

business@school International Finals

Partying safely: Student team from Milan wins Finals with best international business idea

At the International Finals of business@school, the educational initiative of Boston Consulting Group (BCG), seven students from the German School of Milan took top honors with TWID, a drinking straw that detects harmful substances. Second place went to three teams: Two from Zurich, Switzerland, and one from Pogradec, Albania. Overall, nine teams from Albania, Germany, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland competed in the International Finals.

Milan, June 15, 2022. "In my home country Brazil, beverages spiked with drugs are a big problem. And I heard about similar incidents here after coming to Milan. There are armbands that recognize harmful substances, but our goal was to develop something even simpler," explains Gabriela (18), a member of the winning team from the German School of Milan. Gabriela, Carla (16), Emma (16), Giacomo (17), Lorenzo (17), Patrick (16), and Sara (16) tinkered to find a solution and finally did: TWID, which stands for "Test while I drink."

When it comes into contact with drugs, the straw alerts users by changing color from dark blue to bright red. "We worked with a chemist and tested the material in a lab during development," notes Emma. Potential customers are already lining up: Besides selling the straws at drugstores, the team also plans to do business with clubs and bars. The idea also impressed the judges at the International Finals of business@school, the educational initiative of the international consulting firm Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

Expert judges analyzed teams' business ideas

Again this year, over the three phases of business@school, more than 1,000 senior high school students from roughly 70 schools tried out business for themselves. As the climax of the project year, they tested their entrepreneurial skills by developing innovative business ideas, supported by their teachers and roughly 400 volunteer coaches from over 20 well-known companies and BCG. "We didn't know each other very well when we started, but in the course of the project we grew together as a team and learned a lot about teamwork," remarks Lorenzo.

All the teams competing in the business@school International Finals presented their business ideas live at the Boston Consulting Group's office in Milan and then answered probing questions from the judges, who were highly impressed by the students' business ideas and well-thought-out business plans.

business@school
A BCG INITIATIVE

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The judges were

- **Sabrina Casalta**, Head of Business Commercial Operations, Vodafone Italia SpA
- **Pierluigi Dialuce**, Group Head of People Tech & Change Management, Intesa Sanpaolo SpA
- **Monica Possa**, Group Chief HR & Organization Officer, Assicurazioni Generali SpA
- **Monica Regazzi**, Chief Executive Officer, Homepal.it
- **Luca Rossetto**, Private Investor, Italian Angels for Growth

Strong competition from around Europe

In view of the many great ideas, it wasn't easy for the judges to arrive at a decision. Two teams from Zurich and one team from Pogradec therefore shared second place.

- Annina (19), Camille (18), Levin (18), Nicola (19), and Sakura (17) from **Kantonsschule Enge in Zurich** presented the book exchange box "Bex," a subscription model with which users can donate and receive books monthly.
- Another team from **Kantonsschule Enge** introduced "PLAGO": Reusable lunchboxes leased for take-out establishments and returned by customers at drop-off stations. With this idea, Ilian, Mathieu, Nico, and Silvan (all age 18) aim to reduce plastic waste.
- The very first bowling alley in their hometown as a new place to hang out—that's the idea presented by Eden, Gersida, Klemend, and Rakela (all age 17) from **Nehemiah Gateway in Pogradec**. Called "Strikes Me Miq," the bowling alley includes a corner for chess players and affordable beverages and snacks for sale.

A total of nine teams with the following ideas took part in this year's International Finals:**Albania**

- **Nehemiah Gateway, Pogradec: Strikes Me Miq**—a bowling alley including a chess corner and beverages and snacks for sale

Austria

- **Sir Karl Popper School/Wiedner Gymnasium, Vienna: Calendyum**—a fitness and health app focused on meal planning
- **Theresianum, Vienna: Fab Sac**—a fashionable tote bag made of recycled COVID masks

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Germany

- **Munich International School, Starnberg: Photon**—an app to connect electric vehicle owners with available charging ports at private residences

Italy

- **Collegio San Carlo, Milan: ePapyrus**—an app with which retailers and customers can create and send digital receipts
- **German School of Milan: TWID**—a drinking straw that detects harmful substances in drinks and beverages

Switzerland

- **Institut Montana Zugerberg, Zug: Dreamskin**—distribution of personalized boxes with skin care products
- **Kantonsschule Enge, Zurich: Bex**—a nonprofit book exchange in Switzerland
- **Kantonsschule Enge, Zurich: PLAGO**—reusable lunch boxes for take-out food with drop-off stations

Founded in 1998, **business@school**, the educational initiative of the international consulting firm Boston Consulting Group (BCG), now provides more than 1,000 students each year with the opportunity to learn about business in three phases over the course of a school year: First by analyzing one large and one small company, and then by developing their own business idea, including a business plan. They are supported by participating teachers and 400 professionals volunteering as coaches.

Social responsibility

Boston Consulting Group (BCG) is an international management consulting firm and a worldwide leader in business strategy. Founded in 1963 by Bruce D. Henderson, BCG now has more than 90 offices in over 50 countries. In addition to their work for clients, BCG consultants also support selected organizations on a pro bono basis, such as Save the Children and the World Food Programme of the United Nations. BCG currently supports more than 200 such organizations in over 350 projects across the firm. In Germany, BCG is particularly active in the education and training of young adults. In its initiative **business@school**, the firm has partnered for 20 years with teachers and other companies to provide students with the opportunity to learn firsthand at their schools how business works.

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