Developer of anti-bullying application named Czech Republic’s most creative startup

Young Brno-based entrepreneurs from the startup faceUp won the national round of the Creative Business Cup competition

- The national round of Creative Business Cup 2020 took place on 22 September at Industra in Brno
- The competition of nine creatives and entrepreneurs was won by the Nenech to byť (Don’t Let it Be) application developed by young entrepreneurs from the startup faceUP
- Second place was won by the Ofform3D digital design studio, followed closely in third place by Deeptime, a manufacturer of luxury designer speakers

Prague, 30 September 2020:
A developer of an anti-bullying application, a digital design studio and a manufacturer of luxury designer speakers have been named the Czech Republic’s three most creative startups in 2020, having found success in the national round of the Creative Business Cup competition, which took place at Industra in Brno on 22 September 2020. The grand-prize winner was the Brno-based startup faceUp with its anonymised reporting system that serves as a means of preventing bullying in schools and unethical behaviour in workplaces. The company plans to also focus on victims and witnesses of domestic violence in the future. Next year, faceUp will represent the Czech Republic at the global finals of the competition in Copenhagen.

“We started the project as students when we were seventeen. In the past three years, we have built the idea up into a functional business with turnover on the order of millions, expanded our team from three classmates to thirty people, received three investments and expanded abroad. Our products are currently used in the broadest range of countries on three continents,” says Jan Sláma, co-founder of faceUp.

The mobile and internet application helps concerned users to anonymously report bullying that they encounter in their vicinity. It is intended not only for the victims of bullying at school, but particularly for the so-called silent majority, i.e. individuals who are often aware of bullying, but for certain reasons are afraid to share their concerns with a teacher. Thanks to this platform, they can do so anonymously and outside of the school environment. Partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which schools around the world have been shuttered, faceUp is expanding its activities toward companies, though this idea as such began to take shape approximately a year earlier, when the startup, together with CzechInvest, attended the Innovfest Unbound Singapore conference and received feedback on its product from potential customers.

“We launched the corporate platform in the summer, roughly three weeks ago. At the moment, the number of companies using our platform is in the single digits, but they have dozens to thousands of employees. We are currently in talks with a number of other companies,” says Sláma, adding: “Our whole product was created as an application by students for students, which we see as our major advantage. We strive to proceed based on their needs, we meet with children regularly, discuss with them and explain to them what the application can do for them. We’re managing the company ourselves and we have employees, so we’re familiar with the corporate issue.”

The startup Ofform3D won second place in the competition. The problem addressed by the project is that a large amount of material is consumed in traditional fashion design. Therefore, the company uses digital technology in the fashion industry and provides designers with a service that accelerates the process from the initial design to the final garment. In addition to 3D visualisation of garments and digital fashion shows, it also offers workshops in which designers learn how to work in the digital environment. It is an efficient approach to fashion that is also environmentally friendly and sustainable, and responds very quickly to ongoing changes in customers’ needs and expectations. “In addition to the prizes, with which we are very pleased, our participation and second-place finish in the competition brought us a number of interesting contacts and inspiration,” says Barbora Čihařová of Ofform 3D. “Though we are still in the early stage with our business, we already have a relatively diverse
range of customers. For example, we are handling an order for a supplier from Jordan and overalls for racing drivers. We would definitely like to expand abroad in the future, as we see great potential there,” Čihaflová explains.

Third place in CzechInvest’s Creative Business Cup was taken by the startup Deeptime, a developer of luxury speakers for design lovers and more discerning music enthusiasts. Last year, the company was the first in the world to introduce to the market an audio system made of silica sand using 3D printing. “The competition brought us a lot of contacts. We also learned to present ourselves in front of people who move in business circles. I also take it as good training on how to manage nervousness in important negotiations. In addition to the onstage presentation, we were also able to exhibit the product here, and those who were interested could come to us directly,” says Ondřej Chotovinský, founder of Deeptime.

The audience’s favourite was CityZen, a manufacturer of clothing on which sweat and stains are not visible.

All of the finalists – Affini Creative, CityZen, Deeptime, faceUp, Fluidum Té, Forsage, Hayaku, Ofform3D and Petshare – presented themselves to an expert jury composed of representatives of CzechInvest, the City of Brno, Microsoft, Nation 1 and the South Moravian Innovation Centre in the form of a brief three-minute pitch and subsequently answered the jury’s questions. The jury assessed the startups’ creativity, market potential, business plans and management.

“The City of Brno is proud of the fact that it places emphasis on science, research, innovation and the creative industry, and I therefore think that what was possible to see during the final in Brno can aid the development of the Czech Republic as a whole. In short, innovative and creative people can change the world. The path of business is not easy, especially at a time when we are fighting a pandemic, but the participants in the Creative Business Cup final have a solid start in further developing their business and we are keeping our fingers crossed for them,” says Brno Deputy Mayor Tomáš Koláčný, who served as a member of the the expert jury.

“Creativity is an inexhaustible resource, unlike all of the other resources that we have here. The cultural and creative industries are on the rise in the Czech Republic,” says Markéta Přenosilová, head of CzechInvest’s Startups and Innovative SMEs Division. According to data from the statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat), these industries’ share in the Czech Republic’s gross value added has grown exponentially over the past six years. According to data from the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the creative industry accounts for 6.5% of the gross value added of all non-financial enterprises, i.e. the rate of contribution of producers and sectors to GDP.

About the Creative Business Cup competition

The Creative Business Cup Foundation is a non-profit organisation that supports startups in the creative industries. Since 2012, it has annually been organising the international Creative Business Cup competition, which has the aim of supporting creative startups, putting them in contact with each other and helping them to find investors and conquer foreign markets. CzechInvest is the organiser of the Czech national round of the competition for the third consecutive year.

If you did not manage to attend the final, you can view a video from the event [here](#).