

Global Entrepreneurship Week 2015 | Kosovo

Narrative Report



Prepared by: Innovation Centre Kosovo

December 2015

Prishtina, Kosovo.

About Global Entrepreneurship Week

Global Entrepreneurship Week is a celebration of the innovators and job creators who launch startups that bring ideas to life, drive economic growth and expand human welfare. During one week each November, GEW inspires people everywhere through local, national and global activities designed to help them explore their potential as self-starters and innovators. These activities, from large-scale competitions and events to intimate networking gatherings, connect participants to potential collaborators, mentors and even investors—introducing them to new possibilities and exciting opportunities. Millions who had never before considered launching their own ventures soak up advice and inspiration from the likes of Richard Branson, Michael Dell and Muhammad Yunus.

Thousands of brand new startups spring to life through bootcamps like Startup Weekend and competitions like Startup Open. Hundreds of universities strengthen connections that help them commercialize research from their labs. Researchers and policymakers engage in discussions around the world to examine the underlying policies necessary to promote entrepreneurial growth. And serial entrepreneurs share their expertise through activities like EO24, run by the Entrepreneurs' Organization, and practical training courses like Fast-track. Meanwhile, world leaders and local elected officials alike have embraced the campaign as they look to fuel the economic engine of high-growth startups in their own countries and communities.

What is Global Entrepreneurship Week? Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emr_6-W-ymE



Global Entrepreneurship Week 2015 | Kosovo

On June 2013, Innovation Centre Kosovo was recognized and announced as a formal host of Global Entrepreneurship Week / Kosovo. For the first time, ICK representing Kosovo, is a part of a selected group of leaders advancing entrepreneurship around the world, driven by thousands of organizations and companies.

The goal of GEW Kosovo is to inspire mire citizens of Kosovo to find better ways of doing things and to consider being an entrepreneur at some point in their lives. As part of the effort, GEW Global agreed to work together with GEW Kosovo in developing a community of organizations and leaders that can form the entrepreneurial ecosystem that drives more new firm formation throughout the country. GEW also serves as a platform for testing and validating new methods and programs – created at home or replicated from other nations – for supporting entrepreneurs in Kosovo.

The Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) 2015 Kosovo started with a kick off breakfast, gathering together all its partners that each year is growing, from 12 in 2013 to 28 partners this year, and every year looking for more. The Global Entrepreneurship Week Kosovo 2015 was supported by the Embassy of Sweden in Prishtina, USAID Kosovo and the British Council in Kosovo.



The first event of the week started with a panel discussion by launching an Entrepreneurship HUB at the American University in Kosovo (A.U.K), hosted by its student government and on the panel with Uranik Begu (executive director of ICK), Michael Gold managing (director of Crimson Capital), and Besart Disha (executive director of Recura Finances).

The main concepts that have been discussed is that young people in Kosovo have ideas and all they need to do is find the right finances, networks, and most importantly as Michael Gold said *“when you know who you costumers are, and they are ready to pay for your product or service, than your idea is a good idea.”*



What would be a start-up without the investors? The second day of the Global Entrepreneurship Week in Kosovo started with theme of Investors.

The second day of the Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) started with a great round table, hosted by American Chamber of Commerce, on contract enforcement for start-up business. This was in cooperation with USAID, promoting the importance to “Put It on Paper”.



The next step on how to give life to your idea of a start-up, is that you need to follow up with the global trends. The event hosted by KOSME gave a chance to learn on how business consultants of CSR helps you understand how to behave as an entrepreneur, by giving back for a stable society, environment, and prepare you for the business world.



‘Start-ups are very risky’

What would this week be without the tradition of ICK’s *Business Tuesday*? This time, ICK added a great panel of professionals giving their first starts offs as entrepreneurs and showing that a failure here and there will make you a good entrepreneur. Start-ups are very risky, and that is a global issue, but to build your business of a start-up it’s preferred to push it as far as you can with your own resources, and that will help you bring the investors in. As the panelists agreed on that: “Invest first your money and push the business as far as you can, start to make at least one costumer, and do your homework”, and then the Angel investors will kick in. Angel investors in Kosovo are increasing, they are mostly the ones that first started as a start-up and succeeded. All you need to do is look for them and talk to them.



Being an entrepreneur is not based on gender; this is what the events of the third day of the GEW with theme of Gender agreed on.

The third day of the Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) started with a great panel and information session about the pilot project entitled “Women in Online Work – WOW”. The proposed pilot aims to increase the participation of women residing in rural municipalities of Kosovo in green, ICT-enabled jobs. This should give chances to women to show their innovative minds and be entrepreneurs.

As most women are affected by the prejudice in Kosovo, the most focus of the day was putted on women. There was also a following panel session which main points were on how women deal in business, empowering women in business through education and support them. These all were the main points of discussion tackling the challenges of women as entrepreneurs: in global and local perspective.



“There is a need to bring up the awareness that women as well as man can have their start-up, and their chance to do well is equal”.

The following up presentation gave as a chance to understand and learn on reform and normalization as a business and career opportunity. This led us on how economic reform can generate new business opportunities and how are the chances to approach them, and to understand how to look at career opportunities in order to change following job losses in a changing economic situation.

And the least event of the day was followed up with a heated discussion of how women and man can come to equal chances to show their ideas, bring them to paper, and start to develop this idea by adding life to it.



What is a Global entrepreneurship week (GEW) in Kosovo without the fresh minds of the youth?

The day started with the theme of Youth, and kicking it off with some success stories; about start-ups that made it to successful businesses. A Business lunch was organized from CEED, together with the project Enhancing Youth Employment (EYE). Parts of this business lunch were a lot of businesses that started as startups and made it to stand where they are now.

As their message to the youth was to have big save ups: “save as much as you can, because you should invest first, only you can bring your idea to life”.



Within the GEW, Kosovar Youth Council (KYC), created the event by following it up with two very critical debate themes with a good number of participants, coming from VET schools and other high schools of Kosovo. The debates came with the topics of: “Are VET schools producing entrepreneurial culture in Kosovo?” and “to what extent, education can stimulate the innovation of young entrepreneurs?”. These debate topics came along with different frustrations from the students, because as on their ideas they have emphasized that there is a need for a better education so they can fulfill the concept of an entrepreneur. What they are mostly concerned of is the curriculum of their education which, according to them, should be adapted to their concentrations in schools.



Youth from both Prishtina and Mitrovica

As GEW touched not only Prishtina, but as well as other cities such as Mitrovica, IBCM as first time partners in this global event held the activity on Cooking up a business. Students had the chance to learn the basics of an entrepreneur, and as the result of some group works and small tests within the activity, they had the chance to think of an idea, and understand the privileges of being an entrepreneur. There was also a Presentation organized by the American Corner on the topic of: Maker space (in the making) as a platform for young entrepreneurs.

There was a discussion on what a young entrepreneur needs to have, such as knowledge and skills and other tools to lead them succeed. What are the most challenges the young entrepreneurs face in Kosovo, and so many more facts that are self-declared from the young start-ups that were present.

Trying to give the day a great ending, and for one moment to have a chance to laugh on our failures, and disappointments, there is a need for the last event of the day known as Fuckupnights, located in Prishtina. Where everyone had the chance to speak open about their failures, and show that there not the only once who have failure sorties behind them. Such failure stories had also our special guest of the night, Ilir Deda, who emphasized that no one became successful without having lots of failures left back. As he is saying that the youth should be motivated and should not stop just because they failed in something.

You only think you have failed because you look back, but the point here is not to look back and even if you do so see those failures as lessons for you. An entrepreneur will make lots of failures because they are great risk takers, and falling should not stop them from reaching their goals.



The fifth day started with an organized a panel discussion from Universum College on how to integrate social entrepreneurship in higher education. Coming from an educational background, gives you the chance to see the potential of young people. As at times the opportunity for an entrepreneurship gives lots of new chances. And why not find sources as entrepreneurship for new possibilities.

A great round table of discussions was also on the interpretation and implementation on one of the latest trends known as Digital Economy. This was the last event that Am Cham hosted regarding the GEW. Great Kosovar success stories were part of this round table by showing that through digital economy they made it possible from startups to the path of a real business.

Within the GEW, there was also a presentation on Prishtina mobile market: A new platform for farmer entrepreneurs. This was hosted by the American corner, which made possible a great discussion and introduction of this new platform for farmer entrepreneurs and show that this sector has a great potential in Kosovo.



GEW kicked off its first Bar Camp of the week held in Prizeren, organized by Ipko Foundation. Where there were different discussions on how can an entrepreneur be involved in the society and what are the advantages and disadvantage of being an entrepreneur.

When someone made it from being on the first stage of an entrepreneur by just having an idea to a business, at some point those businesses will need help of an expert or consultant. Therefore, there was a presentation on promoting standards of consultancy in Kosovo hosted by BCC Kosova, where the discussion was on how a consultant can help this business develop and go towards the path on which will lead to growth.

The day ended with a great presentation hosted by Prishtina Hackerspace on the topic of how Open Sources Software can help Businesses. As this software lately can help business in their inside and outside operations for their businesses.

The sixth day started with the young generation as KYC organizes the Assembly of student council of Kosovo. Where students have the chance to speak up for their ideas on a better education, what they like and what, according to them, will give them a better education. As on this assembly meeting, students had the chance to hear success stories of startups becoming great businesses.

As Uranik Begu (Executive Director of ICK) refers to the students as: *"Your voice will and should be heard". "Besides education, do your research and choose what you want to do, see what is needed and let nobody stop you from your idea"*.



A basic training for young entrepreneurs was also organized by KUSA, where young people had the possibility to learn and understand about entrepreneurship. Where there come questions in mind as what makes an entrepreneur an entrepreneur? What are the challenges of an entrepreneur? And so many more questions that have been answered through this training. Organized by KUSA was also a visit to Royal Hospital, having the chance to see the organizations hierarchy of the hospital and see that team work in every business is needed. There is no sleep for the once that work hard.

Another great Project has been launched by Jakova innovation center (JIC); they have done a presentation on their project on Women in online Work (WOW). Where there has been a discussion on how women can be involved in the online work.

Within this day, there have been Bar Camps in Ferizaj, Gjakova and Peja, which were organized by Ipko Foundation. Where all had the chance to learn more about entrepreneurship and what is the best way to understand it.

Organized by College Universum and Kosovo Network of Business Angels (KOSBAN), the global race of Get in The Ring took place. Get in the Ring is one of the most attractive races of startups. Startups are changing the world. They develop innovations and that in a very fast way. Get in the ring gives the possibility of a platform to challenge one another to the grand prize, which means their business financing from foreign and local investors.

As GEW closed the day and the week with a warm party, where partners and others were welcomed to once again celebrate this successful week, and say goodbye. This year GEW gave us a reminder of all the great things entrepreneurs have the chance to experience. As on this week we are leaving behind all these activities, showing us that we hold the spirit of an entrepreneur and that we are able to make it form a start up to a business This week might be over, but be patient next year will be even better with more variety on activities and more partners to join our family.



As promised, ICK with all its 28 partners brought up an eventful Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW), bringing once again the entrepreneur spirit into live. As the events marathon started with heated panel discussions by touching every sphere of an entrepreneur, to roundtables, presentations, workshops, Bar Camps, FuckUp Nights, movie nights, discussions, and presentations. All these came from the power when all come together and give chances for one to learn and share experiences. Approx. **4,000** people directly attended **42** events during the GEW 2015.

What would the Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) be without its audience, great debaters, active entrepreneur spirits, innovators, open-minded thinkers, and risk takers? Everyone who took part of the events shared their opinions freely and gave those events more brightness.

The Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) this time touched different topics, launched new creations, and gave chances to those whom needed answers for their question on entrepreneurship. And many more, as what trends we are able to follow and what would be the week without the successes stories that were able to change someone's life.

From all these chances that were given one week is not enough, but bear with us. We will come bigger, with more partners joining our family, more debates and trend full topics. As for now we need to say goodbye, but yet the next year GEW is closer than you think. As ICK would like to thank all its partners and every single entrepreneur spirit that joined us this week.

Till next time, we are just a year away.