

Youthmakers Hub:

From volunteerism to entrepreneurship



Marilena Marangou

[LinkedIn](#)

Co-founder [Youthmakers Hub](#)

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Youth, 21st-century skills, education, personal growth, empowering individuals, robust collaborations, effective entrepreneurship

Aggelos Chamakiotis

[LinkedIn](#)

Project Manager [Youthmakers Hub](#)



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hat is *Youthmakers Hub* all about?

Youthmakers Hub is the Hub, which shapes and is shaped by youth. This would not be a reality if we hadn't embraced the entrepreneurial spirit, which we are now actively trying to pass on to the Greek Youth. The organization essentially came as a result of a transition from volunteering to business. This may have seemed frightening or tough at times with ups and downs, yet we feel nothing but gratitude as such a path has been full of great people, ideas and constant innovations.

Youthmakers Hub is a Civil Society Organization (CSO) with the vision to make young people be the change they want to see in the world and the mission to empower and equip them with the necessary tools and skills for the future. The organization offers a variety of services to Higher Education Institutions, CSOs & individuals with the main aims: to provide education & mobility opportunities to the Youth & support them to become change agents of tomorrow; to empower Youth with the 21st-century skills & prepare them for the future, educating them on entrepreneurship, soft skills & the digital revolution; to promote & use non-formal education as a methodology to alternative learning; to create the active citizens of tomorrow and democratize participation for the common



good of our European society. The activities of the organization lie on three pillars: Africa, Education & Culture.

Our journey until today

Many times they keep asking the exact same question "How did you start *Youthmakers Hub*?". As a Ugandan colleague says "The only way to start is to start". Why keep postponing a new start? At times there is a lack of courage and confidence, and people care too much about what other people will say, instead of embracing a new initiative. They feel afraid in front of the upcoming challenges, obstacles, and the unknown. The truth is that you do not know if you will succeed if you do not take the

not know if you will succeed if you do not take the risk and try.

So let's get it started! It was around the end of 2018 when we realized that *Youthmakers Hub* was the risk to take, the new boat to sail. Until that moment, we have been working on several projects either on a professional or a voluntary basis. During our stay in Africa back in 2018, while implementing the project [WE AfriHug](#), we realized that we needed to follow our passion, focus on that and the only way was to build something on our own. The single way to sustain ourselves financially and to take advantage of our momentum was to create something on our own. So we did. By the end of January 2019, we established our organization, *Youthmakers Hub*. A Hub created by youth, empowering individuals and communities at a global scale inspired by our initiative, WE AfriHug, which has strengthened the capacity of thousands of African Youth in 10 African countries.

The *Youthmakers Hub* team

Youthmakers Hub is all about young people giving back to the Youth. And one thing can be said for sure: throughout this short, yet intense trip, there's nothing that we are prouder of than our team. Our team consists of 10 members, from Greece and abroad, with an average of 25 years old.

Joining *Youthmakers Hub* is not about who has the most competitive CV! It's all about connection, collaboration, and willingness to become better. In other words, striving to "be the change you want to see in the world" as we often say in the office. Before implementing any project and empowering individuals, we take into consideration our personal growth. We are looking for ways to keep our team -and ourselves - motivated, educated, and productive. We believe safeguarding the workplace should be a top priority for any entrepreneur, as the relationships among the team members will always leave marks, both positive and negative upon a final product or service. We pay special atten-

tion to the collaboration within the team and with external partners, building bridges among people and continents [this is what stays in the end]!

By now most of us know how beneficial sustainability can be whether it comes to the environment, for example, or the economy. But have you ever tried being sustainable with your partnerships as well? Why fix something that's not broken? Reevaluate all the partnerships you had in the past, choose what has worked for you, and do it again. When it comes to teams and synergies, you don't have to be or think the same with your partner. Creating a common communication code, sharing a mindset regarding ethics and efficiency, and getting clear what each of the team players' roles is, and you are on the right path towards your goals. This has helped us a lot to express our gratitude and build robust collaborations, which become more efficient every time.

Promoting the entrepreneurial mindset

Seeing how effective entrepreneurship can be as a means to realize our dreams, we devote a substantial part of our endeavors to endorsing the business mindset, and especially to the Youth, as they are the future. Unfortunately, when in school, it is really rare to listen to educators promoting entrepreneurship, risks, and even different forms and lifestyles for working. The youth doesn't get a chance to hear different stories or someone saying: "Hey, it's possible. If I did it, you can also choose this path." We detect a strong need to let the young ones know that they have a choice to create something from scratch and build on their ideas and dreams.

That's the reason why most of the trainings we provide aspire to either facilitate one's dreams of entering the business or follow a more unconventional path if that's what suits them best. From customer service and project management to digital and communication skills, our goal is to equip young people with the toolkit necessary to navi-

gate in the 21st century. Sometimes we focus so much on hard skills or theoretical knowledge that we tend to forget that people need to practice what they have to do. For example, recently we facilitated a 48h Hackathon concerning Sustainable Development Goals and sustainability. The teams that participated had to practically get involved in the finding of the solution. They estimated the budget, researched their project, wrote down an action plan, and found their customers/beneficiaries.

Mainly utilizing European grants we organize several trainings, based on non-formal education techniques. We strongly believe that interactive activities and fun additions are the key to success, especially now, when training has become digital, and people suffer from “Zoom” fatigue.

Lessons Learnt

If we had to give any advice to future entrepreneurs, the first would be to excessively study! One should become aware of the market’s needs and gaps and decide which is the position they want within it. As the objectives of the business progressively become clearer and the idea begins to take form, this is when you need to start doubting yourself as well. And from this point forward, you should never stop, as this is the only way you can ensure quality and continuous development.

Actively searching for new things to learn can only propel your enterprise forward. The point, however, is not to try to be the best at everything! On the contrary, business owners need to form a strong team of talented people with a variety of skills when it comes to the fields of expertise. The next step is of course to keep investing in this team. The more you give to your team, the more is going to give back to you. That’s why it is of utmost importance for the entrepreneur to establish strong connections between the team members.

From a more practical point of view, many of us would do ourselves a great favor if we just em-

braced technology. From manager to trainer, whatever your profession, you can always make it more effective or appealing, using contemporary digital tools. Thankfully, if we absolutely had to choose one good thing that came as a result of the pandemic, it is that people have started to realize how helpful technology has become. Still, there is a long way from a digitally educated world.