

Red Bull shines a spotlight on student entrepreneurs

Having a great idea is just the beginning of the startup journey: gaining attention as an entrepreneur is the bigger challenge. The global Red Bull Basement competition bridges that gap, providing students with the opportunity to come up with ideas and disruptive technology to create a better tomorrow.

This year's Red Bull Basement had 3,865 student entrepreneurs from more than 36 countries submit their innovative business ideas. The competition has grown phenomenally from 1,580 entrants last year and 663 teams from 16 countries in 2018.

Created by a team of students from Brunel University in London, Lava Aqua X has been chosen as this year's winner. The device collects and reuses shower water to wash clothes, providing an environmentally- and financially-friendly option for students who don't have easy access to laundry facilities. The student entrepreneurs calculated that if every student in London used Lava Aqua X, enough water would be saved to fill 700 Olympic swimming pools in just one year.

Competition entries were whittled down via a public vote and local judging rounds, where the best ideas from each country were selected as finalists. The 38 finalist teams were provided with support and additional time to develop

their ideas with international mentors and through workspace and micro-funding, all ahead of the Global Workshop.

“As one of the global mentors for the Red Bull Basement programme, I work and support students and inventors and their bold ideas impacting student lives. The level of innovation, creativity and ambition overshot my expectations: students designing solutions that potentially could not only impact thousands of students and campuses, but also the world in terms of sustainability” – Mathias Haas, CEO, SuperSocial

This year, the Global Workshop was a three-day online event from December 10-13. Student teams were given access to pioneers and innovators from around the world ahead of presenting their ‘final pitch’ to an expert panel of judges.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this year’s final pitch took place virtually for the first time and was judged by Manjula Lee, founder and CEO of World Wide Generation; Ruth Rowan, Chief Marketing Officer at NTT; and Mathias Haas, CEO of Supersocial.

Talking to *Maddyness*, Mathias Haas said: “In my role as jury member, we had to evaluate the creativity, the innovation, and the impact, as well as the pitching performance. While I think that they all are winners by the learning opportunity and feedback given, one project stood out: Lava Aqua X.

“Lava Aqua X combines several sustainable innovative solutions to fix a well-known student problem – dirty laundry – with a new generation of washing machine. Giving students and their ideas wings to implement those ideas is exactly the kind empowerment that is needed for real impact.”

As the winner, Lava Aqua X will receive resources and further support to help take the idea to the next level.

Previous winners of Red Bull Basement include Audvice, a unique solution for students to create, share and listen to audio learning content in one application, and Vacant, an app that enables students to get real-time information about study space across campus.

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