Human Knowledge Program

Education – Growth - Energetic Transition

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way-in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only."

C. Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities

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Word count: 3970

Executive summary

Eni and SDA Bocconi School of Management joined their forces to create a **free** and **easy-to-take** course for aspiring entrepreneurs, willing to **grow in a sustainable way**. The **Human Knowledge Program (HKP)** focuses on providing Italian aspiring entrepreneurs with key instruments, knowledge and competences to successfully achieve their objectives of sustainable growth both for their projects and for the Country.

Eni's business model has integrated many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in its mission and includes a **complete transition to sustainable energy and to a circular economy**. The idea is therefore to place individuals at the centre of this circle, making them aware of sustainability and of the role their projects play within society. The common values that are taught to the entrepreneurs concern an equitable energetic transition, a learning-oriented mistake culture, individuals as metrics, trust in the future, value-creation for the Country.

The **objective** is to provide emergent entrepreneurs of any age, background or experience, with a **patchwork of business knowledge** and a **sustainability-oriented mindset**. Start-uppers are endowed with a well-rounded set of competences that can be fundamentals to the success of their businesses. Additionally, the project is oriented towards a sustainable way of managing the enterprise, granting the spread of socially responsible corporate culture.

The way these objectives are achieved is through a **double path** that leads to the creation or improvement of participants' businesses and their consequent acceleration. One path is a selective **blended program**, that gives 25 young talents the opportunity to attend in-person lectures under a monthly scholarship. The other path is an inclusive, completely **free and innovative learning method**. The project is designed as a completely on-line tv series, to allow entrepreneurs to get a large amount of information in small, engaging pills. To connect the different topics together, a story line is included, with real-life actors that play two young entrepreneurs trying to start their business. The story of these two fledgling start-uppers helps the attendees to relate with all the problems that can be encountered in establishing their projects, granting a deeper and more practical interest in the video-lessons.

Additionally, **technical modules**, held by university professors, are also set in an unconventional way, not in classrooms but in places familiar to the attendees. These modules are intertwined with seminars by successful entrepreneurs that tell their stories and share their experiences. Both professors and entrepreneurs can easily be reached by the HKP attendees and provide them with further notions and advice.

The Human Knowledge Program is sided by an **accelerator** called Energizer. This accelerator selects sustainable start-ups and helps them improve their long-term environmental and social impacts. These synergic paths can shape the future of individuals and enterprises in Italy.

VIDEO PRESENTATION

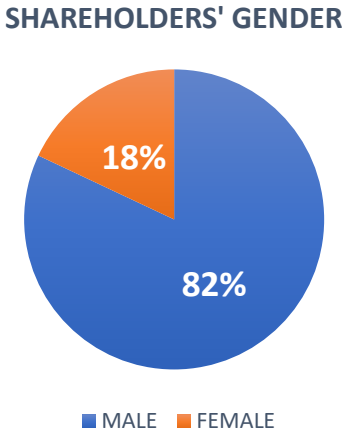
https://vimeo.com/user111670759/review/521993845/b8612b20b0

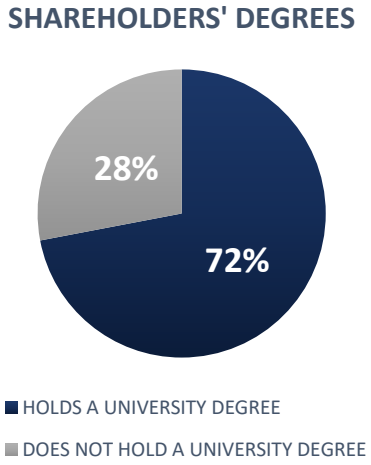
Password: Joule_presentation

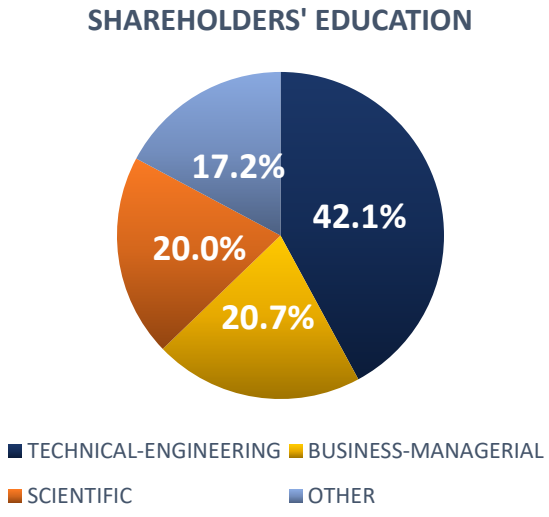
The Context

The Italian entrepreneurship context is very peculiar. Since 2012, Italy has paid a relevant amount of attention to start-ups, particularly introducing a Law Decree (179/2012) aimed at creating a favourable legal ecosystem for the establishment of innovative start-ups. This Decree has helped creating around 10,000 innovative start-ups in 2019.[1]

However, what is notable is the average profile of the Italian start-upper, summarised in the following charts.[2]







[1] E. Provenzano (2019). "Identikit dello startupper italiano: chi sono i neoimprenditori?", Exportiamo website, available at: https://www.exportiamo.it/aree-tematiche/13775/identikit-dello-startupper-italiano-chi-sono-i-neoimprenditori-del-belpaese/.

[2] Start-uppers profiles are studied by *Ibid*.

From the start-uppers profiles, it is clear that some interventions could improve the situation. First, as the shareholders' gender suggests, more attention should be paid to women's willingness and possibility to create sturt-ups and to provide the right means and motivation to do that.

Many start-uppers do not have a managerial background. Therefore, providing them with business skills and knowledge might improve chances of success of their projects.

IN SUMMARY

The areas of intervention that can improve the Italian entrepreneurial fabric are:

- More **equitable distribution** between man and women start-uppers;
- **Open business education** for entrepreneurs who did not have access to university/managerial education;
- **Sustainability-oriented** education, to establish a sensitivity which is generally not provided by the education system;
- **Access to acceleration**, to reduce the average age of start-uppers, as many young people might not have access to financial resources.

The Objectives

Sustainability

- Corporate sustainability education
- Long-term impact
- Acceleration
- Support for the Country

Human Capital

- Free, easy access to business knowledge
- Engaging education with innovative methods
- Establishment of a Community of entrepreneurs

Joule's mission is to train and support entrepreneurs and people who are willing to grow and make Italy grow in a sustainable way, positively affecting the processes of energy transition and the circular economy.

Joule coaches aspiring entrepreneurs, provides tools and skills to improve effectiveness and performance. In addition, it supports individuals who already started a business and help them developing it.

The goal of Human Knowledge is to accompany individuals' entrepreneurial growth through the deepening of ten macro-subjects. It provides pillars, challenges and concrete opportunities, as well as a network of excellent trainers and entrepreneurs who make their experiences available with the community.

"We make a solid effort to contribute in reaching the UN SDGs. We are on a path that favours a just transition, which allows, through concrete solutions, to preserve the environemnt and give access to energy to everybody in an equitable way"

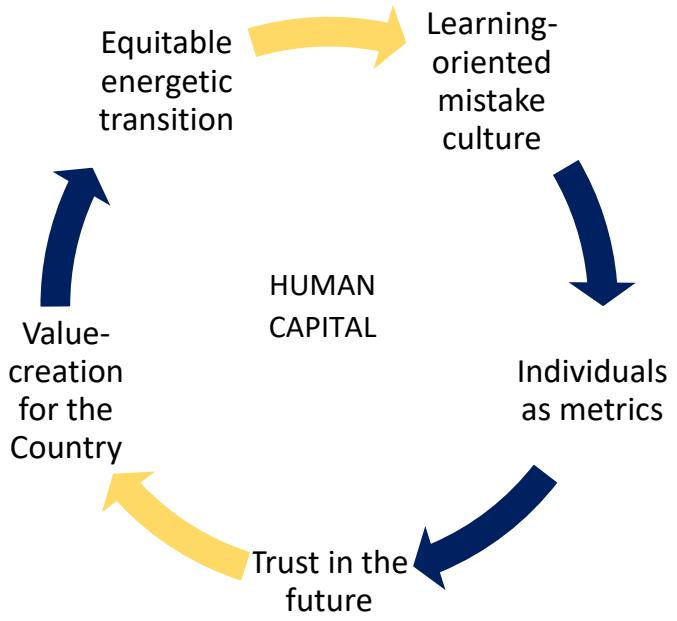
Claudio Descalzi, CEO of Eni

The HKP educates to sustainability, as it is shaped according to Eni's values, which are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations.

Eni's corporate values are transmitted to participants throughout the courses. The idea is to create value through a human capital that is sensitive to sustainability and circular economy. Participants see how entrepreneurial choices can affect the equitable economic transition and trust in the future. They

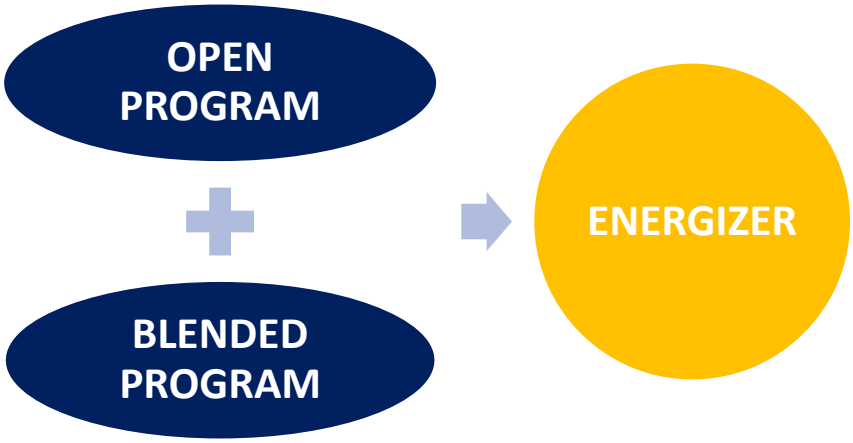
learn how to use their mistakes to improve their business, hot they need to consider people as units of measure of the value of their enterprises and how to create value for their country.

Eni Corporate Values



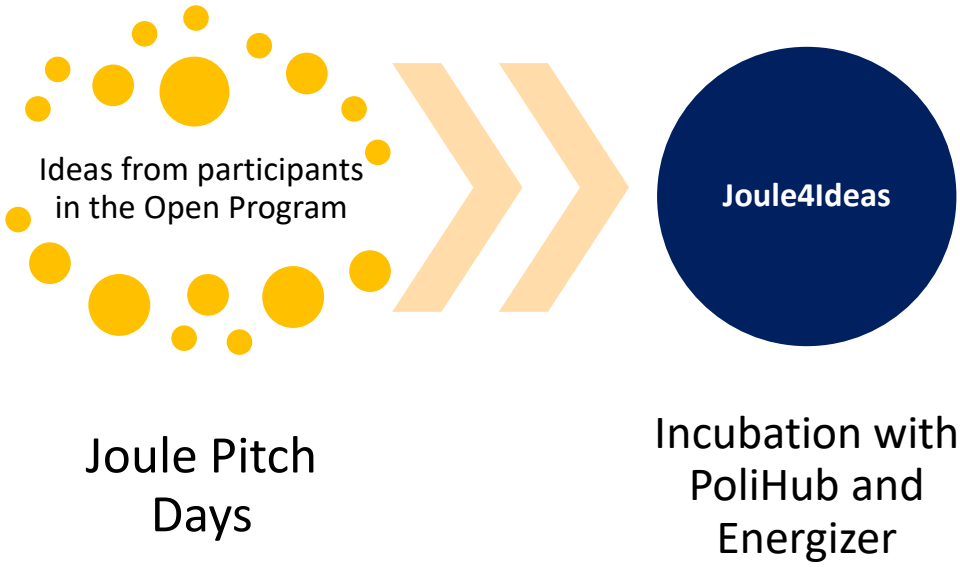
In this way, Joule's objective is to share the entrepreneurial fabric of the country, sustaining start-ups that are aware of their role in the society.

The Methodology



Joule's Human Knowledge Program is an innovative experience, which began in October 2020 with a **Blended program**, for 25 selected participants, and an **Open Program**, in full distance learning, free and open to everybody. Additionally, it includes **Energizer**, which is the hybrid accelerator that supports those who have already founded a sustainable start-up.

Participants from the HKP are provided with the opportunity to share their start-up ideas and projects in Joule4Ideas. In this way, Joule collects brilliant entrepreneurial ideas. Joule4Ideas offers participants the opportunity to exhibit their project during one of the Joule Pitch Days to a commission of experts and then access an incubation program in collaboration with the PoliHub and with the Energizer network.

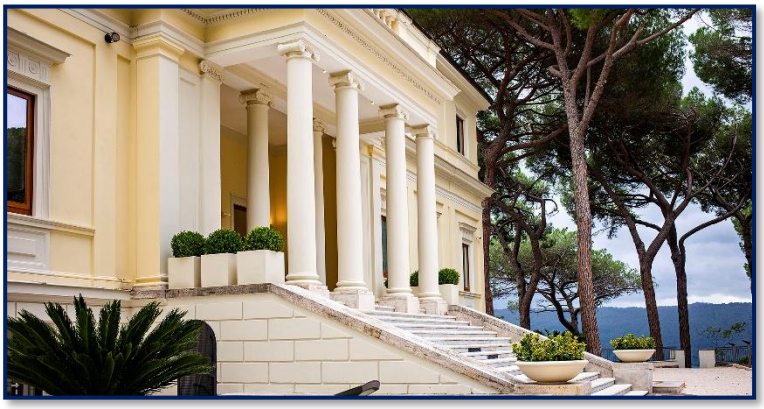


The Blended Program

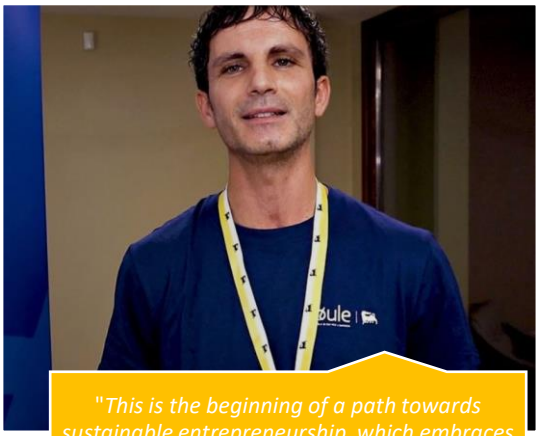
Blended is the Joule training experience offered to aspiring entrepreneurs who want to grow, and make Italy grow in a sustainable way, providing tools, knowledge, skills and interpretations of being a business with a focus on the energy transition path of the Planet and in the transition from a linear to a circular economic development model.

It is a blended learning program that combines the **physical dimension** with the **virtual one**, compatibly with the Covid-19-related restrictions in force in Italy.

The applications closed on 30 June 2020 and 25 talents were selected to attend the classes. Lectures were offered every two months on weekends, both online and at the Eni headquarters in Castel Gandolfo (RM).



The 25 selected candidates started the 6-months program in October, under a 500€-per-month scholarship. Candidates were selected among 2,296 applications of people between 18 and 39 years old.



"This is the beginning of a path towards sustainable entrepreneurship, which embraces the values of the energetic transition, the fight against climate change and circular economy"

Antonio Maglio, Head of HKP

The selection process was based on a set of psycho-aptitude tests and other tests on personal characteristics consistent with the candidates' entrepreneurial profile. Additionally, the knowledge of the English language was one of the requisites for applying.

Those who passed the first selection phase were asked to produce a 90-seconds video, introducing themselves and telling their start-up project or, alternatively, describing the ideal characteristics that an entrepreneur should have. Much interest was given to those who mentioned interest for climate change, the energy transition and the circular economy.

The final interviews took place in person, with travel expenses reimbursed by Eni.

The bootcamp gave the 25 selected “joulees” the opportunity to get to know each other in person and to understand the working methods of the training path. Subsequently, they began their 6-months challenge that provided them with skills and sensitivity to face the challenges of climate change, the energy transition and the circular economy.

The thematic areas analysed in the Blended Program are the same of the Open Program, described in the next session.

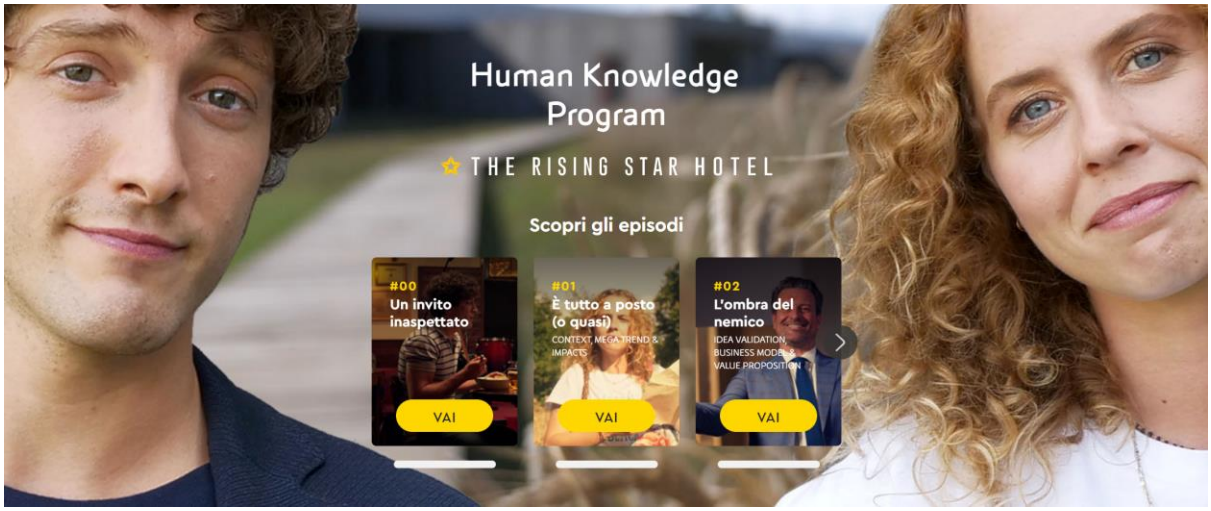
The Open Program

Human Knowledge Open is the Joule training program in distance learning and open to everybody willing to do business in a sustainable way. A disruptive experience that provides individuals with tools and skills to grow their start-up idea in the name of sustainability and innovation.

The Open Program is a path in which individuals can train their entrepreneurial skills by collecting advice and inspiration from stories of entrepreneurs who have started this journey before them. The program provides people with a Skills Coach, a web app to better train their soft skills, and with a forum where the community can share feedbacks and create a network of entrepreneurs, experts and enthusiasts.

With this program everybody can live an out-of-the-ordinary training experience, which helps transform a sustainable idea into a concrete business project.

Furthermore, thanks to Joule4Ideas, participants to the program can have the opportunity to expose their entrepreneurial proposal to a commission of experts and access an incubation program with the PoliHub, the Innovation Park & Startup Accelerator of the Politecnico di Milano and Energizer, the hybrid accelerator of Joule.

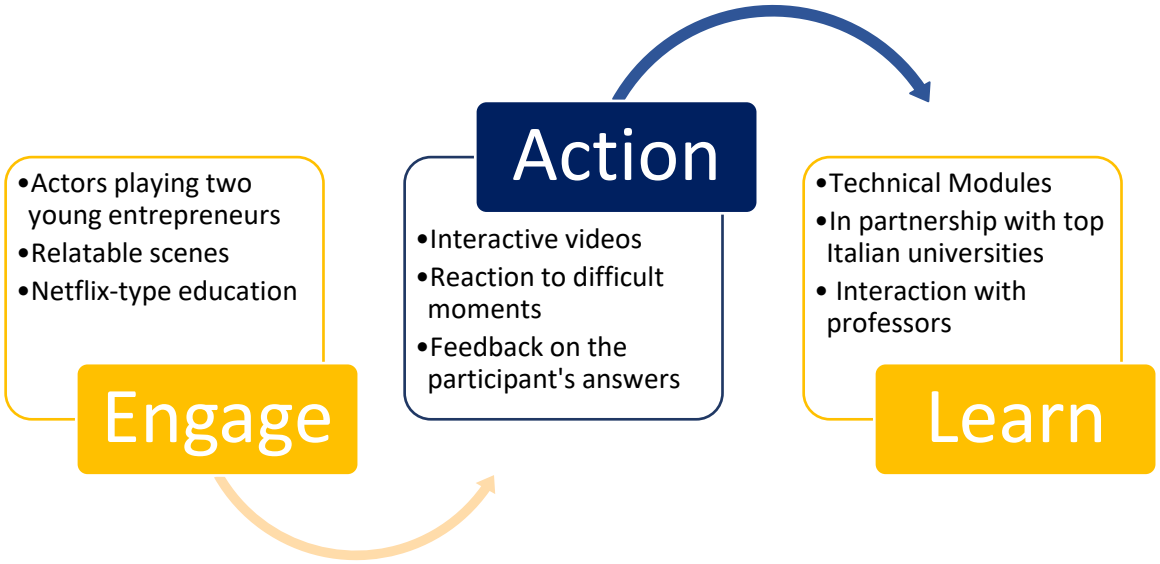


Inclusive	Engaging	Valuable
• Free • Open to everybody • Fully online	• Innovative methodology • Easy to navigate • Interactive	• Technical modules • Partnerships with universities • Experiences from enterepeneurs

The program is **inclusive**, as it is free, open to everybody and fully held online. Even a group of the people who did not manage to get into the Blended Program successfully started and completed the Open Program.

The Human Knowledge Open is **engaging**, as it uses advanced teaching techniques, based on an innovative methodology. Indeed, the program is interactive and structured in a Netflix-type education, in which participants have access to several modules that are linked together as a TV-series.

The presence of technical modules, in partnership with the best Italian universities, and the interaction with successful entrepreneurs make the program extremely **valuable**.



The learning method is based on the key words "**Engage, Action, Learn**", which is implemented through different streams of videos, with different purposes. The first is the catchy story of two young entrepreneurs that go through the challenges of setting up a business. The entrepreneurs are played by two professional actors, just like a TV series. The second is an interactive moment, in which the two actors try to react sensibly before their challenges and the participant is in control and can choose what to do. Participants are then provided with a feedback on the consequences of their actions. The third stream of videos is dedicated to learning. It involves professors from top Italian universities that teach technical skills that are fundamental in the entrepreneurial world.

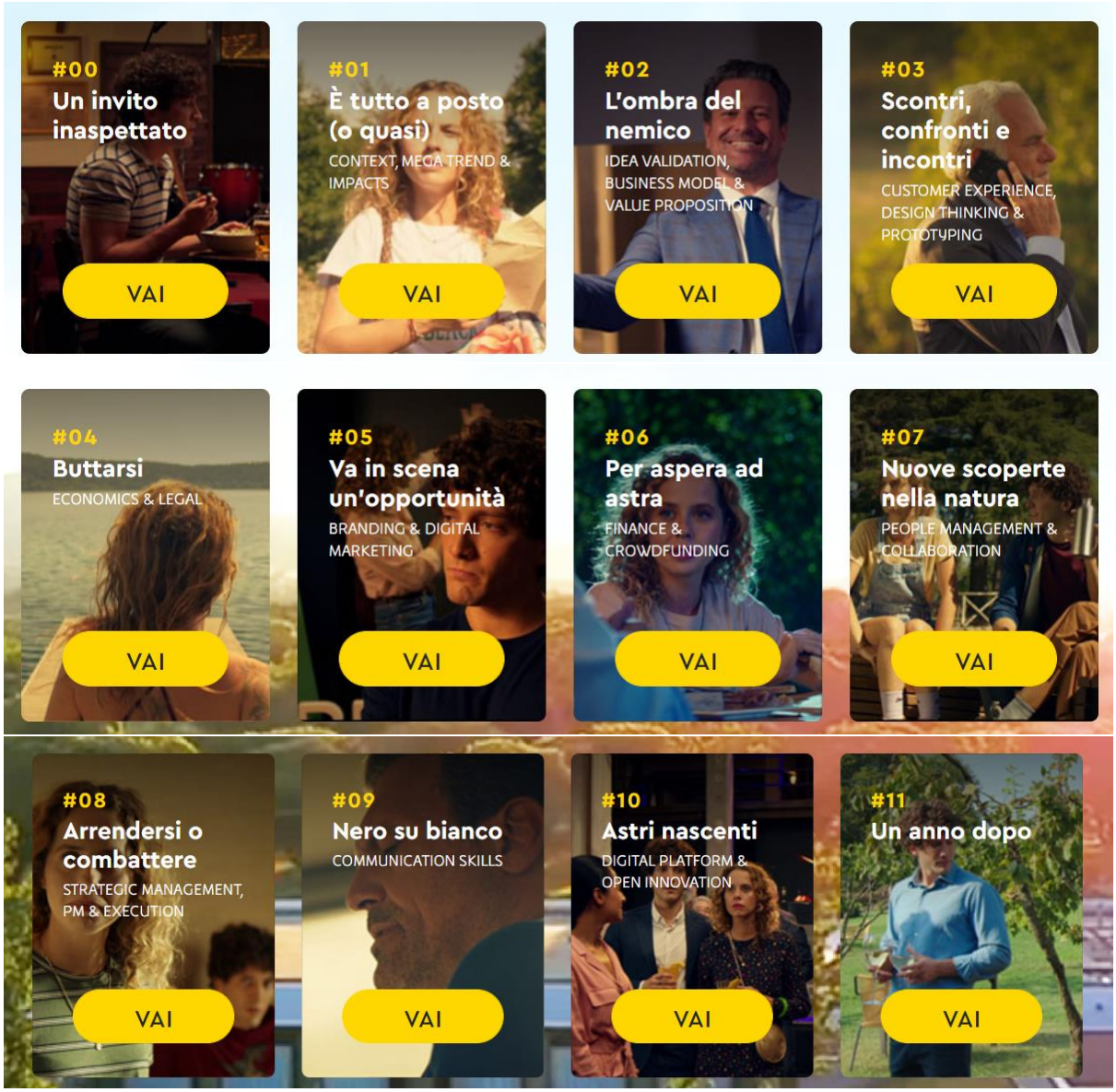
Engage *Focus*

- The focus of "Engage" is to provide relatable scenes to catch the attention of the participants.

The "Engage" modules are composed by 12 episodes telling the story of two young aspiring entrepreneurs, Anna and Pietro, who have to face many challenges to make their dream come true.

This web series is structured in a way that allows participants to relate to the scenes that are seen, and that make them wonder what the best reaction to the challenges that the two protagonists encounter would be. This way participants

are stimulated both to go further in the story and to go deeper in every module with the interactive and learn sessions.



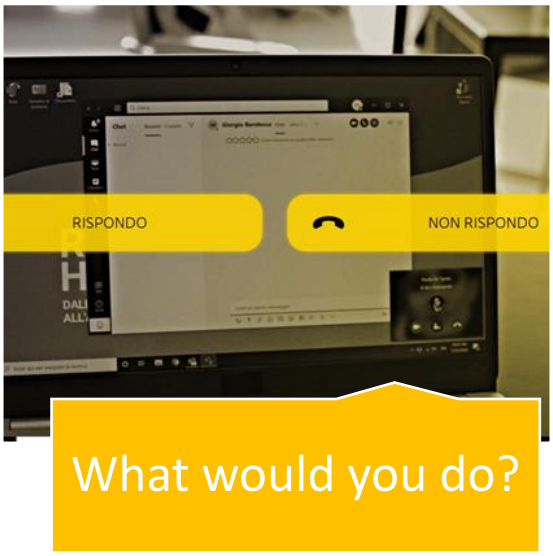
The interface of the Engage video stream is very similar to the one of a TV series, with a story that becomes more and more intriguing. This way of teaching online is absolutely innovative, as it goes beyond the boundaries of a classroom-held lecture, really exploiting the online formula to create adaptive and engaging contents.

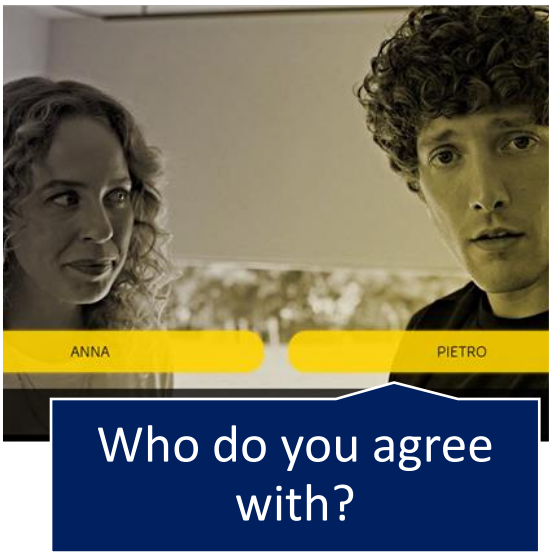
Action Focus

- The focus of "Action" is to teach **soft skills** and test the problem-solving abilities of participants.

The “Action” videos analyse the challenges of Anna and Pietro in a deeper way. At the same time, they give the participant the opportunity to interact with the story. Indeed, every video has some crucial points in which it stops and asks the participants what they would do or who they agree with between Anna and Pietro.

In this way, the participants become to some extent the protagonists of the story, being able to change the course of actions





At the end of every interactive session, participants are provided with a feedback, telling them whether their decisions were optimar or not and explaining what could have done better.

These feedbacks contain real-life suggestions, that help enterpreneurs develop some useful soft skills and micro-management abilities. They will understand how to practically react to daily challenges of their job, like what to do if other people are bossy with them or if they take part to a meeting without having read the praparatory materials.

The “mistake culture” in this context is fundamental, as often participants are shown some cases of business failure and are explained how to learn from it. This resilient mentality is very important to deal with the day-by-day activities in the life of an entrepreneur.

Learn *Focus*

- The focus of "Learn" is to provide **knowledge and technical skills** fundamental to the business world.

The “Learn” modules have been created in partnership with Italy’s best universities. They are technical lectures, teaching fundamental business skills.

TECHNICAL MODULE	**UNIVERSITY**
Context, Mega Trend & Impacts	Scuola Universitaria Superiore Sant’Anna di Pisa
Idea Validation, Business Model & Value Proposition	SDA Bocconi School of Management
Customer Experience, Design Thinking & Prototyping	MIP Politecnico di Milano School of Management
Economics & Legal	SDA Bocconi School of Management
Branding & Digital Marketing	LUISS Business School
Finance & Crowdfunding	SDA Bocconi School of Management
People Management & Collaboration	SDA Bocconi School of Management
Strategic Management, Project Management & Execution	LUISS Business School
Communication Skills	Feltrinelli Education
Open Innovation & digital Platform	Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II

These lectures are recorded in a professional way by film directors, although the “actors” are university professors explaining business concepts in an easy way, in order to make contents understandable to everybody. They have not been set in universities, but in daily-life sets, like bars and parks, so that the participant does not feel too distant from the context in which they are held.

The professors are then available for further explanations of their subjects, allowing participants to get in touch with them. Further webinars are arranged

when a deeper understanding of a topic is largely wished by participants or of particular interest.

The Learn stream allows entrepreneurs not coming from a business background to obtain a general managerial education for free, enhancing their understanding of the business world.

Additional Material

- Participants are also provided with additional materials, including a "Skill Coach" app, a Network of Experts, and Platform for the establishment of the Community.

Skills Coach

Skills Coach is the training web app to enhance the soft skills needed by an entrepreneur. Participants can freely choose the areas to focus on and the ways in which to train at their best.

Skills Coach is based on three main areas:

- **Vision**: dedicated to the creation of the user's identikit. After answering a few questions, a series of identikits are proposed, and participants can choose among them.
- **Skills**: this includes a matrix that presents the individual skills obtained from completing the Vision section.
- **Workouts**: the section where skills can be trained all the skills with different methods.

Network of Experts

The Open community get in touch with the world of innovation and start-ups also through a series of 21 webinars, featuring numerous industry experts. This is an opportunity to inspire and connect people by creating a dialogue.

Additionally, it allows to get to know in depth the most relevant issues for those who are willing to go through the entrepreneurial path in the name of sustainability.

Platform for the Community

Another fundamental tool at disposal of the participants is the Community. The platform provided by the HKP is the meeting point between continuous learning and consolidated knowledge. It allows aspiring entrepreneurs to share their experience, to exchange ideas and to create solid and concrete network.

Participants tackle together issues related to climate change and comment on the program and its modules. They can also discuss topics that they found of interest in the “Learn” courses to increase their hard and soft skills.

The Joule community wants to represent a growth tool for its participants. Therefore, exclusive events are arranged in order to allow participants to get to know each other, as well as trainers and entrepreneurs.

Backstage

The Open Program includes also backstage videos and behind-the-scenes pictures, which tell more about the creation of the modules.

Level-up

- A fundamental feature of the Open Program is the "Level-up", in which participants earn credits for their activities on the platform

In order to maintain people motivated, Joule has created a “level-up” system, according to which participants earn points interacting with each other, posting comments that receive particular attention, and completing the modules.

Open subscribers who obtain a certain number of credits with the Level-Up system are then rewarded for their commitment to the training course.

Indeed, surpassing a threshold of credits, participants earn a “premium” status that allows them to take part to physical events arranged by Joule. For example, they have the possibility to present their start-up projects to Joule4Ideas events, where they could be selected for an incubation and acceleration program.

Energizer – The Start-up accelerator

The last part of the Human Knowledge Program is a start-up accelerator called Energizer.

Energizer is the first accelerator dedicated to decarbonisation, to the fight against climate change and to the implementation of the circular economy. It supports the growth of early-stage start-ups, not exclusively related to the energy sector.

Mission

- **Focus on environment-sustainability issues**: Energizer accelerates early-stage start-ups with an environmental-friendly vision.
- **Business Impact**: Energizer helps develop entrepreneurial skills focused on environmental and social impacts in the medium-long term.
- **Metrics and evaluation of sustainability performance**: Energizer provides support for the structuring of a customized system of KPIs on sustainability applicable to the specific entrepreneurial projects of its accelerated realities.
- **In-kind Services**: Energizer supports services for start-ups through Eni's high-internal-know-how network with advice on thematic areas.
- **Acceleration of ecosystems**: Energizer is willing to contribute to the creation of a regenerative ecosystem of accelerators, corporations, research institutes and venture capitals.

Each start-up that enters the Energizer path will receive a circularity- and carbon-impact assessment with the aim of indicating areas worth monitoring and improving in terms of ecological impact.

This activity allows to monitor the positive impact produced by Joule over time. The measurement system is established at the beginning of the path and continues during the growth of the business project.

The support, which aims to promote an approach oriented towards transparency and continuous improvement, consists in selecting the start-ups contributing in some ways to sustainability, environmental impact and circularity.

The Results

The Human Knowledge Program is a long-term-oriented initiative, which aims at shaping the entrepreneurial fabric and the Country in the future. Additionally, the HKP was established in October 2020 and it has been active only since then. Nonetheless, some impressive results can already be highlighted, suggesting a very positive outlook for the future of the project.

The results can be divided in 5 dimensions, which can be measured with quantitative and qualitative results.

Inclusiveness	• The course has obtained 7,383 registrations • Participants are equally distributed in their gender, backgrounds and interests.
Engagement	• 35% of users has completed at least 1 entire module • An average of 300 is recorded for "level-up" credits
Personal Impact	• Vision to challenge the future • Visibility and strength to participants' entrepreneurial ideas
Business Impact	• Business education oriented towards sustainability • 34 projects for Joule4Ideas
Social Impact	• Sustainability-oriented education • The Community

Inclusiveness

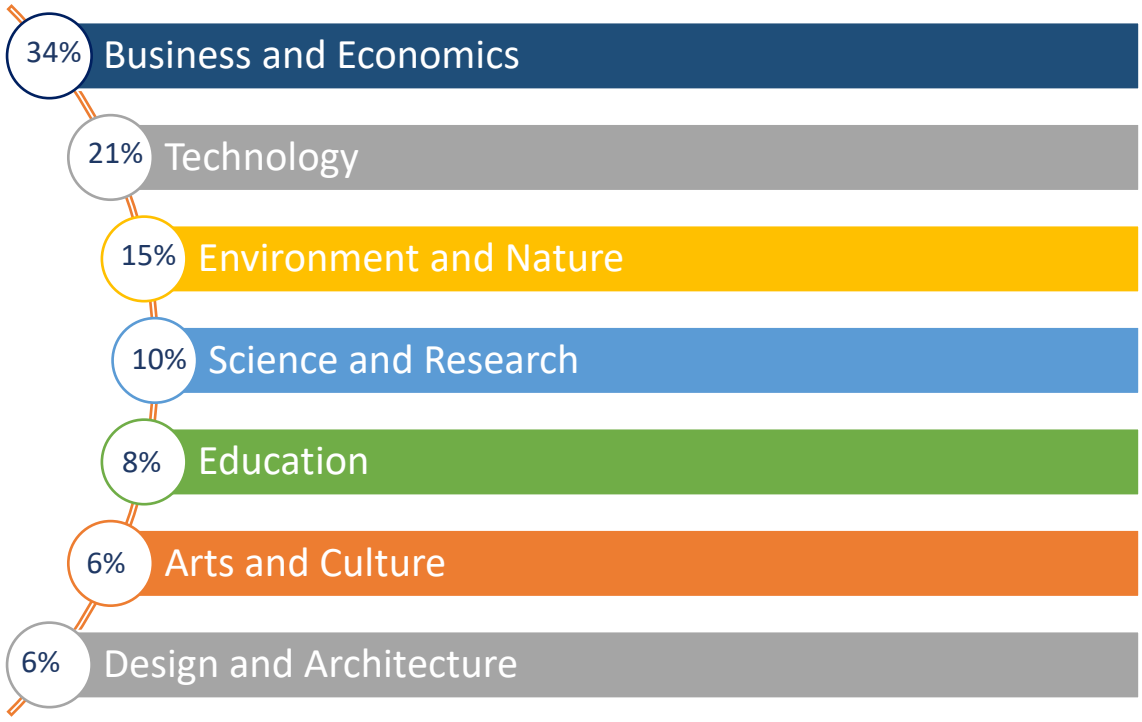
The Open Program has reached a very relevant number of registrations. Indeed, 7,383 users signed up to the Program and are now enrolled.

60% Male

40% Female

Among the participants that completed their profiles, genders are distributed in an equitable way. There is still a stronger presence of male participants. However, it is positive to notice that the proportion is much more equilibrated than the average Italian start-upper profile.

PARTICIPANTS' INTERESTS

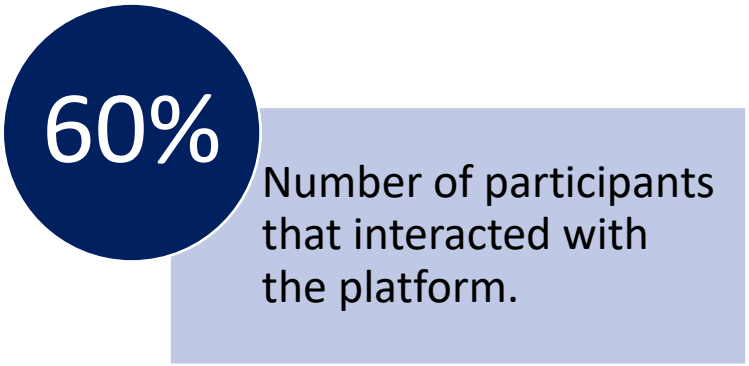


408 Number of people that did not get into the Blended Program and signed up to the Open Program

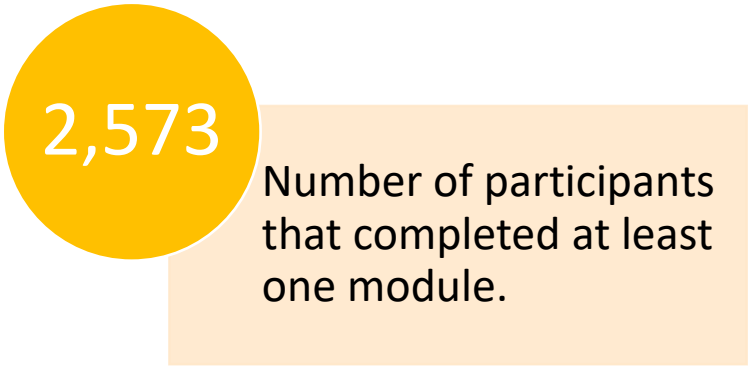
The inclusiveness of the Open Program can be seen also by the fact that 408 of the candidates that were not selected for the Blended Program, decided to stick around and subscribe to the Open Program, exploiting the opportunity to share some events with the Blended Program.

Engagement

The platform has shown particularly engaging, as, despite the short time it has been available, it has already been used by many participants.



A large number of users has already interacted with the platform or connected to the webapp. Other users have subscribed but not interacted yet but are receiving Joule's communications. The HKP's objective in the future will be to make this people interact at least once with the Program.



More than a third of the subscribed users (35%) completed at least one entire module. This is an impressive result as it takes a relevant amount of effort to complete an entire module.

300

Average level-up credits of people that registered to Joule4Ideas

Considering that 80 is the minimum level to accede premium contents, including Joule4Ideas, this result is particularly impressive. It means that on average, people who are engaged have heavily interacted with the platform, reaching an average of 300 "level-up" credits.

Personal Impact

The project has given visibility to its participants, as many newspaper articles talked about them[3], as well as the strength to keep believing in their projects.

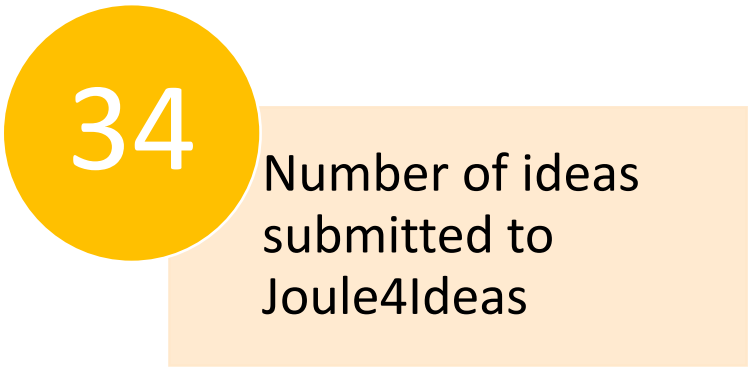
JOULEE'S FEEDBACK

Joule has taught its participants the vision that is necessary to challenge the future, creating a business that fights climate-change, that is compliant with the energetic transition and that looks at sustainability.

Business Impact

First, participants are endowed with a sustainability-oriented business education that will help them develop their enterprises in a more aware and effective way.

[3] See for instance D. Mangini, "Il ruolo della fictionalizing in azienda: come la finzione narrativa educa i manager al cambiamento", *Forbes*, available at https://forbes.it/2021/02/03/il-ruolo-della-fictionalizing-in-azienda-come-la-finzione-narrativa-educa-i-manager-al-cambiamento/



Additionally, 65 people were able to sign up to the Joule4Ideas incubation and acceleration project. 34 of them just recently submitted their start-up ideas, which are currently under analysis.

Furthermore, despite the fact that the course has only recently began, 2 start-ups of participants from the Human Knowledge Program are being analysed by Energizer, the start-up accelerator, to get a long-term sustainability-oriented acceleration.

Social Impact

People that participated to the program receive an education oriented to climate change, energetic transition and sustainable development that is uncommon in the Italian education system. Unfortunately, this culture and awareness has not yet spread in Italian schools and universities. Accordingly, the HKP's effort to make entrepreneurs aware of these problems is fundamental and should be a leading example to the whole Italian education system.

In addition, the establishment of a long-term oriented Community is a key element of this program. As participants keep in touch with each other, they are engaged to continuously interact and update each other on the skills they learned with the course.

Being a "Joulee" has become an expression among them. They have therefore developed an important sense of belonging that will accompany them throughout their whole entrepreneurial experience.

Concluding Remarks

The Human Knowledge Program is an ambitious long-term oriented program, which we believe will have an impact in the Italian entrepreneurial fabric.

The Program makes an effort to balance off the inequalities in the Italian average start-upper profile, granting an inclusive and engaging opportunity to learn fundamental business skills.

Through an innovative teaching structure, the HKP exploits the best features of the online platforms, twisting the traditional vision of online learning. It proposes a new method for business education that is fun, interactive and valuable.

In a historical moment in which entrepreneurship is particularly difficult, and people are getting more and more isolated, the Human Knowledge Program has created a Community of people that interact with each other on business topics and learn vision and motivation for disciplining their dreams.