

The Enthusiasm of the volunteers

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Do you know TEDx? No, this is not a new toothpaste brand for sparkling white teeth or the name of a Texan actor in sexy movies. If it does not ring a bell, ask your children. They will explain to you, maybe in a condescending manner. And you might also discover that they are one of those “TEDx addicted” capable of viewing a massive number of these inspiring videos.

There, I have said it! TEDx means a set of inspiring videos presenting *“ideas worth spreading”*. Those videos are taken during conferences where speakers come and share their ideas with an enthusiastic crowd. More than 113,000 videos are available on various topics such as ecology, culture, science, innovation, society, etc.

To be perfectly honest, my knowledge of the TEDx organization was fairly limited until the day I was contacted to become a speaker at TEDxUCLouvain 2018. It was a nice opportunity for me to discover the backstage and participate to the adventure.

First of all, you have to know that, in Belgium, there are no less than 13 active TEDx groups and at the international level, more than 3,600 events are organized per year in more than 170 countries. This is something! And as you will see it is quite inspiring.

For TEDxLouvain, it was the third edition. In 2017, this event reached an audience of 100 people. In 2018, The Cinescope of Louvain-La-Neuve was completely full with 462 participants (for a paid event). A true success! And behind all that? There was a team of volunteers, passionate of TEDx, who has organized with a master’s touch, a very impressive and professional event.

Martin, Jonathan, Stéphanie, François, Christophe, Robin, Caroline, Adrien et Marine...They shared the roles of coordination, logistics, communication, curation and finance. They brought in the game the coaches of Toastmaster Bruxelles who volunteered to help them to put the presentations in place and improve the script of the event. Taking into account the speakers (all volunteers), 60 people in total have involved themselves to support this event.

Finally, the team also convinced no less than 16 partners to support the event, financially or in another way. This has allowed keeping the event accessible to the largest audience. Congratulations to the team! For the quality of your work (I know what I’m talking about), and even more for your enthusiasm and your friendliness! The enthusiasm of the volunteers!

For those who are interested in the *“ideas worth spreading from Belgium”*, there is one address to watch: www.tedxclouvain.com . The videos will be online for the beginning of the summer holidays.

On my side, my contribution was to share real-life experience, based on the story of a breakthrough innovation realized by IRIS. This story, coming from the IRIS Book (www.iris-book.com), illustrates that for an innovation to become a success, you need to put your heart and all your energy in the project keeping in mind that focus and teamwork are essential.

It seems that this can apply very well to the TEDxUCLouvain. It is possible to innovate and create in all domains. Big things can be accomplished, even by teams of volunteers. One indicator of success that tells a lot? All the team has already signed up for the 2019 edition.



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