSELS?

by Charlotte Baarda



Charlotte Baarda

As co-founder of EST, Charlotte Baarda wants to work on the gap between Brussels and the young citizens of Europe. Her love for European cooperation started with discovery of the continent by train and she has visited more than 18 member states in the last two years. She studies Liberal Arts and Sciences at the Amsterdam University College. Working for youth involvement also led her to become ambassador for the De Baak Youth Change programme, which guides young people towards a career in the business world.



RESOURCE BOX

European Student Think Tank
www.studentthinktank.eu
contact@studentthinktank.eu

Other resources:

The Charlemagne Youth Prize
www.charlemagneyouthprize.eu

The Roosevelt Institute
www.rooseveltinstitute.org

De Baak Youth Change
www.debaak.com

lacks vision. Maybe it's the EU's immensely complex regulations that require extensive knowledge on economics to crack. Or is it the perceived lack of transparency?

By creating the European Student Think Tank and bringing students together from different European countries and from different disciplines, the founders hoped the voices of eager young minds would be heard.

One and a half years on and EST is contributing to narrowing the gap between Europe and its young citizens. Bloggers from all over Europe share their ideas on the website then during intense weekend Strategy Group meetings these inputs are used to build EST strategy on European policy.

The EST network is growing at a rapid pace with ambassadors in every member state, but with its broad vision comes challenges for the organisation; challenges raised by student contributors themselves. The first, according to the founders, is how to shape the EU lobbying process but

in a creative way and one which reflects youth contributors' originality. Lobbying is an ancient art and one EST wants to bring colour to in the form of video blogs, idea-mapping and social media. These are the formats in which ideas are shared between the students and bloggers and why not maintain this youthful flavour in the lobbying process. The challenge is, *how?*

The second challenge, says EST, is that it must fully exploit its uniqueness. EST does not have a political colour but it can maximise the value of the broadness of ideas that European youth bring to the table. EST cannot connect to a certain political party or get a grip on one detail in European regulation. But rather, EST's potency exists in the fact that its composition and methods are different from that of any other lobby organisation. EST aims to bring students together from a wide variety of disciplines and this is its greatest asset, say the founders.



Working Together



Strategy Groups

Today, students in Europe have great expectations placed upon them. In this age of globalisation, 'Generation Y' are expected to navigate digital networks, unlimited choices, and international work environments, but how? Making your own path amidst the dynamics of today's world can be nerve-racking to say the least.

Europe is imagined as one in monetary policy, one in fighting unpredictable threats such as terrorism and climate change; a harmonious place in which to grow-up, but

is this true? Working together as youth in a union of countries that does not have a clear direction can be confusing.

But this does not mean Europe is not important and not a commitment worth making, thought three students in Amsterdam who founded the *European Student Think Tank (EST)* in summer 2010. Eline Bötger, Sari Nijssen and Charlotte Baarda, and their peers regularly puzzled over these issues and many more. How can students contribute in today's society?

How can we influence national policy?

The girls were captured by the idea of US student think tanks, such as the Roosevelt Institute; an example of a student organisation that actively influences national policy through innovative ideas and cooperation. Why did this not exist for the European Union?

Their first thoughts: Are students just not that interested in Brussels? Perhaps some are turned off by the idea that the EU

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO SOLVE TODAY'S SOCIAL CHALLENGES?



by Louise Pulford

President Clinton once said, **"Nearly every problem has been solved by someone, somewhere. The challenge of the 21st century is to find out what works and scale it up"**.

Is solving today's social challenges simply about finding and replicating? If we were able to pick up a solution to youth unemployment in Berlin, scale it up, and apply that same solution all over Bulgaria and Brazil, our job as social innovators would be quick and easy. Unemployment would be fixed and we would all be redundant. Clinton's suggestion is important, but when issues like climate change, increasingly large ageing populations, and vast youth unemployment are so complex and entrenched, what it takes to find solutions requires more than copying and expanding.

So what does it take? One word: innovation! To experiment, adapt, spread and replicate. What it takes to find new solutions to some of the world's most pressing social problems is a challenge in itself. There is a lot we can learn from other ideas and initiatives all over the world, but we need a better system for doing that. We need to experiment with new ways of working, of co-creating solutions together, and understanding *what really works*; who is doing it, why it works, and how we can do something similar in our own context. But this is also not as simple as it sounds.

It takes effective and connected networks

As Clinton implies, there are many creative people, projects and initiatives (successful or not) all over the world. To know who is doing what is an essential first step for any

social innovator.

Social Innovation Exchange (SIX) is the most established global network for the exchange of ideas and methods for social innovation, and its global reach enables the promotion of learning across sectors, fields and countries. Since it was created in 2008, SIX has developed a global community of over 3,000 individuals and organisations – including small NGOs and global firms, public agencies and academics.

SIX's activities, which include an active series of physical and virtual events, are designed to help members effectively exchange the methods, tools, knowledge, resources, and sometimes finance, needed to create and develop better solutions to deep-rooted social challenges. By connecting innovators from different sectors and fields, SIX increases individuals'

capacities - and the strength of the field of social innovation in general - to innovate better and create smarter solutions worldwide. SIX then communicates and disseminates those ideas across the network – a vast resource for the field of social innovation.

It takes support at a policy level

Social Innovation Europe (2010 – 2012) is SIX's two year initiative focussing on European innovations. It is well underway - the first of three major thematic reports examining support structures necessary for social innovation to flourish in Europe is now complete, and the initiative's website is rapidly becoming a clearinghouse for the latest news and insights on innovation, as well as a wide-reaching directory of events and organizations. European innovators can share both successes and learning experiences within the European context. The initiative's events series aims to take this conversation offline and solidify connections in a way that only face-to-face meetings can.

'Official' support at the policy level comes from the European Commission which plays an important role in creating a streamlined, vigorous social innovation field in Europe - rather than a number of competing or parallel narratives. It takes this kind of shared voice, and of course supportive financial systems, for any innovator to develop a successful idea quickly and thoroughly.

It takes better methodologies for idea transfer

Knowing what is going on and having effective support at a policy level is, however, only part of the picture. Social

innovators need the skills, tools and methodologies to know how to transfer information effectively. This is a key feature of the work of SIX, and *Social Innovation Europe*.

In other fields, such as medicine, business, technology, and science, there are both effective systems and well-understood methodologies for sharing ways of doing, but experimentation and iteration is not a well-developed practice in the social sector. If we want to take a concept or idea from Bilbao and apply it in Copenhagen, we need to be able to unpack the mechanics of the initiative - we need to know exactly what problem the idea tackles, we need to know more about the stages of development, what were the main barriers and how were they overcome. When the cultural context of each place is so different, and the issues are so complex, why have we not invested in better methodologies for idea transfer?

Both SIX and *Social Innovation Europe* place a great emphasis on creating a safe environment that encourages this. The currency of these situations is trust, more than intellect.

Have we got what it takes to achieve collective impact?

Investing in people is essential, but we need to invest in each other and honour values of openness, more effective learning and sharing, and being honest about what works, and more importantly what doesn't. Perhaps President Clinton's quote should be adapted to read 'there is no problem in the world that can't be solved by working together. The challenge of the 21st Century is to find the good ideas, learn from them, and apply the relevant parts in our own context'.



Louise Pulford

Louise Pulford is head of Social Innovation Exchange (SIX) - a global network of over 3,000 individuals involved in promoting and supporting social innovation. Louise also manages the consortium that is running Social Innovation Europe, an initiative funded by DG Enterprise and Industry at the European Commission to develop a stronger field of social innovation in Europe. Louise and her team are based at the Young Foundation, a centre for social innovation in London.



Spring School May 2011

Summer School

RESOURCE BOX

Social Innovation Exchange
Twitter - @si_exchange
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Social Innovation Europe
www.socialinnovationeurope.eu

Other resources:

Open Book of Social Innovation
socialinnovator.info

The Young Foundation
www.youngfoundation.org

Dialogue Café
www.dialoguecafe.org

www.younginnovationseurope.org

