



May 2024

# DigiEduHack Webinar #2: Navigating the Preparatory Phases of DigiEduHack (21/05/2024)



The "Navigating the Preparatory Phases of DigiEduHack: Blueprint for Success" webinar provides an in-depth look into the essential elements required to plan and execute a successful digital education hackathon. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration, effective communication, community engagement, and robust infrastructure. Through real-world examples and experiences shared by seasoned hosts, the webinar offers valuable insights into overcoming challenges, securing sponsorships, and delivering impactful events.

- Onsite Invited Speakers: **Szilvia Szilágyi**, founder of Drone Design Lab, geospatial professional, Microsoft for Startups, Hungary/Poland; and **Elchin Jafarov**, founder of Datorium, Latvia.
- Online Invited Speakers: **Katerina Chantzi**, empowering impact early-stage entrepreneurs to develop their businesses sustainably and to amplify their impact based on their capabilities through facilitation, also a SALTO trainer, Greece; and **Davide Coppaloni**, Network Services Manager at JA Europe, Italy.
- Webinar Host: **Mart Soonik**, DigiEduHack webinar host.



## Highlights of the interview

*Could you tell us about yourselves and your background?*

**Szilvia Szilágyi:** Hi, I'm Szilvia, a Hungarian based in Poland. I founded a startup related to drones one and a half years ago and hosted a digital education hackathon last year using mini drones as educational tools.

**Elchin Jafarov:** I am the founder of Datorium, an ed-tech organization in Latvia. We bring meaningful technologies into education and currently cooperate with over 1890 schools, educating around 5000 students weekly. Last year, we organized a hackathon with about 200 participants, and I'm happy to share our experiences today.

**Katerina Chantzi:** Hello, I'm Katerina from Greece. I've been a facilitator in social entrepreneurship and hosted a DigiEduHack event in Estonia last year.

**Davide Coppaloni:** Hi, I'm Davide from Italy. I work with Junior Achievement, an NGO focused on entrepreneurship education. We've been involved with DigiEduHack for the past three editions, organizing events and co-organizing with other partners.

*What are some examples of meaningful tools in education?*

**Elchin Jafarov:** One example is our gamified system that tracks student engagement in real time. Students earn points, or "coins," which helps us identify and boost engagement levels. It's a blend of gaming and education that motivates students effectively.

*How do you use drones in education?*

**Szilvia Szilágyi:** Drones can be used to teach various subjects like science and technology. Unfortunately, many people associate drones with military use, but they have significant educational value. We use mini drones indoors for coding and building exercises, engaging students in aerospace and aviation concepts.

*How did you manage to host a hackathon for 200 people?*

**Elchin Jafarov:** We focused on building an efficient team with diverse skills—technical, creative, and organizational. We used task assignment tools to keep track of responsibilities and employed a blended approach, combining online and offline elements. This hybrid model allowed us to manage large numbers effectively.

*Did you face any challenges organizing your hackathon?*

**Szilvia Szilágyi:** Yes, especially in forming teams. Many participants signed up individually, making it challenging to assign them to appropriate teams. We also had to balance between different topics like robotics and coding, which required a lot of coordination.

*Brainstorming sessions are crucial during hackathons. How did you ensure effective brainstorming?*

**Elchin Jafarov:** We integrated hackathons into the digital skills curriculum, making participation almost a natural step for students. Keeping participants motivated through interim activities and emphasizing the importance of completing the hackathon helped maintain engagement.

*What do you think is essential for building strong sponsorships for hackathons?*

**Katerina Chantzi:** It's important to partner with organizations that share your vision and see the value in digital education. In Estonia, we collaborated with universities, startup Estonia, and IT companies. Building long-term relationships based on trust and shared goals is crucial.

*How do you approach securing sponsorships?*

**Davide Coppaloni:** We leverage our existing relationships with corporate partners and emphasize the opportunity for them to give back to students. Engaging corporate volunteers who can interact directly with students helps in building a strong connection and long-lasting partnerships.

*How do you make your hackathons visible and attract participants?*

**Elchin Jafarov:** We focus on community building rather than just advertising. Using platforms like Discord, we engage our community with events and gamified activities. Investing in the community creates a sustainable model that keeps participants engaged.

**Katerina Chantzi:** Clear communication and setting realistic goals are key. We reached out to our network of schools and teachers, ensuring they understood the value of participating. Regular internal meetings helped us stay organized and effective.

*During the hackathon, how do you document and produce media for future use?*

**Szilvia Szilágyi:** We created videos and photos showcasing students presenting their ideas. Post-hackathon, we provided certificates and software licenses to the winners as a form of recognition.

**Elchin Jafarov:** We stream events on platforms like TikTok and Instagram, showing both successes and challenges. This transparency engages the community and provides valuable content for future promotions.

**Katerina Chantzi:** We streamed key parts of the hackathon and produced after-movies to capture the event's essence. These materials help in promoting future events and showcasing the value of participation.

*How do you thank your participants and contributors?*

**Davide Coppaloni:** We produce reports for our partners, showcasing the impact of their support. For students, we offer experiential prizes like mentorship opportunities and visits to partner headquarters. These experiences are invaluable and foster continued engagement.