

**European Innovation Academy- Entrepreneurship and Innovation Bootcamp
September 2022**

Georgia (Batumi, Adjara) EIA Bootcamp 2022

Day 1:

Our travel was very long, with so many challenges such that we ended up staying a night at Istanbul, Turkey. Carol, Sabelo, Xolani and Nomfundo arrived in Batumi late morning on the 5th of September 2022, the bootcamp was in progress when we arrived at Hilton Hotel, Batumi, where the bootcamp was held.

The 2022 innovation bootcamp encouraged participation- to engage, communicate ideas and invoked design thinking, creativeness, inventiveness on the spot- to think outside the box. It enables the cohort to create or think of ways or models to address a problem or opportunity. Built the cohort to be strategic, become strategic thinkers and leaders. Also, listened to two video clips by the cohort, chosen by our mentors which our mentor's thought were the best for the day.

It was noticeable that the cohort was Caucasian and Carol, Sabelo, Xolani and Nomfundo were the only Africans, noting, this made integration difficult as it appeared that the cohort were not familiar with blacks especially Africans thus was challenging to adapt. Noting, the experience we had at the airport and how the cohort acted around us depicted that it was necessary in future to include more people of colour. Also, the experiences around Batumi indicated that there is a great gap that needs to be addressed when it comes to people of colour. Overall, the experience was welcomed and concluded to be a culture shock, hence, eventually adapted to the current status-quo.

Day 2:

The lessons taught us to be open minded, accepting of different ideas as well engage, participate and share ideas. Our mentors showed us great examples of making blogs, with great insight. Again, it was more on engaging ideas to come to resolution or agreement, group discussions, accept feedback especially constructive feedback. Also, trained our design thinking capabilities, moreover, how to come up with ideas- build an idea- be creative and accept feedback. In all, it was all about creativity-thinking on your feet- promptness- provide alternatives. Also, listened to two video clips by the cohort, chosen by our mentors which our mentors thought were the best for the day, mine was one of the chosen.

Solution driven- how to be constructive-building up of an idea- open to suggestions. To develop an idea, rework the idea, think of parallel industries (competitors) who do it well.

How to come up with the best idea; what works. Star gaze tool – best to use to decide rationally or have rational discussions to get to an agreement if there is a disagreement which idea is best suitable. Emphasis on the need to decide on the success metrics early, in the beginning of the project.

Day 3:

The focus was on leadership, culture, and communication. How to come up with better ideas; learnt how to innovate; design thinking thru the bootcamp program. It was emphasized that established corporate companies were using the tools we were using at the bootcamp in their programmes for their employees. The programme in the bootcamp taught us design thinking which employers are seeking.

Entrepreneurship is not an individual job. Entrepreneurship is fundamentally a team sport. Our mentors mentioned that usually the boss is the dumbest in the team because his or her goal of cause is to recruit smarter people than him or her to work in their company.

Usually, the quiet person has the most to contribute. We learnt on teams, leadership, culture.

Really enjoyed the last 3 days, on design thinking, innovation, creativity. Moreso, insight on leadership and teams. All these subjects complimented my interests, totally my passion. The last day really made me very excited from within, unprovoked, so naturally excited. We learnt the importance to ask the team if they understood the instruction and not assume they did- to communicate clearly. Also, treat people the way they want to be treated, not the way you want to be treated.

On this day I decided that whatever I learn I will share with others thus as KZN OSA youth leader and spokesperson spoke to my team to plan a 1-day entrepreneurship and innovation bootcamp for the youth of KZN, starting in KwaDabeka Township. The 1-day bootcamp will be used to test and create a model that will enable us to conduct a 3-day bootcamp.

Day 4:

The focus was on leadership and pitching, we were taught on pitch practice. We did the two video clips and worked on the project to be pitched on Day 5. The day was distributed a bit by covid testing. After the break we worked on our projects with our respective teams (slide presentations and 90 second pitch). Received feedback on our slides, less is best.

Day 5:

Our day was on pitching, we all pitched in our respective teams on the assigned sustainable goal. Our team focused on life on the land precisely plastic pollution. The whole day we were doing pitches and receiving feedback.

Day 6:

Start Up World Cup Georgia National Competition 2022 included delegates such as the Mayor of Batumi, USADF officials, Ministry of Education officials, UNDP delegates to name a few. It was an experience I will never forget, to see business owners pitch in 3 minutes to real investors, mostly, witness what is expected from us when we are pitching. Congratulations to the young lady who won, she deserved it, I was in awe of how she knew her pitch, pitched without any difficulty, everything was so smooth. The cohort was left in awe, we were all so impressed by the entrepreneurs that were pitching, and concluded we were not where we were when we started the bootcamp.

To conclude, I enjoyed the bootcamp, moreover, the 1-hour session at 5pm – 6pm in the breakout rooms with our mentors and teams. The bootcamp confirmed to me that I am on the right path in life and bigger and better is coming my way. Thank you.





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