



Banking on CSR to drive entrepreneurship among young people

Case Study

The Santander Bank has for many years been a leader in offering CSR programs that promote entrepreneurship and education in Spain. Since 2009, Santander has run entrepreneurship programs aimed at young people between 18 and 31 years of age that offer support, training and advice for the development of innovative technology-based projects for five months. They had created more than 500 businesses in 7 years but Santander was looking to scale this impact even further with a comprehensive

standardized program that could be replicated in other countries where the bank was present. In 2020, Santander partnered with Bridge for Billions for the pilot of the new phase of this program, Explorer Lab. The goal was to prove that quality entrepreneurship support and training for young entrepreneurs can be achieved with one standardized program run across multiple country locations with validated outcomes.



Spain



2020



Multi-sector



Type: University Entrepreneurship

The challenge

Digitalization & Expansion of a large scale student entrepreneurship program

Support for university entrepreneurship is a focus for Santander and through CISE (Santander International Entrepreneurship Centre), Explorer was created to promote young talent, entrepreneurial spirit, and the creation of innovative companies. The main objective of the program was to accompany young entrepreneurs at each stage of their business building journey. For 8 consecutive years, 1000 young entrepreneurs from all over Spain – and for the last two years from Portugal and Argentina too – took part in the Explorer program each year. The student entrepreneurs received entrepreneurship training and mentoring in one of the 53 co-working and high-performance centres in universities and other institutions. The student entrepreneurs could also benefit from and membership in a global community of entrepreneurs.

Going into its 9th Edition, Santander was looking to scale the program even further into new countries by adopting digitalisation and also solve some of the persisting challenges associated with running a large scale entrepreneurship program across multiple regions.

The major challenges that needed to be tackled were

- How to ensure consistency of entrepreneurship support across 53 centres in different cities & countries. In past programs, each centre had run their own programs with their own mentors making it difficult to homogenize the quality of support across board.
- There was a challenge in creating and implementing a structured entrepreneurship process for the students without costly investment in developing a new platform and methodology
- Santander and the program Director were looking to implement a learn by doing entrepreneurship training methodology which will ensure a higher level of innovation and allow students to develop their entrepreneurship skills even better. There was no homogeneity.
- The scale and diversity in the program made it challenging for Santander and the program management team to fully gather data from each program and generate an overview and impact report on the Explorer program

To solve these challenges, Santander partnered with Bridge for Billions to launch Explorer Lab, the pilot of a digital version of the Explorer program leveraging on B4B's standardized entrepreneurship program, interactive incubation platform based on a learn by doing methodology, program managers' dashboard and impact reporting features.



The solution



Explorer Lab, the 9th edition of Explorer was launched during the peak of the COVID 19 pandemic- a great timing which allowed the students, mentors and program managers to support the creation of new businesses during this period where many programs had to be cancelled.

Explorer Lab was a global program for young entrepreneurs between 18 and 31 years old who wanted to develop their innovative ideas. Based on B4B's incubation program, it offered a learn by doing training, one on one mentoring access to an entrepreneurial community for young people who had proposed solutions for the challenges facing the world, aligning their proposal with the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

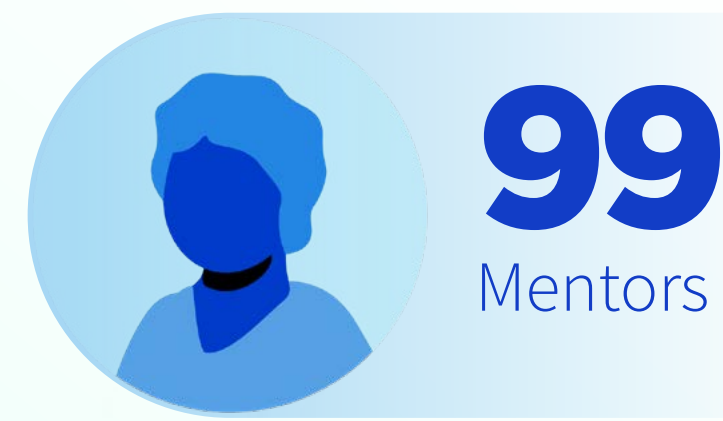
18 Explorer Spaces were involved in the project and accessed the Bridge for Billions program to support their students through their business building process. The program adopted a blended learning approach, offering participants the option to work in the physical location of participating centres in Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Chile and Mexico, in addition to their digital workspace on the Bridge for Billions platform.

“To work with innovation-driven startups you must adopt a startup mindset”

Summary of the program elements

- 8 Talk X sessions with experts**
- 8 Checkpoint sessions with Steve Haraguchi Lead, Artificial Intelligence Programs at Stanford University**
- 6 Group sessions**
- 6 Mentoring sessions with Xcout**
- 6 Inter-center networking sessions**
- 6 Networking sessions with entrepreneurs**
- +80 Hours of entrepreneurship training were given to the students during this period**

The Result



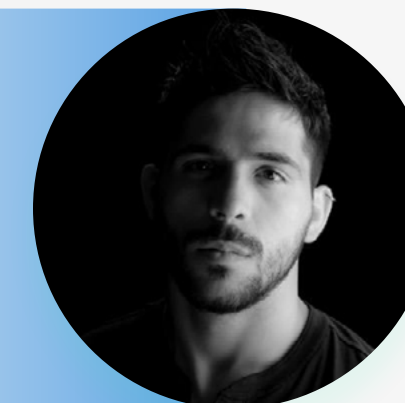
“My team and I are really grateful for the experience in Explorer Lab, it has helped us understand concepts and strategies for Legit. Having a learning by doing tool is the best way to acquire knowledge and speed up the business idea. We have been accompanied all time, we have made new contacts with people from different cities and different countries, and the best thing is, that despite the current situation with COVID19, the Explorer team and the platform have been key allies for us to continue in the path.”



Andy Aguilar

Co-founder and CEO at Legit Health

“Being a mentor in the Explorer Lab has been such a rewarding experience. The platform allows you to communicate effectively with your mentees, and provides all the tools to supervise their work in one place. I highly recommend any experienced entrepreneur to join the Explorer Lab and share their expertise with early-stage startups.”



Federico Leguizamo

IQube Mentor



Do you want to build a Bridge with us?
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