

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master's degree in Impact Entrepreneurship and Innovation from the Nova School of Business and Economics.

How incubators can harness the power of the crowd to drive social impact:

The business case of Problematic

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Abstract:

This thesis investigates the distinctive attributes of Problematic, an alternative to the standard incubator model, which leverages hackathon dynamics to foster social innovation. Through qualitative research, including the Gioia method, the study assesses how Problematic's approach to foster social entrepreneurship—with the help of events like the Ideathon and the Buildathon or its online platform—differs from traditional incubators. Additionally, the study examines the viability of Problematic's methods, such as the relocation of time during the Ideation process and the Implementation of Social Impact Bonds and a franchise system, to enhance social impact.

Keywords:

Impact-driven incubator program, open innovation, business case, hackathon, entrepreneurship, social innovation, social impact bonds

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1. Introduction into the history of Problematic

In July 2007, American programmer and founder Sean Tierney participated in the very first Startup Weekend hackathon (Tierney 2023, Arrington 2007). The objective was to launch a startup within 54 hours with the help of 70 people (Arrington 2007). The outcome was vosnap, a tool that speeds up decision-making in groups (Arrington 2007). Sean was impressed with the hackathon's potential, having observed his own rapid learning curve (Tierney 2023). He participated in nine additional events, running three of them (Tierney 2023). However, a recurring problem arose: the projects were frequently unsupported at the end of the weekend and quickly became forgotten; a loss for society (Tierney 2023). Tired of this problem, Sean started Charity Makeover as a volunteer project in 2013 (Tierney 2023, Charity Makeover 2023). The program followed the same hackathon format, but focused exclusively on social projects for altruistic reasons (Tierney 2023). After each event, the completed projects were then made available to the public (Tierney 2023). A particularly successful project was the provision of various communication channels and a donation platform to a charity fighting the problem of intergenerational begging by women in Bali (Tierney 2023). With the help of these resources, enough money was raised to build a safe house and support 100 families (Tierney 2023). After several iterations, however, a new problem arose. To make a substantial social impact, unique conditions had to be met (Tierney 2023). The charitable organization had to be willing to accept guidance, have a shortage of staff, perform well, and be willing to utilize the resources provided (Tierney 2023). Often, these criteria were not satisfied, resulting in limited social impact (Tierney 2023). Thus, Problematic was established to overcome this problem. Unlike its predecessor, Problematic does not provide support to existing charities, but rather develops its own solutions to social problems (Tierney 2023). As a result, Problematic and its participants have a direct influence on the project's social impact. The objective was to establish a minor economy for social entrepreneurs, who can receive bottom-up support from

Problematic and get rewarded for their initiative with the help of tokens (Tierney 2023). So the overarching vision was to empower individuals with the power of the crowd to solve societal problems themselves and earn a steady income doing so (Tierney 2023). The question now is whether Problematic differs from existing incubator formats, making it a distinctive solution. Therefore, this paper answers the following research question:

How does Problematic differ from the already existing standard incubator format?

To answer this question, the following paper will first provide an overview of existing literature on the topics of social innovation, open innovation, and the hackathon format. In the course of this, the existing standard of a hackathon format will be highlighted. The following section outlines the approach employed for collecting and assessing data on Problematic, the Gioia method. Then, an explanation and elaboration of the results will be presented with the help of a data structure. Finally, Problematic's distinctive attributes will be compared to the existing standard and a final conclusion including its limitations will be drawn.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Innovation

In the midst of the ongoing economic crisis and deep recession in large parts of Europe, the need for social innovation to compensate for declining national budgets is on the rise (Christensen, et al. 2006, Leadbeater 1997, Nicholls 2008, Shaw and Carter 2007, Phillips, et al. 2015). Social innovation can be pursued by all types of different players, individuals as well as organizations, either non-profits, profit driven companies or hybrids combining both (Dees and Anderson 2006). The precondition, as with conventional innovation processes, is to achieve a pattern-breaking change, facilitated by new developments or the recombination of existing products, services, structures or similar (Munshi 2010, Noruzi, Westover and Rahimi 2010, Defourny and Nyssens 2010). Likewise to common innovation, it is described as a process, rather than a linear sequence, because the actions are often loosely structured, leading to very

different outcomes (Tidd 2006). However, the primary motivation in social innovation is the intrinsically motivated desire to create social value instead of personal or shareholder wealth which they usually track with the so called “double bottom line” (Noruzi, Westover and Rahimi 2010, Thake and Zadek 1997, Emerson and Twersky 1996). As a result, Mulgan defined social innovation as “innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need.” (Mulgan 2006, 146). In order to address a social need in the best possible way, research suggests to involve multiple stakeholders such as governments, non-profits and other companies in the activities in order to be able to draw on their resources and diverse skillset (Bryson, Crosby and Middleton Stone 2006, Gray and Purdy 2018, Pache, Fayard and Galo 2022, Phillips, et al. 2015, Ferraro, Etzion and Gehman 2015, Neumeier 2012). This is necessary because social innovations frequently cross boundaries and sectors, necessitating resources and expertise that the agent does not directly possess (Bouchard 2012, Edwards-Schachter, Matti and Alcántara 2012, Phillips, et al. 2015). One possible solution could be the creation of so-called "social innovation systems", in which a community of different actors is formed, all working towards solving a specific social problem (Phillips, et al. 2015). However, there is still a limited supply of these, resulting in a high number of failures in the social innovation sector (Mulgan, Tucker, et al. 2007, Phillips, et al. 2015). For this reason, open innovation methods are becoming more commonly used to create these networks themselves.

2.2 Open Innovation

Open innovation does not only take internal but also external resources into account during their innovation process (Chesbrough, Vanhaverbeke and West 2006). These external resources could be obtained through collaboration with other companies, universities or the involvement of users in the innovation process (Cui and Wu 2016). Innovators utilize this practice to advance their innovation process by incorporating a wider range of skills and perspectives through the involvement of additional stakeholder (Lifshitz-Assaf 2018, Boudreau and Lakhani 2013,

Levina and Fayard 2018). This can result in increased efficiency through economies of scale or access to insights that were previously unavailable (West and Bogers 2014). Both, academia and professionals have frequently verified the advantageous outcomes in this respect (Bryson, Crosby and Middleton Stone 2006, Gray and Purdy 2018, Pache, Fayard and Galo 2022). Despite the increased diversity and involvement of various stakeholders, requiring more effort to align all parties involved, there is a pressing need to act swiftly to address the complex problems arising more frequently (Gkeredakis, Lifshitz-Assaf and Barrett 2021). As a result, innovation formats involving more stakeholders in a shorter period of time, such as hackathons or open innovation challenges, are growing in popularity (Armanios and Zhang 2021, Fayard 2023a,b).

2.3 Hackathon

The term hackathon has had many definitions due to its historical origins in the programming world and its subsequent growing popularity and influence from other industries (HackHub 2021). Nowadays, a hackathon is known as a short-term event in which participants work in groups to solve a problem with a self-developed proof of concept (Gama, Gonçalves and Alessio 2018, Chia 2018). The result may be software or any other prototype (Gama, Gonçalves and Alessio 2018, Chia 2018). This has expanded the field of participants from developers to people from all disciplines and industries (Gama, Gonçalves and Alessio 2018, Chia 2018). Their motivational drivers to initially participate are mainly based on intrinsic factors as their ability to gain practical experience as well as the chance to build up new social connections (Garcia 2022, Gama, Gonçalves and Alessio 2018). However, as the number of participations by a person increases, the motivational drivers change (Garcia 2022). External factors start to play a larger role (Garcia 2022). The prospect of gaining personal reputation and improved career opportunities becomes as important as the social component in motivating people to participate repeatedly (Garcia 2022).

Due to the proliferation of hackathon events, they now appear in a variety of forms and formats. However, a common standard has emerged as the basis for these events (Chia 2018). The event usually spans over two to three days and follow a clear structure (Chia 2018). On day 1, after an introduction to a pre-defined problem, participants are divided into groups of six and allocated according to a fixed system based on their skills (Chia 2018). Ideally, each group will have one person with a management and with a technical background, a marketing and a data specialist as well as a designer; the sixth person can have any background (Chia 2018). After allocation, the group exchanges initial information about the problem and creates a potential user profile, stakeholder map, and research plan (Chia 2018). Subsequently, specific insights are generated through interviews with potential users (Chia 2018). The second day then commences with the ideation phase (Chia 2018). First, possible solutions to the problem are narrowed down through boundary questions and subsequently, a brainstorming session is conducted (Chia 2018). The following conceptualization phase attempts to combine all the ideas generated into an integrated solution (Chia 2018). With the help of this concept, the prototyping phase begins using the LEAN method, meaning constant checking and experimenting in order to evaluate assumptions (Chia 2018). However, this is initially kept at a low-fidelity level, i.e. only paper-based prototypes are created, as these are usually subject to several adjustment cycles (Chia 2018). Once these have been completed, the process is repeated at the medium fidelity level, where, for example, a clickable prototype is created (Chia 2018). The third day is designated for the final pitch (Chia 2018). It commences with the preparation phase for the presentation, during which the judges are usually present to get a sense of the groups working processes and the general atmosphere (Chia 2018). This phase is succeeded by the pitch and the subsequent final feedback (Chia 2018). Evaluation criteria are influenced indirectly by the organizer in the selection of judges and directly in the form of pre-defined evaluation aspects (Chia 2018). Finally, a winner is announced during the closing ceremony

(Chia 2018). Subsequent support is usually outside the scope of the event (Chia 2018). In summary, the structure of a hackathon closely resembles that of a typical open innovation process. However, the intense time pressure it creates is a defining characteristic, and is widely credited with the format's global appeal (Fayard 2023a, Chia 2018). However, the long-term effectiveness of these formats has been called into doubt by recent research, which has indicated that time compression does not always lead to more successful innovation (Lifshitz-Assaf, Lebovitz and Zalmanson 2021, Diriker, Porter and Tuertscher 2023). There are a number of reasons for this phenomenon.

First, research has shown that a reduction of time during the innovation process leads to a decrease in the number of projects pursued after the event (Baccarne, Van Compernelle and Mechant 2015, Zukin and Papadantonakis 2017, Reinecke and Ansari 2015, Slawinski and Bansal 2015, Hilbolling, et al. 2022), which hampers the overall prospects of developing long-lasting innovations (Mair and Gegenhuber 2021, Porter, Tuertscher and Huysman 2020). A possible explanation for this could be that the organizers did not pay enough attention to the implementation and support of the projects after the event (Fayard 2023a, Klein and Sorra 1996, Van de Ven, Polley and Garud 1999). This is usually beyond their scope as it requires a different set of skills and involves other stakeholders especially in the context of open social innovation, where the challenges almost never include the implementation of the idea and where the financial, time and skills resources of the participants are limited (Fayard 2023a, Ferraro, Etzion and Gehman 2015). A second contributing factor to lower success rates are misaligned incentives during hackathons. The format rewards instant success and results within a short time frame, which does not correspond with social innovation (Mair, Wolf and Seelos 2016, Reinecke and Ansari 2015). Social innovation typically has an unforeseen social impact over a longer period of time (Amabile, Hadley and Kramer 2002, Perlow 1999, 2002). As a result, hackathons commonly reward projects based on their instant success rather than their long-term

social impact which subsequently results in a smaller overall social impact (Mair, Wolf and Seelos 2016, Reinecke and Ansari 2015). The third factor contributing to the lower success rate may be the shorter duration of hackathons. While there is evidence indicating that imposing deadlines has a beneficial impact on idea generation, as well as participants' focus and time management, on the other hand, it also causes several problems (Lifshitz-Assaf, Lebovitz and Zalmanson 2021, Fayard 2023a). Hackathons define a fixed period of time in which a solution to a problem has to be developed. Nevertheless, this period may not always coincide with the personal performance period of the participants, who may be distracted by other issues during that time (Fayard 2023a, Gersick 1988, 1994). Research has shown that in the worst case, this can result in participants not being able to develop a solution at all (Lifshitz-Assaf, Lebovitz and Zalmanson 2021). Innovation does need time and can therefore not always happen in a predefined schedule (Jacques 1982). This aligns with Lifshitz's study showcasing accelerated procedures increase ambiguity linked with innovation (Lifshitz-Assaf, Lebovitz and Zalmanson 2021). As a result, the quantity of prototype concepts is reduced and success depends on the participants' own time management, leading to the question of whether organizations should assist participants during the innovation process (Lifshitz-Assaf, Lebovitz and Zalmanson 2021).

3 Methodology

Nowadays, a widely adapted methodology to perform qualitative research on a single case is the Gioia method (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton 2013, D. Gioia 2021). This approach derives a grounded theory based on the experiences and subsequent interpretations of the informant (D. Gioia 2021, Magnani and Gioia 2023, Alvesson, Gabriel and Paulsen 2017). By treating informants as knowledgeable agents, the Gioia method can be distinguished from other methods of analysis which emphasize the researcher's interpretation of events (D. Gioia 2021). With the help of the Gioia method a substantive theory can be generated which, although

context specific, can be transferred to similar situations through its analytical generalization (Magnani and Gioia 2023, Lincoln and Guba 1985).

3.1 Data Generation

To examine the format and process of Problematic and its events, qualitative data was collected from a number of sources following established guidelines (Glaser and Strauss 1999). As a researcher, I participated in an Ideathon event in April 2023, during which I could freely move among the different groups and staff. I was formally introduced as a researcher, so every participant was aware of my role. While documenting my observations without participating in the relevant activities, I observed the proceedings and had conversations with few participants when they were available. Furthermore, I participated in the subsequent event held a week later, called the Buildathon, again as a researcher. Hence, my responsibilities were identical to those of the previous occasion. Occasionally, I engaged in conversation with the participants, but for the most part, I remained an outside observer. Furthermore, I carried out 11 individual semi-structured interviews of about 30 minutes each with participants of the Ideathon. The interviews were conducted online, using a one-on-one format and recorded for later reference. The questionnaire and the anonymized transcribed interviews can be found in the Appendix C-N. While most of the questions were identical, slight adjustments were made to account for the role of the participant. A total of two interviews were carried out with “Judges”, whilst three were conducted with “Mentors” and a further eight with “normal Participants”, three of whom were “Idea owners”. It is worth noting that two of the participants fulfilled a dual role and are therefore considered for both roles. The selection of interviewees was based on their willingness to take part in the interview. Participants were given the option to provide their contact details voluntarily. Nevertheless, care was taken to include interviewees from all three role categories. All appointments were arranged within 14 days after the Ideathon to gather as many impressions as possible on personal event experiences. In addition, further qualitative insights

were gathered from a 95-minute semi-structured interview conducted in November with Problematic's founder and CEO, Sean Tierney. The interview again took place virtually in a one-on-one format and the transcript and the questionnaire can be found in the Appendix O and P. Its purpose was to gain information about Sean Tierney as a person, his personal life, the founding history of Problematic, its different event formats as well as organizational structure from the founders perspective. Finally, more qualitative information was gathered through various online presences of Problematic. The company's website, blog, and internal discussion group were examined between the months of April and November. The data collected provided information about the further development of Problematic and its community.

3.2 Data analysis

The standardized process to analyze data with Gioia Method is made up of three “coding” steps (Magnani and Gioia 2023). Initially, the information obtained in the interview is analyzed and statements are coded to reflect the core message of each remark (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton 2013). However, the coding is still strongly oriented towards the interviewee's way of expression (Magnani and Gioia 2023). These core statements are referred to as “first order concepts” (Magnani and Gioia 2023). In the second step, these first-order concepts are examined for patterns and structures, which can then be summarized with superordinate terms (Magnani and Gioia 2023, Strauss and Corbin 1998). Still based on the author's mode of expression but a bit more theoretical, these are called “second-order themes” (Magnani and Gioia 2023). In the third step, these second-order themes are further aggregated with the help of their theoretical core statements, the so called “aggregate dimensions” (Magnani and Gioia 2023). Finally, all first-order concepts, second-order themes, and aggregate dimensions are brought together and integrated into a single data structure, allowing us to gain insight into the interrelationships between the different dimensions and statements (D. Gioia 2021, Magnani and Gioia 2023). Following common standards, the data structure is then presented in the form

of an extended table which is presented in Figure 1 (Cloutier and Ravasi 2021). A content analysis was conducted in line with current standards to examine the data gathered from the online forum with a focus on structural messages about Problematic and specific project work (Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas 2013). The observations from the Ideathon and Buildathon event were analyzed through a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). It focused on structural aspects of events, how participants interacted within their groups and how staff interacted with participants.

4 The storyline of the incubator Problematic

What emerged from Sean's initial vision of empowering individuals to tackle societal problems themselves is Problematic, a social incubator network based in Lisbon. Since the birth of this format, it has already taken on a wide variety of shapes as, like an innovation process itself, it is subject to constant change in order to test processes and features and validate their success. The structures and features described below have been gradually adapted over time to evolve into their current form. If any changes took place during the observation period, they are presented here in an understandable way in order to better follow the change and the associated learning process. Firstly, the situation in April 2023 will be described, followed by a discussion of potential strengths and weaknesses of the format as well as potential areas of improvement based on the experiences of the Ideathon participants. This will be followed by a portrayal of Problematic in its current form, as well as a description of the processes of change and its differentiating factors to the earlier mentioned current standard.

4.1 Problematic in April 2023

At the start of the observation period, Problematic consists of three main components: the Ideathon event, in which participants work in groups to develop solutions to existing social problems through an ideation process; the Buildathon event, in which the winning group

receives hands-on support to turn their idea into reality; and the internet platform, which is used to facilitate exchange within the community and to track the progress of individual groups. The format is designed as a hybrid to achieve multiple goals. The inclusion of face-to-face events aims to enhance the motivation and enjoyment of the participants, while also promoting community building which in turn increases the commitment of the individual participants after the event (Tierney 2023, Interview partner 1 2023, Interview partner 7 2023, Interview partner 10 2023). The online component is integrated to seamlessly develop proposed ideas without limitations in terms of location, time zones, or availability (Tierney 2023). Collaboration can continue from anywhere and at any time, and the status and needs of the project can be easily communicated to anyone who is interested (Interview partner 4 2023). The events take place at different venues in Lisbon, provided by partners of Problematic.

The Ideathon event follows a clear one-day structure, and the staff members ensure that it is followed. The event has 50 participants, of whom approximately 30 are regular attendees. The remaining individuals serve as staff, mentors, judges, or feedback providers. The participants of the Problematic Ideathon represent a wide range of international backgrounds and professional experiences (Interview partner 2 2023). This is accomplished by not having any prerequisites for participation and therefore a high level of inclusiveness (Interview partner 1 2023). In terms of the thematic focus of the event, unlike other hackathon formats, no predetermined challenge is given; participants are allowed to design solutions to their own problems (Interview partner 8 2023). Ideas are even expected to be submitted in advance (Tierney 2023). The sole criterion is to add social value to an existing social problem (Tierney 2023). This is worth emphasizing, as the primary premise of the format is not to maximize profit, but to maximize impact (Interview partner 4 2023, Interview partner 9 2023). The Ideathon starts after check-in with the presentation of the pre-registered ideas by the so-called idea owner, i.e. the person who registered the idea in advance (Tierney 2023). Subsequent to

the presentation, attendees are requested to join the team of their choice, with no restrictions on team size or skillset distribution. The decision on team selection lies solely with the participants. Factors such as personal affinity towards the topic or one's ability to support the project with their own skills can often be crucial (Interview partner 7 2023). However, it should be highlighted that the allocation is not definitive as individuals can switch teams at any time before the lunch break. The intention is to start broad and then narrow as the day progresses (Tierney 2023). Once the groups have been formed, they begin to produce an aspirational press release. Its objective is to establish a few month's goal, prompting the participants to contemplate and identify the necessary steps to achieve them (Tierney 2023). With these principles in mind, market research is carried out, and findings are shared during the group check-in just before the lunch break, with the aim of creating a shared knowledge base. During the lunch break, the intention is then to temporarily break up the groups and connect other sets of people in order to encourage the exchange of external viewpoints and thus leverage the knowledge of the crowd (Tierney 2023). After the break, the groups are challenged to solve previously unresolved problems with the help of the mentors, all of whom are experienced founders and experts in their field (Interview partner 8 2023, Tierney 2023). These mentors move around the room freely, proactively assisting the groups with any difficulties. The teams must then create an initial wireframe on paper and transform it into a clickable mockup with the help of an app (Tierney 2023). Once this is completed, the feedback interview phase begins. Visitors are invited to attend the event and participate in personal conversations with each group, and try out the mock-ups to provide feedback from a potential user's perspective (Tierney 2023). The primary intention is to obtain input from stakeholders who have not been involved in the previous process and who may therefore have a different perspective to consider. This input can be included during the pitch development phase to refine the idea. Eight hours after the start of the event, the teams enter the pitching phase where they are granted a 5-minute time

slot to present their idea to a panel of 4 judges made up of experienced investors (Tierney 2023). The emphasis of the pitches lies on storytelling; any medium can be used to support the pitch, such as a mock-up or PowerPoint presentation. The judges then have the opportunity to ask questions on each project. Afterwards they will have to decide which projects, if any, to bid for based on the criteria they have set themselves. Notably, offered sums are generally modest, with a cap of €50 for a designated number of shares. Groups may choose to either accept or decline the offers received. The winning project is then determined based on the resulting financial valuation of their project (Tierney 2023). The project with the highest rating is granted the opportunity to participate in the subsequent event, the Buildathon, to actively work on implementing their idea (Tierney 2023). The limited number of slots in this event aims to encourage competition among teams and boost their motivation (Tierney 2023). The team's final task is to upload their idea onto the Problematic platform. Besides providing general information about their project and open work packages, they can specify how many percent of their shares they want to give to Problematic for the support which can range between two to fifteen percent (Tierney 2023). The proportion of assigned shares, among other factors, will then affect the level of hands-on support that Problematic provides to teams during their development phase (Tierney 2023). As the proportion of shares ceded increases, so does the likelihood of receiving greater hands-on support (Tierney 2023).

One week after the Ideathon, the Buildathon will take place. This event is held again all day on Saturday, but with a much smaller number of participants. Participation is exclusively granted to the teams that received the highest valuation by the investors during the Ideathon and therefore emerged as winners (Tierney 2023). In case of a tie, several teams may participate. Moreover, individuals that are willing to provide support to the participating teams as volunteers can also attend. In addition, Problematic invites professionals, such as coders or designers, who bring skills that are needed for the tasks at hand, but cannot be covered by the

team itself. The volunteers and experts are then potentially compensated with shares in the project (Tierney 2023). The primary objective of the Buildathon is to collectively develop the project, so that team members are motivated to pursue the project after the event, and do not let it become neglected (Tierney 2023). This element is crucial given that none of the projects are obliged to reach a certain stage of development and that the process after the Buildathon is mainly based on individual ownership. In addition, the team spirit should be further enhanced by the face-to-face event in order to create a basis for continuous collaboration via online formats (Tierney 2023). As each project has unique requirements and upcoming challenges, the Buildathon does not have a fixed, repetitive structure. Instead Sean and the project lead collaborate before the Buildathon to set upcoming milestones and work packages, creating a development plan for the following few weeks (Interview partner 10 2023). Sean subsequently chooses the focus of the Buildathon and invites the appropriate experts based on this plan (Tierney 2023). The event starts at 9:30am with an organizational phase in which the individual participants as well as their skills will be introduced and the schedule for the day will be presented. Subsequently, attendees are sorted into discrete working groups, and the work session begins. After around two hours, there is a lunch break followed by an alignment phase in which the results of the different working groups are presented to each other. The cycle of work and alignment is then reiterated. There is no official end time, as it depends on the respective work packages of each group. At the very least, however, a sufficient baseline should be established to allow the project team to continue working independently for the time being. The work then shifts onto the Problematic platform. Here the project teams can inform all stakeholders about their idea and the current progress of the project, request external resources for work packages in exchange for company shares and generally raise awareness. In addition, the teams can ask questions to the community via the chat forum and request other support. During this extended development phase, project teams continue to receive support from

Problematic, be it hands-on assistance, help with planning and strategic considerations, or connections to contacts in the network (Interview partner 10 2023, Tierney 2023). However, as mentioned earlier, the level of support varies depending on the company shares ceded to Problematic, the overall prospects for success in terms of social impact and the realistic chance of successful implementation due to Problematic's limited resources (Tierney 2023). The idea of Problematic's support system, which is applied both during and after the events, is best described by the term "servant leadership" meaning that Problematic's main task is to support project managers in order to make their work as effective as possible (Tierney 2023). In all areas that can be of help, Problematic offers support when needed. In addition, support after the event is not only provided by official bodies; the mentors and judges involved are usually also available to the projects on a voluntary basis (Interview partner 10 2023).

4.2 Benefits, Problems and potential solutions

The data structure resulting from the interviews provides information on the strengths and weaknesses of the April 2023 format just presented from the participants' perspective. It also highlights possible suggestions for improvement and provides an insight into the motivational drivers for participation. A detailed version of the data structure can be found in Appendix B. The interviews uncovered the primary motives behind the participants' decision to take part in the Problematic Ideathon, and what sets it apart from other formats in this respect. The first reason was the distinctive structure, which prioritizes social impact, and the emphasis on idea development and realization through iterative design and prototyping stages in the product development process (Interview partner 8 2023). Secondly, Problematic offers a streamlined ideation process that focuses on essential elements, resulting in a short-term success prospect and building momentum (Interview partner 6 2023). Thirdly, the program stands out from comparable formats due to the fact that participants are free to implement their own ideas, independent of the organizer's specifications in the form of challenges (Interview partner 4

2023). Although the vast majority of participants were enthusiastic about the format in April 2023 and would therefore participate again, they also identified certain problems. These can be divided into 4 main categories: Structure & Timing, Communication, Group composition and Execution of the concept.

First order concept	Second order themes	Aggregate dimension
- Support from the staff - Unusual and therefore unique format	Feature of the format	Current assets of Problematic
- Inclusivity - Diverse set of people - Intensive discussion culture	Feature of the Ideathon	
Clearly defined and executed schedule	Feature of the structure	
Sufficient team size	Personal positive aspects about the Ideathon	
- Diverse set of feedback from several stakeholder - Unique format - Ideathon had more momentum	Problematics' USP compared to comparable Hackathon formats	
More time between events	Improvement for the format	Areas of improvement
- Even more structured schedule - Pre-defined group sizes - More guidelines during the event - More time needed - Feedback phase needed more structure - Lacking diversity in the board of judges - Lacking personal connection to people outside	Improvement for the Ideathon	
Uncertainty regarding the investors' claims to influence project	Problem of the format	
- More time needed in general - Unclear group formation at beginning - Not enough time for prototyping - Missing introduction of the mentors and the feedback phase in general - Lacking transparency regarding the overall objective of the feedback phase	Problem of the Ideathon	
Lacking structure & expectation management	Problem of the Buildathon	
- The business idea - Chance to put the idea into practice	Reason to participate in the Ideathon	Motivational driver
Long-term decision to participate	Timing as motivator	
- Enlarge existing event formats - Sean is no crucial success factor - Current participant size was optimal	Upscaling existing format	Future growth opportunities
- Less attention - More inclusivity - Flexibility of timing	Online event format	

Figure 1: Compressed Data Structure

Regarding the structure and timing, several participants stated that they would have wished for more time during the design phase or for the whole process (Interview partner 5 2023). However, other participants described the timetable as appropriate to the tasks and recognized that the time limit led to an increase in momentum which in turn had a motivational effect and people achieved more progress (Interview partner 10 2023). In addition, more time was allocated for the development of a prototype, which was very well regarded (Interview partner 5 2023). Nevertheless, a couple of brief intermissions between phases would have been appreciated (Interview partner 10 2023). The judges would have liked a little more time before the pitch to get to know the groups and get a clearer picture of the ideas (Interview partner 8 2023).

Regarding communication, it was noted that the outward advertising of participation was perceived as old-fashioned and unattractive (Interview partner 9 2023). Also, it was considered deceptive as it implied that a fully operational minimum viable product was present after the two events, which may not be the case (Interview partner 5 2023).

The group composition generated mixed opinions. The divergence of views on group size appeared to be caused by the imbalanced team composition. Some participants endorsed the open allocation approach based on their own preferences and accountability (Interview partner 6 2023). However, others opposed it due to the lacking clarity in the short term regarding group allocation and the inequitable distribution of skills, expertise and capacity (Interview partner 9 2023). While some participants consider their group size as ideal, others criticize their group as too large, leading to lacking ownership among some group members (Interview partner 1 2023, Interview partner 3 2023, Interview partner 6 2023, Interview partner 10 2023). However, many participants viewed the high level of diversity within the groups as a positive aspect, surpassing that of comparable formats and therefore presenting a unique characteristic (Interview partner 11 2023). A multitude of nationalities and a range of professional backgrounds contributed to a varied feedback culture, increasing the quality of the work, but also slowing it down in some cases (Interview partner 10 2023). Additionally, one participant noted that assigning one group member as an idea owner can lead to an uneven distribution of power within a group, influencing future decision making and workflows (Interview partner 11 2023).

There were additional remarks from the attendees of the event regarding the execution of the concept. The participants appreciated the close structure and definition of the different stages, but required further specification in some cases (Interview partner 5 2023, Interview partner 7 2023, Interview partner 9 2023). For instance, during the feedback session, the mentors and their expertise were not sufficiently introduced, which meant that the teams did not know which areas of expertise to ask the experts questions about (Interview partner 7 2023, Interview partner

10 2023). Some groups were initially unaware of the overall aim of the feedback phase, resulting in an inconsistent implementation of the guidelines by the participants (Interview partner 7 2023, Interview partner 11 2023). The selection of judges also presented opportunities for improvement. On the one hand, the board of judges lacked diversity, and on the other hand, due to their background as investors, they occasionally utilized inadequate criteria to assess the projects (Interview partner 7 2023, Interview partner 11 2023). They focused rather on investability than on social impact (Interview partner 11 2023).

4.3 Problematic in November 2023

Sean, the CEO, considers Problematic itself to be an iterative development process, therefore he conducts interviews with some of the participants after each round of events to uncover any problems that may have occurred and to develop solutions to it (Tierney 2023). Consequently, he has addressed most of the aforementioned problems already by making appropriate changes in the format. Hence, it is worth examining the current version of Problematic in November 2023. The changes and additions to the version for April 2023, as described above, are highlighted in the following.

To address issues with structure, scheduling, and group composition, the group allocation process was restructured and moved up to the days before the event (Tierney 2023). Prior to submission, idea owners must produce a brief profile of their concept, complete with an explanatory video and upload it to the Problematic platform (Tierney 2023). Furthermore, they should indicate the skills they are likely to require for successful completion of the project (Tierney 2023). The other participants complete a preliminary questionnaire indicating their interests and skills, which Problematic uses to match them with the right projects (Tierney 2023). The aim is to achieve a balanced distribution of skills and a homogeneous group size of approximately six (Tierney 2023). Nonetheless, the allocation is not definitive, participants have the opportunity to inform themselves about the project on the platform and swap teams

with others if necessary (Tierney 2023). By moving the group assignment to an earlier stage, more time is available for the actual product development during the Ideathon event (Tierney 2023). This can be used to address the time issues some participants had during the Ideathon event in April 2023. Furthermore, the stricter regulation of group composition ensures the creation of more efficient teams (Tierney 2023). Nonetheless, the possible negative aspect of losing some open innovation elements should be taken into account.

In order to address the issues that have arisen, changes have been made to the implementation of the Ideathon concept. Firstly, every group participating in the event will now be provided with a handbook containing detailed step-by-step instructions for each phase (Tierney 2023). This will provide additional structure and clarity regarding the aims of each phase, as the instructions can be referred to at any time, rather than being presented only once before each phase (Tierney 2023). Secondly, the ineffectiveness of the feedback phase has been addressed by a complete restructuring of this phase. A round of introduction for each mentor, who are now referred to as Subject Matter Experts, is implemented so they can introduce themselves and showcase their expertise in specific subject areas (Tierney 2023). These experts are no longer required to circulate from team to team to offer support, but instead maintain a station at which idea owners can approach them with any questions they may have (Tierney 2023). As a consequence of the modifications, there is more emphasis on the subject matter experts and their knowledge, and the teams are given more time to formulate relevant questions. Thirdly, the judging mechanism has been adapted in several respects. The primary change is that the board of judges is now composed of accomplished entrepreneurs, rather than investors (Tierney 2023). The rationale behind this is that the stage at which projects are at after the Ideathon is still too early to assess their investability (Tierney 2023). At this stage, entrepreneurs possess a more profound insight into the potential of each group (Tierney 2023). However, the investment round, which involves pitching to investors, is not entirely eliminated; instead, it is positioned

at the end of the Buildathon (Tierney 2023). Still, at that stage, investors are not obliged to make an actual investment, rather they are kindly requested to demonstrate their appreciation to the projects by investing their ticket fee of 50€ (Tierney 2023). The proper investment will then happen at an even later stage. Furthermore, there is a new addition to the event: the audience choice award (Tierney 2023). This allows the audience to choose another winning team during the Ideathon, in addition to the Board of Judges' selection, who will also be able to participate in the subsequent Buildathon event (Tierney 2023).

However, the format of Problematic has not only been adapted based on the feedback received. Over the past six months, the system has also been expanded to address project funding and distribution issues. In the April 2023 version, certain projects faced funding problems. The projects were required to either generate financial returns along with social impact in order to be attractive to mainstream investors, or were dependent on NGOs or philanthropic donors (Tierney 2023). This impedes the projects' development autonomy. To address this issue, a Social Impact Bond system called “the Benefactor Model” has been introduced (Tierney 2023). In this system, Problematic and a social stakeholder, such as the government, municipalities, government agencies, high net worth individuals or foundations agree to pay a certain risk premium for solving a social problem (Problematic 2023a). In this case, the social stakeholder is not concerned with the methods used to solve the problem, but rather with achieving predetermined outcomes within a set timeframe (Problematic 2023a). A contract is drafted which dictates that the social stakeholder will pay the predefined project costs plus the risk premium to the project retroactively if certain goals are met within a defined period of time (Problematic 2023a). If these objectives are not achieved, all of the expenses are borne by the project itself (Problematic 2023a).

As projects, even those with solely social impact as an outcome, can now offer returns based on the contract, they become compelling to impact investors (Cabinet Office, Department for

Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport 2023). These investors seek moderate financial return along with social impact and can now invest in such projects by purchasing shares to receive a proportionate portion of the project's profit or loss at the end of the project (Cabinet Office, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport 2023). The financing model represents a mutually beneficial solution for all parties involved. Social stakeholders have the chance to address social issues, potentially avoiding high costs without bearing financial risk (Tierney 2023, Cabinet Office, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport 2023). Projects can expand their financing options by including social investors, contribute to solve social problems and additionally have the opportunity to earn a risk premium (Tierney 2023, Cabinet Office, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport 2023). Social investors in turn can achieve financial returns and social impact simultaneously and at the same time reduce effort by working with only one standardized provider, Problematic, instead of multiple individual project managers (Tierney 2023, Cabinet Office, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport 2023).

To address the distribution problem, Problematic launched its Impact Portal in November 2023 (Tierney 2023). Prior to this, the organization's outreach was primarily limited to Lisbon and Portugal due to Sean's and therefore Problematic's location (Tierney 2023). Although it may have been possible to organize additional events in other cities and countries, Problematic lacked the necessary networks and internal capacities to ensure the success of such events from the start. Implementation would have been both expensive and time-consuming. To prevent this, a franchise system called the Impact Portal was created instead (Tierney 2023). Any community organizer with an innovative community can purchase a license to use the Problematic software, customize it according to their own needs and add their own branding

(Tierney 2023). In other words, a white label software-as-a-service model was introduced (Tierney 2023). The usage of the software does not require a fixed license fee (Problematic 2023b). Instead, fees are tied to the success of each project (Problematic 2023b). Once a project is successfully completed within a franchisee's network and all goals have been met, Problematic will receive 10% of the risk premium paid by the social stakeholder from the franchisor (Problematic 2023b). The advantage for franchisors is that they can enable their existing innovation community with minimal effort using the Problematic software and thus exploit its capacities. Costs will only occur if the franchisor's goal of achieving social impact is met (Tierney 2023).

4.4 Current Status and future outlook on Problematic

The long-term effectiveness of these measures and the Problematic format overall cannot be evaluated yet due to the short period of time since implementation. Furthermore, Sean has primarily focused on establishing the structures of Problematic rather than cultivating the community (Tierney 2023). That in mind, there are currently 16 projects listed on the platform, all in various stages of development ranging from ideation to proof of concept stage (Tierney 2023). However, none of the projects have yet been rolled out, therefore neither had any social impact (Tierney 2023). One of the main factors contributing to this is the lack of investor attraction on the platform as currently, only a limited number of investments have been secured for the projects (Tierney 2023). The reasons for this are unclear to Problematic at this point of time, but will be investigated in future discussions with local impact investment firms (Tierney 2023). Since the impact portal has just been launched, there is no track record yet. Nevertheless, if the opinions of the Ideathon participants on possible scaling up options are to be taken into account, the solution developed represents the best upscaling option. A web-based alternative would not be an adequate substitute given the diminished group dynamics and discussion culture as well as prolonged workflows (Interview partner 5 2023, Interview partner 11 2023).

On the other hand, upscaling by increasing the frequency of events and expanding to other locations is seen as a valid option (Interview partner 1 2023). The person Sean as moderator of the event is not seen as a non-imitable element of success and therefore other people could take on the role (Interview partner 9 2023). However, Problematic is currently unable to implement these upscaling activities on their own due to limited work capacity, which makes franchising an ideal alternative. The Problematic team is currently comprised solely of Sean Tierney, the founder, who receives assistance in organizing events from his personal network in addition to official partners of Problematic (Tierney 2023). Most notable is Casa do Impacto, the incubator from which Problematic itself emerged, which is providing access to their locations and strategic guidance (Tierney 2023). However, Sean is currently seeking a co-founder to expand the operational capabilities of Problematic and therefore its social impact (Tierney 2023).

5 Conclusion

A comparison demonstrates differences between Problematic and other incubator programs. The primary difference is in their thematic focus. While most incubators strive for profit maximization, Problematic's priority is the maximization of social impact (Tierney 2023). They adhere to social innovation principles, utilizing an innovation process that is inclusive and open, which is apparent even in the pre-incubation phase (Tierney 2023). Participants are typically left to work independently during this stage (FasterCapital 2023). Conversely, Problematic prioritizes this phase with its implementation of the Ideathon (Tierney 2023, Klein and Sorra 1996, Van de Ven, Polley and Garud 1999). However, the event does not follow the classic hackathon format, but has been adapted in terms of time allocation. The generation of ideas to solve a problem is placed prior to the event, thus removing the time pressure, which is in line with current research recommendations for higher success rates (Fayard 2023a, Reinecke and Ansari 2015, Slawinski and Bansal 2015, Hilbolling, et al. 2022, Tierney 2023). The process of transforming the idea into a viable solution is accelerated by using agile working

methods and shorter iterations compared to the traditional waterfall approach (Chia 2018). Accordingly, the event duration was condensed from the standard 2-3 days to one day (Chia 2018, Tierney 2023). Research confirms that the output can improve as long as strict guidelines are provided, which is the case for Problematic (Fayard 2023a, Gersick 1988, 1994). The subsequent support is also unusual for hackathon formats, but will likely increase the projects social impact (Mair and Gegenhuber 2021, Porter, Tuertscher and Huysman 2020). The second major difference is in the financing of individual projects. Because of the emphasis on maximizing social impact, traditional financing methods through profit-driven investors are of limited use. The resulting integration of Social Impact Bonds as a financing method into an incubator program is a unique solution. The third and final difference is the open-ended nature of the format. Offering an open-ended incubator program using a franchise system for exclusively performance-based royalties is unique in the market (Tierney 2023). In summary, it can be said that Problematic differs from other incubator programs due to the factors just mentioned and thus represents a unique format. However, only time will reveal whether its distinctives will lead to greater success compared to other formats. This is a topic that requires further investigation.

6 Limitations

As this study used the Gioia methodology, certain limitations occur. First of all, the research does not claim to be exhaustive. During the data collection, it was not feasible to interview each participant of the Ideathon event, therefore not all available information could be collected. Another limitation is that the study was carried out by a single researcher, therefore it should be noted that personal bias may have occurred in the observation of events and the analysis of interviews and other data sources (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton 2013). Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that findings from this study, as the Gioia Methodology was utilized, are not generalizable, only a substantive theory was developed (Magnani and Gioia 2023).

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Appendix B: Extended data structure

Name	Answer	First order concept	Second order themes	Aggregate Dimension
Interview Partner 5	Sean is a huge mentor for us. So it's incredible how much time he invests for...	Support from the staff	Feature of the format	Current assets of Problematic
Interview Partner 8	The main cause is that Sean is trying to tackle with this initiative, that is super relevant, usually out of the radar.	Unusual and therefore unique format		
Interview Partner 10	Sean is also one of the investors, so of course he's always on the ball. And we've definitely had a follow-up with all of them, at least thanked them for the in-vestment and will always, whenever there's interest, we can also plan a call at any time.	Continuous support from mentors and investors also after the events		
Interview Partner 1	What I also find super cool is that the whole thing is free. So anyone who just wants to help can participate.	Inclusivity	Feature of the Ideathon	
Interview Partner 2	...it feels like it's bringing a much more diverse set of people.	Diverse set of people		
Interview Partner 5	I was very surprised how many different backgrounds people had, which really spurred the discussions big time as well.	Intensive discussion culture		
Interview Partner 7	I have no idea what was going on and we were so completely focused on ourselves and our team that I have no idea what happened like on the other side of the room.	Full focus on own team activities		
Interview Partner 7	And Stranger A, she just kept saying: "I can't believe you guys have only met once before. This is incredible. It looks like you guys have been friends for 10 years." And this is really how it feels.	Building strong personal connections within your group		
Interview Partner 8	The second one is the amount of work they do in such a short period of time, like from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. It's incredible, all the steps and Sean has been involved in the process as a whole and has been introducing a lot of new features to the process with the subject matter experts, with volunteers which will give you feedback every time, and of course with the digital platform that is being building. He has been improving the process so, as every time happens with startups, things are, I have to reiterate, a lot and Sean is doing that...	High amount of work getting done		
Interview Partner 11	I think maybe most of the participants were foreigners. Not Portuguese I mean, which is awesome.	Highly international crowd		
Interview Partner 5	What I also found cool is that Sean really stuck to his schedule.	Clearly defined and executed schedule	Feature of the structure	
Interview Partner 11	That was good because there was actually a kind of a process to come up with a business idea that Sean presented in those slides, and then the steps. It made sense to me to do it like that and the design was also or the discipline of design was also represented in there, which is my main pet peeve. That's it. So that was cool.	Sensible constructed structure with the incorporation of design phases		
Interview Partner 11	Like the things that Sean was saying what people should do in the slides and all that because I think that structure is the right structure, so I think that structure works. I've seen it work before and I was not expecting for this case to be to show that structure, and I was like, huh? Yeah, they're doing this rig.			
Interview Partner 5	You don't really have to criticize the size of the team.	Sufficient team size		

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Interview Partner 6	But we are also lucky because we are not so many, people. So, we were four. It's a perfect number, actual-ly.		Personal positive aspects about the Ideathon	Problemattics' USP compared to other hackathon formats
Interview Partner 7	I really liked the sequencing of it. The fact I did have some structure, you know, there were the timeline and the aspirational press release and then working to-towards welcoming the people who came to get feedback and then the pitching.	Predefined schedule and structure gave project guidance		
Interview Partner 10	No, it was actually a perfect fit for us now.	Schedule suited time requirements		
Interview Partner 1	I would say that was one of the most useful parts of the whole workshop. To get this feedback again not only from investors who somehow point out every little mistake, but really just people, normal people.	Diverse set of feedback from several stakeholder		
Interview Partner 1	...had the feeling that this was kind of a pretty unique thing now.	Unique format		
Interview Partner 2	It had the prototype part of it. It had sort of: Let's build a prototype of something. But then I think, because it was so long, it was sort of killing the momentum.	Problemattics event had more momentum		
Interview Partner 2	...maybe that misses the point and it's more about refining the product and then making mockups and sort of iteratively converging to something interesting.	Iterative product development process		
Interview Partner 2	I really like that it has made me want to build a proto-type.	Motivation to build a prototype		
Interview Partner 4	And I think people really enjoy the day but then after that they more or less forget the project. The next critical step is to really turn these ideas into actions. Hopefully we'll be able to do that.			
Interview Partner 4	It's nice to have one thing like Problemattic that might be not purely money oriented.	Combination of impact and profit driven approach		
Interview Partner 9	And I think it's not as common to see a combination of both. And I think this is where this event is very good, is that you can really find solutions that have impact while generating revenue, creating wealth, creating job, like really boosting the economy, really boosting like a transition.			
Interview Partner 5	I think that many of the projects die in the end be-cause you don't have enough time to really get some-thing done.	More time for project realization		
Interview Partner 6	Otherwise, there's a possibility of being stuffed be messy, but I think with when people come to volunteer help for these causes you probably don't have it as often.	Group formation process on own responsibility		
Interview Partner 11	And the one bias that I have is that these Hackathons are usually much more focused on the technical aspects like development and so on and not so much on design or customer development or business or business model exploration and stuff like that. But uh, this one specifically was actually not at all focused on the technical parts. All it was not like a normal Hackathon where people just like code and act something together.	Focus on non-technical aspects		
Interview Partner 4	I think the team that won was sort of a little burnt out after the Buildathon as well.	More time between events	Improvement for the format	Areas of improvement
Interview Partner 1	because the day was already very planned, then I would have just for example again planned more.	Even more structured schedule	Improvement for the Ideathon	
Interview Partner 1	According to my experience now, I would say that groups of 5 to 6 are probably the best.	Pre-defined group sizes		
Interview Partner 3	Maybe maximum a team of 6 or maximum 7 because it's easier to manage.			

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Interview Partner 7	...your space and yeah, maybe 8 to 10 maximum is a good size.			
Interview Partner 5	But what would have been a bit easier would have been to have a bit more guidelines.	More guidelines during the event		
Interview Partner 6	Yeah, I mean I prefer when it is like 2 days Hackathon.	More time needed		
Interview Partner 7	Maybe the feedback moment could have been structured a little better.	Feedback phase needed more structure		
Interview Partner 7	...but I could only notice that the line of judges and mentors were only men, and I know that Sean had actually tried to get women and it just didn't work out. But I only know that because we talked to him about it at dinner and then he told us that.	More diversity in the board of judges		
Interview Partner 7	I didn't connect that much with, apart from you, many people around in the other teams.	Fostering more personal connection to people outside your group		
Interview Partner 8	We found both, me and Person A, that it was useful to meet the teams before just the pitch, so we could have a deeper understanding because we're not there to actually invest or give you a tough judgment.	Meeting the individual groups as judge before their pitches to foster deeper understanding		
Interview Partner 8	Another thing that could be improved, which is not easy, is getting even more people...	Greater amount of participants		
Interview Partner 9	I think that there will be better of a difference between something that in terms of communication seems very outdated and not so interesting, and then it is itself that is really interesting and engaging.	More modern and attractive external communication of the event		
Interview Partner 9	So personally, I would like to have a more structured participation for the groups.	More structural guidance on working processes within the group		
Interview Partner 9	...instance having a max cap of participation per group, making sure that all groups have the same, well... Starting with the number of people they have the same, but for instance at the time of submitting the idea or registering to go, you don't have to fill like a form where you kind of have different like three to four types of personality or behavior or whatever roles that you want to do, so we know already that person is more blue, red, green. And in all the groups you would try to just get some of the same topology in the group... Not creating too many rules or settings or blah blah blah, but just making sure that equally scattered along the groups and creating like three to four different profiles that people would kind of have to fit in.	Pre-defined project groups which are balanced by personality type before the event begins		
Interview Partner 10	It would probably have been nice if we had smaller groups.	Smaller group sizes		
Interview Partner 10	A little 5 minute break would have been nice before the pitch.	Small break before the pitch		
Interview Partner 10	OK, the only feedback I gave is not going to be implemented." But I mean, these are small amounts. It's just about 100€. Even if we don't implement AI afterwards, then it's just been a loss for the 100€. In the end, this is still our project. And it's also a bit difficult to what extent we have to bring the investors in as stakeholders. Or do we just keep the money from them and keep updating them? That's just the kind of balance we're trying to find.	Uncertainty regarding the investors' claims to influence the project	Problem of the format	

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Interview Partner 10	That means originally it was said: Whatever we can do in a weekend. That was of course a bit promising. 2 weeks later we are still working on it.	Misleading communication before the events because the preannounced work progress could not be achieved		
Interview Partner 1	I don't know if that would have worked out so well in terms of time if we hadn't had a few things beforehand.	More time needed in general	Problem of the Ideathon	
Interview Partner 4	So, I think also spreading the event out over a couple of days might be another way of getting around this.			
Interview Partner 5	In the beginning it wasn't quite clear who was going to be with us.	Unclear Group formation at beginning		
Interview Partner 5	...time for the prototype was far too short.	Not enough time for prototyping		
Interview Partner 7	I wouldn't quite understand who was who, what were they coming from or where we were at in terms of timing. It wasn't super clear how long we had with each feedback person.	Missing introduction of the mentors and the feedback phase in general		
Interview Partner 7	...for me it would have helped to have a better understanding of what we were really trying to achieve with this feedback section. Or what should we get at the end.	Lacking transparency regarding the overall objective of the feedback phase		
Interview Partner 9	I think that the teams were not very well balanced in terms of different people, different knowledge, different capability of conducting the team or not conducting the team, so I don't know if they were picked randomly or how was the matchmaking, but I feel that they were not very balanced, not even in terms of size a team.	Imbalanced distribution of skills, knowledge and capacity between the groups		
Interview Partner 10	...but because we sometimes had too diverse a back-ground, we were challenged a bit too much, so that we sometimes got lost too much in details, although it was all about the big picture.	Too much diversity within the group slowed down the work process		
Interview Partner 10	Because we didn't really know, OK, they just introduced themselves very briefly, but what are they doing again? Do they now have a marketing background? Do they have a finance background now? I think we would have needed another 10 minutes to write down our top ten questions.	Lack of knowledge about mentors' skills and lack of preparation time		
Interview Partner 10	The team constellations were not so clear afterwards. For example, we had the core group of 4 girls and then we had some who also helped. We rewarded them with bounties afterwards. But does that make them a project owner or an idea owner?	Lacking feeling of ownership from some team members after the Ideathon		
Interview Partner 11	I felt that I didn't understand how the groups were formed or why those groups, or why those conditions people and also the groups were pretty big, too big I would say in that case. So I thought I felt that there should be more groups, smaller groups, because some-times there were groups with eight people.	Oversized groups		
Interview Partner 11	...at a certain point were only.... It felt to me were only evaluating projects from the point of view of is this investable or is this not investable or something like that and it failed to... At that point, it's too soon to say.	Improper focus of investors when evaluating projects		
Interview Partner 11	So at a certain point, the judges were being inter-viewed as they were customers, but they were applying as they were judges, right. And that's a bit weird. Because the groups themselves were also pitching those people what their business was instead of doing either interviews and explaining what the concept is and getting feedback from them. I think that step in the process should be much more like a usability testing to be honest.	Inconsistent following of the guidelines by the participants		

Interview Partner 11	But the slides that Sean had were actually saying the correct things, but people in practice were not doing the correct things. And what I would advise to do in that sense is: There's a reason why most of these exercises actually include people leaving the building, finding someone on the street and talking to them, right?			
Interview Partner 11	Someone pitched an idea and then people flocked to them and like yeah, I want to work on that idea. There was an inherent hierarchy in each of the groups, which was the initial pitcher of the idea was the leader and the facto leader not elected. But you know people flocked to that idea which means they're the spokes-person, which means they're the moderator of the discussion, which means they are the facilitator of the thing, which means they make the decisions. And that's not a good collaborative environment to be honest.	Inherent group hierarchy due to idea owner status of the idea generator		
Interview Partner 5	I found it a little bit difficult because the structures were not that clear and I thought we would create more in that time.	Lacking structure and adequate expectation management	Problem of the Buildathon	
Interview Partner 1	I think it was simply a topic or app that somehow moved us all very much.	The business idea		
Interview Partner 1	I think by Sean being there and presenting Problematic, we saw, OK there is a way. We can kind of do this, we can already pursue this if we want to and now it's up to us.	Chance to put the idea into practice	Reason to participate in the hackathon	
Interview Partner 7	But first, there was an idea that we were going to do loads, that we were going to achieve something massive and that was kind of pressuring me a little bit. It was both exciting and both making me wonder, how can I participate really in this or how can I bring value?	Workload outlook can stimulate and hinder motivation to participate		Motivational driver
Interview Partner 4	This idea, actually I came up with a group of other people back in September.	Long-term decision to participate	Timing as motivator	
Interview Partner 6	I think one week, actually the next Saturday works well. So, you keep yourself motivated.	Short period of time between events supports motivation		
Interview Partner 1	..can just do it in different locations.	More locations		
Interview Partner 7	But so, I think then, it would be possible to expand projects and participants.	Enlarge existing event formats		
Interview Partner 9	No, I don't believe that upscaling this event would create any benefits to the type of work and the type of development... I think that's one of the things that if you want to scale what you can do is make it more, repeat it more often. That's one, and you can do it in other places in the country for sure. But you still need, in terms of time allocation, people allocation brains in the room and all of that.	No enlargement of existing events, only higher frequency and different locations are feasible upscaling solutions	Upscaling existing format	Future growth opportunities
Interview Partner 9	There is nothing that Sean is bringing that another person couldn't bring.	Sean is no crucial success factor		
Interview Partner 10	And I think the group size was also good. I think 50 was a good capacity for the room alone.	Current size of participants was optimal		
Interview Partner 11	So, a potential for them to scale would be to, you know, do it in more cities, and doing it with a higher frequency, which is not digital scale, it's physical scale.	Higher frequency of events in more locations		
Interview Partner 11	And then I think it could be interesting too, if the format is geared towards the physical in person event. The format should also have things that can only happen in person in a physical event, right? I'm talking about group dynamics. I'm talking about stuff that people do together when they are together. Bonding, networking, having drinks, chilling, whatever.	Events should be adapted to the in person format to leverage the perks of a physical event on group dynamics		

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Interview Partner 1	Online, I probably would have drifted away at some point.	Less attention in online formats	Online event format	
Interview Partner 2	To be honest, I would probably not participate in this online.	Personal dislike of online format		
Interview Partner 3	And also having the online version would be very helpful. But if there is a hybrid version, it will be very helpful because it's open internationally. So wherever you are, you would be able to access the event.	More inclusivity through online format		
Interview Partner 4	Say 8 hours of your time remotely, whenever you want to do this thing. I think that would be a really nice way of doing things for sure.	Flexibility of timing		
Interview Partner 5	I'm not a big fan of online events like that because I always feel like it's much harder to really get into discussions with people, especially multiple people at once. And then it's very difficult. And also feeling that team connection that you have...	Lacking discussion culture		
Interview Partner 7	I mean making it online like sure it can work. For me, it would lose some value.	Less personal value		
Interview Partner 8	And I think with that it works better in presence. I'm not saying it will not work remotely...	better functioning workflows in persona		

Appendix C: Questionnaire for the Ideathon participant interviews

General Questions

- What is your name?
- What was your role at the event?
 - In which project did you participate?
 - Why did you decide for this project? (Feasibility or interest topic)
- What was the reason why you participated?
- What were your pre expectations on the event?
- Have you ever participated in such an event before and in which role?

Evaluation questions

- What do you think about the event in general?
- How did the event went from your perspective?
- What were challenges that you experienced during the event?
- How did you like the feedback phase? How did it affect your project development?
- What would you change in the future to improve the event?
- Would you participate again?

Investor questions

- What were your criteria to rate the different projects?
- Do you see any upscaling opportunities?

Appendix D: Anonymized transcript interview with interview partner 1 (Participant)

Date: 18th of April 2023

Location: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Duration: 30 minutes

Interview participants: Interview partner 1, Tim Grabe

Interviewee's role at the Ideathon event: Participant

Tim Grabe: Hi Interview partner 1, otherwise can you maybe first briefly say your name and what your official role was in the hackathon?

Interview partner 1: Yes, I'm Interview partner 1 and I think my role was Participant. However, we went in as Participants with a project already. So not as a free volunteer.

Tim Grabe: What project exactly was that?

Interview partner 1: We had a project course at university where we had to develop an app and on the last day of our presentations Sean, the founder of Problematic, came and listened to our presentation. They were all apps that have a specific impact on something. And then he told us what Problematic is and offered us to participate in this workshop, that is, whether we are interested in actually realizing our idea. And then we decided as a group that we would like to do it. That's why we are now trying to turn our university project at Problematic into reality.

Tim Grabe: That means you had already developed a clear idea in advance? And then you went there with this idea?

Interview partner 1: Exactly.

Tim Grabe: Like the name of the project again?

Interview partner 1: Our project is called "Project A".

Tim Grabe: Super perfect. What was the final reason why you decided to go to this hackathon and not to say we don't do it now?

Interview partner 1: What was the reason?

Tim Grabe: Yes, exactly.

Interview partner 1: Well, I think it was simply a topic or app that somehow moved us all very much. What do you mean moved, but somehow we were all very invested and thought the idea was very cool. I honestly believe that we wouldn't have pursued it if the presentation had been in front of our professor and then it would have been over. I think by Sean being there and presenting Problematic, we saw, OK there is a way. We can kind of do this, we can already pursue this if we want to and now it's up to us. And I think if Problematic hadn't been there, I'm not sure if we would have pursued it.

Tim Grabe: What was your expectation, then, specifically of the event?

Interview partner 1: I have to say, I was very curious. I really had no idea what was in store for us. He had explained the whole thing a bit, but I couldn't quite imagine what you would actually be doing all day. That's why my expectations were somehow in the sense of: support for the fact that you can somehow implement this idea in reality. But somehow I didn't have any more expectations than that. I just noticed a bit that you get help or that there are other volunteers who work in data analytics, for example, or in some project management roles, where they can support you more than you can, where you somehow haven't experienced so much yet.

Tim Grabe: That means, you had experiences with similar events before or not?

Interview partner 1: No, not at all yet. That's why I found it super interesting, because I've never participated in anything like that, even remotely.

Tim Grabe: And what do you think about the event in general now?

Interview partner 1: I thought it was really, really cool. Super interesting. I thought it was especially cool to have the feeling that, OK, I'm just getting a taste of reality, just as happens in these financing rounds. Especially at the end with the startups, pitching your idea to the investors and having them really take you apart a bit. So it was just a really cool experience, I

have to say. And I'm also super grateful that we were allowed to participate in it now. What I also find super cool is that the whole thing is free. So anyone who just wants to help can participate. Because I think that otherwise it's often like this: Yes, I'd be happy to help you, but then you want some kind of compensation for it. And that's something I find very unique here.

Tim Grabe: That's right. And what did you think of the course of events? So did you think it went well or was anything missing?

Interview partner 1: I thought it went very well, in any case. I think what I would have liked, well if you come now like us from the university, you would have a bit more from the organizer, because the day was already very planned, then I would have just for example again planned more: OK, this half hour is now a break and then everyone takes a break. Because I think that made the day drag on for me at some point, and I also noticed that from 3:00/16:00 p.m., people were sitting together, but not much was happening. I think that saying, OK, we only have one day, you don't want to take a break because everyone is so committed and motivated. That's why I think I would have liked the organizer to have just at 3 p.m. or so, because lunch was not really a break, so that at some point you really have to force the people from the organizer's side a bit to take a half hour break now. Because I think a bit of effectiveness has been lost.

Tim Grabe: And in general, what else was going on in the individual phases? Did you find everything good or did you miss things? Time for the individual phases, for example, or not?

Interview partner 1: No, I wouldn't necessarily say that. I think that's also difficult for us, because we were already a very advanced group. For example, we already had something like the prototype because we had done it at university. I don't know if that would have worked out so well in terms of time if we hadn't had a few things beforehand, I have to say. But because we had already worked out this idea, already had a presentation for it, already had a Figma prototype about it, the time was actually always sufficient and not stressful or anything. But I

can well imagine that it would have been different if we hadn't had it before. And actually, you come without slides and prototype.

Tim Grabe: How did you find the feedback phase, because you were already a bit different from the others? To what extent did this feedback phase, where completely external people came in, help you, because theoretically you already had a feedback phase when your new group members joined in the first place.

Interview partner 1: Yes, I found that super interesting, because before it was more like: Oh, your idea is so cool, can I join and help you? During the feedback phase, there was a bit more questioning, which was different. And I also found it super interesting during the feedback to just see how some people kind of tell us: "Oh my God, you're going to save the world, you have the best idea ever. To: "This idea can't do anything, already exists or is just useless." So I thought that was kind of interesting, we only got feedback three times and it varied so much from each other. I think that was a good choice, somehow, of different people and different views. That was definitely very interesting. I would say that was one of the most useful parts of the whole workshop. To get this feedback again not only from investors who somehow point out every little mistake, but really just people, normal people, who say what they think about the idea. That was definitely an important part.

Tim Grabe: And how did the feedback phase influence your project now?

Interview partner 1: Actually, I would say we didn't change that much. But it did point out a few things to us. For example, we already had this feedback round at the university. It was also based on Problematic, because our professor was at Problematic, so it was exactly the same. And there, for example, people have this Confidentiality, which is just super important for us, just these legal issues, or also that we just really need a target market first, so we really have to start small and really concentrate first. We didn't fully respond to the feedback. They wanted us to focus only on depression or only on one small thing, we just don't see that as what we

want to offer somehow. But, that we just focus on one target market, just one university at the beginning and just see how it goes and go from there and not directly say, yes, all of Portugal. I think that's good feedback that we're integrating. But I don't think we've changed that much now, not fundamentally.

Tim Grabe: But then again, why didn't you adapt or change some things?

Interview partner 1: Well, I think the only thing that we didn't change... I think the other feedback was much more positive and we just asked them things like that, for example the name we also brainstormed together with them, how they would take the name, what they think when they hear it. And then depending on that, we didn't change it, but just recorded it for us, the feedback so to speak. And that's what we're going to integrate into our decision making now, as kind of changing things. And for example, this very first feedback was, they just said, we have to target ourselves super. The meant specialize you on a disease. But we are not Mental Health and we want to be there for every problem. Then we decided: No, we understand the business sense behind it, but that just doesn't make sense for us, because we don't stand for that. So, we actually stand for general things and I think that's why we decided against it. If we now specialize in something, that's not what we wanted to achieve with our app. That we address the problem for everyone and that everyone has the feeling that I can go to this app and talk to someone about anything.

Tim Grabe: I can fully understand that. What is also exciting with you is this difference. You already went in with a specific idea and now you've gone out with more. So how does it look now, how did your idea develop further through the hackathon?

Interview partner 1: Well, I would say in any case, you just had a lot of hours. We just talked about very many little details, something like the name, how to call the therapists now, we shouldn't call them like that. So super many little things, where you just don't have the time otherwise. And also because we were a very large team, we jumped around a lot between things.

Then we didn't concentrate on one thing. Sometimes it was exhausting that we had to keep... During the break, Lilly told me that she somehow had the feeling that we were more and more insecure, or that we weren't planning more and more, but were more and more insecure. I think that's part of the process, that you sort of realize: OK, there are 1000 small steps that you have to think about and tackle and then you're also echoed from all sorts of right sides. Of course, it's not that easy when three of us are sitting there and we all want to go in the same direction, but then you come to an agreement pretty quickly. So I think the hackathon just gave us a lot of different perspectives and just showed us how many little things we still have to think about, consider and discuss.

Tim Grabe: Now just again in relation to the group size. You said you were a big group, would you see that as a negative point now?

Interview partner 1: I think we were a bit too big in parts. That's why we split up at some point. Yes, I think groups of 5 to 6 people sometimes have it easier, because with us, conversations arose in the conversation, or not everyone can say something about new things. So then the benefit of different opinions is no longer given, that is, with too many opinions. Not everyone can express their opinion. And I think that we were actually a bit too big. According to my experience now, I would say that groups of 5 to 6 are probably the best.

Tim Grabe: OK. Other than the group size, are there any other things you guys want to change or add to the event?

Interview partner 1: No, I thought it was really super cool. I thought it was especially cool how committed the people are, how unbelievably enthusiastic they can be about your project, which somehow makes you even more motivated. And that was just really cool, also so inspiring. So I thought it was a really super cool event, I have to say.

Tim Grabe: Do you think you could have experienced the same event in a different format, like an online format or something?

Interview partner : Mmh, no I think. I have to say, by the fact that the event was really from 10:00 in the morning to 8:00 at night, I found it already difficult to concentrate then at some point. And I think the only thing that kept me going is that you're there in the room with the others and you can talk to them and act. And I also found it very interesting to get to know these personalities. Online, I probably would have drifted away at some point.

Tim Grabe: Do you see any other upscaling methods or opportunities for the model then?

Interview partner 1: Well, you could do it much more often in any case and you can just do it in different locations. So instead of just one event, with the help of 3 4 project managers in Lisbon, we could offer a workshop every week.

Tim Grabe: But you don't mean that it has to be Sean, it can also be other people?

Interview partner 1: Yes.

Tim Grabe: Okay, and now the very last question. Would you participate again or not for the time being?

Interview partner 1: I think that since I'm a student here in Nova and have a lot to do, I probably wouldn't participate again until May, for example. But I could super well imagine, if one is back in September, then to participate again.

Tim Grabe: And then just go there without an idea?

Interview partner 1: Yes, yes, I think it's actually interesting. That's something new again.

Tim Grabe: Totally cool, perfect. So that was actually it. Do you still have things you want to get rid of?

Interview partner 1: No, but I already had the feeling that this was kind of a pretty unique thing now. I never heard of it before. I thought it was super cool and I was also just super grateful that I or we even had this opportunity to experience it. And I feel like I learned super much for life. And it was just a super cool group of people. So different, so really with completely different backgrounds, just character-wise very different, which was also not always so easy,

but was super interesting in the group work. And I think I've now really taken a lot with me for life.

Tim Grabe: Very cool, thank you.

Appendix E: Anonymized transcript interview with interview partner 2 (PCP, Judge)

Date: 18th of April 2023

Location: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Duration: 30 minutes

Interview participants: Interview partner 2, Tim Grabe

Interviewee's role at the Ideathon event: Participant, Judge

Tim Grabe: Good, perfect. So yeah, I mean just for clarification purposes, maybe you could just like tell your name and what your role was at the event?

Interview partner 2: OK, so my name is Interview partner 2, and I actually did kind of a two role thing. Because I joined first just as a participant. And I didn't really tell anyone that I was going to be a judge later on to not change the interactions. And so, I really get to see both sides of it, like: Hey, genuinely I am interested in this project, and I would like to help with my skills. And then later as a judge to hear about the different pitches. Of course, that introduces a tiny bias because I'm going to like the project that I've worked on better. But it was really interesting for me to see both sides.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, I was super surprised as well as you turned out to be an investor because I just remember that you were sitting in that one group and also working on it. And at the end it was like: Oh, but he was also an investor, you know?

Interview partner 2: I think it's also part because I hadn't really understood the format. But then I think it was actually really cool to have both sides. In general, like in my current life I also invest in small startups. But originally, I'm really like a Doer. You know, I love technical problems and so for me it's cool to see the whole product also.

Tim Grabe: I probably agree. And which project did you work on again?

Interview partner 2: Project A. Which is the one with mental health for students.

Tim Grabe: And why did you decide for that project if you had the choice between all four?

Interview partner 2: Because I thought that this was the sort of... I thought it was the one that has had the most problems, but also has the sort of biggest payoff. So, I like companies that are in sort of the well-being and generally mental health, and I like companies in that space. And also, I think what they're trying to do is kind of ballsy, but also that comes with a lot of problems, like legal, quality of the care. But I think it's worth to do something that is problematic. Because the actual payoff on you knows, the quality of life of students, society as a whole to me that is what is most interesting. In comparison there is one project that I actually kind of disliked, so you could use that as a comparison for my least favorite project.

Tim Grabe: OK. And which one was that?

Interview partner 2: Which is funny because it's the one that actually won. They have the same, Project A and Project B had the same valuation. And for me Project B is greenwashing. If you know anything about carbon that's produced as part of our daily activities as humans. Project B to me is more like, oh, it feels like sustainability and so it makes me feel better as a consumer and for me, no, it's just hard data. And my comment to them at some point was like: OK, but a vegan restaurant is always going to win compared to a BBQ restaurant because a burger is 10 kilogram of CO₂ per serving. A salad is like 1/2 kilogram of CO₂ per serving. So here you go. Problem solved.

Tim Grabe: That's true. I agree. Yeah, I didn't see it from that perspective, but you're definitely right.

Interview partner 2: But I don't want to shit on people's ideas. I'm not going to be as front towards this and I think it is still interesting to raise awareness of these things. That I fully agree. It's good to raise awareness. So, in that sense, maybe that can be good, but I don't like when it's greenwashing and it's feel good stuff that doesn't translate to reality and like there's the red green flags that go on.

Tim Grabe: Were these kind of factors also influencing you as an investor? So, what were your criteria to rate the different projects at the end?

Interview partner 2: Yes, that's definitely one of them. Like what problem does it really solve? But for example, there is the one about walking more and meeting working groups. I feel like there is... OK, so we have a crowded space like if I feel like tons of people already trying to solve this or making you walk more. But still I thought that, in the proposal, there was a bit of charm to me. So, I still made a small offer for this one because of social aspect that they were promoting. So yeah, there's sort of feel good and there's sort of hard data. Does it solve the real problem? And then maybe I'm here.

Tim Grabe: It's really interesting to know. And how did you, because there was not really clarified, at least as I heard from Sean... because you were now investing real money, small amounts, but did you actually think about getting now the 1% share which you offered if they accepted your offer?

Interview partner 2: So, I was kind of clumsy in my offers and none of them were accepted because I was asking for too much. But it's also because I had to go. I had a dinner. I was already late, and so I just texted Sean, like, oh, I want to put this on that. And I was just coming up with the percentage, I don't want to think about it right now. So, none of my offers were actually accepted because I was being too greedy in what I'm asking in exchange. Because the amount of euros is very low compared to each share, compared to a real world scenario where you may invest €20,000 or €50,000. It was hard for me to get the big deal of it. So, you have enough time, but also it was a bit too much like monopoly money. I didn't think about my offer. It made it harder to think if my offer is good.

Tim Grabe: So, would that also be like a point you would choose in the future or in general, are there other points you would choose to improve the event?

Interview partner 2: Yeah, I think make it, you know, maybe.... OK, when you're offering this conversion of euro versus share you could have maybe a little slider and then it could tell you: OK, this is a fair offer. This is a cheap offer. You know, a little bit of a guideline of offers that have been accepted before. And also, in my life as an investor, I've never had to ask for specific valuation because I don't invest enough to set my own criteria. I invest in a small ticket of €10,000. So, there are larger investors that have already set the market cap. So, it's something that I've never had to do.

Tim Grabe: OK. And other points you would improve except just the guidelines here, but rather from the whole event structure and everything?

Interview partner 2: There could be a little paragraph on how to invest and have examples of trades that have been accepted before, like either in text or maybe like I said, that little slider. That would say blue is fair, green is like you're selling yourself short something like that and orange to red is like you're ripping them off basically.

Tim Grabe: But coming back to the question from before, did you expect to go out with a real share for example like real asset of the project or not? Nevertheless, they didn't get accepted, but beforehand you thought, OK, now I'm investing in this project and now I'm a serious investor of them or what was it like?

Interview partner 2: I think the sum is a bit too low to feel really... OK, no, I will still say it's well priced because if it was €1000, I would be like I don't know like maybe those guys will finish never and I'll never hear from them ever again. So, I think it's kind of well-priced. But it's still hard to feel like, OK, I'm truly investing in this project for the long term. But actually, I feel a little bit invested in this project and I've offered to start coding. I've actually started to code an app, so I've put a little bit of code down, unfortunately there's a building event this Saturday to actually build the app, but I'm going to be traveling so I won't be there. But I spent like a day and a half on making the very basics of an app. But I'm also like, I don't really care

if they find someone else, not use it, use different technology, because for me it's also like I'm using this as a learning. As a little bit of a learning sandbox so I can follow a little bit of a few YouTube videos, use ChatGPT and so on. Like try to have a quick app. So, I feel more committed. I feel more invested that way than I am with the money, because with the money it feels a bit too unreal.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, I get that because usually investments are never made within the range of 0 to 100 euros.

Interview partner 2: And if it became a serious project, there would be a real round.

Tim Grabe: That's true. You said that you cannot participate on Saturday otherwise, we would see each other again because for sure, I'm also participating in that event. to just see how everything's going and how everything's finishing up. So, I'm also excited to see what's going to happen there. And what was your reason to participate in the event format in general?

Interview partner 2: Uhm, so I quite like hackathons and I haven't participated in one for some time. And I like this more than a hackathon because it feels like it's bringing a much more diverse set of people. Like Hackathon have often just Tech people. Or some people will be like advising or something. But here I felt like they were the sort of right balance that you would actually find in a tech startup maybe, like product people, business people, some coders, some investors, some advisors, like that. That felt really right of, OK, it's small scale, but it's the kind of things that I'm used to in like, let's build something real.

Tim Grabe: Interesting. And when was that? And how often did you in total participate in hackathons?

Interview partner 2: Maybe five times but the last one that I participated in was during sort of extended COVID time. So, the format was all online. And then they would be, uh, I don't know. I think it was like six months long. They had, I don't know, like 6 tracks of projects. So, the six tracks of themes and then people would kind of propose a solution to address one thing.

Tim Grabe: OK. But they had 6 themes, not six months of timing?

Interview partner 2: No, no, but also a lot of months.

Tim Grabe: Yeah. Wow. OK.

Interview partner 2: Because it was all online via Slack, like interposed Slack so people would work on something one weekend and be like, hey, look at what I've done. So, it really missed the that sort of quick interaction and like, OK, it feels like we're going forward.

Tim Grabe: But would you then frame that also as a hackathon?

Interview partner 2: It had the prototype part of it. It had sort of: Let's build a prototype of something. But then I think, because it was so long, it was sort of killing the momentum.

Tim Grabe: I get that. Do you then think it could have been done, online in general? For example, when Sean is now thinking about upscaling, do you think online is an option or not with those experiences in mind?

Interview partner 2: I much prefer doing this in person. And you know, I feel like even in person you can have like.... in these events, you can totally.... It's not like a company. You haven't really filtered people, so at these events you can have someone who's kind of mediocre and then demands to be part of in all the conversations, for example, and it's kind of hard to say no because you know it's like we're all polite and stuff. But when that happens online, it's a lot harder. Like you're in a zoom call with eight people and someone, never shuts up. There's a lot of fatigue from that.

Tim Grabe: It's true. And when you had this online experience as the last experience and now, you're coming here to the Hackathon, what were your pre-expectations on the event in general?

Interview partner 2: I didn't come with that much expectation. I think I didn't expect to like any of the projects as much as I've actually liked them. So, I think it exceeded my almost no expectation.

Tim Grabe: OK, that's cool. So, you would also then say that the event went well from your perspective?

Interview partner 2: Oh yeah, I think so. I got from both, you know, seeing what people are working on, what people are excited on, but also, socially, I think I've made two good contacts with the investors. One of them is a very good friend of one of my friends and someone that I will probably invest a little money with, so it felt like: Oh yeah, I'm meeting people that I should already know. So socially, I feel like I get a lot too, which is really nice, and I know I don't get that same feeling as online. To be honest, I would probably not participate in this online.

Tim Grabe: OK. It's great to know. And I think, these type of events also sometimes help to get to know the startup scene and stuff in Lisbon, you know? Because I think usually you always see the same people then hopping around. But before, if you never participated in those events, you probably never met them before, right?

Interview partner 2: Yeah, and also, it's slightly different. They're like the earlier start up people. The people are still in school, or they have ideas, but they haven't really formed them. And I think the people that are running a well-funded startup or are getting traction, you probably won't find them in hackathons because they're already so busy that on the weekend they prefer to go hiking or surfing than to go into more pitches.

Tim Grabe: What do you think now, in general, about the event?

Interview partner 2: Sorry, what's the question?

Tim Grabe: So, like just to resume from your perspective, what do you now think in general about the event?

Interview partner 2: I think it was fantastic. I think it's one of the best hackathons that I've been to. I think Sean does a really good job. The structure I think was quite nice. I think too many hackathons that I have been to were just focused on things like: OK, let's write code to get a demo as quickly as possible. But I think maybe that misses the point and it's more about refining

the product and then making mockups and sort of iteratively converging to something interesting. So yeah, it's good.

Tim Grabe: So, one initial part, if you would ask Sean, probably would be the feedback phase. How would you rate that? Because I think during that point you were still working within the group when the feedback was given? Like when the external feedback givers were coming in, I think around 3:00 PM. How would you rate that for the whole process, and did it affect your project development within the project?

Interview partner 2: Yeah, I think that part is important because it's kind of the first time you pitch. So, you've been on it for a few hours, you cannot have something that you've never confronted. Maybe you have people that give you positive and negative feedback in your group, but then now you have a future judge who says something like: OK, you haven't thought about this, and this is critical. We had a feedback that was like: OK, you, have to think of what will make a student want to use this. And I thought that was quite good. And I think you have enough time after that to be able to address that and hopefully incorporate it in your final pitch. So, I think that's a good part of it.

Tim Grabe: Do you think about any improvements that can still be made, just in general, about the event?

Interview partner 2: Let me think. I haven't given this enough thought. No, nothing. Nothing really pops up in my mind, but I will give it some thought and see if something comes up.

Tim Grabe: I mean, that's also kind of an answer because if nothing really popped up right now, then it must not be something super urgent.

Interview partner 2: No, nothing. I wasn't like: Oh, this is terrible.

Tim Grabe: And then just one last question. Would you participate again?

Interview partner 2: Yeah, I would participate again.

Tim Grabe: Cool. Perfect. Yes.

Interview partner 2: Yeah, I think I would have the capacity for one event every three months, let's say. One every two months or three months, depending.

Tim Grabe: I think that's actually the schedule of the Hackathon. It's like once every three to four months, right? I'm not sure yet, but it feels like that Sean is doing that around that time. But yeah, that's perfect. So, thanks a lot Mathieu! Do you have anything else you want to share?

Interview partner 2: I really like that it has made me want to build a prototype, you know, because I'm learning something new and there are all these things that are in the back of my mind. OK, like I want to learn this. I want to learn that. But then sometimes it's kind of hard to come up with, you know? Like what when am I going to build? Like a shopping app, a note taking app, like it's kind of boring. So, it's funnier if I have like: OK, I'm building the app that we talked about.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, it gives you a reason to actually learn these things. Like a proper one and not those stupid examples, which you have on the learning platforms probably.

Interview partner 2: Yeah, exactly.

Tim Grabe: That's super cool. Thank you so much Interview partner 2.

Appendix F: Anonymized transcript interview with interview partner 3 (Participant)

Date: 18th of April 2023

Location: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Duration: 30 minutes

Interview participants: Interview partner 3, Tim Grabe

Interviewee's role at the Ideathon event: Participant

Tim Grabe: Alright, so Interview partner 3, can you just like shortly tell me your name and what your role was at the event?

Interview partner 3: OK, so my name is Interview partner 3. So I came as a participant for the event and I came like specifically for "Project A". We had this project from a previous school here at Nova and we came to develop it in the event.

Tim Grabe: You didn't decide on the event for that project because you already developed it before, but what was the reason? Why did you decide in the university course to do this project and not something else?

Interview partner 3: I mean, we did the project in university course already.

Tim Grabe: I know, but why did you, in university, decide for this this project, especially this one?

Interview partner 3: Ah, like how we came up with the idea and everything?

Tim Grabe: Yes. And also why you then chose it because probably you had several ideas. So why did you decide especially for this one, like for this idea, not another idea you had, you know?

Interview partner 3: So during the first class we had several worldwide challenges like no poverty, no food waste, climate change, mental health and many topics. And then we need to sit in a table for the challenges we want to build a project for or we want to work on. So we will

randomly sit at those table, each person according to what they want to work on. And me and Person A, Person B and they all, we sit on the same table and at the beginning we had two ideas. One was about an app for well-being like with yoga exercises, breathing exercise and all that. And the other idea we had was connecting students. It was about connecting students who are struggling with mental health, with coaches, psychotherapist yoga teachers and all those that can be related to that job. In the beginning this was the idea because I had it inspired, from another course I had in Country A where we had an app for coaching. Because coaching was not really trendy, but it was still new, so people don't know where to go. So in a project course, something like that was developed and I wanted to make it for student and mental health in general. And then Person A said that since she had a bachelor in psychology, that psychology students know everything about psychology, but they are having hard time to find internships and 1st experience jobs. So since the app is for doing good and we want it for free, it's easier to bring students who are willing to gain experience rather than professionals who are already profitable and have a lot of meetings. So we did a project with three persons and the other project had three persons and we developed for around 6 weeks of the course. We had already the idea, the funding plan, a first design, the competition analysis, the problem and solution like an entrepreneurial presentation.

Tim Grabe: And if you had all these things already, what was then the reason why you participated in the event?

Interview partner 3: So, Sean assisted in the final presentation and he said that he had a platform and event for Ideation and it would be the occasion to bring the project to life because it's still just a PowerPoint presentation, like sitting on Moodle and no one knows about it and we just present it. But the project is not working in real life, so to bring it in real life. And like they have, investors and investors can see the project, can be interested, they can invest in and they already did, and also we needed someone to develop the app because we don't have

development and coding skills and also we were missing financial skills like someone who want to do the finance and to develop it and bring it to real life and not keep it in the stage of a presentation.

Tim Grabe: So your pre-expectations on this event were to get these resources?

Interview partner 3: Yes.

Tim Grabe: Did you have any other pre-expectations on the event?

Interview partner 3: No, because we know that it's a competition. So we don't know if it will be a winning project or not. And we just wanted to try and see if we can get a real startup from it in the future.

Tim Grabe: But so you were rather expecting to get additional resources as you already mentioned or were you also experiencing a development in your idea? That this would further develop in some other ways.

Interview partner 3: We wanted to develop the idea, but at the end of the event we came to the initial idea we had, because we thought that as much as we add things, we also tried in the beginning, like before coming to the event, to combine our project and the other project like about yoga and exercises and make it holistic. But the more we add features, the more the app became complicated and it's difficult to go through it, like it's not user friendly. And even for us to explain and to find then the content to add and the people. If we were looking to therapist, we will need then to look also for features and content creators and everything and even during the event we tried to add many things but then we removed them and we kept it simple. So we talked a lot because each person in the event had feedback or had a suggestion. And we studied them all, but at the end, I think the idea was almost the same. Like it didn't change a lot.

Tim Grabe: Interesting, but I mean it's also a learning process, eh?

Interview partner 3: I mean, maybe we changed some things in the design we presented, but the idea that was pitched was almost the same, just apart some details.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, but I mean, that's good. So what did you think in general about the event, now after it is gone?

Interview partner 3: I think it was a good opportunity for networking. Also to know about the real value of our project, if it's a successful project and what we think about it, but also what other people think about it. If they would be willing to try the app for now and how to start. For example, we had a suggestion that we can start without even launching an app and start contacting students and contacting the other students and manage between them through Excel sheets and emails and try if the idea works or not. We had also the feedback of many professionals in the startup event. And I mean yes, we got investments, we had other teammates who are helping us with developing the project. So it was really helpful. Also for us to know that it could work beyond the course.

Tim Grabe: So what did you say now as a resumé, do you think the event went well? Or don't you think so from your perspective?

Interview partner 3: And yeah, for sure it went well because, like, we were the winning team. So I can only say that to add. And we also get the investment for the project and we started developing a prototype for the app.

Tim Grabe: But also from the organizational perspective, so not for you guys if it went well, but rather in general?

Interview partner 3: The agenda you mean? The agenda was designed in a good way. To present everyone and then present the projects that are out there from the beginning and then to divide each others in groups and start with the press release. This is something we didn't have before coming. And then ... where's the agenda? I think we did everything that was mentioned, then we had to do a draft design mockup for our project. And until the page it was very organized.

Tim Grabe: And how about the feedback phase? Because did it had any priority for you or did it affect your project development in some way?

Interview partner 3: Not that much because the user had different feedback. I think the two of the judges and were also giving feedback. And he gave us at the beginning the really negative feedback in the feedback phase. But then, like this feedback, we just took into consideration in terms of specifying more that it's not professional therapy. Which is already part of the project, but maybe when saying the speech not as clear as it should be. Then also we had feedback about doing group discussions which for example we didn't do because it would have trust issues. And if everyone is not professional, then all talking about mental health would generate more negative thoughts than positive things. And we also got really, really positive feedback like someone saying that he will definitely use the app if he finds it.

Tim Grabe: Great. I mean, that's great.

Interview partner 3: It was great.

Tim Grabe: And did you have any challenges you were experiencing during the event?

Interview partner 3: Uh, yes. The timing, like to come up with the final presentation on time because we did some changes on it and changes on the design. So we were working until the last minute and hesitating about the design, how to navigate through the app. And this we did it until the last minute, even if we had a previous design. But on the draft phase, we divided into two groups. One half were the users and one group were the volunteers. And so we had the idea that came up from the volunteers group. One idea that came from the final users group. And we also had our initial design. So we needed to agree on one user journey.

Tim Grabe: But also, for example, with group sizes and different personalities?

Interview partner 3: Yeah, the group size was a bit like bigger than usual. So I think we were more than seven. That's why in the beginning we divided each other in two groups. And it's more difficult to manage than for people like we were initially. So, but it was helpful. At least we got more insights about what we were doing.

Tim Grabe: That's cool. And would you change anything in future to improve the event? Because you said now, you came there with your initial idea and you basically ended up with your initial idea again. So would you change something in future to improve the event?

Interview partner 3: No, I mean because our objective wasn't to find a new idea. So even if we ended up with almost the same idea, it's OK. I think most of the group, it was almost the same at the ideation hackathon that we want to win to go to the Buildathon. So being able to do that is also so important. Our initial objective wasn't to find a new idea. It was also to test the idea and see if it will work or if it needs some changes and adjustments. But it was for that idea that we came to the event.

Tim Grabe: And are you also participating in the Buildathon now, which is happening on Saturday?

Interview partner 3: Yes, since it was a winning project, so we are participating in the second event.

Tim Grabe: And what are your expectations on that one?

Interview partner 3: On that one I hope we go with an app, like not launched on Google stores, but I mean develop it. We should develop it and we should have clear directions on what to do next to launch it. And yeah, that's it. During the Buildathon we should basically build the app. Not only design, but should be working.

Tim Grabe: And would you generally say that you would participate in this Hackathon / Buildathon again? For example, with some other project.

Interview partner 3: I don't think so, because if we would not had done this project, I think I wouldn't go. I mean with no other classes, I already had a lot to do. So if I didn't have a specific project, a specific idea in mind like a personal objective or team objective that we went there for, I wouldn't go just to participate in the event.

Tim Grabe: OK.

Interview partner 3: And in the future, I don't want to be dealing with two real projects at the same time.

Tim Grabe: Sure, that makes sense. And did you ever participate already before in such an event?

Interview partner 3: Yes, I participated here in a two days event and we needed to find and develop, it was like a design thinking addition and then a design thinking process and then the pitching. And it was to find an idea for the Pingo Doce app, to make people use it.

Tim Grabe: OK. And in which role were you in there? Also as participant?

Interview partner 3: Yeah, I was participant. It was in teams and we were allocated randomly by the Innovation lab.

Tim Grabe: And how was this one different to the one you now had from Problematic?

Interview partner 3: The topic it was already set for us. Like they have the challenges or the problem and we have to find the solution for this specific one. And also we had many workshops like a workshop for ideation and a workshop for design thinking, I don't remember them all. And we also had some activities. We had one activity in which we wrote random words, for example, beauty, hospitality, funding, blah... And then your teammates will randomly select tools and you have to come up with an idea from this tool. I mean, we did many activities like that during the event before each phase. Yeah, it had the workshop and the activities.

Tim Grabe: And in terms of people participating in there, were there any differences?

Interview partner 3: We had in each team at least one Pingo Doce executives, but it was usually more than one. So in my team there were 3. Three people from Pingo Doce and we were a team of four students from Nova.

Tim Grabe: And in terms of backgrounds, like academically, were there any differences?

Interview partner 3: I mean, it was diverse, but still maybe less diverse. In terms of nationality representations it was almost the same. It were many nationalities. For Pingo Doce the staff

was from IT, was from HR, from the digital and also from marketing. So from many backgrounds. And even as like we were 3 masters in management, but I had a marketing expertise, someone had the masters in entrepreneurship and innovation and someone else had business analytics I think. And another student from bachelors, so it were many specializations, but in the business field.

Tim Grabe: Perfect. So yeah, Interview partner 3, that was basically it from my questions....

Interview partner 3: But if you want to compare it to the hackathon, it was also diverse in terms of nationalities, of ages and also of what people do in their life, because there were many developers. For example, our team will get three in software and development. And we had also someone in committee like she was doing comments. So which is something totally different.

Tim Grabe: Hey perfect, thanks for sharing all those insights Interview partner 3. Do you have anything else you just want to share? Like a topic which we haven't talked about yet and you still want to mention?

Interview partner 3: Uhm, I don't know.

Tim Grabe: Algood. It was super cool. It was a big pleasure. I think it was some really valuable and nice insights. Thank you so much for taking your time and everything.

Interview partner 3: Thank you.

Tim Grabe: And if you have like later on also some research, interviews or surveys I need to fill out for your master thesis just hit me up. I'm always there and we see each other on Saturday anyway, because for sure I'll also be present again. And hopefully then we'll also be able to focus a little bit more on your progress within the group because then we're only 2 groups, you know, because it was so hard to always like switch and take notes of all the things at the same time. So I'm really looking forward to that one actually, because yeah, I think it's going to be nice. Oh damn it, I forgot one question. About upscaling of this event, you know because Sean

is thinking about upscaling. Do you see any way the same thing could also have happened, like in an upscale version, for example through an online format or other things? Do you think that will work?

Interview partner 3: Yeah, I think so. I mean, to get more people if it's that, you could advertise on universities and not only Nova. We have Nova SBE, we have Nova Lisbon, we have Catholica, and many other universities. And he only came to one class, so only those people know it. But there are many people here who have many ideas and who have developed projects either for classes or just for themselves or just an idea from their bachelors before coming. And also having the online version would be very helpful because, I was in Country A until Thursday and I came on Thursday, not specifically to attend on Saturday, but because I had many things I needed to attend physically. But if there is a hybrid version, it will be very helpful because it's open internationally. So wherever you are, you would be able to access the event.

Tim Grabe: And do you think that the experience would still be the same even if it's in a hybrid or online format?

Interview partner 3: I think yes, but the teams should be less. Maybe maximum a team of 6 or maximum 7 because it's easier to manage and it's easier to divide the tasks. So when we will have someone online and the others, they are physically present, they will just open a teams meeting like we are doing and share the screen. They can talk and still share their insights, ideas, screens and everything I mean. And like this it can work.

Tim Grabe: OK. Yeah, perfect. So now, I'm officially done with my question, sorry for that. I forgot the last one.

Appendix G: Anonymized transcript interview with interview partner 4 (Idea Owner)

Date: 24th of April 2023

Location: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Duration: 30 minutes

Interview participants: Interview partner 4, Tim Grabe

Interviewee's role at the Ideathon event: Idea Owner

Tim Grabe: All good, no. Worries perfect. So, Interview partner 4, should we just start? Can you please tell me shortly your name and what your role was at the Ideathon event?

Interview partner 4: So, my name is Interview partner 4. And I guess my role was as team leader for the Project B group.

Tim Grabe: What is your background actually? Just like one or two sentences.

Interview partner 4: So, I currently work as a researcher in cognitive neuroscience. So, I don't understand business very well at all. So, part of this experience, I guess for me, was just to try and get a bit more understanding about how the real world works.

Tim Grabe: So, and you mentioned that you were like the idea owner of the Project B and what's really interesting for me then was, why did you decide for this project? Like why did you come up with this idea?

Interview partner 4: This idea, actually I came up with a group of other people back in September at one of the previous events and I guess sustainability is an obvious problem and we were just thinking of some way that you can tackle it directly, but in kind of a local way. So, something specific to Lisbon, and so we were thinking of Lisbon restaurants and, you know, I'm always quite frustrated to go to supermarkets and just see how much plastic everything is wrapped in. It just feels so unnecessary, and it just felt like something that we could do something about, basically something manageable.

Tim Grabe: So, it was a mixture of interest but also of feasibility?

Interview partner 4: For me feasibility was a big part of it because it became apparent to me very quickly that in these ideation sessions, things spiral out very quickly. Everyone has very different ideas. It's hard to bring everything down to something kind of achievable. And so, it's really aiming small, but hopefully in a way that would be kind of impactful and actually today we're meeting the group to discuss it again and to try and get some basic kind of data together and to start making first steps towards practically realizing it. So hopefully it is achievable.

Tim Grabe: That's cool. And just for recording purposes. So, the Project B just shortly, what is it about?

So, the idea was originally, it's changed a bit now, but it was going to be an app where people would rate restaurants, but rather based on the usual criteria of how nice the food is, how nice the atmosphere is, more sustainable criteria, so whether or not their take away packaging was, you know? Not single use plastic or not. You know where there are kind of more vegan and kind of less beef oriented items on the menu. There are various different things that some people can rate based on that, and then that might help people then to just change the way they think about choosing restaurants. And now it has sort of changed because I think after the last session, we're now trying to make sort of a plugin that will, rather than rely on user ratings, it will kind of more filter restaurants based on those that seem to be more green compared to less green. So now I guess it's almost taking the decision away from users in the sense that you don't have to actively think about which restaurants will be able to filter across and then that will take the pain of that decision making process for people, hopefully.

Tim Grabe: And which data are you then using to filter?

Interview partner 4: So yeah, this is the challenge. So, we were thinking originally of for example going on TripAdvisor and just scraping lots and lots of user reviews and then kind of pouring over that text and then just finding keywords and phrases that would be most associated

with more sustainable kind of practices. And then of course, verifying that so we can't purely just rely on a data-driven approach. We have to do a little bit of careful checking, but hopefully this will be kind of a semi supervised way of very quickly getting a lot of information about restaurants without having to go to every restaurant, interview them and go about it that way.

Tim Grabe: And was that this whole change? Was that the result of his idea? Like the whole change in the idea, or was it afterwards?

Interview partner 4: Yeah, I think so. Team partner A kind of came on board and she, I think, has been working on a very similar problem outside of Problematic. So, she had a lot of really, really smart insights about this stuff. It was, I think, her suggestion actually to make it more about having this filtering approach rather than a rating app in the sense that it would just be faster and more achievable. And so, I think it's really a practicality based thing that made us move towards this approach.

Tim Grabe: Generally, now coming a little bit back. Before you applied for the event with your idea, what were in general your pre-expectations on it?

Interview partner 4: Yeah, good question. So, I guess just to be involved in a, you know, good project. You know, I don't have kids. My pre-expectations I guess... The reason I was interested was because for while I wanted to do something kind of voluntarily and this came up. And you know, I'm continually getting angry about lots of things in the world not going particularly well and it's sort of like combining frustration plus wanting to do some volunteer work, it just seemed like a really nice outlook for those things. And it has been really good for that. I guess I was expecting the overall event to be a little more kind of pure volunteering or volunteering for the sake of it, but there's quite a strong business element to it, which I think, from a practical point of view makes perfect sense. But I wasn't necessarily expecting that before joining.

Tim Grabe: But I mean you said you already participated in such an event before?

Interview partner 4: Uh, sorry. OK. I was talking about the time before Problematic, of my first time basically. But this time, so my expectations.... I suppose what I was expecting more of the same as before basically. But kind of going back to this kind of balance between I guess altruism and business. By this point, I was aware that it's kind of tipped more towards business and that's kind of a more important aspect to take into account if you want to win with the group. So, I guess this time going in I was a little more aware of that perhaps and that was perhaps one of my main preconceived ideas about this particular session.

Tim Grabe: And what kind of other events like which were similar have you participated already before and which role were you in there?

Interview partner 4: So yeah, it's only just been two previous Problematic sessions that have been to like this. So, in the first one I think I kind of assumed a Team leader-ish role, like it wasn't formally that, but like I think I ended up presenting and doing that stuff, but it was obviously a collaborative effort. And then I think the last time as well, I pitched an idea and it was just two of us that worked on this idea and sort of I shared the kind of leadership with that, I guess so.

Tim Grabe: So, you are usually always bringing in leadership and ideas? That's cool.

Interview partner 4: I mean, actually funny because this time I wanted to not be leader. I wanted to be more of a background person. But then Sean asked me to lead the group. So, I was like, OK. So, for the next Problematic I really intend to take more of a background role because it's nice to see it from both sides, right?

Tim Grabe: I fully agree. And what do you think about this event in general now after you've participated three times in total already?

Interview partner 4: I think it's amazing. I think the fact that Sean is doing it voluntarily and the fact he's managed to get this much momentum, it's just it's really, really impressive. And I think the stuff that he's doing with this kind of like internal sort of economy or, you know,

reward system I think is really smart as well. I guess the difficult part is now getting people to engage beyond the event. And I think people really enjoy the day but then after that they more or less forget the project. The next critical step is to really turn these ideas into actions. Hopefully we'll be able to do that.

Tim Grabe: So, do you have any ideas on how you would change on the event in general in future? Maybe to gain later on more engagement, but other parts as well?

Interview partner 4: So I guess there are two things that I mentioned, sort of show and ask for a bit of feedback last week and I sent them some and I guess the first thing is this tension between volunteering and making things profitable, and you know, I was saying that I think maybe that within the context of a single day, it's really hard to balance both of these aims. And I think you were saying that maybe in the next version there'll be kind of two streams that your group can enter. It can either be a business oriented one or a pure not-for-profit one. And so, I think my interest would be more with the not-for-profit thing because then I think you have more freedom to just think and just to do the thing rather than having to worry about money. And, you know, it feels like everything in the world is driven by money. It's nice to have one thing like Problematic that might be not purely money oriented, and that was the first thing. The second thing I've actually forgotten.

Tim Grabe: But would you say that the event went well or bad? How did it went from your perspective on like structure wise?

Interview partner 4: Yeah, I think pretty well. I mean, I think by the end of everyone's pretty tired and I feel like there was this point during the day where we just didn't have time to make use of the feedback we were getting. So, we were struggling to get our ideas together and then people kept coming and asking if we wanted feedback and we were like we didn't have the ideas together yet to get feedback from. So yeah, I think I would probably restructure that they

would have more thinking and brainstorming time in the morning and less feedback stuff later on. Yeah, probably mainly that I think. Just more thinking time.

Tim Grabe: But how did you like the feedback phase in general?

Interview partner 4: I think it's really useful. I think it's really, really good to get feedback from these people. But I would say we could probably do with just maybe two or three people's different input rather than like, you know, 8 or more. I think it just wasn't possible. So, I think also spreading the event out over a couple of days might be another way of getting around this. And I said to Sean that maybe having for example, if the next event is on a Saturday, then the Wednesday before having just a two or three hour evening session on perhaps the Wednesday where people just kind of really formulate the idea. And when you come back to it on Saturday morning and then just really make quick progress, think we get more out of it that way.

Tim Grabe: OK. And how did the feedback phase in general affect your project development?

Interview partner 4: Yeah, I think it has sharpened up our ideas a little bit, exposed, a kind of a break or I could divide because we had two ideas within the group and so we then had to kind of try and work together as a team after these two competing ideas were kind of playing out. So yeah, it was really useful from that point of view, helped to maybe adjust the group dynamic a little bit. I received feedback that I could have been perhaps a bit more proactive in terms of leading and managing that things were coherent, so that's something that I've taken on board and next time we'll try to be a bit more on top of.

Tim Grabe: OK. And what other challenges did you might experience during the event? Like project work, but also otherwise.

Interview partner 4: I mean, I think it's just really hard to coordinate more than one person, right? It's hard to get people to think in the same way. And I think on top of not having enough time to think and people kind of thinking in their own different ways, I think that was really the major problem. I think really, the big challenge that day. Other challenges, I really thought it's

a time thing. I think it's just such a short day and there's just so much to do that, I think.... I'm quite a slow person and you mentioned that in the meeting like and I think that for me it's just incredibly challenging to make the progress that I would like to in just one day. I would be someone that would naturally need a lot more time to do this stuff. So, I'm a little frustrated with the format in that way because I don't think it suits my way of thinking best, but it's not just about me, it's about everyone, I'm working together. So, I think just more time would really be the ideal thing.

Tim Grabe: And if you would just see like as a starting point to kick off... I mean, are you also like in the future, also staying on the project and still developing it?

Interview partner 4: Yeah, I'm hoping to. So today, we're going to meet and actually, after this, I'm going to start trying to pull some data from the Internet to try and see if we can start this idea out. And so, we actually we came joint first. So, we do have developer hours with I think some of the volunteers with the technical background. So, we didn't use them this weekend, but we'll be using them at some point in the future. So, I think we're feeling quite encouraged to carry on and yeah, at least take this to the next stage. Whether it becomes a fully-fledged web plugin, I'm not sure but let's see.

Tim Grabe: That's cool. So, I mean you already mentioned it a little bit before, but what was your whole progress? So, what was the initial idea and what was the complete final deliverable which you had when you left the idea finally? So, what progress have you made within this time?

Interview partner 4: OK. So, I guess from going from a fuzzy idea that I didn't have much confidence in to now having something that I think is, you know, tangible and relatively straightforward and easy to implement. And we have the technical resources now to actually do it hopefully so it's a massive change in fact.

Tim Grabe: And how was it because, I mean, you were also one of the winning teams, so congratulations for that one. And there was this Buildathon happening last Saturday, but you decided to not participate yet or not participate at all?

So, two of us were unable to make the session and you know, I think it's good to start at a point where you're going to be able to make most progress. And I think because we haven't looked at any data yet, this is nothing we can sense if we do it at this point. So hopefully within the next few weeks, we'll be working on that. So, we'll be able to go to these guys with the technical know-how and say: you know this is a basic data set that we have. Help us realize this. I just need a bit more time with it. I think the other group, I guess they're your colleagues, I guess at Nova SBE and so I guess they had a pretty well developed idea and I think they were probably at the stage where they could make better use of that, but I think we're a little bit further behind them.

Tim Grabe: But would you then say that the Buildathon was maybe too short after the Ideathon?

Interview partner 4: Yeah, I think so. Certainly, for us. And I think at least from what I heard from the last event, I think the team that won was sort of a little burnt out after the Buildathon as well. I think it was just too much, too soon. So yeah, I think also having that month, say having a month gap between the Ideathon and the Buildathon will perhaps also encourage people, then in the meantime, to then develop the idea a little bit more, whereas with only one week in between, I think maybe they don't have the time to really do that.

Tim Grabe: And do you see any, coming now back to the Ideathon and maybe Buildathon, like the whole system itself. Do you see some upscaling opportunities, for example, bigger group sizes or an online format or, however. Do you see there any ways you could do that? Would you even recommend it or rather not?

Interview partner 4: Yeah, that's a nice idea. So, I guess maybe having something. Yeah, something a bit like up work or something where you can just place ads. You know, we need

this particular goal finished. Are you happy to volunteer? Say 8 hours of your time remotely, whenever you want to do this thing. I think that would be a really nice way of doing things for sure.

Tim Grabe: OK. But also, like the Ideathon process as a whole? Do you also think that this online would be manageable or doable?

Interview partner 4: Oh I see. So, you mean having a completely online event?

Tim Grabe: Yeah, like a complete online event.

Interview partner 4: I mean, yeah, during the pandemic, we realized that everything's possible, really. I think there are a lot of advantages to in-person meetings, especially for this kind of discussion based way of working. So, I think you would be losing something from remote stuff, but I think it wouldn't mean that you couldn't have successful workshops.

Tim Grabe: And in general, now, Interview partner 4, would you after, I mean you already participated three times, but would you participate again?

Interview partner 4: Yeah, I'm hoping to be an ongoing participant for sure.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, but then the next time without an idea.

Interview partner 4: Yes, that's it.

Tim Grabe: Thank you so much Interview partner 4. Those were my main questions. My last question would therefore be: have I missed something? Do you still want to share something which we haven't talked about yet?

Interview partner 4: Nothing immediately comes to mind. No, I think not. I mean, the main strong thing I have is that it's been too business oriented. But I think Sean kind of somewhat agrees with that and I think it's changing in that format. So yeah, that's the strong opinion that I have about this thing, everything else works pretty. Well, we've covered most of what I have to say.

Tim Grabe: Perfect. So that was great, like really thank you so much Interview partner 4 that you took the time and everything.

Appendix H: Anonymized transcript interview with interview partner 5 (Idea Owner)

Date: 24th of April 2023

Location: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Duration: 30 minutes

Interview participants: Interview partner 5, Tim Grabe

Interviewee's role at the Ideathon event: Idea Owner

Tim Grabe: Perfect. Then I would just ask you to start again with your name and what was your role in the Ideathon.

Interview partner 5: OK, so my name is Interview partner 5 and my role at the Ideathon was....

That's a good question. So I already had an idea together with my team and then we just worked on it together. I don't know if you call that a project owner?

Tim Grabe: Yes, exactly. Which project exactly did you take part in then?

Interview partner 5: We worked on the project "Project A". I don't know if I should also give a short explanation of what that is?

Tim Grabe: You can do it briefly, yes.

Interview partner 5: Okay. So the very rough idea is just to help the young adults. So to give them a way to talk when they are struggling for example with negative thoughts, anxiety or things like that. And because it's very difficult to find a therapist or something like that, we said we want to connect them with the psychology department of a university, that we have a kind of non-official talk buddies, where you can just discover yourself a little bit and talk about your stuff.

Tim Grabe: You had already said that you had already sketched out the idea in advance, in the course with Teacher A was that or?

Interview partner 5: Exactly, so in the course "Course A" had done that. We were originally 2 groups. I had another team and Group member 1 had her whole team and we had 2 different ideas, but they came out of the same problem, just these Mental Health issues so to speak. And that a lot of people just don't really know how to manage their Mental Health. And my team actually had another approach, where we also had different practices with yoga, breathwork, meditation, mindful walks etc. and also this talking possibility. Group member 1s group had only focused on talking and we then decided that the two topics fit together quite well and thus became a team.

Tim Grabe: What was the reason why you decided to do this project back then?

Interview partner 5: Well, I can't speak for the others. For me it's a personal story, I have a lot to do in my immediate circle with people who are still dealing with various Mental Health Struggles at the moment. And I focus myself by being a yoga teacher and paying a lot of attention to the Body-Mind-Soul Connection and a strong Mental Health in general. And because I realize what it brings me, I would like to share that and I would like to help people somehow to take a few steps towards a stable everyday life.

Tim Grabe: Totally cool. And how does that work? So how did you come up with it? As far as I know, several ideas were developed in the course. So there were many projects there. So why did you decide to be the only group to actually participate in this Ideathon? Or why did you decide to do it?

Interview partner 5: Well, we were all encouraged in the course to take part in this Ideathon. Sean came in the last hour and listened to everything and actually thought all the ideas were really good and was very impressed overall. And he just said, if you feel like it, you're welcome to keep working on the idea and try to make it a reality when you come to this Ideathon. Or you can sell your idea to him and he would then easily compensate this team. And by the fact that I enjoyed the whole course very much and also the whole creating and just collecting the ideas

for this possible app, I just decided that it would be really quite cool to do something there. I actually think that if you somehow have a passion for a topic, then of course you want that idea not only to stay in the course, but also to actually implement it when you have the opportunity. And Group member 1h and the team felt the same way. And that's why we said we'd just give it a try. Let's see what happens. We didn't really have any expectations about what would come out of it. And the other teams... I think most of them really saw it mainly as course work.

Tim Grabe: Have you participated in such an Ideathon / Hackathon before or not yet?

Interview partner 5: No, it was the very first time I ever kind of did anything like that, actually.

Tim Grabe: Very cool. And how did you like it in the end? So now once also like once separately in Ideathon and Buildathon.

Interview partner 5: I found the Ideathon mega exciting. As I said, I came there and I didn't know at all how it would all work. I thought it was really cool that so many motivated people came and that so many were enthusiastic about our team and also really supported us with their expertise. I was very surprised how many different backgrounds people had, which really spurred the discussions big time as well. What I sometimes, I mean the whole thing about 10 or 11 hours I would say now, it was already very long and at some point you noticed that because we were a large team, because really many people were interested in us, it was sometimes very difficult to structure and coordinate all the thoughts somehow. I would now say that our idea, we have considered many concepts and seen new hurdles, where you still have to think more. But our basic idea has actually not changed at all throughout the day. That is, I think if I were to participate in something like this again, I would try to somehow structure the whole thing a bit more clearly and also record it more. Somehow just bring in a better organization into our own project, so that we can somehow work more clearly towards a goal.

Tim Grabe: That means the structure was a challenge that you had as a team now during the event?

Interview partner 5: Exactly.

Tim Grabe: Was there more stuff so more challenges?

Interview partner 5: In the beginning it wasn't quite clear who was going to be with us. Yes, I think that because we were four people who had created the idea together and we were not yet one hundred percent in agreement with everything, it was sometimes a bit difficult. Some talked to one, others to the other, depending on who was available at the time. And quite often one was then like this. Yes, I don't know exactly how we could do that. I can't tell you anything about it now. So it was just a tad too big I think. I think. I actually think that sometimes less is a bit more, that you don't get 20 different opinions at once and then have a big salad, but that you can somehow divide it up a bit.

Tim Grabe: Would you say then that in a future event then you should regulate the group size more from Sean's side?

Interview partner 5: That's a good question, I don't know exactly. I always think that every expertise is actually very valuable. For example, with our topic we had people who were very far advanced in psychology and medicine, we had people who were very good in technology, and I couldn't have told you now: Okay, we don't need these people now. But what would have been a bit easier would have been to have a bit more guidelines, for example if you haven't been to such an event before, how to best organize such a discussion. So we did have this goal of this reflection, so writing this article about it. But how do you get there, this way, if you have not yet done something like this, I think would have been practical. You don't really have to criticize the size of the team.

Tim Grabe: And apart from the guidelines, would you change anything else about the event in the future?

Interview partner 5: Personally, I thought the time for the prototype was far too short. We only had one hour and you can't get anything done in that one hour. So I would have said, in order

to tinker with the prototype or at least gather a bit more ideas, it would have been cool if we had had a bit more time. Or actually, I think it's great that we did it all in one day, but I think it would have been much easier to say: OK, on the first day we'll do this rough idea and on the second day we'll do the prototype and then the pitches, so that you can solidify a little bit where exactly it should go. But that's just my personal opinion. I have the feeling that if you cram too much into one day, then in the end it's just your heads that are smoking and you somehow don't even know where the front and back are anymore. I think that many of the projects die in the end because you don't have enough time to really get something done.

Tim Grabe: How would you evaluate the organization of the event and everything like that? So of course also the schedule, you have already said a point of criticism, but how would you evaluate it now in general?

Interview partner 5: On the whole, I still thought it was absolutely great. We achieved much more than I would ever have thought. I would never have thought that we would get not just one, but even several investors and so much support now, even after the fact. So on the whole, I would say that was a huge success for us. And accordingly, of course, the organization was actually pretty good. What I also found cool is that Sean really stuck to his schedule. Because quite often, especially with Portuguese events, it is so that you start with something and then everything shifts again by 2 hours and then you don't do the one thing anymore. And he really pulled it through from front to back and also always showed such a nice timeline, where we are now on the day, I thought that was pretty good.

Tim Grabe: The day was divided into various phases, including the feedback phase, where external people came in and gave brief feedback. First of all, what did you think of this phase and how did it affect your project?

Interview partner 5: I found it very helpful. We already had something similar in our course, where we had, on one day, I think 7 or 8 people to whom we were supposed to present our idea.

I would perhaps say that they came a bit too early, because we weren't really in agreement about a lot of things, and at first we were like: OK, what are we actually going to tell them now? But I actually think that it's even more crass when you come to this Ideathon with a halfway developed idea vs. when you just come with a basic idea and are open for everything. Because I think, well it struck me now at least, that it's a lot easier to build an idea from scratch with a team than it is to change an already established idea. But overall, the input from the different people was super helpful. We got very different perspectives from different age groups, from different backgrounds, and many asked very important questions as well. I would say, on the whole, that also influenced a little bit more the functionality with us.

Tim Grabe: So in the end, what has changed in your project in terms of functionality?

Interview partner 5: Exactly, for example, we were unsure beforehand whether we should add such a chat function or not. And that was just really cool. We could really ask all the people who came there: What would you think of that? And then we got very different feedback. We also got some feedback where we said: OK, we just see it completely differently, so we don't accept the feedback now. But yes, on the whole it has definitely given us good input.

Tim Grabe: And if you were to imagine this event now, would you see any opportunities to scale it up in the long term? That means, for example, allowing even more people to attend an event or having the whole thing take place online or some other way. Do you see any possibilities there, and if so, what are they?

Interview partner 5: Well, I do believe that you can scale. I think you can definitely make it even bigger. You might need 1-2 more people who are part of the organization, so that, for example, when these groups are working, you could go from group to group to ask or help. For example, with the structure, how do I get there and there or what is the best way to proceed? But personally, I'm not a big fan of online events like that because I always feel like it's much harder to really get into discussions with people, especially multiple people at once. And then

it's very difficult. And also feeling that team connection that you have at a startup baby like that, I don't think it's easy online because you're not as connected. At least that's the feeling I have. And 12 hours on the laptop would not be my preference now either.

Tim Grabe: I understand that. But would you participate in such an event again now?

Interview partner 5: I think I would, if I had another idea like that or had the feeling that I needed a lot of input to start something like that, then definitely. I don't know if I personally would just go there without having an idea of my own, just to have a look and help others. But I think that's also more because I don't feel like I have the expertise to really help people out. But in itself, yes.

Tim Grabe: And in general at the Buildathon, to go back to that now, how did you like that in general?

Interview partner 5: I thought the Buildathon was pretty cool. I would have liked to stay longer, to be honest. Mainly because I personally find building a product or especially now an app incredibly exciting and therefore, I was almost more excited for this event than for the Ideathon I would say. Mainly because I just think I can learn an incredible amount there. I found it a little bit difficult because the structures were not that clear and I thought we would create more in that time. Also that we would collaborate more with the developers. We defined a bit more in this prototype, but in the end, the building was just completely handed over. Personally, I would have liked to have been able to see a bit more. But that's just me, because I want to learn these skills. But otherwise I thought it was actually pretty cool. I also didn't realize that we would get new people, for example, who would give us something again. So that was very surprising actually. But it also helped.

Tim Grabe: Was it clear beforehand that now only your core team is back with the 4 people? At the Ideathon you were a very large group. So was that clear to you?

Interview partner 5: Well, we communicated with our group and said: Hey, anyone who wants to come is welcome to come, but no one is obliged to. It's definitely important that our core team is there, but I think it was our little learning from the Ideathon, where we realized that if there are too many people, you just can't move forward. And that's why in the end there were only 2 people from our group who had the technical skills. The idea phase was now completed, so to speak, and then it went into the next phase. So that was communicated relatively clearly.

Tim Grabe: And what was the general output of the Buildathon? So what was your stand?

Interview partner 5: We tested the prototype a bit. Three or four of us went around and tested how people would respond to the prototype. Then we refined our user stories even more to really see what are the essentials for version 1 of our app and what will go into version 2 or so. The whole data model and how this basic structure of this app should be built is now clear. And the prototype has also been advanced a bit, so what screens are still needed, what can perhaps be made easier, so that the flow for building is also easier. Where we had several screens before, we said, OK, it's much simpler if we put it all in one thing.

Tim Grabe: And what are the next steps for you now?

Interview partner 5: The next steps are definitely to contact the Well-being Department here at Nova again. We also want to slowly contact the psychology department now and ask whether students would really be interested. So now it's a lot about testing the idea, who would be potential users and potential talk buddies and we also want to possibly rebrand it, because we've already received feedback that it's too spiritual. I think we really go step by step, then we have our next meeting and see where we are. And then we do the next step.

Tim Grabe: And Sean, how is he still involved now? How does he still accompany the whole thing or does he do that at all?

Interview partner 5: Sean is a huge mentor for us. So it's incredible how much time he invests for us. He's already met with Group member 1h I think four times to discuss next steps. We

also sat one evening at his house and I think 2 or 3 hours thinking about user stories and working with post-its and whatnot. So he invests an incredible amount of time. And yes, he was one of the driving forces behind the Buildathon and also in the general organization he usually tells us what's coming next. He also gives us all the contacts. So without him we would be nowhere, I would say.

Tim Grabe: Perfect. So that's really it now with the official question part from me Interview partner 5, do you have any things that you want to get rid of or that haven't been covered yet?

Interview partner 5: I actually don't think so. Except, how did you like it so much?

Tim Grabe: No, I also thought it was really mega cool, so I have to say quite honestly. (...)

Interview partner 5: It's funny, I think one or two people once kind of said we could do it like that and tried to somehow do more of their thing with it. But I think most of them were just because we already had a presentation, the branding and everything was actually already there. It was just a matter of refining the idea. I think that's why a lot of people really only came to us in this consulting step and said: What do you think? What do you think about it? But I also have to say that in the beginning it was a bit limiting, because one of our participants always asked: What is it now, so to speak? And I was like: I don't know, we're in the same boat. You can say what is now just as I can. And she just went completely down that road: And how do you want to do that? And how do you want to do this? And I thought to myself, well, this is an Ideathon, that's what we're here for, we want to find out now. So I think some people put us a little bit too high in the sense of: You already have everything. Actually, we just sit there and want to hear your answers.

Tim Grabe: I noticed that too. I mean, your idea was already partially developed, but it was still far from mature or anything else. The reason why you went there was because you didn't really know what to do at that point. That's why I found it interesting, even though you always indirectly offered: we want to know your expertise, take ownership, take over the project and

make it even better. It was very easy to see your intention behind it, once you had done the introduction round and picked up everyone. But I actually found it funny that the participants still didn't take it on, but really stayed in their consulting approach. I also noticed that. I just found it exciting to see it this way, as a scientific project.

Appendix I: Anonymized transcript interview with interview partner 6 (Participant)

Date: 24th of April 2023

Location: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Duration: 30 minutes

Interview participants: Interview partner 6, Tim Grabe

Interviewee's role at the Ideathon event: Participant

Tim Grabe: Could you just shortly start with your name and what your role was at the event, Interview partner 6?

Interview partner 6: Yeah. So, I'm Interview partner 6. I don't think I have a proper role in the event. I was just an attendee.

Tim Grabe: So, but you were a participant, because there were judges, participants, investors, you know, like all those kind of things. So, you were a participant.

Interview partner 6: Exactly.

Tim Grabe: OK. But you didn't have an idea before, did you? Which you pitched there?

Interview partner 6: Not that I have pitched, no.

Tim Grabe: And what is your background, Interview partner 6?

Interview partner 6: UX design and film.

Tim Grabe: Cool and which project did you then participate in the whole event if you didn't have an idea yet?

Interview partner 6: It was the sustainable TripAdvisor, I think they call it like that, the project.

Tim Grabe: It was Project B, wasn't it?

Interview partner 6: Yes.

Tim Grabe: And why did you decide for that project actually?

Interview partner 6: I saw the biggest potential in it.

Tim Grabe: So, was it a feasibility choice for you?

Interview partner 6: Yes.

Tim Grabe: That's cool. And but did your interest for that project play any role or was it just 100% feasibility in that way?

Interview partner 6: Sorry, can you repeat?

Tim Grabe: Was feasibility the only criteria for you to choose a project or were it also other things which play a role in there?

Interview partner 6: No, mostly feasibility, yes.

Tim Grabe: OK, that's interesting. Cool. Well then, what did you think about your project and the development you've actually made then. Are you saturated by that? Or how was it in general?

Interview partner 6: Yeah, I'm happy with what we came by. Yeah, actually we have a meeting today to see how we're going to proceed.

Tim Grabe: So, what was the first status when you joined? What was the initial idea and what did you have afterwards, after the event was done? What was the progress like the two steps, like start and end?

Interview partner 6: Well, I think they have the issue that they would like to solve or make things better. But I don't think they have a product and then when we finish, we had multiple possible products. Even though we didn't got a way to do it for all of the possibilities, I believe. But I think we can do one or two of them. One of two-part or two parts of the product. At least one.

Tim Grabe: It's cool. So, the event was structured in several different kind of steps. You know, there was at the beginning the pitching phase and all that kind of stuff. Did you think that at some point... Did it make sense to you, like, the whole organizing structure of the event? So, did it make sense to you, or would you change something in general, like also time wise?

Interview partner 6: Yeah, I mean I prefer when it is like 2 days Hackathon, but this was just the first part of the Hackathon. It's just the idea, right? So, it quite works. Yeah, it quite works like that. I mean, I liked the part when he said something like: Where do you see yourself in two years reading in a newspaper or so? And yeah, that was actually interesting, and it helped us to see what we are doing and why we are doing this, even though we didn't have a product at that time. So, it was a bit ambitious or difficult, but it worked. I mean we figured it out and we were lucky to come out with the products quite quickly as well. So, it quite worked. But then, at the end, closer to the presentation, that was tougher because we had quite a hard time to get in the same place regarding what we're going to present and what our product is. And then you have a lot of juries and audience asking for feedback, if you wanted feedback, and we didn't have possibilities to think about our product. So, I think that time was quite short there.

Tim Grabe: OK. How did you like the feedback phase then in general? And how did it affect your project development, because as you said there was not that much time. Did it then even have an effect?

Interview partner 6: Yeah, you know, I guess like when the juries come to approach us, they come with the idea of giving feedback and we didn't need any feedback. We needed help solving and taking a decision. And that dynamic was a bit off, I guess.

Tim Grabe: OK.

Interview partner 6: If they were like: Oh, OK, we are not there yet with the product, maybe we can help. But no, they were more like a Hackathon actually, when they are a jury, and they are doing their work. That's like we are not here to help, we are here to judge you and to give you feedback if it's good or bad, or if you can be better, in another way. But not to tell you about how to do your product. If you work with that approach, I think it would be more interesting.

Tim Grabe: OK. And is there something else that you would change for the future to improve the event?

Interview partner 6: No... I guess if there was more time, it would be better. But it's always difficult for some people, but I guess most of the people were from Lisbon. I'm not from Lisbon, so I had to sleep there, get a place to sleep. But I would prefer it if you just presented it on Sunday morning and take it more altogether like that. Also, because for example for the other part, this building part. With other groups I would be able to help, but I'm not going to Lisbon again. I work in the project and then come back again. Or sleep there again. Get the place to sleep. So, I would prefer actually to have the events more closely on the schedule.

Tim Grabe: OK. And apart from the timing in general, like the lack of time, were there other challenges during the event from your project you had to face?

Interview partner 6: No, I don't see any. And in particular.

Tim Grabe: So how was your group work then in general? Like, how did you interact together? Like, how did you distribute tasks within your group and all that kind of stuff?

Interview partner 6: I think we were all pretty much leaders. But yeah, sometimes one of us had to take more... Lead more but yeah, I guess we did it right.

Tim Grabe: And how was your way of working? Were you always making decisions in the team and working on it together? Or was it rather distributing tasks to each other and then working on them?

Interview partner 6: Well, we got in the position of distributing tasks once in a while. But I think we are doing stuff naturally, you know, like you comment, I comment, another person comment or we ask for a vote. Actually, we didn't vote much, but yeah, we tried.

Tim Grabe: OK, that's cool.

Interview partner 6: But of course, it comes with the effort. But it yeah, it was natural, the flow.

Tim Grabe: And did you ever participate in such an event before, like, where you can compare it to?

Interview partner 6: Yeah, multiple and I studied in the professional school. So, we are doing group projects every day in turn two years or one and a half. So yeah, I'm pretty used to different people getting together and trying to do so. It's quite complex, actually. It's not for everyone, it's difficult. But we are also lucky because we are not so many, people. So, we were four. It's a perfect number, actually. It's a pretty nice number.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, that's cool.

Interview partner 6: With five, six or seven you have to go to other dynamics.

Tim Grabe: And so, do you think Sean should maybe like do a... because I mean this time it was completely open and everyone could just assign themselves, so group sizes you, I mean you were lucky then that there was the number of four. But I mean, you could have also been 10 people, you know. Do you think it is still good that it's that open, or would you rather change that and limit it?

Interview partner 6: I think it's alright. It's OK being open because we are here to contribute to these causes. So, it's like, if you have different people with different skills, they will jump on the topic when it's time. So, it's fine to see the pitch open, but a leader is definitely welcome. I think that's to say. Otherwise, there's a possibility of being stuffed. be messy, but I think with when people come to volunteer help for these causes you probably don't have it as often. When you come open and ... yeah.

Tim Grabe: And was it like, because you already said to come back to it, but you said you already participated in some other events? So, if you would compare them to this one, what were differences and also which role were you in in the other events you participated? Was it also just as a participant or did you also have other roles there?

Interview partner 6: Just as a participant. These events, usually they are like a weekend. So, they even start on Friday night, or they have some presentations on Friday night. And then they take until Sunday afternoon. But by the time when I was participating on that Hackathon and

started at weekends, well, I did not have so much experience. It was hard for me to come up with project and product ideas. I mean now it's easy to do it just in one day, but you know, it's even more difficult. It's difficult as well. Sometimes it depends on the group as well.

Tim Grabe: And what was your reason why you then keep on participating? Like, what was the reason why you participated this time at the Problematic hackathon?

Interview partner 6: Well, I have not participated in a long time in hackathons, so I really like the possibilities of having a project that grows. Or just learning with other people, making friends, and getting to know some mentors eventually. I mean, it's quite right with my work as well, so it's nice to be part of it once in a while. And actually, I'm unemployed right now, so I have some time for it. So, I can also be helpful in what I know.

Tim Grabe: Well, that's cool. And what, I mean you already mentioned now some parts but what were like in general your pre-expectations then on the event?

Interview partner 6: Not much, just make friends and take it easy. Not much.

Tim Grabe: And would you do... for example, because we were round about 50 people together, do you think that was sufficient? Do you think maybe bigger? You know like because for sure, long term, maybe upscaling could also be a solution. Do you think upscaling could work if we have more people at that event, or would it be hindering? Or also do it rather online because you also mentioned it's hard to always go to Lisbon. So, do you see there any possibilities?

Interview partner 6: I think online is a bit harder, though. It gets a bit harder if you don't know the people, you're working with.

Tim Grabe: Why do you think so?

Interview partner 6: Well, it's not so easy to talk all at the same time and communicate, make small groups. I mean you can split the room, but it takes a bit more time and the time, actually we didn't have much in this event. I mean then if it's more people, I think it's alright, but we are quite limited on the space. Yeah, I mean there is space for so much people. I mean, it's fine.

Hmm, I think a bigger space would be very nice, but I'm not sure if there's so much available. One time I was in Gulbenkian and that was a big location, but yeah.

Tim Grabe: Do you think, apart from the location, by the organization and by the number of people, that it would work if you did more people?

Interview partner 6: I think the groups should have a limit of people and then if you have too many people in the room, a lot of people could go to the same group. You're not presenting much project. So yeah, that can be messy I believe. But if people are willing to participate, it's awesome. It said to let people down without a reason at least. So, when I was at Gulbenkian, I was with the project also, but I have my own project and my own team. They selected the teams, so there was a selection process. When there is no selection process, yeah, OK, I can understand. and especially if it's open, like you select what you like or not.

Tim Grabe: You participated in the Project B project, at the end you actually won. So, congratulations on that. And then you get the opportunity for the Buildathon. You know, this following-up event, the initial one already happened last weekend. But as far as I heard from Sean that you decided to not participate yet, so what was the reasoning why you did not participate right away on this Saturday? And do you still think you will continue that project and also do the Buildathon one other day?

Interview partner 6: Yeah, I mean we had two people outside on holiday for this weekend. So, we are not able to participate, and we are not pretty sure about the product as well, but what we're going to start with. So that's what we're going to talk about today as well. We have a meeting at 3:00pm, I guess.

Tim Grabe: Because you were not 100% sure about the product, would you then say that maybe the Buildathon was a little bit too short notice kind of like next week already? Because there was not that much time in between, would you prefer to have it normally later on?

Interview partner 6: That building part? I mean I think one week after it works good enough. Yeah, it just happened that we are not available, and they were even busy during the week. Some people were on holidays during the week, so we weren't able to meet before today.

Tim Grabe: Alright, but then it rather sounds like you would say one week in general is sufficient. It was rather because your team was busy during that week but in general there's no need to do the Buildathon always a month afterwards or something like that.

Interview partner 6: No, I think there's no need. I think one week, actually the next Saturday works well. So, you keep yourself motivated.

Tim Grabe: OK, that's cool. And as you already participated, at least in the Ideathon, would you generally participate in such an event again?

Interview partner 6: Yes, it was super fun. I found it super fun. And the mentors were super nice as well. I found them super insightful.

Tim Grabe: Thank you, Interview partner 6. These were my main questions. So, do you have any other topics you still want to talk about? Like what happened during the event? Something I didn't ask you yet, like something which was not covered yet.

Interview partner 6: No, no, I think it's everything pretty much.

Tim Grabe: That's super cool, yeah. Thank you so much Interview partner 6 for your time and everything.

Appendix J: Anonymized transcript interview with interview partner 7 (Participant)

Date: 26th of April 2023

Location: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Duration: 30 minutes

Interview participants: Interview partner 7, Tim Grabe

Interviewee's role at the Ideathon event: Participant

Tim Grabe: Perfect. Alright then do you mind starting with your name and what your role was at the Ideathon event?

Interview partner 7: I mean, my name is easy, it's Interview partner 7. And I don't know what my role was really.

Tim Grabe: Probably it was participant.

Interview partner 7: Oh yeah. OK. Yes, as a participant. Absolutely as a first time participant.

Tim Grabe: OK, that's cool. And in which project did you participate?

Interview partner 7: So in the Project C project.

Tim Grabe: Can you explain a little bit what it was?

Interview partner 7: So the project was presented and led by Team member 1. The idea is still hard for me to phrase, but it's to facilitate group conversations on really dense topics. And so there's kind of two steps of it. One step of it is either an app or platform, that would allow people to basically register themselves and then form a group. Kind of like, decide on the topics that they would be interested to discuss etc. and figure out a time and their location where they could meet. And then the meeting would happen in real life and it would be a group conversation. It's not one to one. And there will be a main sort of facilitator which we have called a conversation guide to ensure that the conversation goes through, you know, let's say follows a certain direction. And yes, the idea of it is to help ourselves breaking down some really complicate

complex topics such as one example that Team member 1 gave was: What should we think about AI? And this is for me at least so overwhelming as a question that I think it's... a group like this is something I would love. So education and knowledge is one side of it, another side of it, of a potential benefit is getting people out of isolation helping them to learn community, communication and connection skills.

Tim Grabe: And why did you decide for this project? I mean there were quite a couple ones pitched at the beginning. So why this one?

Interview partner 7: So I was in between the Project A project and Team member 1's project. I felt like Project A was quite advanced. And that they would need more technical skills like coding or that kind of stuff, which I don't have at all. I am friends with Team member 1, which I think led my decision, but I didn't go into the hackathon thinking necessarily that I would be working with Team member 1 and I still wanted to really consider the topic of Project A. Yep, but eventually I felt like this is where I would have the most impact, but also this is where I would feel the most comfortable. But also a little bit linked because I think for me to have an impact I need to feel comfortable.

Tim Grabe: And did feasibility or general interest in the topic also play a role?

Interview partner 7: Yes, absolutely. I think I wanted to feel like: Oh, this is something I really like, I really believe in it. I have experience in organizing conversation groups. I have experience as a facilitator. That also participated my interest and my comfort.

Tim Grabe: And what was the reason why you participated in the event in general?

Interview partner 7: Yeah. So I'm a startup coach. And everything I can do to understand more about the context of a startup is great for me. I'm always very curious, so there is this side of it. And then just generally meeting more people that are in this field. All of my clients so far are in Country A and in Country B. So this is participating in a wider goal of being more involved in the startup scene in Portugal. Or in Lisbon at least. So there was this aspect, and there was

also just like generally super curious aspect. That I read about it and I was like: My God, this looks so cool. My first thought was I wish I could participate, but surely I have nothing to bring. And then someone, uh Samantha, who's also another coach, and she had gone and she said no, I think you shouldn't worry about this. And I saw the event twice before I really decided to sign up on the third time because I was still intimidated at first. But then I talked to Team member 1 about it and he also said no, you should come. And then I did.

Tim Grabe: And what were your pre expectations on the event then?

Interview partner 7: There were two things going on in my mind at the same time and I tried to reframe it for myself. I think we talked about this maybe. But first, there was an idea that we were going to do loads, that we were going to achieve something massive and that was kind of pressuring me a little bit. It was both exciting and both making me wonder, how can I participate really in this or how can I bring value? And then as I was thinking more and more about it, like in the evening before, the morning before, I reframed it for myself, wondering what do I think people want when they come to something like this? Moving further in the project is one thing, but my personal belief is also that they come for exchange and connection and just sharing moments. And as a facilitator, I also know that the quality of the experience itself is so much more important than the actual learning. And so when I reframed that in that way for myself, it really made a massive difference in the energy that I was able to show up. And so I think I see those two things.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, it's super interesting. Have you ever participated in such an event before?

Interview partner 7: No.

Tim Grabe: Ah, cool. I mean it's funny because you're managing startups on the one hand but a lot of people have already participated in such a thing when they are in the startup environment, it's quite interesting. It's cool.

Interview partner 7: Yeah, I need to build deeper knowledge of the startups in general.

Tim Grabe: And what do you think now, after the event has happened? Like, what do you think in general about the event?

Interview partner 7: I think it was great, but I'm so curious about my... You know, I can only have my own perspective, which is so connected to the group, the team, the project. I have no idea what was going on and we were so completely focused on ourselves and our team that I have no idea what happened like on the other side of the room. Yeah, I don't know. Can I answer something now that maybe is more looking into the future? Or do you want to...

Tim Grabe: Sure! But I mean the question "what do you think about the event in general?" is not about what the general event was like, it's rather how it was for you in general, you know?

Interview partner 7: OK, so it was great. It was wonderful. When I got back home, I couldn't sleep. You remember, I was so tired? We were all so tired. And I felt like I was trying to sleep, and my heartbeat was just going like thousand, I don't know it just wouldn't stop. I was exhausted but had so much energy from it and I just, I absolutely love that. I really liked the sequencing of it. The fact I did have some structure, you know, there were the timeline and the aspirational press release and then working towards welcoming the people who came to get feedback and then the pitching.

Tim Grabe: So, you think the structuring was good. How was like that, everything went well within the structuring and all that stuff for.

Interview partner 7: OK, so I wouldn't be comfortable giving you an answer to this until I would have participated in maybe five of them. You know, and then I could say, OK, I think this could be improved here, this could be improved there.

Tim Grabe: But just like from your feeling, for example, were you at some point lacking a little bit of time or do you think one session was too long? I don't want a definitive answer, you know? Just what you felt in the moment.

Interview partner 7: OK, I think the aspirational press release being quite quick was good because it put us straight into the movement that we needed to get. I think there was a little bit of a lagging around lunch. But it was lunch and then it's post lunch and you have to accommodate for that. That's normal. Maybe the feedback moment could have been structured a little better.

Tim Grabe: OK. In what way? How did you feel that it was unstructured?

Interview partner 7: I think I don't like sometimes, like some people would come, see us, but we were already interviewing some people and I wouldn't quite understand who was who, what were they coming from or where we were at in terms of timing. It wasn't super clear how long we had with each feedback person. And then this moment was a little bit messier somehow.

Tim Grabe: So, a short little introduction into the feedback round maybe would have missed where everyone was just like: I am this person and then Sean actually saying: OK, now they are going around like 10 to 15 minutes each and you just tell them and stuff. So, instructions were a little bit missing here.

Interview partner 7: But this could also be that I was distracted when the instructions were given. It's also a possibility, but I feel like it could have... for me it would have helped to have a better understanding of what we were really trying to achieve with this feedback section. Or what should we get at the end? Where is it that we're trying to get, but this is also very personal because I'm very like, OK, this is the task, this is how we need to do it. And Team member 1, for example, is super open to anything that can happen. So, for him receiving the people for feedback was just an opportunity to play and for me, I was like, what are we trying to do? Are we getting there? What do we need to do to get this? So, it's also down to personal preference.

Tim Grabe: But did you like the feedback phase in general or what was your feeling there?

Interview partner 7: What I liked was observing. Team member 1 led the feedback interviews. Because I learned from the way he was facilitating this. I don't know how valuable it was. It wasn't valuable at all, but I think the value of that step could be improved.

Tim Grabe: OK. So, if you say the value was rather low, did it affect your project development in general then or rather not?

Interview partner 7: Nothing at all.

Tim Grabe: OK. It's interesting.

Interview partner 7: In my understanding, right? It could be that Team member 1 had a different insight.

Tim Grabe: I mean, that's the thing. Because it's super interesting to know that because maybe the feedback session was also not that valuable, but it's just a theory because I mean you were already quite new people which just developed an idea and there were already quite a lot of new influences coming in and then even more sometimes can just be distracting and fuzzy, you know? It's not like feedback sessions sometimes aren't just more valuable if you have already worked on a project for a certain amount of time and then you need fresh feedback again. But you were all pretty new, which makes perfect sense.

Interview partner 7: And actually, now that you're saying this, I remember that I want to differentiate with the mental feedback. Because the mental feedback I think was more helpful because it was more precise. But I had a situation with the two judges that I thought were, yeah, not helpful or not constructive in their feedback. And kind of taking a lot of time in that conversation to their own benefit. Again, that's only my own judgment. But the feedback from, I think it was Judge 1 and then it was Judge 2, I can't remember if there was another mentor, but that was super, super valuable. And no, I don't know if it really made us change, but it pointed us to interesting questions.

Tim Grabe: Alright. And did you have some challenges in general during the event like yourself or also you as a group?

Interview partner 7: I mean, I'm sure we had loads but I don't really know. Like what do you think? What would you have like? What would be a kind of challenge?

Tim Grabe: I mean, what could be a kind of challenge in general? If you just see: OK, we have an idea here, but we don't know how to make it work at some point. Or the idea in general is great, but people might not use it. Or we don't know how to turn it into a business model. Or maybe group sizes can also be a challenge. You know, those kind of things.

Interview partner 7: I don't know if it's a challenge, but I think you know we all had our, but that's also what's amazing about it is, that we all had our personalities and our ways of doing things. But I think there was a good balance of people being very exploring and people being very result focused. But if there was a challenge, maybe it would be about managing those two things and allowing enough space for exploration. But also making sure that we do get somewhere. In that sense maybe having something even clearer in terms of what we're trying to achieve in each step and by the end of the day. I think Sean did give us that structure, but then again, it's super personal. For me, I'm like: OK, this is what we have to do. So, we need to get there now and some people in our group were more like: Oh, but this idea is so interesting and let's just add things. And it has nothing to do with what we're really doing. And then people will get into rabbit holes like this. And which I think is also absolutely precious and part of the value of what we're doing. But the challenge for me was managing those two things, right? Leaving space and doing what we're here to do.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, super interesting. Like that's true. And is there anything you would improve in the event for the future?

Interview partner 7: We talked to Sean about this, but I could only notice that the line of judges and mentors were only men, and I know that Sean had actually tried to get women and it just

didn't work out. But I only know that because we talked to him about it at dinner and then he told us that. I think if he had taken a moment to acknowledge that in the moment like: Hey, by the way, we're going to do judging like I want to acknowledge this is only men. This isn't what I was trying to achieve. I tried something, but it didn't work. That would have been nice. Only because for me it's all fine, because we talked to Sean about it. We have his answer but if I hadn't gone to dinner, I would still have this in my head that there would be like 10 or 12 men, you know? And I was annoyed by that.

Tim Grabe: I fully agree that's true. But in general, would you participate again in such a format?

Interview partner 7: Yeah, I think I'll be worried because I feel like I kind of lucked out, you know? Because the team was so great and the team, I think they allowed me to take the space that I could take, and I was very comfortable with letting each other be their own person and really bring what they had to the table. But if I was somehow ending up in a different energy then I don't know but I will try again for sure. I feel like we just had such a special experience that I feel like the standard is so high right now. I don't know how it could be as nice, but yeah, I will do it again.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, I mean, you had a special energy in the group in general. So, it's pretty cool. So, would you actually, because, I mean, you didn't win at the end, but you were asking for not that much money and you got some funding, so are you actually now proceeding with the project or not?

Interview partner 7: Yeah! I mean, we don't really know how, but we're meeting this evening for a brainstorming session, and we'll see what comes out of it.

Tim Grabe: I think some investor actually said to do it in presence because you were just asking for food and snack and drinks and stuff. Did it turn out? I just heard that some investors said it.

Interview partner 7: Yeah, I don't know. I asked Team member 1 about it. I asked him towards the end. Hey, do you have contacts of the two investors who offered like it was... someone offered location, someone offered drinks and he just said: "Oh, I'm sure there's a way to get that." But Team member 1 is always 10 steps ahead. He has his own plan. We'll leave space to do what we want to do. But he knows what we're doing and so for me, that's on him. I'm not sure he followed through on that offer and if he didn't, then he has a good reason for not doing it.

Tim Grabe: And do you think now, after everything has happened, that there is also a way of upscaling the event in general? Or don't you really see an opportunity here?

Interview partner 7: So, to upscale the Hackathon?

Tim Grabe: Exactly. Like getting more people involved, for example by increasing number of participants per Hackathon or making it online or all that kind of stuff you know?

Interview partner 7: I mean making it online like sure it can work. For me, it would lose some value. But also, I work online all the time, so I'm not spending my Saturday online to do this, you know? I think opportunities to connect in person, we know now how precious that is. So, I would really want to make sure that it is maintained. I think definitely we could have had more participants, but only if we had more projects. I think there was a very good ratio of participants per project. I did notice that I think we were 50 people on the guest list and how many people were there?

Tim Grabe: I mean on the guest list was everyone. So also, judges were on there and everyone. So, I think in total we were 48 people I think so three people did not show up because it was, I think three people did not.

Interview partner 7: OK. I thought there were a lot more people that didn't show up, so that is great. I mean that is an incredible... Yeah, that's amazing.

Tim Grabe: Yeah.

Interview partner 7: But so, I think then, it would be possible to expand projects and participants.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, that's good to know, you know? Because, some people liked the group size which they had, but some others said it was too big. Would how big was your group?

Interview partner 7: We were eight.

Tim Grabe: Ok.

Interview partner 7: That was good. I made bigger teams, and I wondered about that.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, because sometimes for them it was.... But I mean, everyone has their personal feel-good size of the group, aye? So, because I also heard from people that their favorite group size was four. And four is quite small, so for you it's eight. It's interesting.

Interview partner 7: More than that, like imagine a group of 15. It's going to be hard to feel connected and take your space and yeah, maybe 8 to 10 maximum is a good size.

Tim Grabe: But you also liked that it was so open? For example, there could have been the situation that one idea would be so convincing to everyone, that you would have a group of 15 people. Do you think it is still good that it is open for everyone without limitations to join any group?

Interview partner 7: I think it is good that it's open. It could be a little bit more suggested or oriented towards a specific site. So, Sean could say we recommend a team size of about 10 people, but we still want to make sure, people feel free to go to the team that they want the most. I'm so curious about the energy of what would have happened in the big group. And I think some people; again, it's just my guess that maybe some people who didn't really know what they had to bring or weren't too sure, they would have ended up in the big group and then maybe not making a massive difference because then their voice would be a little lost in the middle of that because they were joining a little bit by default because this is where everyone

is going. Whereas if you encourage people to have a more limited group size, that hopefully could be a bit more trying to go somewhere else.

Tim Grabe: I definitely agree. So basically, Interview partner 7, that was if from the official side of my questions. So now the next thing would only be: Have I missed something? Do you still want to share something which we haven't talked about yet?

Interview partner 7: Yeah, I'm happy to share. One thing is that two of the group members in my team and I really connected. It was so nice, and we met each other again on Saturday and it was just incredible. And one of them, so she brought a friend over, Stranger A. And Stranger A, she just kept saying: "I can't believe you guys have only met once before. This is incredible. It looks like you guys have been friends for 10 years." And this is really how it feels. So, it's wonderful for sure. And then I also saw Team member 1 again on Thursday and I think even our friendship has kind of moved further as a result of this event.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, I fully agree on that because there was such a special vibe at the end of the event, it was crazy. Everyone was kind of friends with each other. And you have already made such progress altogether in there. So, it was one big group. It was super cool because even though when you all went out for dinner at night, nevertheless if you didn't work in the same group, so basically you haven't really spent any time with each other, but still it was this all together joined team.

Interview partner 7: There was, but there could be more than that. That's also one thing that I still feel like. I didn't connect that much with, apart from you, many people around in the other teams, but I think that could be also my own like social limitations, right? So, it was already like eight new people for the day. And that's good enough. And I was already very stimulated, but hey, I did chat a little bit with people actually for lunch but or at drinks and stuff. But yeah, maybe a little bit more of that would have been good, but by the end of the day, I was so tired, I think I was chatting to someone and being like Oh my God, I can't think, I can't hold it. So

yeah, I don't know, but maybe if I go back then, I will feel more comfortable in initiating these kind of conversations outside of the team.

Tim Grabe: I mean every person has a limit on people which they actually can get to know in a certain amount of time. So, I think that's pretty normal, and your group was definitely bigger than other groups. So, I think you already had to deal with quite a lot of new people in your group. So, it's normal that you don't get to know that many from outside. Even I felt a special thing, even though I was not connected to any group. But at the end, it still felt like I was connected to everyone in the same way. So, it was super cool. And I also do really think that I will participate next time again but then as a participant and not as a researcher, because I also want to go once through this whole process.

Interview partner 7: Yeah, I think that would be valuable for you for your insights.

Tim Grabe: Definitely, yeah. I mean not for my Masters project anymore, because my thesis will probably be finished soon, then when the next one is going on. But just for myself, you know? It's just out of interest. Yeah, it was super cool. I also liked all the people I met there. I think it was a super cool and diverse group in so many ways, like all different kinds of backgrounds and ideas. But everyone was kind of jointly going to one goal, so it's super cool. Yeah, basically that's it from my side.

Appendix K: Anonymized transcript interview with interview partner 8 (Mentor, Judge)

Date: 26th of April 2023

Location: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Duration: 30 minutes

Interview participants: Interview partner 8, Tim Grabe

Interviewee's role at the Ideathon event: Mentor, Judge

Tim Grabe: So, Interview partner 8. Could you just start with some general things, so what your name is and what your role at the Problematic Ideathon was?

Interview partner 8: OK. My name is Interview partner 8 and I've been acting as a mentor, as a judge and likely as an investor.

Tim Grabe: Perfect. And what was the reason why you participated in these roles in this event?

Interview partner 8: OK, so I'm on the third..., the last event was my third. And on the first it was because I'm part of a thing called Community A. And Community A exists to support founders. Of course, the startups also, but our focus is mainly on the people, and we exist to support founders during this lifelong journey that is becoming an entrepreneur. Person A, who is one of the Co-founders of Community A, knows Sean and was invited to be judging there to be acting as a mentor there, and he was not available at the moment, and he asked me if I was interested and available to do so. And therefore, I said yes, let's do it. And it was on the following I went there, spent there the full day and that Sean and I had never met before. There was another mentor who I already knew from other things, Person B. And it was a very coincidence, I didn't know he was going to be there. And I said we enjoyed it a lot. Then, last December I think, there was a new opportunity and Sean said: Hey, do you want to be mentoring and also, we have a panel of judges, and you can be either just one because you have going to have subject matter experts. And I said, OK, we can do both. And we just arrived there about

lunchtime and then spent the afternoon having the conversation with the team trying to give some support to them. And then on end both of us, plus another judge, which is decided that that the prices actually the prices are just formalities just to give them more feedback, more structural feedback and. For this April, we've had Sean coming back again and said: Hey guys, still available? Do you want to act as mentors or investors? And we said we can do investors, no problem. And of course, but you'll arrive sooner so we can meet based on the previous experience. We found both, me and Person A, that it was useful to meet the teams before just the pitch, so we could have a deeper understanding because we're not there to actually invest or give you a tough judgment. We got to help them, and so the best way to give relevant feedback would be to have a better understanding and that would be only available by arriving sooner, which we did. So, we arrived after lunch time and spent a few... actually talked to everyone, so all the teams and then acted as an investor. And slash (/) because now the judge is the investor, right? So, in the 2nd edition I attended the December one, we had like poker chips, so it was phony money, and we were investing on businesses. Actually there was a full service at the time which is worth as she can. A nice lady from the Laos that is busy and works on her business for the most time of her life. And that's it, that's, I think in short, is the full story of my connection with them. I am a good fan of what Sean is trying to do. I think Sean is a great guy also, and it gives me the opportunity to do something which is super relevant for me, trying to support innovators and entrepreneurs, develop themselves with their ideas. And that's because of my own purpose in life, which is to support people to develop themselves and their ideas, trying to, with that, contribute to cook here the better world for us to live in and that's it.

Tim Grabe: And what other kind of pre expectations did you then had on the event rather than just the support side, but did you also have other pre expectations on the event?

Interview partner 8: No, no, no. Because of other things I do in my life, I have some experience in dealing with startup founders and entrepreneurs in general. So, I feel a bit of almost

everything and my only expectation was, so my only wish was, I could be really helpful. Obviously, I also wish I could learn and meet new people, meeting inspiring kids, inspiring young innovators and possible future entrepreneurs, I was looking also for that. I love meeting people and learning from them, but regarding the job itself, because I hoped I could give some value to them and that's it. I deliver real value to them and help them proceed, learn something and then, I was not expecting that to actually build something after that and have a company, but give them some form of support. And if you want a better word, support them in the idea of keep trying and keep creating and keep joining people like minded and try to do things and try to like the solutions for problems. And of course, it's not a detail. The main cause is that Sean is trying to tackle with this initiative, that is super relevant, usually out of the radar. You know, like things dealing with people that have been imprisoned or with healthcare industrial complex or things like that and with minorities or migration. Because too many times companies focus on other things and leave those spaces for nonprofits. And it's always interesting to try to not just support people that are going to do on, from that space, but also seeing if there are opportunities to build for-profit businesses that actually will deal decently and properly with those problems. Because it's sad that it's true, if it's for profit, it's easier even for investment. And I'm not saying that is my goal, but it's sucking up sides. If some ideas can actually be found there, that could be for profit, maybe they will have better chances to succeed. But I'm great for nonprofits in my personal life, I'd say. I also work with charities and NGO, so it's not that the criteria for being OK.

Tim Grabe: And what do you think of the event in general now?

Interview partner 8: Super great, super inspiring, super wonderful. So, I will try to attend every time I can and as long as Sean keeps inviting me of course. And it's amazing to see three things. One is the purity for people who don't know each other actually gather around an idea. And I think that's a great benefit for the participants who are developing that ability. The second one

is the amount of work they do in such a short period of time, like from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. It's incredible, all the steps and Sean has been involved in the process as a whole and has been introducing a lot of new features to the process with the subject matter experts, with volunteers which will give you feedback every time, and of course with the digital platform that is being building. He has been improving the process so, as every time happens with startups, things are, I have to reiterate, a lot and Sean is doing that. And I think that he is being very smart by identifying both opportunities to improve the process or things that are still lacking and finding ways to solve it.

Tim Grabe: And would you rate, because you said it's such an involving process and stuff, did you were happy with the event from an organizing perspective or do you think there were some things which could still be improved?

Interview partner 8: Well, there are always things to be improved. If one day I find myself in a position where I can see no opportunities to improve, that will be the same day for me, because I believe in the power of creation and innovation. So, the answer must be, there are things to improve. Some of them have been as.... This has been improving a lot from my three experiences. There is one detail which is the LED wall that is being used, the screen as like a.... I don't know if you noticed, there you see the full screen of the slide on the TV and then you see like a slice on the right of the next one. But that's just it. Just is a simple thing to properly configure something like that. That's not the problem, because I've got like most things in this startup ecosystem were not aiming to perfect this. We're aiming for progression. I just mentioned that there's a very small detail that should have been solved, but it probably depends on the owners of the space that they need to do that. But that's not relevant, that's really not relevant. But that's something that could be fixed. The other thing that could be fixed, I think Sean has been very smart on identifying them and probably it's been increasing outside the three stage thing, meaning this time people that were applying to participate, would have via the

Problematic app the opportunity to see already some projects predefined with the team leader. So, if people would want to go study up front and say: Hey, I want to join this team and could actually interact with the team leader. So, I think that was very interesting I think as he goes further in that direction, it will value during the day because people will go there with a higher level of preparation. Another thing that could be improved, which is not easy, is getting even more people. It makes a lot of effort on that area, and especially having volunteers to spread, you know, small posters and things like that and mutilators and those types of places. But for example, some universities or even some high schools still don't know. And there are kids there that probably would be.... Did you see that? There is a cap of number of people that can actually be there this time. I know Sean shared that there was a waiting list. So, increasing the awareness around this is always beneficial. On the other end, I'm not sure how much can you scale in terms of the capacity. But I think you'll find solutions for that.

Tim Grabe: But in terms of scaling, would you rather see more people in the event like this, how it happened so in a space, or do you think online would also be an option for this format?

Interview partner 8: Well, I know that Sean, because he said that on the event last Saturday, that Sean is considering scaling even for the other cities, other towns, even outside Portugal. And I think with that it works better in presence. I'm not saying it will not work remotely. I think probably something he will try, I'm not sure. I will discuss that, but I imagine that you can train some people to do what he does here and then open in like Porto or Geneva or Brussels or whatever and just ship there two guys and train the local team to help do all the preparation, organization and helping work during the process. It can be terrible physically, let's say, with a small amount of effort preparing the guide book and stuff like that. You could put a bit more people in that same venue, but you can scale easily to other countries? But Sean is doing this I think on very smart ways, iterating, fixing things and improving the app. The more things

happen on the app, it will become easier to bring more people in and honestly, I'm happy and I'm proud for Sean on what he has been achieving.

Tim Grabe: And just now coming to when you were at the event as a judge. What was your criteria to rate the different projects?

Interview partner 8: Look up, we tried to impersonate the investor, so I tried to balance a few things. One was, as a business, would I put money on this? Would I see any, even though it's not expected that people would come with a lot of figures and a lot of financials around the business but, to invest on something there's a set of questions I consider that are relevant to be answered from an investors perspective. The problem is real, they define it, they define it well. Do they know who is the target group or the primary target groups? Do they have some information about possible or existing competition? Now coming to the team. Are they a team or can they become a team? Because it's impossible to say they're a team when they just start of course. But can they become a team? Is there a different set of skills in the group? You're not just guys from marketing or from sales or from tech. And then if I believe the team works, can I agree this team could actually deliver what they're trying to launch as a service, as a private or whatever. And of all these boxes, particular these boxes, I would probably invest. Considering that I can't have enough financial information to see return on investment and things like that. But let's do that business model. But please, I'm not assessing the business model. Are they saying this is for-profit or not? And if they're saying this is for-profit, how do they expect to make money? And I will not assess if I believe that way is the best way to make money, I will just assess if they consider doing that. So that's from the investors side. From my supporter side and my mentor, like those things I do also, I see the progression. So that's why I like to arrive sooner because it's a great.... For example, one team on the last event made incredible progress in a positive way. And the other one and another one also had a relevant progression, but not in a good way because we gave them some feedback, so they needed to

sort a few things. And the way they decided to sort out a few things plus the way they pitched was not as good as during the conversation we had previously. So, I assess progression, that is one criteria. The other criteria is the way they interact. Can we see leadership? Can you see team spirit within the group? For example, with one of the teams, I had the conversation during the afternoon. I said to them: Why are you not a team? You are two teams. And then in the end, I said to the team leader, which I knew from the previous events: I personally love servant leadership as a style, but you must ensure that you are collecting them all the time. You are aligning them so you can't allow alpha males. Split the team. In the end, they are the team that surprised me on a good way. So, they actually did that. So, I also assess the beauty to create a group and to work as a group and work as a team and why they evolve things. And the last one which is connected to the previous two ones, these are the cultural. Do they listen? Do they actually interpret, let's say work on the information they get and deliver something out of it? They don't have to agree with you, I just want to see if they considered and how they reacted to the comments together.

Tim Grabe: And what were your expectations from this investment? What did you expect now? Because it's an unusual way of investing, because it's a super small amount of money and everything was a little bit unclear. So, what were your follow up expectations on the teams?

Interview partner 8: I expect... Let's put this on a scale. First and foremost, I expect to see them coming to the next events and some of them I already knew, I don't know if you notice, but some guys were coming and salute me or I was saluting them and that were participants from previous editions and that is great. They keep coming. So that is my number one goal or number one expectation because it shows that Sean is doing something right plus these guys are really interested in doing this path. If I see that number increasing and newcomers also coming, it's, you know, it's done, it's perfect. I don't expect them to and it's funny because it's great to see someone working on a different project for a different cause. For example, in the 2nd edition,

there was a guy that was a solo founder. And one of the things that we gave him was... He said, I'm a solo founder because no one wanted to work with me, and I wanted to do this. And I said, well, you should reflect on that because: one probably just being stubborn or two, you're not. You were not able to sell your idea to in a way that will attract other people. OK, because it was not so blunt, but this was the general concept. This time he was in the group. And that for me was, you know, great goal done. So, he joined the team and by the comments of his colleagues, he was, even though he was an introspective guy who is very shy. Shy or at least not, you know, that the appetite is not always talking, always shining. But people were saying that he made a lot of great contributions. They were telling that because of his idea and other things. So, I think that kind of proves that, that is magnificent. So, if you expect any of those ideas to become a company, not really, even though it may be possible. But if you ask me during this process: Do you believe some startups will actually be created? Yes definitely.

Tim Grabe: OK.

Interview partner 8: Maybe on the next edition someone goes back and takes one of those ghost projects that were done previously, and no one wanted, and now someone decides to take them again and reshape it and do something out of it. Great, but I truly believe that will happen. There's not just a timeline for that, and for me that's not a problem, but I'm sure it will happen. And these are my expectations.

Tim Grabe: Super interesting. So, I probably already know the answer, but would you participate in this event again?

Interview partner 8: As long as I can Sean invites me, yes of course.

Tim Grabe: These were all of my core questions, you answered them really insightfully, thank you so much. And the last thing would be now, have I missed something with my questions? Do you still want to share something about the event or anything which we haven't talked about yet?

Interview partner 8: No, just congratulate you and Sean for having chosen for your master thesis. talking about Problematic. Honestly, I'm not trying to be nice, I'm trying to be honest. OK, I think it's amazing both for Sean and for you. So, congrats and just put my camera on once again to just to say goodbye and.

Tim Grabe: Thank you so much.

Appendix L: Anonymized transcript interview with interview partner 9 (Mentor)

Date: 29th of April 2023

Location: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Duration: 30 minutes

Interview participants: Interview partner 9, Tim Grabe

Interviewee's role at the Ideathon event: Mentor

Tim Grabe: Perfect. Maybe we can start to like you just saying your name and what your role was at the event.

Interview partner 9: OK, so my name is Interview partner 9. I was invited by Sean to be a mentor at the program.

Tim Grabe: So, what was the reason? Why did you participate only because of Sean's invitation or to personal curiosity?

Interview partner 9: I would say a combination of three things. First of all, because of the invitation, because I already have a good connection with Sean. So, when he presented the idea, because I already trusted Sean's vision, it was easier for me to decide how I would allocate my time, which is not a lot, so that was it, so the main one. The second one was knowing more about the project and knowing more of what's was being developed and how it was being developed. And probably the third one was understanding the impact that as a mentor in other initiatives that I also have, understanding that some of that experience could actually be put to a lot of good usage in this specific event. So, it was not only the person, the ideas and the way it is built, but also seeing a fit between what I know and what I can provide and the audience and the project itself.

Tim Grabe: And what were, like, your special mentor skills? Like, why did Sean invite you here?

Interview partner 9: So, well, you'll have to ask him directly. And he will be the best person to tell you that. Probably one of the things is that I have some experience growing ideas from scratch or even pivoting completely companies and ideas from one place to another, especially when there is lack of market trust in that specific area. And I think that's a core component when you're trying to identify and launch an idea. Ever get an idea out of the paper with traction. If you tell me that you have traction when you're just setting up, you're wrong, you're dead wrong. But knowing how to grow it from that point onwards, that's actually a skill. And while you are drawing it, if you have some of those points aligned in your mind, I think it will make your journey a lot smoother. The other thing is that, since I regularly participate in events with universities, hackathons, even started ideation and other projects as well, this already gives some experience that I can provide to users. And since I've also worked with Sean on a couple of those, I think that he probably liked the idea and the angles that were kind of discussed in the previous events.

Tim Grabe: And in which role were you participating in these other events? What's usually there your function?

Interview partner 9: It depends, it depends a lot. In some cases, it's mentorship directly. In other cases, it's specific help with growth. In other cases, it might be as consultant. In other cases, it might be like ideation between different founders and different founders just doing the brainstorm, setting up programs as well. So, a little bit of everything.

Tim Grabe: OK. And with all those experiences you already made, what do you think about the Problematic Ideathon in general?

Interview partner 9: The idea itself?

Tim Grabe: Like the event, yeah, like the idea itself rather.

Interview partner 9: OK, two different questions. You have to decide which one so that I can give you the right answer.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, yeah. So, this.

Interview partner 9: Which was good to start with the idea itself or the event.

Tim Grabe: Let's start with the idea itself.

Interview partner 9: OK, I think the idea is awesome. I think the answer is awesome. I think that it's definitely something which is needed and something that a lot of times gets overlooked in most of the programs that I know. Either you have initiatives that are really close to a social cause and because of that they almost don't have any revenue component associated or any profitability associated to that, and they are clearly NGO's and they are clearly going for nonprofits. And I think it's not as common to see a combination of both. And I think this is where this event is very good, is that you can really find solutions that have impact while generating revenue, creating wealth, creating job, like really boosting the economy, really boosting like a transition. And I think that's one of the things that was probably very good in the idea and the concept.

Tim Grabe: In terms of the event itself?

Interview partner 9: I think that the general communication and general perception doesn't really portray what happens in the event. I think that the communication itself from flyers to the websites to some of the communication on social network. I think they are really disconnected between if you just saw it and then if you go to the event. I'll luckily, I have the context to put the pieces together, but for other people or if someone doesn't know Sean, or if they don't know a bit more about it, I think that there will be better of a difference between something that in terms of communication seems very outdated and not so interesting, and then it is itself that is really interesting and engaging.

Tim Grabe: Hmm yeah, I get what you mean. And in general, like for example then about the event. How do you think the whole event went like structure wise and all that kind of stuff?

Interview partner 9: So, I think that's probably... So personally, I would like to have a more structured participation for the groups. When I was told to arrive, I got there like an hour something earlier than I was supposed to, so that I could have some interaction. But all of the groups were fully engaged with doing something else so right when my other colleagues also mentors arrived to give and to share some of the experience, there was already another challenge, and the groups were not keen to break away from the challenges because they didn't want to miss the milestones. So, you really didn't have a lot of time to just break and say: Hey cool, let me just hear you out and understand where you are and bla bla. And the other thing is that those that I managed to connect with before lunch or around lunchtime in two hours, they were in a completely different space because since the project started from the press release and then it moved on to the actually developing the component. It's a really good way of doing this, but it also means that some of the mentorship which is applied earlier doesn't have any impact or relevance. Two hours, two hours upper, so it makes more sense to just be deployed after finishing those sets of exercises. I'm not saying that it doesn't make sense to be deployed this way, I'm saying that it can take more than mentorship at that time. Because it's already more, the ideas are more mature. It's not you telling them where they want to go, it's actually you understanding what parts and pieces make sense and can be attached. And that's ... The role of the mentor is not to create and define, but actually fine tuning and finding perspectives where there might not be. So, it works, I think it could work better if done this way.

Tim Grabe: OK. And did you have any other challenges during the event except like sometimes that your whole thing did not have that much impact in long term, but was there anything else?

Interview partner 9: So apart from not having this specific time through exercises, so not having the ability to fully connect with the entire team and having that, there was no, there was absolutely no issue there. I think everything apart from that, and even that it's just an optimization point of view. So, it's not.

Tim Grabe: And would you then also change anything else in future to improve the event except the time allocation or are there?

Interview partner 9: So, I would start with the communication. Yeah, an example I had a couple of flyers here placed in the office. Everyone asked me. So even after seeing the flyer, which is a, which was a pretty big flyer, so it was not small in size, and everyone was asking: So, this is like an Earth Day initiative? Is this like, what type of session is this? What is happening? And if everyone had the question, then that means that probably the message needs to be restructured. So, I think that the message, and the message read and message and the image around it, needs to be restructured. I think that's the way that people, so that their curiosity is not because they don't understand, but because they want to participate, and they want to engage. And I think that could be clearer. And even if you just think about the event the way that Sean tells you, like you have this event, you know where you with the team develop full day, the developing the idea you'll have people and actually investors betting on you. You have a program that will be decided, a project that will be decided, and then you'll have another in the next week, and you'll have it developed. But if you think about this full idea in 2-3 clear steps. That's amazing. That's like, that's game changing for any company like you and I, if someone we are just walking or taking a coffee. If someone tells you about this in just this clear way, we are both blown away and we're like, OK, come, I'll find the time, I'll go there. I don't think that the sexiness of the proposal was portrayed in the communication, so that is one of the first things that I would change. That would be one of the main things, and I think that would be an easy one because it probably finds agencies or associations that are very well connected in terms of doing this type of communication and they could probably take this full-time. And then Sean could connect and do the things that he does so well and have a company, even if nonprofits are working and cooperating on this. I think this would be great, because you're actually, after all of this, you have something to show. And that's also something that an agency

or a communication team would love to do. So that is the first thing. Then in terms of time allocation and structure. Even though I have this suggestion to take more advantage, there are different ways, and I don't feel that should always be done in the same way. So probably one of the things, I've just participated in this one, but probably one of the things would be kind of mix and replace and this time you started with PR. But instead of having that approach, because it's a common Y combinator approach as a standard approach in some of the events, it might not always be the case, and trying new ways and fostering new ways in the process might be interesting to also get different results. But again, that's just a small nudge there.

Tim Grabe: And anything else or?

Interview partner 9: No nothing. Well, next time you should do delivery from Company A, not from Company B. That should be a...

Tim Grabe: (laughing)

Interview partner 9: Just the personal one. Just to avoid delays. I'm not saying bad things about our competitors, but well.

Tim Grabe: I know I get that. Yeah, the food was quite late. But do you see for example like for the future, any upscaling opportunities of this event or do you think it would be even beneficial, useful or anything like that?

Interview partner 9: No, I don't believe that upscaling this event would create any benefits to the type of work and the type of development, which is then... I think you can only have it done well, with purpose, if you do it, and if you keep it in a very structured way. I don't think this is scalable. I think that's one of the things that if you want to scale what you can do is make it more, repeat it more often. That's one, and you can do it in other places in the country for sure. But you still need, in terms of time allocation, people allocation brains in the room and all of that. You really need a lot of components there, which you cannot just easily drag and drop and

scale from one to the other. I think this way is very meaningful and like money, then that's a different thing. But if you want to make a meaningful impact, then that's there.

Tim Grabe: And do you think, for example, that Sean is a key essential part at the event as well, or for example, that these events like happening in another city, Sean, would not be necessarily needed there?

Interview partner 9: I don't see.... I have so... There is nothing that Sean is bringing that another person couldn't bring. The whole fact that he is there creates a different mood to what is happening and that it is not something that you can put it on a job offer or on a description for a role description you can have that. So what you have from him which you cannot measure is what makes the event different so, I cannot tell you specifically if it's the skills, if it's the ability to connect, if it's the flexibility to resolve and take some of the complications away, if it's smooth, it's humor, but, the combination of all of those create a specific mindset, the specific flow in this event. If you are taking away, can you still do a hackathon where you are building a company or have five teams or four teams developing a product? Yes, sure you have it every day right now, probably fifty of those would be happening just in Portugal. So, you can if you can replicate this exactly? I don't think so, not exactly.

Tim Grabe: OK. And will you participate in this event again?

Interview partner 9: Yes.

Tim Grabe: Last question, that's great. That's super cool, yeah.

Interview partner 9: No, no, knowing the time better I would do a different time allocation because I allocated all of my Saturday. Again, it's not easy. I usually work on Saturdays and Sundays so that I can do other things, which are essential at this stage. So, everything that I'm depositing away hours from my work, I have to be extremely thoughtful. And when I'm not adding value, I always think to myself: What is happening and why am I not with my family if I'm not adding value? And that's a core to me, so, if I'm laying there without knowing exactly

or feeling that right now, I'm not adding a lot of value, that usually triggers me to say OK time for me to move on. This is not a way and it's not a many driven or putting many allocations to the hour, it's actually being quite pragmatical. If I'm doing this, and if I'm not moving the needle in my business, why am I not with my family? And that's one of the core things. Now, knowing that, and even knowing that a different structure might help me dedicate the time specifically, knowing exactly that. I'll start at this time. I'll have all of this engagement. Then we'll break away for an hour while they are breaking away. I can sit in the lounge, do another thing and then in a couple of hours you'll need me again. And then I'll come back. That would help me guide my efforts so I would participate, but in a different participation, I would ask for this structure to be, at least from my participation point of view, to be restructured.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, makes complete sense. So again, thank you so much, Interview partner 9. That you took the time here. So, I think you're adding quite a lot of value here because you're mentioning some points which haven't been mentioned yet. So, it's super, super great. From the main questions, from my side that would be actually it, so my last question would be rather: Have I missed something yet to talk about?

Interview partner 9: Yes, I think it is something quite dramatic which is talking about the projects themselves.

Tim Grabe: True, what do you think about the projects in general?

Interview partner 9: I feel that there were a lot of good projects going on, different projects. I think there was a very interesting twist between the midday presentation and the final day presentation, and I feel that the projects should really be... You really should keep like a time frame where you were at that stage and when where. Imagine when you see a company and you see their pitch deck throughout the years and you consolidate that and for instance you have like those things for Startup A and me where you can see them since they're first crazy and you can see the pitch deck and you can see how the idea and the concepts keep on changing and

evolving design to general and vision and the way that they are doing this. I think it would be really interesting to kind of freeze that moment and like a first stage, second stage and then the third stage for the companies that move on for the product. And really understanding this, it's a way different initiative to explain what a full day or a full weekend of work brings. Because the vision is different, the strategy is different and the concept, the revenue concept, that everything is very different showing that organic way of evolving a business in a weekend, is usually what companies do over years. I think that's one of the real ups. I would start a new if I'm... Imagine that I would be organizing a second event or an event after this, I would start this. I would start just by doing a quick recap of the latest projects and how their participation actually was and giving them these three timestamps. Because this creates the flexibility of people to know that they can pivot, things can progress, things can change, and starting to create with this idea in mind, it creates a whole world of possibilities. So, I find that part itself should be very clear and should be used. I think that the teams were not very well balanced in terms of different people, different knowledge, different capability of conducting the team or not conducting the team, so I don't know if they were picked randomly or how was the matchmaking, but I feel that they were not very balanced, not even in terms of size a team. There were teams that were clearly struggling. You had one team where you had one clear voice and three completely muted voices in the team. And that does not create an amazing experience for them. Have the case of Project B, where I don't remember the name, the name of the Team member who was not the group leader. This person was taking the front and doing most of it. And I think that, I'm not saying that it's bad for this person because this person has a lot of experience, but it's not amazing for the other team members because they also don't feel that the right flow of participation so probably reassembling the groups in some way, doing some type of matchmaking, understanding better their skills, what they bring to the table and creating more equal teams, equal in terms of capacity, would add up to a more interesting and I'm not saying result, because

the result then depends on a lot of things, but the process would probably be more interesting to a lot of them. You could see that some groups were having a lot of fun while doing it. Some groups were not having the same fun or they were not feeling the same energy and drive to do things.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, I agree. Like, I mean the selection process was... yeah, quite freely, let's say like that. There were just like the four group owners, which knew like, which applied before with their idea kind of and they were just pitching, and then everyone could sort themselves to the groups, like, from the type of their likeability. So, at the beginning, there were still a lot of changes, you know, like within the first half an hour. So, you couldn't really tell. But I mean then yeah, at some point the groups got quite fixed then, but I completely agree that there were completely different prerequisites from the groups, also quite different developments. But what I found out from a researcher's perspective; it was super interesting to see the different ways of working which actually involved because of this group composition. But I fully agree that I think there could be some matchmaking, like improving the matchmaking process. So, what would you suggest how to do it best?

Interview partner 9: I would have a couple of settings for that. Like for instance having a max cap of participation per group, making sure that all groups have the same, well... Starting with the number of people they have the same, but for instance at the time of submitting the idea or registering to go, you don't have to fill like a form where you kind of have different like three to four types of personality or behavior or whatever roles that you want to do, so we know already that person is more blue, red, green. And in all the groups you would try to just get some of the same topology in the group. Then what happened? Like everything is going to happen, the groups can... You can get groups that groups get along just fine because they are all equal and you can have exactly the opposite. They are so different that everything works. You can't control that, but at least you control the fact that everyone can really contribute and

they can feel heard and they can feel that the process is developing, without looking at the other group and saying: Oh, but the others have or the others, this or the others that or thinking, well, I don't want to be in this group. So that would be something that I would change. Not creating too many rules or settings or blah blah blah, but just making sure that equally scattered along the groups and creating like three to four different profiles that people would kind of have to fit in.

Tim Grabe: Makes complete sense. But the results at the end of the event, did you expect them or not? I mean like the progress which was made at the end.

Interview partner 9: I could see the end result by midday or three hours before the result. I could see that they would be going that far. I think they really went far in terms of what they developed. Maybe it was not clear for all of the groups exactly the way that they should portray. So, some people were focusing on making the visuals compelling, others were focused on making the presentation compelling and others were focused on making the business compelling so that you could really see at least three different types of approaches. I think that for the juries, they were a bit partial, probably in the way that this was presented, and they chose their preference on the capability of someone standing up and defending their ideas in a very coherent way and well sustained. And I think probably that mattered more than anything else in the business. So, if you are there to evaluate and reward based on the pitch, I think that works. If you are there to have to evaluate based on the idea that didn't work, if it's a mix, I don't know exactly I would have to see the juries' notes to say if it doesn't mix or not.

Tim Grabe: OK, perfect. Thank you so much, Interview partner 9. Any last words to share?

Interview partner 9: No please do share and do consolidate all of this feedback. The events can be better and better and more and more impactful. And if you ever need anything you know where to find me.

Tim Grabe: Perfect. Thank you so much.

Appendix M: Anonymized transcript interview with interview partner 10 (Idea Owner)

Date: 3rd of May 2023

Location: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Duration: 30 minutes

Interview participants: Interview partner 10, Tim Grabe

Interviewee's role at the Ideathon event: Idea Owner

Tim Grabe: OK, perfect, all right. Then Interview partner 10 I would like to ask you once again to tell me your name and what your role was at the event.

Interview partner 10: Hello dear Tim, I am Interview partner 10 and my role was Team Lead of the group Project A. But now we just bought a new domain, that means we are called Project A from now on, but at that time still Project A.

Tim Grabe: Cool and as I know you guys were a project that was developed before. Why did you decide to do this project back then when you guys were developing this?

Interview partner 10: We were supposed to choose one of his challenges that touched us the most or that we felt like tackling. And I definitely wanted to do Mental Health, so definitely in the direction of health. And then we found ourselves together at a table, I think we were 7 people who all wanted to tackle the same topic and then it actually turned out a bit that we thought: OK, one group does a bit more about physical well-being with yoga and meditation. And the other group then maybe a little bit more these opposite options. The conclusion is honestly that it developed more or less organically depending on how we sat. OK, the three people are doing the therapy.

Tim Grabe: Was there also something like feasibility, for example? So general interest or feasibility? How did play into it with ?

Interview partner 10: In hindsight, do you think how that's implementable?

Tim Grabe: Yes, exactly, that is, feasibility in the development of ideas, so to speak. Did that play a role for you?

Interview partner 10: I don't know. I honestly have to admit that I was actually a little less enthusiastic about our idea at the very beginning and would have liked to do more of this physical part. This one with the yoga. Together with Team member 1, so to speak. And then it more or less developed. OK, the 3 do yoga, the other 3 do therapy. That means at that time I more or less didn't quite think about it or believe in it. Now, through this whole process and the support that we have received and also just generally through the fact that one puts more work into it, one has also somehow noticed that there is somehow a gap and that is feasible. There is definitely a great need and that makes it a bit more interesting.

Tim Grabe: And why did you or did you decide at that time to participate in this Ideathon after this class, so in general in the event from the beginning?

Interview partner 10: I mean: for one, we don't have anything to lose. I think it's also just cool to think outside the box a little bit. I mean you are studying entrepreneurship, we are all studying management and I was not so happy with my choice from the beginning anyway. I would have liked to choose entrepreneurship and therefore it was for me personally a good alternative to see if it is something for me and I found it somehow encouraging and motivating that Sean has put so much hope in us, but also just generally encourages us to do it. Yes of course, why shouldn't you try it, of course it's still a bit of a time commitment besides university, but I for example enjoy the project much more than any marketing simulations.

Tim Grabe: I can fully understand that. And what were your expectations of the event back then? So of the Ideathon. What did you expect from it?

Interview partner 10: I had already been to a team lunch with Sean and the other team leaders. So I knew roughly what to expect. And since we theoretically used the same structure or a similar structure as we did in class, I knew that it was probably more about challenging our idea

again than completely overturning it and starting from scratch. We've already done user testing in class, we've already done a marketing analysis, and that means I've also tried to convey to the girls that we shouldn't be too stuck on our idea just because we've verified it for ourselves. It could be that we get new input from 50 people and they say, hey, do it like this and like that. So that one is then not too stuck and that one is not in the mode; we are now actually justifying what our idea is. Or why we developed the idea the way we did. But that one is also open to suggestions, for example, renames it or opens it up for both criteria, starts small ones, doesn't just do it virtually, does it personally. You know? That you are simply still flexible in your mindset.

Tim Grabe: Have you participated in such an event before?

Interview partner 10: No.

Tim Grabe: Exciting. And what do you think of it now that the event is over? So first from the Ideathon and then we can go back to the Buildathon, but first the Ideathon.

Interview partner 10: I thought it was really cool. I found it very inspiring. Even at the very beginning, when the groups were first formed, to see that all of a sudden 10-15 people were standing around you and just asking questions like that: Oh cool, have you already thought about this? And what are you doing with it? And just to get a little bit of support in general, so if I had been a student back then, I would have done that right away. Just to get a little bit of confirmation for it, but also interesting to get a lot of aspects chilled out again. Because we had already put a lot of thought into it beforehand, we unfortunately got into the mode of justifying why we had thought about XYZ and discussed x possible scenarios in the ideation workshop in far too much detail. But now we've already done some preliminary work and know what our version 5 or 6 will look like. We are now starting very low with version 1.

Tim Grabe: OK and organizationally? How do you think it went?

Interview partner 10: Good, I think Sean did a great job. Of course there were some technical difficulties. It would probably have been nice if we had smaller groups. We were 50 people for four ideas. That was maybe a little bit too much. It was really cool to have so many people on the team, but it didn't make it much easier to coordinate when you have 15 people tinkering with one idea. Maybe we should have just split up a bit more, even within the team. OK, you work on the user journey, you do the value proposition. But because we had already put a lot of thought into it and because we wanted to know a lot and everyone had to be brought up to speed somehow, it was difficult to split up directly because, as I said, we had already thought about a lot of things. But otherwise, I thought the organization was great. It is of course super difficult to organize when exactly a lunch break is. Maybe a small after-work snack would have been good, because everyone was through quickly at 17/18:00. And just before the pitch it would have been somehow.... It was then somehow all recorded very briefly. So OK, we weren't even finished with the prototype, although we had actually already done the preliminary work, and I somehow managed to paste the pitch in 5 minutes. A little 5 minute break would have been nice before the pitch.

Tim Grabe: Yes, and in general the structural set-up, that means at the beginning with this pitching phase blah blah blah and then first the working phase feedback and so on, how did you find that?

Interview partner 10: What did we have first? First groups, then market analysis. I don't even know if we did those right. I don't know if we skipped that or if we didn't get that in our team. Otherwise, it was definitely plausible. I thought it was good. For example, we hadn't done this aspirational press release in class yet, so I think that helped us again. Now we could also use ChatGPT for that, that was not forbidden. So I think if we hadn't had ChatGPT, we wouldn't have been able to get the whole thing done in time.

Tim Grabe: That means in general, time-wise, did you think it was too short for the day now or did it fit?

Interview partner 10: No, it was actually a perfect fit for us now.

Tim Grabe: OK, and you just mentioned it with the team size, that that was a challenge. Did you have any other challenges during the event? So any problems or challenges?

Interview partner 10: Not necessarily problems, but because we sometimes had too diverse a background, we were challenged a bit too much, so that we sometimes got lost too much in details, although it was all about the big picture. But as I said, maybe that was just because we were already in a different stage than the other groups. Otherwise I think it would have been plausible in any case the way the structure was set.

Tim Grabe: Yes, and in relation to the feedback phase, where then again random people came in, how did you like that and especially how did it influence your project progress?

Interview partner 10: I think it would have been good if we had known that the first two judges, Judge 1 and Judge 2, the mentors, would be the right judges later on. I think in that first feedback round, because we hadn't prepared a pitch yet, we didn't do so well. Maybe it was also due to the judges, who were a bit too investment-driven for our taste. A bit too much: "Yes, but how do you make money with it?" Equity here, equity there. And less on this: "OK, first of all it's primarily about generating the social benefit and then we just more or less tried to respond to the previous feedback in the second and third feedback round. So do you believe that as well? So to have their feedback verified again, so to speak. Because we didn't really know, OK, they just introduced themselves very briefly, but what are they doing again? Do they now have a marketing background? Do they have a finance background now? I think we would have needed another 10 minutes to write down our top ten questions. Because we scurried from one task to the other so quickly that we didn't really have time to think about the questions. And then they sat in front of us and were like, "You're not asking anything." And we were like, "Um, OK.

Where do we start? What kind of people are you again? It would be good to know, here in marketing or you're finance, that you don't have to ask again, what's your background again? Because these are certainly really great people who are sitting there, but it was just difficult to ask appropriate questions at that moment because you were just so completely unprepared.

Tim Grabe: Yes, that means that you would definitely change the visibility of the feedback providers. So that it is somehow clearer what they are experts in. And then the second thing that you mentioned was the judges, who were also feedback providers. Would you go so far as to change that? That is, that these feedback providers are not judges later on?

Interview partner 10: Yes, but I think some of the judges also cancelled. Of course, it could be that this was due to the fact that it was doubled. When we realized that they were going to the chairs, we were like, "Oh no, we didn't deliver at all." But that's also part of it, and it's all right.

Tim Grabe: Yes, I mean, it's just generally about that, even if it just happened by chance. But that one knows that these people should not have a double function in general. If that is born of necessity, then that's just the way it is.

Interview partner 10: Well, actually, you can look at it either way. You don't have that much time to really incorporate their feedback. If you really had time to implement their concept, it would be super nice for the investors to know: "OK, I gave my feedback and it's taken seriously and I really see a potential that they do it according to my interest", you know? But now more people have invested, have said, "Yeah, OK do AI. You could implement AI here." And then gave money. And then we sort of accepted it. Of course, we can then also say, no way are we doing this. Then he also thinks, "OK, the only feedback I gave is not going to be implemented." But I mean, these are small amounts. It's just about 100€. Even if we don't implement AI afterwards, then it's just been a loss for the 100€. In the end, this is still our project. And it's also a bit difficult to what extent we have to bring the investors in as stakeholders. Or do we

just keep the money from them and keep updating them? That's just the kind of balance we're trying to find.

Tim Grabe: OK, so that means that you haven't received any clear instructions or anything like that as to how you're going to deal with the investors?

Interview partner 10: Yes, from Sean actually. So with Judge 2 and Judge 1, for example, I met afterwards and got the missing feedback from them. Because we didn't get any investment from them, but we did from the others. So I thought, OK, it's good to know why they didn't invest. Or what could we do better anyway? We will definitely pick up the others during the week, but since we are still relatively early in the stage, we first want to get our MVP ready and then we will consult them all bit by bit. Sean is also one of the investors, so of course he's always on the ball. And we've definitely had a follow-up with all of them, at least thanked them for the investment and will always, whenever there's interest, we can also plan a call at any time. But now we don't have so many open questions where we would need answers again.

Tim Grabe: And would you adjust anything else at the event now? So for the future?

Interview partner 10: Nope, I don't think so. On the whole, I thought it was a very successful event.

Tim Grabe: Can you think of a way to make the event bigger? That is, the general format could be scaled up, for example, if you switch to the online format or let it take place more often or things like that. Do you think that would be possible in general or do you see other ways to do that?

Interview partner 10: Ah, I don't necessarily think online. I think something like this lives from the fact that you meet here in presence. And I think the group size was also good. I think 50 was a good capacity for the room alone. I do not know whether that is now really so the Need there. Maybe you can do an ideation workshop more often or you make smaller groups, that

you say, OK, there are six people per group and not 12 to 15. Of course, that would also be an option somehow. Or is the question concrete, how can you scale that?

Tim Grabe: Nope. Whether it makes sense is one thing. So that would be the first question, whether you think it would make sense. And if it would make sense, then how it might be possible.

Interview partner 10: Yes, I wouldn't do it in hybrid either, I would do it in person again. In class, for example, we had someone online during user testing. Then there are technical difficulties, then it's too loud again, then you can't find a quiet niche where you can sit down and maybe you don't have Visual Aid or something. That's why it's always difficult. That's why I think it's best in person.

Tim Grabe: And how was it now that you were already relatively far along with the project when you started the Ideathon? Did your idea develop further in the course of the Ideathon or did you end up with the same result?

Interview partner 10: Actually, we stuck with the same result, but we got another good challenge. We went into a lot more detail. The networking alone helped. For example, we also had two participants who helped us with the Buildathon and are now somehow more or less on board and also enough people who we could now still ask for feedback or their opinion. So I think our biggest benefit from the Ideation Workshop was really the networking.

Tim Grabe: Would you then generally participate in such a format again or rather not?

Interview partner 10: Yes, I think so.

Tim Grabe: Cool. And now a quick word about the Buildathon. That was a week later. What did you think of the timing? So did you think it was good that it was a week later or a bit too short notice?

Interview partner 10: I think it was quite good for us because we had already put a lot of thought into it, so it was okay for us in terms of time. If you really start from the beginning, I can

imagine that a week right after is a bit too short notice. Of course, it always depends on how detailed or how intense the app is. But for us it was suitable. I think you should use the momentum especially in the beginning. And scan everything more or less as quickly as possible. But of course we are now also just in the next 2 weeks in the exam phases, etc., that is of course especially difficult for students to invest super much time in the project, because just many things are pending.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, and then what was the progress that you made? So what did the Buildathon bring you?

Interview partner 10: Of course, super valuable work from Support 1 and also from Sean. So Sean is still working super hard on it now, but as Sean told it, Cameron also worked really long on it on Saturday. So of course that brought a lot of results. And also Darius, who was there, getting a bit of mentoring from him was also really cool. Especially because he has also developed a mental health app, which is of course exactly in our sector, and it was super valuable to talk to him.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, so just for completeness, Sean and Cameron worked on the app, right?

Interview partner 10: Exactly. At the right development so they have coded or not coded so with Bubble.

Tim Grabe: Originally it was said that you would have a functioning MVP at the end of the day. Did that work out?

Interview partner 10: No, unfortunately we don't have that yet, because there are still one or two hurdles with the plugins. That means we have this scheduling plugin, which is still missing. There are one or two hurdles, but Sean is still working on it right now. That means originally it was said: Whatever we can do in a weekend. That was of course a bit promising. 2 weeks later we are still working on it.

Tim Grabe: But did that bother you now? In the sense that these promises were made at the beginning that were ultimately not kept?

Interview partner 10: No, I don't think so. I mean, we didn't have that much time ourselves on Saturday. If we had really locked ourselves in on Saturday and Sunday, we might have made some progress. But it's just a side project, so nobody can expect us to lock ourselves in 24/7 and work only on the project. Maybe the progress is OK the way it is now.

Tim Grabe: Very exciting. So I think it's super, super cool. I actually have one question regarding the structure of the Buildathon, what did you think of it?

Interview partner 10: Mmh, yeah. I mean, Sean and I worked the story into Trello beforehand. I think that made sense. We then yes split up the group so that Sean, Support 1 and the tech guys then started with Bubble. Then all of a sudden the two mentors stood behind us and said, yeah ok, what can we answer for you? I don't know if that passed us by a little bit, but in any case I wasn't prepared that there were two more people, like a user testing or that we could ask them again. That means we had to pull a few questions out of our sleeves, but they turned out to be very valuable conversations. And it was also super practical that you then walked around and asked people. So I think that was a good division, that everyone could somehow make their contribution. For the fact that we of course only so to the short time have perhaps unken drawn out a bit too long. Mattresses right, it is still right that we had to leave afterwards, we would have liked to stay longer, thought ey, we actually want to stay here, still develop and continue to work, but that's why the stop was so n bit so the only stupid so, yes OK. If you win, then you have your Buildathon again next week on Saturday. And if you don't really have any time or plans, then it's so stupid. Maybe that gives you a little bit more flexibility. So it's really nice that the Buildathon is a week later. But you can't always expect that you only plan from day to day. Most of the time, the next weekend is already planned. Maybe we could have

communicated that differently with Sean. But that maybe you just keep the Buildathon more or less flexible, when it is exactly.

Tim Grabe: Is there anything else you would change, other than now the flexibility of the date?

Interview partner 10: Nah, I don't think so. I mean, because Sean and Support 1 are working on Bubble now, we haven't heard anything about it. That means it's going to be hard for us to get into it afterwards if we want to change something ourselves. It's really nice that we have the guys to do it for us. For us, I know we have to take the blame, it would be nice to do another bubble workshop. At least one for beginners, so that we also get the basics so that Sean doesn't have to brief us later, we have to change this and so on, but that we maybe get a bit of know-how ourselves, how it looks technically and design-wise. Because the guys are working on it right now, so that it just works technically. That has nothing to do with it having a nice interface later on.

Tim Grabe: What I hear indirectly now, would it have been nice if you had been integrated more? In the sense that you could be there while the coding was going on. Now it was rather separated.

Interview partner 10: Yes, but then we might have found it interesting for 2 minutes and then it's just so technical and then it's also no fun to see how he pushes something over there and enters something there. That's why I don't have a better solution for it now. Afterwards Sean gave me a little introduction to Bubble. But maybe I have to warm up with it as soon as the MVP is finished. Then you can work your way in. But so, if Sean would jump off now, we have no idea how to use it.

Tim Grabe: Yes OK, super exciting . So from my fixed questions, those were actually all of them now. Is there anything else that I haven't addressed now that you would like to get off your chest?

Interview partner 10: Maybe the tasks, but Sean already knows that. The team constellations were not so clear afterwards. For example, we had the core group of 4 girls and then we had some who also helped. We rewarded them with bounties afterwards. But does that make them a project owner or an idea owner? Are they now officially members? Or were they just people who helped us with the idea and they go out after the workshop and say: OK, I had a nice day. I helped people with the app but now actually no longer a stake in it. We didn't quite realize that in advance. And then we were also asked by the other: What does that mean now? Are we now inside the project with you? I don't know, it's probably up to everyone to decide for themselves whether or not to include them officially. But for us, for example, it was a bit, OK, what does that mean now? Just because they helped us to challenge the idea, they are now officially part of it? Do they now own equity in the idea?

Tim Grabe: Yes, that means you would have liked more clarity in advance?

Interview partner 10: Yes, but Sean is super open to any question. You can always ask him. That means we could have asked him beforehand. But that was, for example, a question that came up again during the process.

Tim Grabe: Yes, I can fully understand that. That was of course also a special case with you, normally the ideas are developed there first. I think that's why Sean himself was not yet so attuned to it. But it is nevertheless relevant with the new projects, if there now just someone brings out the then nevertheless later. There it is theoretically also the same question. That was it from my side.

Appendix N: Anonymized transcript interview with interview partner 11 (Mentor)

Date: 3rd of May 2023

Location: Online (Microsoft Teams)

Duration: 30 minutes

Interview participants: Interview partner 11, Tim Grabe

Interviewee's role at the Ideathon event: Mentor

Tim Grabe: The interview will probably just take around 20 to 30 minutes. So thank you for participating. Interview partner 11, could you, for the start, just shortly say your name and what your role was at the Ideathon event?

Interview partner 11: Yes, my name is Interview partner 11. I was a mentor at the Problematic Hackathon, at the first event of the two. And yeah, I spent there the whole day trying to help teams. With what they needed actually.

Tim Grabe: And what was the reason why you participated in that event?

Interview partner 11: Sean invited me to it. He actually invited me to do one in December but I was not available, so then he invited me to this one again. And I could make it so I went there. And the reason was because I did a workshop about Thousand were pre in October and where Sean participated himself. And he wanted me to help teams in the Hackathon. Also, I'm a designer by training and so the design skill set was also something that could be useful for teams at that stage. Because they were doing the prototype and so on. And the usability testing and interviews and so on. So that's all. Things that I'm supposedly an expert in. He invited me to be one of the mentors in the in the event.

Tim Grabe: And you mentioned that you already, like Sean, participated in such an event. So have you ever participated in an event like this and in which role?

Interview partner 11: Yes, I will put this in the same bucket as the Hackathon sort of as like a startup weekend or something like that. I participated in a few of those like I started going to those things like 10 years ago or something. Well, more now, like 12 years ago. And I even won a couple of them. So yeah, I think Hackathons are pretty cool. And more recently, I've also been attending some Ethereum related events, some crypto related events. {disruption through cat} Where in most crypto conferences or most here in conferences there is also a Hackathon track where people can come up and create stuff together and so I've also been participating in some of those. They were actually in several places around the world and currently I'm working in a in a startup with people that I met through one of those Hackathons actually. Yeah, I've been part of a bunch of those. I've also been part of design Hackathons and I've helped organizing some things like that as well, and I've been a mentor in a bunch of them as well.

Tim Grabe: And because you had made so many experiences already, what were your pre-expectations on the event?

Interview partner 11: On this one, yeah. Uhm I was actually expecting it to be worse than it was, because I had no idea how this one was structured right. And the one bias that I have is that these Hackathons are usually much more focused on the technical aspects like development and so on and not so much on design or customer development or business or business model exploration and stuff like that. But uh, this one specifically was actually not at all focused on the technical parts. All it was not like a normal Hackathon where people just like code and act something together. It was not that at all. That was good because there was actually a kind of a process to come up with a business idea that Sean presented in those slides, and then the steps. It made sense to me to do it like that and the design was also or the discipline of design was also represented in there, which is my main pet peeve. That's it. So that was cool. I only arrived, when Sean told me to arrive, at noon or something, so I didn't saw how the groups were formed. Which to me is like the make or break of most hackathons is how the groups are formed because

you know, when people don't know each other and they're working in the group, the things can go wrong and that's the thing that most influences the outcome of it. I felt that I didn't understand how the groups were formed or why those groups, or why those conditions people and also the groups were pretty big, too big I would say in that case. So I thought I felt that there should be more groups, smaller groups, because sometimes there were groups with eight people. So you know, it was kind of a round table with eight people trying to discuss something and it's too many people to be effective. Let's say in that scenario where within one day you have to come up with a bunch of stuff, right? So. Yeah, I thought that the groups were too big. I didn't understand how the groups were formed because I was not there when it happened. But I thought I was surprised, positively surprised, by the structure of the day. Like the things that Sean was saying what people should do in the slides and all that because I think that structure is the right structure, so I think that structure works. I've seen it work before and I was not expecting for this case to be to show that structure, and I was like, huh? Yeah, they're doing this right. At least according to my opinion. Another thing that surprised me was, at a certain point were only.... It felt to me were only evaluating projects from the point of view of is this investable or is this not investable or something like that and it failed to.... At that point, it's too soon to say. Oh, but this doesn't have a business model or this will not have enough revenue or well, right? Because they just created the thing. Right. And it's much more about potential and what you could have eventually. So I've noticed that some judges were too harsh on that and also because maybe the system that Sean came up with where investors can actually invest money like it was 100 bucks or something, but they actually could invest in the ones that invest more are the ones that win or something. That system felt a little bit too transactional for that moment. So maybe that's why the judges were also thinking about: Oh, but I should evaluate them according to investment. Which I don't think it's the right approach at that time. So that's another thing that I remember feeling that was like maybe this could be different.

Tim Grabe: OK. So the initial question was like the pre-expectations and that clearly got the way now through like what you in general thought about the event and how it went and all that stuff. Is there anything else you can think of? About the event in general like you already mentioned sometimes. The structure was, even though it was good, do you still see some improvements in it or?

Interview partner 11: Well, actually, yeah. I did real conversation. Your question was about the expectations. Some specific expectation, which is because the event was done in the 42 school, I was expecting for the participants to be 42 school students. Because I've been to a Hackathon there before and most of the participants of that Hackathon were 42 students. So that's why I'm saying it and I think none of them were. I was surprised that. I think maybe most of the participants were foreigners. Not Portuguese I mean, which is awesome. But I was like: Oh, this looks like an event for foreigners and I was like OK Sean organized it so maybe it makes sense. That are people from his network that showed up. So that was something I had a different expectation on?

Tim Grabe: So and now coming back to how the event was in general. You already mentioned so many good things and positive things and some negative ones. Are there still some things missing?

Interview partner 11: Yeah, there's a specific thing which probably was the biggest one and I told Sean in the moment when it happened. At a certain point, the groups were supposed to do user interviews to test their concepts, where they would show what they're doing and get feedback from the people. And those interviews were supposed to be done to random people that came from the street, basically right. And there were some people that showed up to do it. And some of them were also judges. So at a certain point, the judges were being interviewed as they were customers, but they were applying as they were judges, right. And that's a bit weird. Because the groups themselves were also pitching those people what their business was instead

of doing either interviews and explaining what the concept is and getting feedback from them. I think that step in the process should be much more like a usability testing to be honest. Where the main goal is for the groups to get feedback from the interviewees and the users, and not to practice the pitch, which was what happened. And Sean actually had a slide describing what I'm saying what should happen. Which is: you're doing this because you want to get feedback and you want to blah blah. But most groups just defaulted to: and this is how we're going to make this, and that's the pitch mode of, like, just selling what they're doing.

Tim Grabe: OK.

Interview partner 11: Right. And there's a big difference. If you're pitching, you almost get no feedback. But if you're doing a test with someone and asking them to use your thing and you observe them using your thing, you get much more feedback. That's actually useful. So from the design, prototyping user testing part of it, I think it didn't work so well, because the people that they were testing the prototypes with were judges. So they started pitching to them instead of doing this build testing. And so there was no feedback to improve the prototype. So that part was the main one and I told this to Sean at the moment. And then he said: oh, you should come to the stage, talk about it and explain it so people would change their behavior. But it was already too late, and people were late to do whatever, so it didn't happen. But the slides that Sean had were actually saying the correct things, but people in practice were not doing the correct things. And what I would advise to do in that sense is: There's a reason why most of these exercises actually include people leaving the building, finding someone on the street and talking to them, right? And in this case, Sean, I guess, tried to bring the people from the street into the building, right. Random people that would show up at a certain time to be into. And it's different. This one works not so well. The fact that the groups themselves are the ones that need to go after the people and get their feedback puts a whole different context on it of like, no, no, we're doing this because we want the feedback of what people think about this. And not the

price with the pitch. Not to whatever, right? And so yeah, that's something that I would change honestly. And I've seen a bunch of Hackathons and stuff like this where the people go out of the building and interview people are the ones that have the best results because they actually get feedback. So I would push for that kind of change.

Tim Grabe: OK, it's cool. It's super interesting. And were there any other challenges, for example from your side or also from the team side which you experienced during the event?

Interview partner 11: I don't think so. I mean, there were at some point, I'm not sure if there were, some lost in translation problems because again, most people were foreigners, and so we were all speaking in English. But also, most people were not native English speakers, so everybody was, you know, using English as a second language. or most people let's say. And I'm sure there were some, you know, lost in translation kind of problems in there somewhere which always happened but the size of the groups also didn't make that easier. It made that harder because in a group of eight people you have varying different English level skills, right? Sometimes the communication was hard and the way the groups were formed was: Someone pitched an idea and then people flocked to them and like yeah, I want to work on that idea. There was an inherent hierarchy in each of the groups, which was the initial pitcher of the idea was the leader and the facto leader not elected. But you know people flocked to that idea which means they're the spokesperson, which means they're the moderator of the discussion, which means they are the facilitator of the thing, which means they make the decisions. And that's not a good collaborative environment to be honest. And so sometimes, like in one of the groups, when I arrived, they were debating between going one route or another route. Two totally different routes, but kind of the same general sustainability area and there again it was in a seven- or eight-person group. And they were still debating which route to go. And I basically forced them to do a voting. So, it's like OK, we have option A and option B. Who wants to do option A and who wants to do option B? And the result was like seven to two or six to two or

something like that. So a big majority was for one option, but they didn't know that at the time they were debating the two options as if they were equal. And if they were all decided about it, but actually, when we came to the vote, there it was pretty clear which option they should go with, right? And so in this kind of situation, there's always an issue of trying to understand where the leadership lies, who makes decisions, who makes what type of decisions, what makes what other type of decisions, how do we decide as a group strategy going forward and so on. The worst-case scenario that usually happens is people just get tired of discussing and it's like: Oh yeah, whatever, let's go with whatever. And there it's not really a decision, it's not really a proper deliberation. It's probably not really the best decision. This to say that sometimes in these kinds of situations, people don't make decisions in the best way, which as a consequence, of alienating members of the group or electing the fact the leader, that from now on makes all the decisions. So managing the hierarchy within the group is something that's very sensible and hard to do in these situations. And so, if you set up a program where the start of the group is: Someone pitches an idea, and other people flock to them, you're already establishing a hierarchy. That's not that healthy for a collaborative environment. And so, I would change that in in the program. I don't think people should flock to and form teams according to someone who pitches and people like it and vote and so on, which is the typical startup Hackathon format by the way. And I don't think that's collaborative enough. And I think that leads to not so good results.

Tim Grabe: Umm, but so you would then rather suggest what?

Interview partner 11: That's the problem. In the workshop that I did that Sean went to, I did it another way around. So, the goal of the workshop I did was that people should create an organization. In the registration form for the workshop, I asked: Do you already have an idea for that? Yes, or no? So, most people that register for that workshop said that yes, they have an idea for that. And so, what I did on my workshop was: OK, write down your idea for yourself.

Then scrap it, put it in the garbage, because what we're going to do today is that everybody's going to decide collectively what they should work on. So, what we did was a process where everybody defined their own personal values. You know, individually. And then we would have all everybody's personal values and match them for similar ones, and then we'll make groups out of that. So basically, 30 strangers got grouped into ten groups of three people. Where those three people in the in that group had similar values and then they had to figure out what to do. Then they had to figure out what would be the mission of the organization, what the organization would do, what would be the values of the organization. Then they had to figure out the idea basically. And so this is another way of doing it, that doesn't rely on: Hey, this is me. I have this idea. Please come to me. No, this is more like: Hey, this is me. I have these values. Oh, you have similar values? Let's get together and see if we can come up with some ideas, right? And so, if we do it in the way that I'm suggesting the idea is shared, right? The mission is shared, the values of the company are shared from the beginning. There's no founder, there's everybody creating the thing collaboratively at that point and I think that makes a really good and big difference in the in the quality of the outcome.

Tim Grabe: And is there anything else you would change to improve in future to improve the event? Except for all the things mentioned already.

Interview partner 11: Well, it's just a logistics thing, there should be more breaks. At a certain point, people were just like too involuntarily taking breaks and going outside or whatever to take a smoke or whatever it was. It felt too intense and in the middle of the afternoon, people were already all like dead. So, I think that there should be some more intentionality around people having breaks either with food, because people need food or whatever it is. Or some stretching exercises or whatever it is. So that there's some glue with the deliberate breaks so that people don't burn out.

Tim Grabe: And how would you rate the different projects? I mean you couldn't really see them from the beginning on, but I mean from the stuff or from the point on where you arrived and then the progress at the end. You know like, how would you rate them?

Interview partner 11: Actually, this issue of people being tired influenced it a lot. I don't think the project ideas were very good, to be honest.

Tim Grabe: OK.

Interview partner 11: I remember one idea that I thought, hmm, this is this could be interesting. This could have some potential. But all the others felt like things that were already done before or things that people didn't put that much effort in because they were tired, or they didn't feel ownership and the groups were too big. So, if I would have to rate the quality of the output of the event, I would not rate it very high to be honest, because only one out of four or five groups was actually OK in my opinion. But it's also too early to judge, obviously. And I think that the structure of the event was like 80% correct. The things that I would change were the things that I mentioned already. How the groups are formed and that specific part about the user interviews and the breaks. But the structure of the event and the contents and the flow are mostly correct in my opinion to produce good outcomes. But in this case specifically, maybe because of those things that I'm pointing out, the outcome was not that impressive. Like another way you can measure the output is... All the participants are excited about what they're working on, right? If they leave the events feeling, wow, this is going to be the next billion-dollar startup like: We invented something cool, right? So, if they have that, I would say the event was successful, right? If they don't have that, I would say not that much, right? And so, I would predict most people didn't feel that or only very few people felt like: Oh, this could be something really cool. And we want to continue to be part of this and so on and so forth. So that's basically maybe the framing through which I would evaluate output, how the participants felt about what they

created and if they wanted to continue to put that energy into it or not, and how excited they felt about it.

Tim Grabe: And would you participate again in the event?

Interview partner 11: Yeah, as a mentor for sure.

Tim Grabe: Right. OK. Just if you've still got time, one final question regarding the upscaling. Do you think this event or event type can be upscaled in some way or even should be? Or should not be? For example, by more frequency or online format.

Interview partner 11: Doing it in more locations and so on, yeah... I mean the format is again, like I said, 80% is there. I think this kind of thing would not work with this format online. So, to port this to an online remote digital version it would have to be totally different, and people are already doing digital remote hackathons a lot in the in the crypto space. Actually, in the web free space. And they're different because they need to be different. They're done across one month long and stuff like that. So, I think this format is good for personal events, which means that they have to be bound to one location in one geography. So, a potential for them to scale would be to, you know, do it in more cities, and doing it with a higher frequency, which is not digital scale, it's physical scale. And then I think it could be interesting too, if the format is geared towards the physical in person event. The format should also have things that can only happen in person in a physical event, right? I'm talking about group dynamics. I'm talking about stuff that people do together when they are together. Bonding, networking, having drinks, chilling, whatever. So, I think that when most people are working.... most people that are working in the remote fashion they feel and crave the need to be with other people and so to participate in physical events. And so, I think physical events, post COVID, should be really like the things that you can only do in person. For example, people used to go to conferences where they would sit in the theater room and watch the presentation, right? Nowadays, that doesn't really make sense, because you can watch the presentation online. And the presentation

is going to be recorded. And so, what's happening now in the conference is that there's a stage and there are people presenting. There's no one in the audience of the stage, everybody's outside networking and talking to each other because they know that the talk is being recorded and they can watch it later. So, whatever they're just enjoying the time that they're there to network with other people and meet other people and so on. So, I think the in person physical events will be much more about the in-person part of it and not so much about the parts that could be done digitally actually. And so, I think people should design events in the sense of physical events, present in personal events in a way that they double down on the physical aspect of it and not so much on the things that could be done digitally. For example, in a very actionable tip regarding this is Sean, showed the slides with the kind of methodology what people should do. If instead of that, there will be people role-playing and showing how it could be done in this specific example. Like if there if the whole teaching educational moment of the event would be people just watching our particular group with the particular sample dummy idea would interact and do stuff. And then they would just monkey see monkey do so. Oh, they think like that it is okay. I should also do it like that, right? Much more physical communication of what they're trying to communicate. I think that would work better than just: Oh, these are the slides. This is the theory; this is what you should do now. Go and do it and people will be like: Oh, but it's hard to do like this. So now let me interpret it and try to figure out how to do it. If they would see somebody else doing it, they would just have to copy it so it would be more natural, right? So those kinds of changes I think are the things that would make the event even more special.

Tim Grabe: Perfect. Thank you so much. Really, really insightful. I think a lot of things you mentioned weren't mentioned before, so thank you so, so much for all these insights. And have I missed something? For example, one question I haven't asked yet, but do you still want to share something?

Interview partner 11: First of all, you didn't miss asking that question, which is something that all researchers should do. No, I mean I'm not sure how I felt about the whole thing. Like when you asked: How would you rate the output of the event? That's when I realized, hmm, I wouldn't give it a very high score because not all the teams were that they... like the ideas were not that well. That's what I realized. Like if I have to judge the quality of the output. I wouldn't put it as high as maybe people would be expecting, right? And so more questions around judging the output. The place where I feel I would have to go deeper to try to be like, huh? Yeah, maybe that's the reason why it wasn't that good. Or maybe that's where it could be improved. So, when I said that only one of the four or five groups, I felt that we had an interesting idea, right? If I had to go deeper on that and ask why? Maybe the fact that the groups were too big were the main culprits of it. Maybe the fact that people didn't have idea pitches beforehand and knew all the available ideas to join and whatever. Maybe that could also be part of it. Maybe the way the teams were formed should have been different. Like I said before, maybe all those things, so I'm not really sure but it's impressive to see that sometimes just a little detail like that can impact the output or the quality of the output a lot. Yeah, I think the only thing that maybe you should go deeper is when people say what they think about the output, it's like, yeah, but why? That's basically what I feel like

Tim Grabe: Thank you so much Interview partner 11.

Appendix O: Questionnaire for Sean Tierney (Founder, CEO)

General Questions:

- Can you tell me something about yourself? Where are you from? How old are you?
What is your favorite hobby? Where did you go to University?
- What has brought you to Portugal? Are you planning to get old here?

Sean's Professional Journey:

- Can you tell me something about your personal career path? What were your first touchpoints with Open Innovation?
- What projects did you start before Problematic?
- What were your reasons and motivations to start the project Problematic? Why did you chose the field of Open Innovation and in specific Hackathons?

Ideathon:

- Why did you design the Ideathon format how it is? For example: the One-Day in-persona format, the location, open group sizes, pre-registered ideas, allocation of groups after the pitching phase, the Feedback phases with professionals and people from the street..
- Why did you design the schedule of the day how it is?
- How important is the fixed schedule for you?
- How do you see your role at the Ideathon?
- What criteria do you use for choosing your expert feedback giver as well as investors?

Buildathon:

- Why do you conduct a Buildathon event for the winning team? Why not the others?
- In what role do you see yourself during the Buildathon?
- Is your support limited to these events? Or are you supporting in between as well?
How does this support look like?
- What are your reasons to support the teams? What is your goal with them? Are you also invested in them?

Benefactor Model:

- Why did you implement the Benefactor model?
- Are there any possible shortcomings so far?
- Is the attraction of investments working? Can you attract Crowdfunder as well as institutional investors?

Company Questions:

- How many projects did Problematic successfully launch already?
- How many people are involved in developing Problematic and why this amount?
Who are these people?
- Which learning did you have during the time Problematic was founded? So which major adaptations did you do?
- What is the current USP of Problematic?
- What are areas of improvement in the current system?
- What is the future outlook of Problematic? What are the next steps? Are you planning to upscale and if yes, how?

Appendix P: Transcript interview with Sean Tierney (Founder, CEO)

Date: 14th of November 2023

Location: Online (Zoom)

Duration: 95 minutes

Interview participants: Sean Tierney, Tim Grabe

Interviewee's role at Problematic: Founder, CEO

Tim Grabe: So then, I think we can start with some general questions. Can you give me some general information about you? Where are you from? How old are you? What's your favorite hobby? Where did you go to university or did you even go there?

Sean Tierney: Hold on, I'm going to just in case this thing fails, I figure I'll record a local recording just so you have the audio just in case. Yes. General background. So I went to school for psychology, ended up doing not psychology. About my junior year, I got fascinated by the Internet, so I taught myself basics. Well, I actually talked my way into an internship. I was hired by a guy who later became my best friend and still is. And then over that I learned how to code, went back to school, got my degree, and then just realized I wasn't interested in doing psychology. I wanted to do like computers and internet, and that was where the future was. So I took a job at the newspaper in Arizona. I was there for two years, went to a basically like HTML wasn't cutting it. So I figured out this other thing called fusion and database programming and that. I started a user group, got discovered by a guy who hired me into his startup. iTool, employee number five there. I was there for like a year and a half, and that was just where I got my first experience with startups and really like that thing went from like five people to 40 people got acquired by Onvia. We went through the whole dotcom craziness. So I was really at that point hooked on startups. And I mean, I was a programmer through all that, so I thought

that was my path. But also it was this weird like square peg in a round hole. Did so anyways, like, craziness. I was a programmer for a while, tried another programming job, but got to the point where I realized I was just burned out. And I, like, I'm not a good programmer. I don't deal well with things like small details and minutia and like being in front of the laptop for ten hour days, like six days a week, which is what it was. It was just really grueling. So I went and learn 3D animation and try to be a firefighter. Like I had this rambling, weird career, did a bunch of other stuff, started a company. We did this thing called Jump Box. You can read about that. And that was where I really had my first real running a startup experience. That was a very complex thing. We tried to take this wild idea of could we package every single open source server application in a way that allowed it to run in any computing environment and keep it updated and make it so it was basically like these little virtual machines that contain the software and you can move them around and they live anywhere you live in the cloud, whatever. So we made like this, like this hugely ambitious computing challenge, ran with that. That unfortunately didn't pan out. But anyways, I don't know how detailed you want me to go. This is all my LinkedIn, but I've had like a number probably all told, probably been with like 15 companies and like run six maybe. So I've just had this like very diverse background and the one before that. So where in terms of like where did the idea spawn for what is now Problematic? I think it was 2006 or 2005, somewhere around there. I went to the very first Startup Weekend in San Francisco and this was this project that I just thought was so cool is this idea that they just get all these strangers together in a room and would try to build a project in a weekend and launch it. I was just like, That's so cool, right? That first one, they had 150 people and there was only one project. And so that was insane. Like, do you just have 150 on a single project? It was chaos. But I met the founder of it. We hit it off. I ended up going to nine of them. I was just fascinated by this way of working and it's such a crazy way to like get exposed to all these skill sets and like make new friends and you're working on something real.

And it's like you learn stuff like even just shoulder surfing and like being over someone's shoulder as they're doing something. You're like, Oh my gosh, I didn't realize like, Mac had this shortcut. Like I just learned so much. And of course, that weekend, right? So I was hooked. Startup Weekend was really inspiring. I ended up running three of them myself over a course of probably ten years. And I was just like OK, I like this. It has a flaw though. The flaw with Startup Weekend. It's like this amazing experience, but inevitably every single one that I went to with the exception of like maybe 1 or 2 where they actually got funding and they took the project forward. The problem was you have this awesome team, you have this awesome idea, you actually build and launch it, but then there's no one to maintain it after the weekend and it just evaporates. And so my thinking at the time was could we get the same experience and all the value of Startup Weekend only like let's just work for a charity. So it actually sticks around. And then whatever we build in that weekend, we'll give it to the charity, they'll take it forward, right? So we'll still retain the experience. It'll actually be amazing because then we're doing it purely for like altruism, at that point. We're just like making something. It's like this takes the place of like volunteer work. It's like high leverage, volunteer work because we're all using our skill sets to create something that only we can create at that point. So I tried that and I ran this thing called Charity Makeover, and you can still find it. It's out there like [Charity Makeover.org](http://CharityMakeover.org) is the website. We did a number of those. I think we did 8 or 9 and this was something where I'd go, We did it in Bali, we did it in Barcelona and Lisbon and us and Nomad Cruise, we did in all these places and it was cool. We built stuff. We actually built some amazing stuff. In Bali, we changed, we fully changed the game for this one project. And it was crazy because we met them the night before the event and I'm like: They don't know, we haven't onboarded them. I don't know if we can take it. And fortunately we did. It's just this woman who's a powerhouse. So Kim was from New Zealand. I'll just tell you this quick story because this one is really helpful. So Kim came from New Zealand and discovers this problem of generational begging

is what she called it. But like women who had typically been victims of domestic abuse would take to the streets, they'd bring their children and they would beg together because they got more money when the kid was there. But then the problem is the kid grows up learning that that's life. And so then they become the mother eventually. And it just like this cycle just perpetuates. And so she saw this happening and she's like, okay. I think I know the answer. She, on the back of her motorcycle, started this thing where she was teaching these women how to sell crafts and how to make stuff and get revenue from it. And then that took them off the streets anyways. Long story short, she had no website. She had nothing, no way of representing this cause she was just doing it. We learned about that. We built her a website, we built her a donation platform. We took her know we made her social media and taught her how to use Instagram, and she just absolutely took off. I have the letter still that they sent us the week or the month after they deployed the website, which was like two months after the event. They made \$7,500. It was like 1 million or 10 million rupiah or whatever the equivalent was. But it was just a game changing sum of money. But not only that, but because of the way we had set it up, is a recurring donation platform. This continued to run and they were able to build a safe house and take care of 100 families. And it just it was this incredible game changing experience. Right? So that was kind of a thing where it was like, okay, there's definitely something like in the course of a weekend, we can absolutely change the game. And we did that like that. 90% of that stuff came together in one weekend with this team of people and you can read about it all in Charity Makeover.org. So anyways, the flaw with Charity Makeover though was that in a lot of times and we would do multiple, we pick like four charities per event. The problem though is that you had to kind of have like the unicorn of charities for it to work. The founder had to be coachable. They had to be like decidedly doing good work and like poised for greatness, but just under marketed and understaffed. And they had to, like, believe, be coachable and believe that like, whatever you built them was going to be useful so they'd stick with it. So it's like they

had to hit this sweet spot of all these criteria. And we were finding that like maybe 1 in 4 actually had all those. And so three out of four we would end up ditching it was we're back to the same problem as Startup Weekend. You know, they now build something and it just goes away after the weekend and that's when you're doing it out of pure altruism. And that's actually demoralizing when that happens because then it's like, Oh, we just did this. It's like we made you this cool thing and now you're just like throwing it away. So. The idea was I, like basically took a step back, went to the drawing board. This was kind of shelved at the point like I was working for Pagely and this was just more like in the back pocket as a hobby, really. But around the time like right before COVID, we did our last Charity Makeover event, I quit Pagely and I'm like, I want to go full. Like, I know there's something here. I want to go all in on this thing. I wrote a post called All In, I'll send you that. But basically it was like, Can I fix the flaws with this? And the more I thought about it, I started thinking like, what does Charity Makeover version two look like? And that was basically Problematic. And so I started envisioning like, do we need the charities? Is it possible that we could attack problems themselves directly without having the proxy of having to go through a charity? Right. So, so then it became like, okay, how might that work? We could build open source projects. We could maybe put together a company that could sustain itself if ever we could figure out how to keep the company running after the event. So I started thinking about all the problems that we had to solve to make it work. And out of that emerged like what you see now, this idea of can we have like this mini economy, Can we tokenize things, so if people at the event do stuff, they still get rewarded for their value. But if they go away, we now still have the chip's quote unquote chips to pay people in the future to do stuff. So it just like these ideas just kind of swirled and formed. I had also like, this is just another random site tangent. I had done a previous exercise called Automation Gurus. This is back in Phenix. This was a consulting arrangement where I was bringing people commercially to work on solving other people's problems. And I use this concept in the realm of poker chips.

Like I was struggling with this, like, how am I going to manage three different projects with me having to know what's going on in each one and direct everyone. And it was to top down, I'm like, how do I make this bottom up? And so I got the idea. I'm like, Okay, well, what might it look to run a little mini economy? I'll go out and hire a project manager for each of these projects. They'll run them, I'll support them, and then I'll give them, like the stable of five experts, a videographer, a designer, a developer, all these pieces that they might need. And I'll create like this little like barter system in the room and give them poker chips and they'll go purchase what they need. And that just works swimmingly well. And people raved about it. I had one lady was like, Oh my gosh, this is how all work should be done. This is amazing. We got so much done in a weekend. And so that stuck with me in my mind. And that came back when I was trying to figure out like, how do we gamify Problematic? How might this work? I just drew that same lesson. I'm like, okay, perfect. We already did it in the room with commercial projects. This should work with Problematic. And so we tested it. We did poker chips at one of the events, did the same test. It seemed to work. We had cap tables, paper cap tables. A cap table is like how you represent ownership in a company. So we had these like paper cap tables experimenting with how to do it, and it wasn't quite right, but it was enough to know that, like, that experiment is sound like there's something there, right? And so that's basically fast forward. We're now I don't know how many events were at, I think 4 or 5 Fixathons. But yeah, so now we have a pretty well refined model. And I think it was... Benefactor Model was emerging when I was talking with you that didn't exist yet that since been implemented I've also now rolled out like a nice mobile UI. So it's come a long way. The final tweak here and what you can read about in the October update is something that I call clans. And this solves the distribution problem because I now basically have everything working. It's the right everything. The dynamics are correct. It's all what I call Wikipedia fide and that anyone can extend it and bring it to their city. Anyone can propose an event. Anyone

can propose a problem, a solution. Anyone can propose a bounty or contribute to an existing one. So it's very open ended. And this is like the ethos of the project. This is also what makes it different than a normal incubator, right? And normal incubator isn't like a democracy where anyone can just like take it and make that incubator in their town. They can't. It's not like a franchise. This is essentially like an open ended franchise. I'm intending to make a movement in like the fabric that powers a movement. But the issue that I struggle with now is like, how do we get capital and talent onto the platform? It's not scalable for me to go put signs up every time we do an event and like go to each of these incubators and give talks and there's just like a lot of manual legwork. And I know that there's I know we have something because I know the testimonials of the people at all the events. They love this style of working. So I know there's something here, but I've been struggling with like, how do I push this? Like, what is the way to scale this thing? And the epiphany I had is that it's about helping other people to run their own like impact hub. And so if I can make it so that you can just easily go in and spin up your own version of Problematic such that now you can dictate what problems do I care about? What are some solution ideas that I've had? What are friends in my network and what bounties do I want to propose out there and get other people to fund? So when I give you the ability to be Problematic, I think that's the level where it's at. I think that's the final iteration here. Call it whatever you want, like Problematic 3.0 or whatever, but it's like that should in theory fix the distribution problem because that's an easy sell. Then it makes a lot of sense. I can explain it to people easier because I can just say, Oh yeah, you can be your own Problematic like, just go in here and did it.

[...]

Tim Grabe: What I mean, we've already definitely crossed some questions here. I'll just like go completely back to one short general question. What actually brought you to Portugal?

Sean Tierney: So I was working for Pagely. I went to this program called Remote Year and it was a like a travel program for remote people, so you had to have a remote job. And yeah, 75 of us traveling the world, we all had our different independent remote jobs. company was like the travel company that took us around. And so, yeah, Lisbon was our fourth city out of 12. We did 12 months, 12 cities. And I was just in love with it. I don't know. I just felt so alive and myself here and like Trump won in month six, the election, and I was just like seeing crazy news and it seemed really toxic. And I just like became I felt like I identified more as a European at that point, almost like I really wanted to live in Europe. So when it concluded, I did a little solo travel in South America, applied for the visa, waited four months in Mexico, and then when I got the visa, I moved here. Oh, no.

Tim Grabe: Sorry to bring you that much back, you know, because there's that just like the little things that might bring in. You definitely already talked about talked about your career path and the reasons why you actually started Problematic and what...

Sean Tierney: Well, there's one more reason that's probably bears mentioning and that is like this unshakable, like Peter Thiel has this thing where it's like, what do you believe? What is so clearly true to you that other people don't believe and like? And that's not the right way to word it. I forget his wording of the question, but it's this idea. And to me, I really think that like the individual, like we're going to have such complex problems going forward that it's not like existing structures and like the existing education. The way education works like it doesn't it's not going to serve us. It's like this legacy system and it's going to be about like empowering

individuals, like not it's not these big, faceless entities that come up with solutions. It's like inspired individuals. And I think we're moving towards like the gig economy. Like it's just going to be more about people should be self-sufficient and like, so I just have this vision of enabling everyone to figure out what their core strengths are and then contribute to the causes they care about. And then ideally ultimately make a living doing that. And can I make the fabric necessary to enable that? That's what Problematic is. It's hard to articulate that. I do my best on the site. But that is the that is really the vision here.

Tim Grabe: Yeah It fits also to your open innovation belief, doesn't it? Like this whole thing that you think empowering people helps. So you talked about like when you went to this this first Hackathon thing. I think 2006 or something. Was that your first touchpoint with open innovation in general?

Sean Tierney: Yeah. I mean I had heard of hackathons before. I mean that was the first one that just resonated. I may have even been to one, I don't remember. But like that was just such a magical experience because it wasn't all coders. It was like designers and developers and just the magic of putting diverse background people in the same room and then there's no way you could learn that as much as we did in that weekend any other way. It's like the most fertile learning experience I can imagine.

Tim Grabe: Okay, cool. So that was just like to get the personal stuff done. Now we can talk about Problematic. So I thought about we might go through the different events in that way. So for example, like the Ideathon or Hackathon, I was wondering why did you design the whole Hackathon event, how it is? For example, like the one day in persona format, the locations, because you usually choose specific locations, the fact that you used to have open group sizes.

I'm not sure if it's still like that. And that you usually just allow preregistered ideas, for example. Because the people usually come up with their ideas before and then they already apply to pitch. It was at least like that when I was there.

Sean Tierney: Let me make sure I got everything. Yeah, there's a lot there and I journal after every event. I have this practice where I just hand write, I'll just bring dump in a journal all my thoughts of what worked, what didn't work, what do I think we can improve upon? And then I'll go and talk to people I try to talk to like team leaders and participants and the mentors and the judges. So get like all these angles on how the event went. And then I just distill all that, and I usually do like a blog post, write up and say, This is what we're going to change next time. And then I go do it right. So that's my process for iterating. It seems to be working well in terms of all those questions. So why in person? I think that's key. We tried during COVID, so when we did our last event in Bali, that was March 14th, 2020. We did one more after that where we tried to do it virtually because obviously during COVID you couldn't do a big event with a bunch of people. It just didn't. It wasn't the same. We tried doing it where we'd like check in throughout the day and we'd have groups. We actually had people in the US and then in Europe and then in Asia. And so it was cool that we could kind of have this rolling like hand off. But it's still it was just like, nobody wants to do Zoom calls. COVID made everyone understandably fatigued with Zoom. Like the last thing when you've worked an entire week with your job, the last thing you would do is like, go do more Zoom on the weekend. And it's a volunteer project. So I think the in-person is an important component. It can be done. But that being said, you do need to have a virtual component to it because you've got to take it forward after. So like if you create the system such that it could work virtually, then you just use it in person and you have the best of both worlds, right? So everything I've built has been built in a way with the tokens and all that stuff. We can do that in the room. Those trades can be made like you saw the judges

at one point. We were having this trading system, the valuation set by the trades with the judges at the event then determine the winner of the event. So that's an example of this system that was built to work anywhere virtually could also be purpose to use in the room at the time. Right. So but I do think that there's value to having everyone in the room. There's just no substitute for that in person energy and interaction. And hearing someone over your shoulder come up with an idea, you can't replicate that virtually. So I think the idea is we jumpstart things with an in-person event and then it goes forward asynchronously. Virtually. People can use what I call the contributions. You have these little task bounties out there. People can claim the opportunity, contribute it asynchronously. And then the idea that I wanted to do was I could we do like every two weeks, do a coffee, like a co-working session somewhere and have that be the glue, Because right now these events are a lot to pull off and I can only do them like once a quarter. They're just a lot of work to pull together. So but I do want to have something in person that's kind of like the glue between events that keeps people excited and in teams, and that's how you build a community. That's how people come back and get to know each other. And then if I solve that, then they should help promote the next event too, right? So anyways, in terms of choice of the location, 42 is just an amazing space. That was the one that you went to. At Casa do Impacto at the last one, we were there just because that's my incubator like as a company, I'm incubated there and so they give us access to that space. And everyone loved it. It's just sunny and open and nice. And then Le Wagon has been a good partner. We did the Buildathon there or two, a couple of Buildathon there but it's just a good setup. They've got little breakout rooms and areas and couches and stuff, and so it works well for that. What were other questions that you have?

Tim Grabe: The Pre-registered ideas.

Sean Tierney: Sorry pre-registered ideas. So this is one that I'm actually tinkering with now, like my notes from the last event. I want to pull forward the team formation and the ideation piece of it, even though it's called the Ideathon. I would like to see us go into that with already knowing who's on what team and who's doing what, and then use the Ideathon to refine the idea, not to propose an idea. So what I'm going to try to do with the next one is actually frontload that and have more of the problem definition, pitching, team formation stuff occur ahead. We'll do like a zoom or maybe even like a social mixer or something where we take care of that stuff and then that way it's just it solves a lot. Like we waste too much of the morning at the Ideathon now, just like figuring out what problem are we working on, who's doing what? I kind of want to switch and be on this team. It's like it's really like noon or even 1:00pm before we are like fully focused and have the teams committed. So I think we can win back that time by front loading and moving that piece ahead of time. I've tried both forcing people to pre-register ideas and then at the last minute allowing them to pitch in person. And obviously the ones who thought about it ahead of time have stronger ideas and are more committed and better pitches like everything. Also not to mention like they're in the system. So like this last time I had the voting was to be done with these little tokens, but then I realized like, Oh, we let people pitch like ad hoc at the event and they're not in the system. So this voting thing doesn't really work. So there's a number of reasons to move to the pre-registered ideas, and I think I'm probably going to stick with that.

Tim Grabe: Okay. And how about if you already want to move the groups setting and all that kind of stuff beforehand, will they still be open group sizes or will you limit the group sizes then?

Sean Tierney: Yeah, this is a good question. The experiment that I want to try at the next one is actually pre determining the groups and potentially even randomizing it and then letting people trade if they want to swap with someone. And the reason being there because I do get like part of it is let's form groups based on cause affinities and skill sets and whatnot and like that squishiness. Let people figure that out in advance. But also we have some groups that are like 14 people, and then this group is like two people. And so I don't want that either. And so I'm almost inclined to say like normalize, like equate on group size. I have all that data so I can I can algorithmically suggest groups and say, Hey, you guys share same cause affinities. You all care about these SDGs and you have different skill sets. So this would probably be a good group. And so I think that's probably the optimum is suggest groups of six or whatever and then let people will say, hey, you're in this group and then you go to that first orientation online or at the social mixer and at least people, it's like immediately you've got a team like we get rid of all that nonsense. But then if people decide, Oh no, I want to trade with so-and-so because I like what they're doing better and they agree they want to be in this one, then we'll totally allow trades. There's no problem with that. But I think that would I think that would be a better way to do it, though.

Tim Grabe: So but for sure it will be then a little bit less open in that way, because if you already get a predefined suggestion, you could work on this topic based on your preferences or whatever kind of.

Sean Tierney: Yeah, I mean the trade off, I think it's still open in the sense that you can trade, so you can move to a different group. I mean, I'm not going to enforce this like with a heavy hand. If someone just like, Look, you guys can be a team of seven and you'll be a team of five and that's fine. But I think the net is a good trade off overall to just take away some of this

awkwardness. Like when you just plop people in, it's completely open. It's what they call the paradox of choice. It's like literally like you can do anything here, so there's no structure to it. So I think by imposing a little bit of predefined structure, even if it's just completely arbitrary, actually will help kick things off.

Tim Grabe: And how is it with the thoughts behind the whole Ideathon day schedule? So the different phases, that you have at the beginning. Because you used to have the pitching phase at the beginning, but I mean, this will be probably gone now. But for example, the feedback phases with the professionals, people from the street and whatever, like these. What is the reasoning behind the structure?

Sean Tierney: The idea is to start broad. So start with and again part of this in the future will be frontloaded so it won't be at the event. But the idea is to start with like, what do we care? What are we actually trying to solve? And is it really the right problem? Like, let's get clarity on the problem first. Then pitched solutions that could solve that problem or at least diminish it. Then you'd form the teams. Once you've had all the pitches, then people gravitating to the teams they want to be in. Then it's like I have these other things, like the aspirational press release. The idea there is like it's this technique that Amazon uses. It's a really great way to hone everyone's thinking and get everyone on the same page. You make this press release to project yourself forward a few months, like when you're going to launch this thing and you write the press release you wish you can run at that time. And it forces you to think backwards and like, okay, that's what we want to deploy. What are all the things that we need to solve leading up to that point? And it's just a good way. It's a good exercise. Market research landscape, leverage the group like these check ins, this is something I didn't do a good job at the last event. It was too free form. I'm going to do more dated. The one that you were at was very like I was strict on

the time and I would hold people and say, Hey, we're doing this now. We're doing that now. At the last one, I was a little more lax, and the feedback overall was that people actually liked the structure and sticking to deadline, but like leveraging group check ins is always a good thing. Like you're in a team and let's say there's five teams and your team is five people, you'll get as much done and get as much clarity as you can with that team. But then like when you break for lunch, let's all check in and leverage the power of who else is in the room. It's like you're just using those resources in your team, but you have access to like 20 other people that might have the answer to it. So it's really a matter of thinking through how do we use everyone? The I'm a big fan of the mock up thing that we do. So like debatable whether you have the customer interviews first or you go to the mockups first. Ideally you do customer interviews and then what you learn from that. Then you go try to develop like a wireframe and turn it into a clickable mockup. It's just given how much we try to get done in one day, that's really hard to squeeze in, which is yet another reason for front loading everything. To the extent we can move all that other stuff, it opens up the day that we can use more for the customer interviews, more for let's get a good mockup right? And then the pitching at the end really is like this idea of take everything you learned and can you at least craft it in a way that's sensible where you could win the event? Like you can convince the judges that this is a good idea and it's just it's one lens of doing it. I suppose you can make the argument that like judging, like if it becomes too much of a competition, then it's maybe a different flavor. But also, I don't know. I found that like when you're steering towards a competition, it just motivates people. If there's nothing like at the end, if it doesn't culminate in something like that, then it's less. I don't know. It's just it's more frazzled like there's no it's got to culminate to something. So But yeah, I guess whether judging at the end is the right thing to do or whether we just have like a demo night and there is no winners picked, I guess you could debate whether which one is better.

Tim Grabe: Okay. You already mentioned the fixed schedule versus the more open schedule. So now after you had both, how important would a fixed schedule be for you during the day?

Sean Tierney: So I think it is important. I actually made a workbook after that last event and went back and had the two winning teams complete the workbook and just so I can then use it and say, Hey, this is what we're doing at the next time. So I kind of reverse engineered and backfilled what was missing. But I think having the structure is important. Like when it's too open ended, then people like, what's it called? There's a name for this. It's like Parkinson's law or something where the volume of work fills the container. Things will expand to fill the container you give it. So if you give like very short containers, you force people to be very focused and you gate the progress and you move them to the next thing. If you don't do that, then people will tend to just talk and they'll tend to just debate things instead of actually making definitive progress. And it's just a pattern that always happens. We gravitate to what's easy, what's ideas are easy. So people like to ideate and debate back and forth. But at the end of the day, the idea is like, can we produce something real by the end of the day? So I think it is important to have that gated structure and the timeline and be kind of strict on it. But also this workbook that I created, I can send you a link. I don't know if you have you seen it already?

Tim Grabe: Yeah, I looked through it online and it looks good.

Sean Tierney: Yeah, that should help. That's basically all those phases that we move people through but with like a page for each. And so then I figure print that out, leave that on the desks. That makes it very clear. And then you just have time to add at the bottom of each one of those. And I treat it like homework that they're trying to race through on the day.

Tim Grabe: That's great. How do you see your role at the Ideathon event in general?

Sean Tierney: I'm supporting the team leaders. So there's this concept called servant leadership that I came to appreciate at Pagely. And by the way, you should listen to the on the podcast. I interviewed my boss at Pagely, so he's fantastic. He really got this idea. He was running that company in the way that this book called Turn the Ship Around that I read. Like I read that book and I saw what he was doing. I'm like, Dude, you're doing this intuitively. You don't even know you're doing it like, read this book. And so he's like, Yup, that's what it is. But it's this notion of like push decision making to the edges and then support people. And it's like leader mentality is what that book is. Servant leadership is another way of calling it, but it's the same thing of like invert the pyramid instead of trying to do top down management. You brought up like, how do we support the people at the end? So the middle management should be supporting the employees to do their best work. The C-suite should be supporting the directors. The CEO is basically supporting everyone just trying to make everything work. So like the way I think about it, like my role at the events is to actually ensure that the team leaders get what they need to be effective. And then whether that's putting them with the right mentors, like figuring out what software, what if I have any ideas, I'll hopefully share with them, but I'm not there to dictate what they do. It's really like, how do I get you whatever you need?

Tim Grabe: And you already mentioned mentors or the expert feedback givers at the event and for example, also investors sometimes act like mentors. What criteria do you use on choosing them for the Ideathon?

Sean Tierney: Just a clarifier here, I'm likely going to change how mentors work based on some feedback. Mentors at the event in the current format ends up being a little distracting because

it's like a day zero project and they come in beating up on the idea and that early on we actually don't need them to like stress test it. We know there's flaws with it and we also need to not like, I don't want to impose mentors on teams. And like right now when we have mentors, they come in and descend on a team and say like: I'm a mentor, here's how I'm going to help you. And that shouldn't be the way it is. It should be like the team leader can go to a mentor if they need their help, but they're not being blitzed by them. It's distracting. It throws them off. So I'm going to change the way mentors work. I'm probably going to rebrand it as subject matter experts. And so I'm going to have a bench of people that all have like one of each. So I'll have like someone who's super good at business strategy, someone who's really good at, I don't know, fundraising, someone who's like a UX expert, and I'll have all these pieces in the room and those people will just kind of be hanging out. They'll have a little station and then the teams like the team leaders, I'll just have like an intro session where they get to essentially pitch who they are and what skills they have, and then the teams at their own discretion can go like meet with the mentors, maybe book sessions, maybe free form. I haven't decided, but it's really going to be more about like, how do we provide a support resource instead of like imposing mentors on the on the teams going forward in terms of how we select those people, I just I don't know. I have enough of a network here that I know kind of who's good at what and who has the right mindset for this. Something I changed at this last event was I thought the judges and this is also based on feedback in my own observation, but like the judges at the event that you were at were a little Sharky or they're a little too aggressive, right? They were just like: This isn't going to work. Why haven't you thought of this? This is stupid. So it was to it was very much like Shark Tank. And I don't want that. It needs to be constructive. And so actually the lady at the last one called it Dolphin Tank because it was like a friendly, like a nicer shark tank. And I thought that was good. But yeah, so for this one, instead of picking investors, like last time, I actually went out and found VCs, people who invest money instead of getting those people because there's just

too early stage. So instead of that, I went and got founders who had built companies who knew what they were going through, who were decidedly more humble and more like constructive. And so like, Hey guys, this is like, don't beat up so much on these ideas. Like you want to get them to think about these problems, but in a way that like, hey, have you considered, you know, you might think about these things like, I've done like I had a similar situation and this is what I found. It should be crafted far more like that versus like, this sucks. This isn't going to work. Like there's no way I'd give you money. Like that's not the right mentality for this event.

Tim Grabe: But the founders are then still expected to put some money into the into the Ideas or not?

Sean Tierney: I took away that requirement. I think the thing to do, I haven't decided for sure yet, but I think it makes more sense to do a demo night at the Buildathon with investors and those people. Then it will be some stupid small amount of money, like 50€ or something, and I'll treat it more as like, Hey, this is just like a ticket fee for the investors or something. But, but then they deploy that money and it's only at the Buildathon because we've had more time. We've refined it. We've we have something real. I just don't think it makes sense to invest money at the Ideathon It's too early.

Tim Grabe: Coming now already to the Buildathon because during that time when I was there, you gave the ticket to the winning teams. I mean, at that time there were two winning teams. The one winning team could not participate at the Buildathon at that time, just at a later stage. Is it still the same? Is it only always the winning team getting it and what's the reason? So why only choose the winning team and not the others?

Sean Tierney: guess there has to be a winner for it to be like a competition. I mean, everyone, it's not to diminish. Everyone should keep working on their projects. We just want to acknowledge one of them as being definitively like the best one. At this last one, I opened it up for audience choice voting, and like I told you, I was going to do it with tokens. That proved flawed because letting people pitch ad hoc they weren't in the system. So then we reverted to like an in person, like raise your hand or like that. And then someone was like, Oh, but that's not fair because one team is huge. So they're going to be at a disadvantage in that scenario because they can't vote for themselves. So then we went to like written down each team, pick a winner and deliberate and then do that and we had a tie. So it was just kind of a mess. I don't know. Ultimately, it's not like. It's a balance of making it like a competition. So it's actually people are trying hard and there's something to steer towards, like a landmark. But also, setting the right expectation that, hey, it doesn't matter if you win this, you may have the best idea and not win it. Go build it. We're just trying to make this be the jumping off point and make it inspiring. This is something that, again, I'll just refine it as we go through it and I learn and I figure out what the right format is, I'll just refine it.

Tim Grabe: But at the moment, the startup founders would vote or what's the current status?

Sean Tierney: No, the judges still vote. So I have judges at the last one. So the judges were startup founders. So they voted. We did instead of doing it the way that you saw, which was very technical, we had them propose trades and teams would accept. And then the valuation set by the trade was the deciding factor. This too complicated for an event. What I figured out was we just had the judges go deliberate, give them ten minutes while they were out talking. I know we had the audience choice voting. We thought we went around and asked feedback and

whatnot, so that was good. Brought the judges back in and then they just said, runner up, winner.

Sorry, so what was the question?

Tim Grabe: So also the other event, the audience voting did not really play a role in choosing a winner then because it was still the judges deciding who has won?

Sean Tierney: Right. The way I'd like to do it is just we'll have two prizes. We'll have a judges trophy and an audience choice trophy. And I would like to actually get a little like Problematic House. I want a 3D print, like a little house and give them that as a trophy. Make it fun.

Tim Grabe: That's great. But then, if you have two winners, would then both be eligible to go to the Buildathon event? Or is it only the one by the judges?

Sean Tierney: Yeah, we so we had like extra capacity this time. So I invited Burn Bright and Neuro Health to both come even though Neuro Health was the winner technically and Burn Bright, I don't even think they won the audience choice but they had the founder who was the most committed to the idea. And so I just kind of arbitrarily said, Hey, Julia, why don't you come? Yeah, I don't know. I think we should invite, you know, ideally everyone gets to come to the Buildathon and maybe we just do like the winning team gets to pick their dev team, you know, at the Buildathon. I don't know the answer here. Like, we'll figure this out. But yeah, I mean, at the end of the day, the idea is like, how can we get the most out of that day? And so if we have ten people signed up and we only need five, then yeah, let's build another project. Let's take the next most promising one.

Tim Grabe: And what's your role? How do you see your role during the Buildathon then?

Sean Tierney: And the same thing. I'm supporting the teams, just trying to help them get the best outcome. Keep them on track. If we start going down a rabbit hole during the day, just remind them like, Hey, is there some smaller version of this we can make? Are we at the point where we truly understand it well enough to go and build this fully? Or should there be some smaller scale experiment we could conduct that would reveal that information that will help us figure out what needs to be built? So again, like a success of the Buildathon is if you build something, that then keeps people invested and engaged and it tends to move it forward. So if you try to build the full product itself and you only get like a quarter of the way, that's actually not necessarily a good win because that could flounder. It's in a very not done state and people just kind of let it die. But if instead you can build a landing page, get some email outreach, get something automated and get like ads in place or something. So now you have a steady trickle of feedback surveys coming in, conversations being had, like they're showing their mockups to people. I almost think that that's a better win from the Buildathon because that's going to result in a team that stays more engaged over time, and that's the whole point of it.

Tim Grabe: So the overall goal of the Buildathon is just like to equip the team with as much stuff to keep them engaged into the project so they don't let it die because they already invested a certain amount of money and got a little bit of work already which is functioning. So just to accelerate their own engagement.

Sean Tierney: Yeah. I mean, it would be fantastic if we can pull it off and maybe we can someday of like shipping an entire end product. Like Neuro health has a fairly complex thing that they envision and it was just way too big to build in a day. So instead with them, what we decided to do was like, Can we build the landing page that tries to sell this thing and then learn,

get that running and get some ads and get some responses and see, is this truly what people need? How is this going to work and iterate? So I think anyways, that's a good example of like can't build a full product, let's build whatever is going to keep us motivated down the road to stay involved in this.

Tim Grabe: And is your support limited to these events like the Buildathon and the Hackathon/Ideathon? Or is it also supporting the groups between the different events or afterwards as well? And how does your support, if you do it, then look like?

Sean Tierney: Yeah, well in an ideal world, I'm supporting each project every day, giving them whatever they need. There's not enough hours in the day and I have only so many cycles in terms of investing in the platform development for Problematic, doing content for the podcast interviews with folks like yourself. Right? So I have only so many hours, but I do have a category. If you look at my updates, I have a category called Project Success, and it's arguably been the one that languished the most. I just never ultimately have time to do each project. I did help on Onesta. I put a fair amount of time into helping them get their MVP built in bubble. But yeah, the idea is like, Oh, so this is interesting. So part of the way that I modeled things like when someone proposes a project, they go through this wizard, they give all the details, they explain it, the graphic that what it's going to do, the problem is solved and all that stuff. And then the last thing is they get to they get a little slider and they have to allocate a minimum of two and a maximum of 15% to Problematic. And so that allocation is yet another variable that I then use to determine like which projects do I put more time into. So if it's a super promising project and they only gave 10% or like 2% to Problematic, I'd still probably like invest my spare time in it. If it's like a less promising but I see where it's going and it give me

a big chunk of it then okay, I'm still interested, right? If it's like not promising and they've only given me a small chunk, then it's just like at the bottom of the totem pole.

Tim Grabe: So you already said that you're in some way then invested into these companies or ideas in general. So what is your overall goal then with them?

Sean Tierney: So alignment is the goal. Everything that I've done in terms of creating this model is around ensuring all the stakeholders are aligned, including myself. So owning a small piece of each project means that I'm invested in their success. And also it's important to talk about what this actually is, because none of these are real companies. Like the whole idea of this process is how do we minimize the not pre-optimized. So if after a startup we can you go and form an entity and create like legal structure and go get a tax ID and do all this crap before you actually have a working product, that's a waste of energy. It's just mis expenditure of calories, right? And I saw that in Startup Weekend. So with our world again, like being able to envision this from the ground up and architected the way I think it needs to work. The idea is like, can you make a placeholder cap table that's very transparent that it shows the lineage of contributions, that there is no entity to form, there's no legal stuff to worry about, there's no tax stuff to worry about. But like we give them the simplest possible way to have like this placeholder in place. And someone showed me there's something called grunt table. I'll send you the link. But a friend saw what I was doing is like, Oh, you're doing basically a grunt table. And so it's like this. It's a way to achieve the same thing. But I arrived at it independently, not even knowing what that was. So it's like this placeholder cap table, that helps you avoid pre optimizing. And everything we do has to be around avoiding pre optimizing right. Avoid making the product too early, avoid going down rabbit holes like what is the next thing that we can do that has the maximum impact and doesn't paint us into a corner. That's the key.

[...]

Tim Grabe: I mean, you already talked about the reasons at the beginning why you implemented the Benefactor Model because you wanted to accelerate the social purpose. Do you want to still add something there?

Sean Tierney: It's alignment. Again, it's like seeing those as different roles, like people who want the change are just putting up a bounty to get the change. Impact investors are just a liquidity. So I drew ideas from Web three on this piece and it's like how do we frontload? It's the whole retroactive public funding thing. Like how do we take that future money? And frontload it as a reward today. Like the people who want to make those bets are the impact investors. And there's just a clear framework on how they make that bet. And in theory, this should be very attractive to impact investors because instead of going to like 20 different people and having different arrangements and not knowing what the IP state is or who owns what. This is a very standardized, systematized, clean way of doing it and you manage your whole portfolio in one place.

Tim Grabe: You already said at the beginning what is still lacking a little bit at the moment is the attraction of capital. How is it working with the crowd funders or institutional investors or anything like that? What are your experiences there so far?

Sean Tierney: It's not is the short answer. I needed them. I put my own money up to start the bounties just for the sake of doing so I could literally finish the code and have it work and have something up there. But yeah, it's not working. This isn't a struggle, frankly. Like I don't I have yet to figure out the sales equation for benefactors. For NGOs or government agencies or

municipalities or high net worth individuals, foundations. I did go through and teach myself grant writing and tried to do a few grants for this purpose. Grants are kind of a long shot. I think it could work. I almost need like a full time grant writer on staff just handling that role. But right now it's me. So I think that could be one angle. But also this whole clan thing to me is a more deterministic way of getting there. If I push this feature, it's useful because I can then go and sell it. I can it's lead generation for that idea of white labeling it. But also I think it's going to be more compelling for benefactors actually to be able to run their own impact hub using their software and then putting their bounties up there. It makes more sense. So yeah, but to answer your question, it's not working. It's me kind of flintstoneing it with my own money right now.

Tim Grabe: Okay. Are there any other possible shortcomings of the Benefactor Model except like that, it's not really working to attract customers like investors at the moment.

Sean Tierney: I guess I won't know the shortcomings until we get there. I've thought through. I think the game theory of it is sound. I guess you could argue that once they win the bounty, what's the incentive to keep working on it? In theory, like the project that at that point has gotten the cash reward. So then there if there's no other motive, then they could just stop. The way around that is if you're going to stay purely with capitalistic motives is like they're eligible for future bounties. So they should, just for the sake of potentially being winning future bounties, they should stay in it. Hopefully, though, they're invested enough in the clause itself where they're not going to just stop after winning the bounty. They want to reward it. So but yeah, in terms of like, I don't know, this is just one of those things that, again, maybe it's an issue, but it's like way down on the totem pole in terms of things for me to solve right now.

Tim Grabe: And I mean in general it should definitely work. I mean, it's the impact investment kind of way. Maybe you could also talk to those people from impact investment companies or whatever, because I mean, basically it would solve the problem in general. You could do it that people propose an idea to solve a societal problem and then you go to the government and propose like, Hey, this is our plan, this is our ideas. How much are you willing to pay, for example, like the 4% premium on top of it. And then they say, Yeah, okay, like those are the rules which you have to target like this impact investment way. And then everyone who's getting the shares will then get the premium price paid back to it. So I think it definitely sounds eligible that way. But I mean we can talk about that later. I'll just go to the last broad questions about Problematic itself. So how many projects did Problematic now already successfully launched in that way? Is there already one thing which started.

Sean Tierney: Yeah, this is the other thing is we don't have any real successes to cite at this point. I spent so much of my energy on actually getting the platform right and the event format right and all the game theory and just everything. But like I said, like the project success piece of this and languished and I just haven't put enough time behind helping bolster one of them to make it a home run. We have I'm just counting them right now. It looks like we've got 16 projects in the library. Of those, probably the most promising is actually message everywhere. And that's just because it's a guy I know in Phenix who's using a variant of it now. And this is just like a souped up version of that. So it's like a real life already has legs. Useful thing. So we got a MVP for that deployed and bubble. And now the goal is to actually convert that to flutter flow. But that's been a challenge to find that person. Onesta, I've actually pulled down the bubble app because, I was paying for it and no one's using it. And I just realized like it's not quite right. There's like another iteration that we need to go through. So we just need to find them like a dev team at this point, that was a team of four girls that came out of Nova SBE and

they all just got jobs and yeah, you know them. So I had coffee with Hannah last week and talked about it and basically, they gave back half of their tokens to the project so that we have more tokens to play with to incentivize the next round of people to come through and make another stab at it. But I did put up a prototype, I think. So I helped them think through, what might the next version of that look like? Can we use Chat GPT to make it more engaging, make it more immediate for the people. And so, yeah, I would love to see someone adopt that project and take it over and take that forward because there is something there. They just need to get a team behind it.

Tim Grabe: Okay, so officially they resign from operative work now?

Sean Tierney: Yeah. And it's totally understandable. Again, I built this system intentionally to facilitate this precise outcome where it's like they made a run at it. They are no longer interested in taking it forward. We shouldn't just let it die. And the good news is, that by staying in the library... Actually went when this happened, I went and wrote the adoption process to accommodate it. So now there's this little thing like if you go in there, you can actually apply to adopt the project and take over control of it. And you just have to show that you understand what it is and what your plan is to move it forward. And then nothing changes like ownership wise, Hannah and Dora and Julia and Lillian and everyone in that project. There's like 20 people with tokens in that project. Everyone retains their stake. And this is the beauty of it, is that it preserves that lineage. You did the work. You're going to retain the reward if anything ever comes of it. And it's just now like, what's round to look like? How do we motivate the next people to come in? It's very similar to like vesting options. Like once you've invested your options, they're yours.

Tim Grabe: So they gave away now half of their shares each?

Sean Tierney: Or yeah, I can pull it up and see so they. The project itself at this point has 734,000 of a million tokens. And so they'd pay themselves like, what was it? Hannah had 110,000. Lillian had like 75,000 or something like that. So somewhere in those orders and they ended up giving away basically half of those back. So now Hannah has 55,000 and Lillian has 37,000.

Tim Grabe: And because you already mentioned that you're doing most of the work of Problematic, is it like a one-man show in general or how many people are involved in the project?

Sean Tierney: It's just me right now. I would love to get a co-founder. I do the monthly build in public update and that's always like the one thing that I say about I'm still looking for a co-founder. But I mean, I enjoy the bubble. It's fun to develop, but also it's not the best use of my time and it's by far the most time consuming thing for me right now. Clans, like rolling this out, it's going to basically require me going heads down for a few weeks. I'm hoping to get it. I was hoping to get V1 deployed by Thanksgiving. I don't know if that's going to happen, but for sure I want a workable version in place by Christmas. So that is the goal there. But yes, it is just me right now. I'm a lone wolf. I do at least get some support from Casa do Impacto. I go to their events and they're invested in my success to some degree. Like they want to see this be a win. And they might be a supply of capital for the bounties at some point. They do have a huge endowment and so I need to have that pitch to them. I'm waiting to get the clans live and then I'm going to pitch them on the Casa do Impacto Impact portal powered by Problematic.

Tim Grabe: And what would you say now? What is the one USP of Problematic? How would you summarize it?

Sean Tierney: I mean, it totally depends on who you're talking to, who the stakeholder is. And we have a new set of stakeholders now with the clans, once that's out. So for knowledge workers, the main USP is: Contribute, maximize your skills, use your inherent gifts, and work on the causes you care about and potentially make money doing it such that you can just make this your thing so that you prompted them. Value prop to the impact investors is like we said, there's a very clear systematic way that you can go evaluate projects and it would be the same value prop is using something like angel lists indicates like you can go in there and there's tools standard way of the way deals work. Everyone has access to that information like pre vetted projects. You can literally propose deals from your pocket. It's now it's all mobile and whatnot. I'd say for the benefactors, by the way, I call them philanthropists now and I don't know, I may go back to benefactors for them. It's pretty simple. It's actually like you're buying outcomes, not paying for work. Like the example in the video that I made was the city of Lisbon for that traffic congestion problem. They kind of don't care how it's solved as long as it meets certain criteria, right? So it's putting a price on an outcome, not buying a specific solution and then all the problems that come with that. So it's really elegant way of getting the change you want to see.

Tim Grabe: Yeah, definitely. It's like the impact investment thing in general, so the whole system. So I also like the system.

Sean Tierney: And then lastly, the last USP, because like I said, there's a fourth one now, which is and this could be anyone but like a clan runner, the person who is in charge of a clan. The

USP there is just basically to run your own impact hub, like all the value that Problematic has for yourself and basically the ability to put all these mechanics to work in solving whatever you care about.

Tim Grabe: So now we already talked about so many changes in the whole system of Problematic. But most of them sounded to me natural. It was rather a development than a change. Was there any major change, for example, out of a learning which you had in the past year or one and a half years?

Sean Tierney: I mean, yeah. All this stuff is open so you can read everything. I'm trying to think how to chart this because I do those handwritten notes and then I post them in the Discord, and then I write the forum post, wrapping up the event, and then I link to those notes in the Discord. So you can literally see the distillation and then the distillation of the distillation. So if you want to see what those learnings are and you have the time, probably the best thing would be to read the event, wrap up post of the last three events and just see how my thinking changed.

Tim Grabe: I did that. For sure there were always like small changes. For example with the group size now. For me it was rather a question for a major change because I feel like those are like optimizations. I mean like a major change in the whole system, you know?

Sean Tierney: Yeah, no, it's pretty well baked. Like it's fundamentally, I think the right structure. There's no major changes to be made. At this point it's more around like how do we pull some of the frustration, like the stuff where we waste time at the event. How do we frontload that and get that to happen earlier? How do we not monopolize teams with mentors who are too distracting? But fundamentally though, I think the structure is really elegant and I

put like it's no surprise it's emerged over many years of learning and running events and seeing how people operate and what motivates.

Tim Grabe: Okay. And you also mentioned some improvements in the current system, for example, now with the clans system and whatever. Anything else to add there for improvements on the current system?

Sean Tierney: I just roll the mobile interface this weekend. So that was a major improvement. I don't know if you've seen it lately, but pull it up on your phone and it looks a lot more like LinkedIn or Twitter. It's got the little tabs at the bottom make a lot more sense. It just feels like a mobile app now. So that's good. Clans is 100% my focus like that is the single biggest thing. I've got some stuff you can see on the whiteboard in the back. That's the biggest one. And others I want to do like marketing automation. So far too much of my time leading up to an event is spent around not just organizing and getting signs out, but then following up with people saying, Hey, it looks like you create a profile, but you never like introduce yourself in the forums like you can't attend until you do X, Y, z. Like all that stuff should be automated. So that's marketing automation. Someone suggested I think this is a good suggestion, but like a role specific wizard for onboarding. So right now it's a you come to the site and it's a little overwhelming, like you understand how it all works, so you get it. But like when you just see all these things and all these, like it doesn't speak to you. So I think it might make sense at some point to have it say like, who are you? The way I do now is like, I'm a knowledge worker. So instead of then giving you a sales pitch, I should keep asking you questions and saying like, Well, what do you care about? What's your skill set like? Do you want to do in-person events or just virtual events?

Tim Grabe: So like guidance through...

Sean Tierney: Yeah. So you basically interview them and at the end of that it's like, great, we'll create your account. So I think having a better onboarding for people that funnels them basically into the app and pre completes everything once they get there. I think that will be a good change. It's just it's not the biggest one to make right now. It's actual help videos I intend to make. I already did the viral event unlock which was really cool. So when you saw that, but like I made it so like anyone can propose an event and it stays private until they get five signups and then it publishes to the website. And then once its public, it stays in a proposed state and not a confirmed state until they get to the next level of sign up. So really gamifying that whole... making it open, making it so anyone can propose it, but they have to demonstrate traction and prove that they're actually getting people to sign up for it.

Tim Grabe: So that's part of the clan thing right? So like if you want to do it.

Sean Tierney: That's live now. Yeah. I think clans will probably have similar game dynamics in terms of like you can maybe only publish a clan to the library once you've gotten a certain level of traction amongst your friends. So there's like some, I don't know what you call this type of meritocracy or like whatever this pattern is, but it's proving your worth, like showing, demonstrating that you can actually get traction. And then, only then you can actually post to the website. So it's kind of like Wikipedia, maybe the way they do it.

Tim Grabe: The last question is what you are already said, like the future outlook of Problematic. At the moment probably to make the clan based thing. So to outsource Problematic. Is there anything you want to say to it? So to the question what the future outlook of Problematic is? Or maybe just your vision or whatever?

Sean Tierney: No, man. I mean, this is what's a unique dynamic is. I'm like a VC funded startup or even one where I'm reliant upon this making money, I don't need this to make money at this point. I'm doing it for the impact. So that can be a good and bad thing. So in terms of the future of it, I mean, I'm going to do this anyways. This is just what I'm working on. This is the biggest thing I can work on. And yeah, it'll just get better and better over time and hopefully I can crack this equation. And I'm very hopeful with the planned stuff. I'm actually talking to Bubble, which is the platform that I use to build the website itself. I was at their conference in New York two weeks ago and just having to meet the right person there and hit it off. And now I'm having a conversation with her on this Friday. So that would be an amazing partner. And yeah, it's just one step at a time, I think, like figure out how to crack into communities, get people. That clan pivot I think is a key one. Having the epiphany, Oh, it's a Kathy Sierra. I don't know if you've ever heard her stuff, but she has this thing of like products should just make you a more badass version of yourself. There's a graphic that says it all. It's like a little Mario and your product is the little power up and then you become like the big Fire Mario. That is the way to think of the product. The product is the thing that makes your user a badass. And so clans is a way of thinking about this at the level of how do we just power up people? This whole thing was designed to power up people, but then this is the next level of like, Oh, you give them the ability to run their own clan. Game on.

Tim Grabe: So one additional question, which is not part of the official ones, but what I was now thinking of with the clans. So if somebody is hosting an event in Madrid or whatever, because I know that Problematic takes between 2% and 15% of shares. So will the host get an amount of these shares? Or how will he be incentivized to host this whole event?

Sean Tierney: Yeah, that's exactly it. So, they get 20% of Problematic shares.

Tim Grabe: So 20% of Problematic shares, okay.

Sean Tierney: And that actually works with referral links. That's not that's independent of clans. Clan is basically the ability to kind of white label or co-brand the site, but the referral link now works that way where if you refer someone and they create a project, then you are going to get 20% of Problematic share of that project.

Tim Grabe: Those were my main questions. Thank you so much for the extensive session Sean! Do you have anything you want to add. Something which you think should be in there, which we did not talk about?

Sean Tierney: So yeah, I did have an idea and it just slipped. There was something else I was going to mention that was somewhat related to that question of running events. If I think of it, I'll send it to you. I don't remember. Oh no, I know what it is. It's this. It's going to be something I need to solve, but not right now. It's the governance. So, like, arbitrating when a bounty is actually fulfilled correctly. There needs to be an independent panel. And I have like an advisory group right now that consists of all my old bosses. Basically, it's all the people I respect and who we meet occasionally, and I show them my progress. But I've asked them: Can you arbitrate when we have the problem of people submitting for the bounties and now we need to adjudicate? Did they meet the criterion we're going to need like a process for doing that credibly neutral way that you can explain it and you can say, here's why we you didn't make it or here's why you did. So that needs to be arm's length. That can't be me. And that is a conflict of interest, if I have any bearing on the satisfaction of a bounty, then as an investor, that's a conflict of

interest. So I will need to solve that. I'm not it's not the biggest thing I can solve right now, but at some point that will need to be.

[...]

Appendix Q: Time schedule Ideathon event in April 2023

Time	Activity
10:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Welcome & Ice breaker
10:30 AM - 11:00 AM	Project Pitches
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Team Formation and Market Research
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Lunch provided by Pagely
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Building Clickable Prototypes
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Customer Feedback Interviews
4:00 PM - 4:30 PM	Break & Check-in
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM	Working on Pitches
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM	Pitching Investors
7:30 PM - 8:30 PM	Afterparty

Appendix R: Time schedule Buildathon event in April 2023

Time	Activity
09:30 AM - 10:30 AM	Welcome & Work Organization
10:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Interview / Work Session
12:30 PM - 1:45 PM	Lunch provided by Pagely at a Restaurant
1:45 PM - 2:15 PM	Sharing of Work results
2:15 PM - 3:30 PM	Work Session
3:30 PM - 4:00 PM	Sharing of Work results