

iBridge Berlin 2015, City Cube Convention Center, Berlin, Germany, 4–6 June 2015

The iBridge Berlin conference^[1] was a 3-day event which brought together Iranian entrepreneurs and business owners and their counterparts in Europe and the US to explore opportunities in Iran's high-tech sector. It was a pure educational event, privately funded, and organized with no government involvement.

As a sequel to iBridge Berkeley,^[2] the innovative conference held at the University of California, Berkeley, on September 6, 2014, iBridge Berlin took place on June 4–6, 2015, at City Cube convention center, Messedamm 26, Berlin, Germany, the startup capital of Europe. Figure 1 shows the logo of the iBridge conference.

iBridge had three types of sessions:

1. The Main Hall sessions included all the participants with keynote speeches and panel discussions. Figure 2 shows a photograph of audience during lectures
2. Breakout sessions for smaller groups of participants which held parallel with main hall sessions
3. Included panels, pitch fests, workshops and exhibitions for start-ups.

Dr. Zarkesh, one of the iBridges co-founders, reported that the event included 117 sessions with 163 speakers and 1040 registered participants from 35 countries. Of these, 345 were from Iran, 324 from Germany, and 121 from the US. The event was also live streamed to viewers around the globe, with online viewership of around 3000.

Attendees were divided into two groups. the first group included of established, successful entrepreneurs from the private sector, mainly in communication technologies. We can mention Stephen Chambers, the director of international strategy at the SAID Business School,^[3] Oxford; Dave McClure, Prominent Silicon Valley investor who is the founder of 500 startups and a former investment director of the Facebook fbFund;^[4] Kamran Elahian, Chairman and co-founder of Global Catalyst Partners; and Hamid Biglari, former Citi Vice Chairman and also Founder of Digikala,^[5] the largest online E-commerce platform, Aparat,^[6] an Iranian version of Youtube, Takhfifan,^[7] a Group buying website were among them.

Address for correspondence:

Mrs. Neda Esmaeili, Department of Biomedical Engineering,
Faculty of Advanced Medical Technology, Isfahan University of
Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran.
E-mail: esmaeily.neda@gmail.com



Figure 1: The logo of the iBridge conference

The second group was composed of younger startups and innovators who have demonstrated talent in developing business ideas such as Mamanpaz, which offers homemade meals to customers. Our team introduced a new startup about a computer game for rehabilitation of children with speech disorders.

There was a competition between young startups. Top six winners would be soon arriving the US to visit accelerators, incubators, and high-tech firms in Silicon Valley and to participate in entrepreneurship workshops at the University of California, Berkeley, as part of their award.

The last program was visiting famous startup accelerators of Berlin-like Bayer,^[8] a German multinational chemical and pharmaceutical company which has a global enterprise with core competencies in the Life Science fields of health; Betahaus,^[9] a co-working space for individuals who want to choose and share their ideas of work; Factory Campus,^[10] Germany's largest startup campus and Plug and Play,^[11] a global innovation platform for startups, corporations, and investors.

According to Dr. Hamid Biglari, the other founder of this event, the goal of this venture was to “accelerate the build-out of an innovation-based private economy in Iran by exposing local, young, talented high-tech entrepreneurs, who are either starting a high-tech business or are in various build-out stages of such a business to knowledgeable Iranian diaspora who can impart practical knowledge about high-tech entrepreneurship to them.

Last year, the first medical startup weekend in Iran in the field of E-health was held in Isfahan University of Medical Sciences. In this 3-day event, almost 100 participants



Figure 2: The “iBridge Berlin 2015” audience during lectures



Figure 3: The participants of medical startup weekend of Isfahan

participated with new ideas. Figure 3 shows a photograph of participants in this event. All participants competed on the selected 30 ideas in teams of five to eight. We had a team that worked on our new idea about designing a game for speech disorders. Fortunately, our team was the top winner of the competition, and the reward was to attend the iBridge Berlin conference, 2015.

Attendance at this event was a great experience for us. We could get familiar with successful entrepreneurs, founders of the best platforms and factories, and also many investors. We could listen to their keynotes about their success and also their suggestions to nurture new and young ideas. We also had a good communication with them to develop our computer game startup.

We are working on this young startup to expand and make it mature. We hope to be one of the prosperous entrepreneurs in the near future.

Omid Sarrafzadeh, Neda Esmaeili

Department of Biomedical Engineering, Faculty of Advanced Medical Technology, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran

Submission: 20-12-2015

Accepted: 13-01-2016

REFERENCES

1. iBRIDGE Berlin. Available from: <http://www.ibridges.org/>. [Last accessed on 2016 Jan19].
2. iBridge Berkeley. Available from: <http://www.bridge2014.org/>. [Last accessed on 2016 Jan19].
3. SAID Business School. Available from: <http://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/>. [Last accessed on 2016 Jan19].
4. Facebook's fbFund. Available from: <https://www.facebook.com/fbFund/>. [Last accessed on 2016 Jan19].
5. Digikala (Online Retail Seller). Available from: <http://www.digikala.com/>. [Last accessed on 2016 Jan19].
6. Aparat (Iranian Sharing Video). Available from: <http://www.aparat.com/>. [Last accessed on 2016 Jan19].
7. Takhfifan (Discounts and Group Buying Sites on the Tour, Goods and Services). Available from: <http://www.takhfifan.com/>. [Last accessed on 2016 Jan19].
8. Bayer (Pharmaceutics Company). Available from: <http://www.bayer.com/>. [Last accessed on 2016 Jan19].
9. Betahaus (Let's Work Together!). Available from: <http://www.betahaus.com/berlin/>. [Last accessed on 2016 Jan19].
10. Factory Campus. Available from: <http://www.factoryberlin.com/>. [Last accessed on 2016 Jan19].
11. Plug and Play. Available from: <http://www.plugandplaytechcenter.com/>. [Last accessed on 2016 Jan19].

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as the author is credited and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

How to cite this article: Sarrafzadeh O, Esmaeili N. iBridge Berlin 2015, City Cube Convention Center, Berlin, Germany, 4–6 June 2015. *J Med Sign Sence* 2016;6:64-65.