



October 2024

# DigiEduHack Webinar #6: Winning Strategies for Hackathon Finals and Beyond (29/10/2024)



## **DigiEduHack Webinar #5: Winning Strategies for Hackathon Finals and Beyond**

**Date:** October 29, 2024

**Time:** 17:00-18:00 CET

### **Overview:**

This webinar focused on generating winning project ideas and assembling high-performing teams for educational hackathons. The session offered insights into brainstorming, project conceptualisation, and team dynamics, emphasising practical strategies for building collaborative, interdisciplinary teams.

In this final webinar before the DigiEduHack days 2024, speakers shared valuable strategies for hackathon participants preparing for the finals. The session focused on refining presentations, building team resilience, and ensuring project sustainability post-hackathon.

### **Onsite Invited Speakers:**

- Tudor Lapp (Moldova): Trainer at Future Classroom Lab Moldova
- Marcos Almonacid Andrés (Spain): DigiEduHack 2023 winner

### **Online Invited Speakers:**

- Blerina Guga (Albania): CEO of Junior Achievement of Albania
- Mihajela Črnko (Slovenia): Partnerships Lead at the UNESCO AI Research Center

### **Webinar Host:**

- Mart Soonik (Estonia): Communication Manager and Lecturer of MSMedia

### **Ask-Me-Anything Host:**

- Kristof Fenyvesi (Estonia), Visiting researcher at Tallinn University.



Webinar #6 speakers. Photo: Surly Väät

## Highlights of the interview

### What Are the Most Effective Strategies for Presentation?

Tudor Lapp highlighted the "**Keep It Simple, Soldier**" (KISS) method, advising participants to focus on delivering clear, memorable messages rather than overwhelming details. He emphasised structuring presentations around core ideas and saving specifics for the Q&A, as clarity helps hold the audience's attention and build engagement.

Marcos Almonacid Andrés shared his insights into storytelling, noting that a strong narrative arc—beginning, middle, and end—can create an emotional connection with the audience. By weaving a journey into his pitch, he explained how challenges, solutions, and visions for the future resonate deeply. Marcos also recommended using multimedia, such as videos, to bring concepts to life, making complex ideas accessible and memorable. Mihajela Črnko added that presenters should prepare **visual backups**, like demo slides or prototype visuals, to support explanations and provide clarity, even in cases of technical issues.

### How Can Teams Handle Last-Minute Challenges?

Blerina Guga stressed the importance of **team cohesion** in managing stress and last-minute issues. She noted that teams benefit from creating an environment of constructive self-criticism, turning weaknesses into growth opportunities. This approach, she shared, builds team resilience and promotes quick adaptation under pressure. Team mentors, she added, are instrumental in helping participants remain focused, balanced, and solution-oriented, especially when last-minute adjustments are necessary.

Marcos noted the value of informal bonding, such as jokes or breaks, which he found helpful for reducing stress and building team unity. Mihajela expanded on this, emphasising the need for backup plans and a prepared response to potential technical failures. Having backup visuals or alternative ways to present ideas, she explained, allows teams to remain composed and flexible despite unexpected setbacks.

### **What Are the Best Methods for Ensuring Project Sustainability?**

Marcos and Tudor both highlighted the importance of laying a **solid foundation** when designing sustainable projects. Marcos shared how his team prioritised essential resources early in the process, eliminating non-critical elements to keep the project scalable. This approach, he explained, allows teams to focus on aspects critical to long-term feasibility rather than spreading resources thinly. Mihajela advocated for minimal-resource solutions, which are not only sustainable but also scalable and adaptable to real-world needs. She emphasised that sustainable projects often have simpler designs, making them easier to implement and modify over time.

Blerina shared success stories from her experience, citing projects that have grown from hackathon ideas to three-year businesses in Albania. She credited this success to **community engagement** and the commitment of teams to iteratively develop their ideas post-hackathon. She advised participants to maintain a strong connection with supporters and mentors to ensure ongoing growth and viability.

### **How Can Participants Maintain Team Morale and Engagement?**

Mihajela spoke about the importance of **team spirit** and how genuine connections within a team reduce stress and enhance productivity. She recounted examples of previous hackathons where open communication and mutual support encouraged creativity and collaboration, even under pressure. She suggested incorporating humor and informal moments to relieve stress and improve team cohesion, especially as deadlines approach.

Blerina and Tudor advised mentors to focus on building participants' self-confidence and encouraging **constructive feedback**. Such a supportive atmosphere, they agreed, helps participants remain motivated and productive, even during challenging times. This strategy, they noted, is essential for sustaining team morale and ensuring everyone feels valued and engaged in the collaborative process.

**Ending Notes:**

DigiEduHack Webinar #6 offered actionable strategies to help participants excel in their hackathon experience. From refining project ideas and sustaining team morale to presenting impactful pitches and planning for sustainable solutions, the insights shared equip participants to approach the finals with greater confidence and preparedness.

