

Career Connect Expo Impact Report



Prepared by

BigTech Agency Ltd



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Executive Summary ↘



The inaugural **Career Connect Expo**, held on **October 3, 2024**, at the **Maryam Abacha American University of Nigeria** in Kano, marked a groundbreaking effort to **bridge the gap between talent and opportunity**. Organised by **BigTech Agency Ltd** in partnership with esteemed organisations and institutions, the event brought together over **1,500 attendees**, including university students, recent graduates, startups, industry leaders, and policy-makers, to create a vibrant platform for growth, innovation, and collaboration.

The event featured a diverse array of activities designed to **empower participants** and **inspire actionable** change. Startups had the opportunity to compete in a high-stakes pitch contest, where they received valuable mentorship and guidance on scaling their ideas from concept to implementation. Panel discussions led by seasoned industry experts provided students and young professionals with deep insights into career development, leadership, and leveraging digital innovations to meet the demands of the modern workforce.

Exhibitions showcased groundbreaking work across various industries, including technology, health, education, and entrepreneurship, offering attendees a chance to engage directly with organisations and explore emerging trends. The event also facilitated **skill-building activities**, such as startup pitch competitions, life painting competitions, and interactive career guidance sessions, ensuring a well-rounded experience for all participants.

Key outcomes of the event included the **identification of promising startups** for further mentorship and funding, **enhanced career readiness** for students through exposure to industry professionals, and the **strengthening of partnerships** between academia, government, and private sector stakeholders. Notably, the Expo highlighted the importance of cross-sector collaboration in addressing **youth unemployment** and **fostering sustainable economic growth**.

The Career Connect Expo set the stage for future editions by creating a culture of **innovation, inclusivity, and empowerment**. It not only provided a platform for individuals to showcase their talents but also offered **practical solutions to bridge the skills gap and equip young Nigerians with the tools needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving global economy**. With the momentum gained from this inaugural event, the Expo is poised to become a cornerstone in Nigeria's efforts to drive youth development and entrepreneurial success.

Event Objectives ↘



The Career Connect Expo was designed with clear objectives to address pressing challenges faced by students, graduates, and young entrepreneurs in Nigeria, especially in Northern regions. These objectives served as the foundation for the event, creating a space where talent, innovation, and opportunities converged. Below is an expanded overview of the objectives:



Bridge Talent and Opportunities: The core aim of the Career Connect Expo was to connect young, vibrant talents with real-world industry opportunities. By bringing together students, fresh graduates, startups, and industry leaders, the event provided a platform where attendees could explore career paths, meet potential employers, and align their skills with current market needs.



Youth Empowerment: Empowering the next generation was at the heart of the event. Through panel discussions, keynote speeches, and workshops, the expo aimed to equip participants with essential skills, knowledge, and mentorship needed to thrive in their careers. These sessions emphasized personal development, emotional intelligence, and the evolving nature of the workplace, ensuring participants are future-ready.



Startup Platform: Recognizing the importance of entrepreneurship in driving economic growth, the expo provided a platform for startups to pitch their innovative ideas. These startups not only received invaluable feedback from expert judges but also gained exposure to potential investors and mentors who could guide them in scaling their ventures. The training sessions before the pitch competition further ensured the startups were well-prepared to present their ideas effectively.



Networking Hub: The event fostered collaboration and networking by creating an environment where students, professionals, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders could connect. This networking was designed to build long-term relationships, foster partnerships, and inspire collaboration across various industries.



Encourage Cross-Sector Engagement: By including industries beyond STEM, such as health, arts, and humanities, the event promoted inclusivity and demonstrated the interconnectedness of various sectors. Activities like live painting competitions and exhibitions ensured that participants could engage in meaningful and diverse ways.



Provide Real-World Exposure: The Career Connect Expo bridged the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. Attendees gained exposure to current trends in their respective fields, learned about emerging technologies, and heard directly from industry leaders about navigating the modern workforce.



Promote Economic and Social Impact: By addressing unemployment and skill gaps, the expo contributed to the socio-economic growth of the region. It empowered participants with practical tools and knowledge, enabling them to contribute positively to their communities and the broader economy.

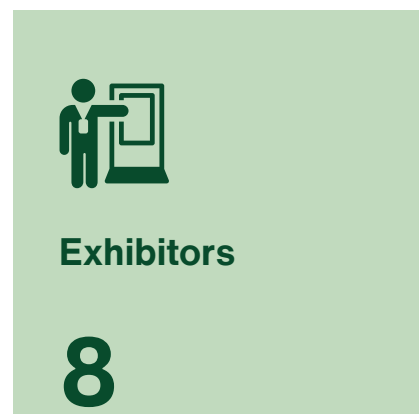
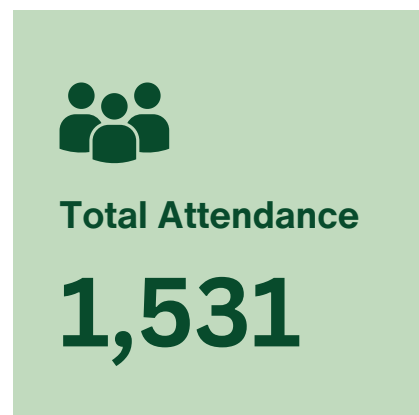
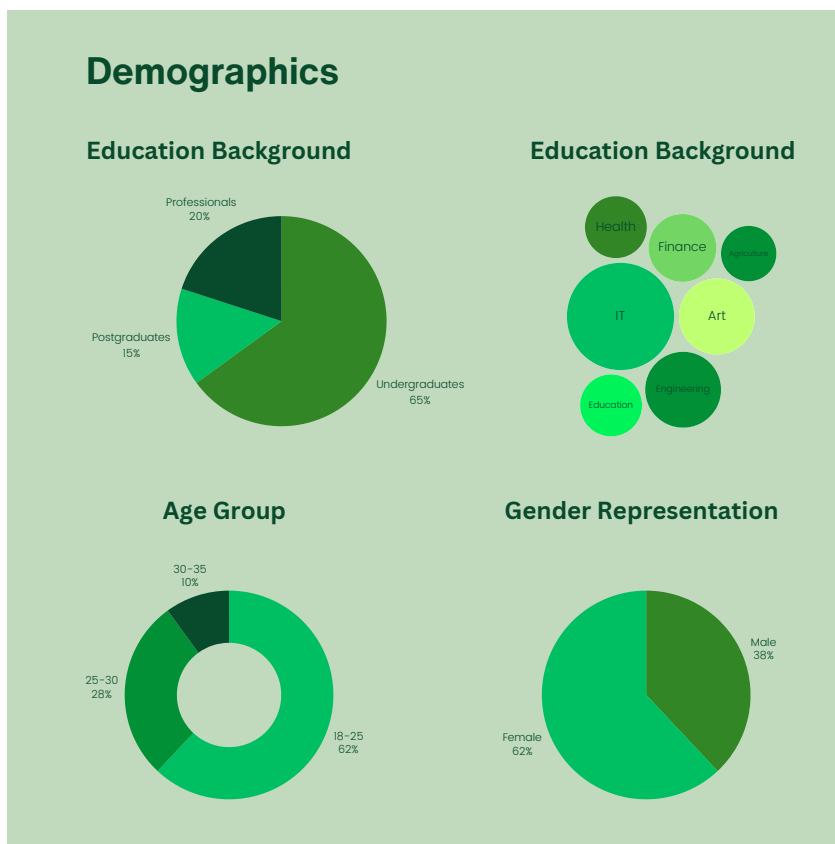
The Career Connect Expo ultimately succeeded in creating a space where aspirations met opportunities, and young people were inspired and equipped to take the next steps in their careers. This focus on impact and sustainability will guide future editions of the event.

Key Highlights ↘



The Career Connect Expo 2024 successfully bridged the gap between talent and opportunity through insightful panel discussions, startup pitches, interactive exhibitions, mentorship sessions, and live art. Attendees connected with industry leaders, gained valuable skills, and explored new opportunities, fostering collaboration and career growth. The event made a lasting impact on participants and the community.

Below are key figures from the event:



- Paint Box
- FlexiSAF
- Data2Bots
- Qalbsaleem
- Ayush Artistry
- Vibrant Feedorh Art
- Hajarah Art
- Cariya Advisor

b. Startup Pitch Competition

The Startup Pitch Competition at the Career Connect Expo was a key highlight of the event, designed to showcase and nurture the innovative solutions of emerging entrepreneurs. This segment provided a platform for startups to present their ideas, receive expert feedback, and connect with industry leaders

Runner-Up Event:

A total of 20 startups participated in the runner-up event, from which 5 outstanding startups were selected to undergo intensive training and present during the finals on the main day of the expo.

Finalists:

- SwiftMedix
- iLearn
- AgroZenith
- Slay Belless
- Kwari 1.0



Winners:

- **1st Place:** Slay Belless
- **2nd Place:** AgroZenith
- **3rd Place:** iLearn



Awards Presentation:

- **Prof. Dr. Muhammad Israr** - *President, MAAUN*
- **Zainab Mustapha** - *Co-Founder, BigTech Agency*
- **Ahmad Sagir Koki** - *Founder, BigTech Agency*



Pitch Judges:

- **Dr. Farouk Kurawa** - *DG, KANNADA*
- **Ubaida Idris** - *Management Consultant, Brycoal*
- **Muftau Sanusi** - *Director, MAAUN*
- **Salamatu Ahmad** - *Founder, Pitch Star*
- **Yomi Sani** - *Programs Manager, Startup Kano*

Judges' Feedback:

The judges commended the participants for their impressive innovation and creativity. They provided valuable feedback, encouraging startups to continue refining their ideas and scaling their solutions to address critical challenges in their industries.

Impact of Startup Pitch Competition

The Startup Pitch Competition proved to be an impactful initiative, offering startups an invaluable opportunity to:

- ▶ **Gain visibility and recognition for their innovative ideas.**
- ▶ **Receive expert guidance to refine their business models.**
- ▶ **Build connections with industry leaders, investors, and peers.**

This competition served as a launchpad for the participating startups, enabling them to take significant strides toward achieving their entrepreneurial goals while contributing to the broader ecosystem of innovation and economic growth.

c. Panel Discussions and Keynotes

The Career Connect Expo featured thought-provoking panel discussions and keynote sessions designed to inspire, educate, and empower participants. These sessions brought together industry leaders, innovators, and change-makers to discuss critical topics aligned with the event's theme, "Bridging the Gap Between Talent and Opportunity."

Panel Sessions

Panel 1: "Bridging the Gap Between Talent and Opportunity – Developing Emotional Intelligence for Your Career Journey"

- Panelists: Nazir Halliru, Ahmad Muhammad, Sadat Aliyu, Muhammad Bello Kano
- Moderator: Engr. Muhammad
- Key Discussion Points:
 - The significance of emotional intelligence in personal and career development.
 - Real-life examples of how emotional intelligence impacts workplace success and leadership.
 - Strategies for developing emotional intelligence to navigate challenges and foster collaboration in diverse industries.

Panel 2: "Empowering Africa's Future Workforce – Unleashing the Potential of Young Talent"

- Panelists: Dr. Abubakar Sadiq, Yusuf Sharada, Mustapha Umar
- Moderator: Ahmad Bature
- Key Discussion Points:
 - The importance of youth empowerment in shaping Africa's future workforce.
 - Strategies to harness Africa's abundant youth talent for global competitiveness.
 - Case studies of successful initiatives promoting youth-led innovations and entrepreneurship.

Panel 3: "Preparing for the Future of Work – How Organizations Can Shape Youth Employment Opportunities in Nigeria"

- Panelists: Damilola Oke, Illiyasu Ishaq, Asmau (representing again Bashir), Onyinye (representing Khalil Halilu)
- Moderator: Amina Idris
- Key Discussion Points:
 - The pivotal role of organizations in creating sustainable employment opportunities for young professionals.
 - The transformative impact of digital innovation on the future of work in Nigeria.
 - Insights into how organizations can build inclusive systems to nurture and support the next generation of the workforce.

Impact of Panel Discussions

The panel sessions were highly engaging and provided attendees with actionable insights and inspiration. They highlighted the importance of bridging the gap between academia and industry, leveraging youth talent for economic growth, and fostering emotional intelligence and digital innovation to prepare for the workforce of the future.

These discussions not only sparked meaningful conversations but also motivated participants to take bold steps in their careers, supported by the experiences and knowledge shared by the esteemed panelists.



d. Exhibitions and Activities



Live Art Painting: The live art painting session, hosted by Qalbsaleem, provided attendees with the unique opportunity to observe and appreciate the artistic process in real-time. This activity highlighted the role of creativity in self-expression and its potential to inspire innovation in various industries.



Career Advice & Mentorship: Participants engaged in personalized one-on-one career advice and mentorship sessions facilitated by Human Resources professionals from leading organizations. These sessions focused on equipping students and attendees with practical insights and strategies for navigating their career journeys while fostering connections with potential employers.



Innovation Exhibitions: The innovation exhibition showcased groundbreaking solutions and projects from startups, businesses, and institutions across various sectors, including technology, health, education, and art. Exhibitors such as FlexiSAF, Paintbox Academy, Ayush Artistry, Hajara Art, Vibrant Feedorh, and Cariya Advisor provided interactive displays that engaged participants and emphasized cross-sectoral collaboration and creativity.

These exhibitions and activities enriched the Career Connect Expo experience, fostering inspiration, networking, and hands-on learning for all participants.

Impact of Exhibitions and Activities

The Career Connect Expo has created a transformative impact across multiple dimensions:

- ▶ **Economic Impact:** Connected startups with investors, driving funding and job creation.
- ▶ **Social Impact:** Provided 1,000+ students with career skills and mentorship.
- ▶ **Environmental Impact:** Highlighted eco-friendly innovations and sustainable practices.
- ▶ **Community Impact:** Fostered partnerships to tackle youth unemployment.

Quantitative Impact



Participants Reached

The Career Connect Expo engaged 1,500+ attendees, including students across all departments of Maryam Abacha American University of Nigeria and stakeholders such as the Kano State Government, leading HR firms, accelerators, incubators, and innovation hubs.

Opportunities Created



Engagement Metrics

Social Media Reach: During and after the event, the expo achieved 40k views on Instagram, 20k on LinkedIn, and over 100k impressions across all platforms.



Participant Feedback:

- ▶ **Volunteers:** 80% rated “Excellent”, and 20% rated “Good” ([Appendix 6](#)).
- ▶ **Students:** 85.5% rated “Excellent”, and 14.8% rated “Very Good” ([Appendix 4](#)).
- ▶ **Speakers:** 25% rated “Very Satisfied”, and 75% rate “Satisfied” ([Appendix 7](#)).
- ▶ **Startups:** 50% rated “Very Satisfied”, and 50% rated “Satisfied” ([Appendix 5](#)).
- ▶ **Non-Student Participants:** 53.3% rated “Excellent”, and 46.7% rated “Good” ([Appendix 3](#)).

This data highlights the tangible outcomes and broad engagement the Career Connect Expo achieved, reinforcing its value as a platform for bridging the gap between talent and opportunity.

Qualitative Impact ↘



The Career Connect Expo delivered a profound and transformative experience for its participants, showcasing its success through compelling testimonials, inspiring stories, and tangible outcomes. Below, we highlight the voices and experiences of individuals whose careers and perspectives were shaped by this impactful event:

a. Testimonials

“The impact on Maryam Abacha American University of Nigeria (MAAUN) has been profound and far-reaching. After the Career Connect Expo program which MAAUN was lucky to be held the first of it in Kano, we have witnessed a significant transformation in the students' mindset, skills, and confidence. They have developed a stronger sense of purpose, creativity, and innovation, which has enabled them to tackle complex challenges and pursue their passions with renewed vigor. Our testimony lies in the countless success stories of students who have gone on to achieve remarkable feats in their academic and professional pursuits.

One of the notable progress areas has been in digital innovation. Our programs have equipped students with cutting-edge skills in emerging technologies such as AI, block chain, and data analytics. This has enabled them to develop innovative solutions to real-world problems, showcase their talents, and attract the attention of top employers and investors. Additionally, focus on emotional intelligence has helped our students develop essential life skills such as self-awareness, empathy, and conflict resolution. This has enabled them to build stronger relationships, navigate complex social dynamics, and achieve greater overall well-being after the workshop

The programs have also had a significant impact on MAAUN career prospects. Through our interview preparation and digital literacy initiatives, students have gained the skills and confidence to ace job interviews, create compelling online profiles, and leverage digital platforms to access new opportunities. Our career guidance services have also provided students with personalized support and mentorship, helping them to clarify their career aspirations, identify relevant job markets, and develop tailored strategies for success. Indeed, it was a great success, and we can't wait for more amazing and educative workshop.”

- Prof. (Dr.) Mohammad Israr (President MAAUN)

“I had the privilege of attending the Career Connect Expo, and it was a game-changer for me. The expo provided a unique opportunity to connect with industry professionals, learn about new trends and technologies, and gain valuable insights into the job market. The keynote speakers were inspiring, and the breakout sessions were informative and engaging.

As a result of attending the expo, I gained the confidence and skills to pursue my career goals. Thank you to the organizers for creating such a valuable and impactful experience.”

- Usman Sani (Student Participant)

“Attending the Career Connect Expo was a transformative experience that bridged the gap between my talents and opportunities. As a member of the ILEARN MAAUN APP team, I was eager to participate in the pitch competition. Emerging as third-place winners was a proud moment for us.

The event’s focus on technology and innovation resonated deeply, and we gained invaluable insights from industry experts, mentors, and founders who inspired us to persevere and innovate. The networking and mentorship opportunities have been instrumental in shaping our professional journey.”

- ILEARN (Startup Founder)

“I attended the first Career Connect Expo and found it transformative, providing invaluable insights and connections that advanced my career. The event was well-organized, and I am always available to assist with future editions, insha’Allah.”

- Abdurrahman Michika (Student Participant and President, Student Association, MAAUN)

“Nothing more to say because everything was well-organized, and Alhamdulillah, each and every one enjoyed the event. More wins to BigTech Agency. We, as volunteers, experienced so much and learned valuable skills!”

- Volunteer Participants

b. Stories of Impact



Empowering Startups: The pitch competition offered startups a platform to present their innovative ideas and receive expert feedback. For example, Slay Belless, the first-place winner, gained investor interest and mentorship opportunities to scale their business.



Career Boost for Students: Several student participants reported enhanced confidence and skills after attending the event. One student landed a promising internship through connections made during the expo's networking sessions.



Volunteer Growth: The volunteers reported gaining hands-on experience in event management, teamwork, and communication. Many expressed gratitude for the opportunity to contribute and grow professionally through the event.

c. Video Testimonies

Scan the QR code below to access video testimonials from participants, showcasing their experiences and the life-changing impact of the Career Connect Expo.



The Career Connect Expo is more than just an event; it's a movement that bridges gaps, unlocks potential, and inspires individuals to achieve their career aspirations.



Challenges and Lessons Learned ↘

This section outlines the key challenges faced during the organization and execution of the Career Connect Expo and the valuable lessons learned to improve future editions of the event. It highlights areas requiring better planning and strategies that can enhance the impact and overall experience.

01

Limited Budget

A constrained budget restricted the scope and scale of certain activities, limiting the event's potential outreach and engagement.

02

Crowd Management

Managing the large number of attendees for sessions and exhibitions proved challenging, leading to logistical bottlenecks.

03

Sponsorship Hurdles

Delayed responses from potential sponsors affected early preparations and limited resources.

04

Participant Coordination

Ensuring timely communication and participation from startups and panelists posed challenges, particularly with schedule adjustments.

01

Early Sponsorship Engagement

Starting sponsorship discussions earlier ensures better financial stability and allows for a more robust event plan.

02

Improved Crowd Management

Developing a detailed logistical plan for crowd control and seating arrangements is crucial for smooth operations.

03

Expanded University Partnerships

Collaborating with additional academic institutions broadens the participant pool and increases event impact.

04

Enhanced Communication Channels

Investing in advanced presentation and event management tools enhances the event's professional appeal and attendee experience.



Future Perspectives for the Second Edition

Building on the success of the inaugural Career Connect Expo, the second edition aims to scale its impact and broaden its reach. Here are the strategic enhancements planned to make the next event even more meaningful and inclusive:

01

Diversifying Industry Representation

The second edition will expand its focus beyond STEM to include industries such as health, agriculture, creative arts, and education. This diversification will ensure that participants from various fields find relevance and opportunities tailored to their career aspirations.

02

Strengthened Sponsorship & Partnerships

The event will broaden its sponsorship base by engaging globally recognized organizations like Google, MTN, UNICEF, and the Tony Elumelu Foundation. These partnerships will bring additional resources, credibility, and opportunities for participants.

03

Hybrid Event Model for Accessibility

To accommodate a broader audience, a hybrid model will be introduced, allowing virtual participation alongside the in-person event. This approach will ensure greater inclusivity for participants unable to attend physically.

04

Larger Venue & Increased Participation

With a target to double the number of participants and exhibitors, the event will be hosted in a larger venue to accommodate the growing demand. This will also enhance networking opportunities and provide a more engaging experience for attendees.

05

Focused Impact Metrics

The second edition will refine its impact measurement, tracking qualitative and quantitative outcomes more effectively. This will provide clearer insights into how the event contributes to bridging the gap between talent and opportunity.

06

Enhanced Startup Support & Hackathon

To drive innovation and entrepreneurship, the next edition will include comprehensive startup training, hackathons, and pitch mentorship programs. These activities will equip startups with the tools to scale their ideas, attract investors, and thrive in competitive markets.

Conclusion ↘



The **1st edition** of the **Career Connect Expo** highlighted the transformative **power of collaboration and innovation**. Its impact extended across diverse groups—**students, non-students, startups, artists, volunteers, partnered organizations**, and the **host university**. Students gained critical insights and connections to **navigate their career paths**, while startups were equipped with **skills and access to investors**, fueling their growth. Artists found a platform to **showcase their talent**, volunteers developed **valuable event management experience**, and partnered organizations and the host university strengthened their roles as **catalysts for youth development**. The overall ecosystem witnessed a **boost in networking, knowledge-sharing, and innovation-driven dialogue**, proving the event's ability to **bridge the gap between talent and opportunity** effectively.

Building on this success, the **2nd edition** of the **Career Connect Expo** is being planned with a vision to **amplify both quality and scale**. By incorporating feedback and lessons learned, the next edition will **aim to create an even larger impact, reaching more participants, involving more industries, and offering deeper engagement opportunities**. This growth will include **enhanced startup support, extended youth development initiatives, and expanded partnerships to ensure inclusivity and sustainability**.

The insights gained from the 1st edition—such as the **importance of targeted training, well-structured networking sessions, and diversified activities**—will serve as a foundation for the 2nd edition, ensuring an even greater impact on participants and stakeholders.



Thank You !

Together, we can continue to shape a brighter future for youth, startups, and the ecosystem at large through innovation and collaboration.



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Appendices



Appendix 1: Photos from the event.



Appendix 2: Video highlights from the event.

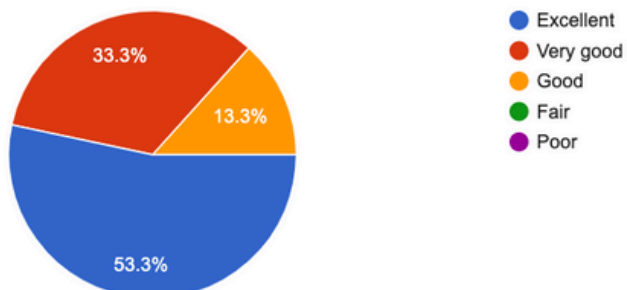


Appendix 3: Feedback from non-students participants.

How would you rate your overall experience at the career connect expo

[Copy chart](#)

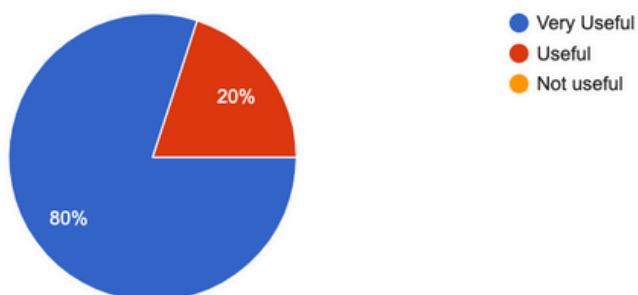
15 responses



How useful were the panel discussions for your professional development

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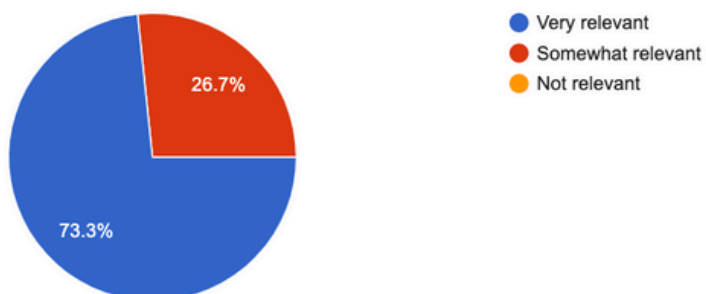
15 responses



How relevant were the topics discussed to your interests

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15 responses

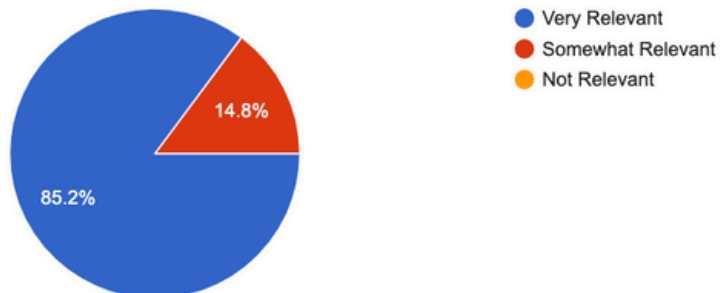


Appendix 4: Feedback from students participants.

How relevant were the discussions to your career goals

[Copy chart](#)

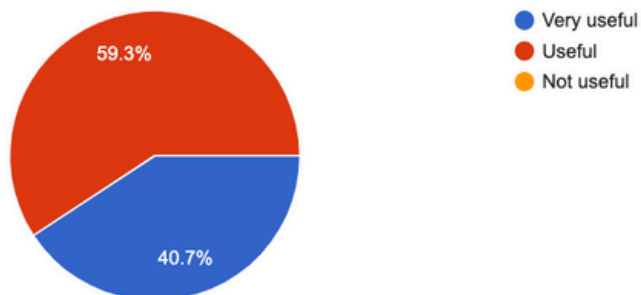
27 responses



How useful did you find the startup pitches for gaining inspiration?

[Copy chart](#)

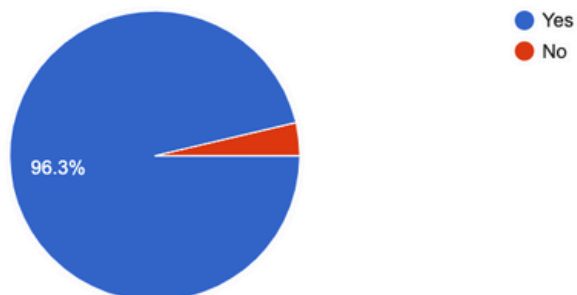
27 responses



Did the event provide adequate exposure to industry leaders and professionals?

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27 responses

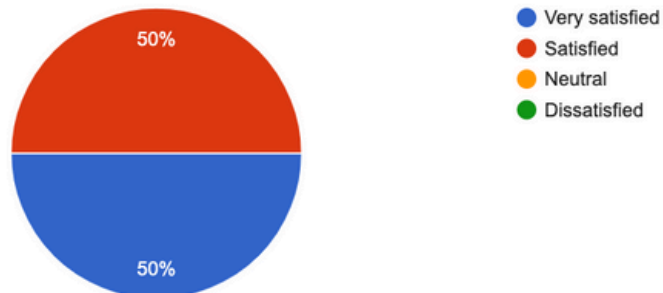


Appendix 5: Feedback from startups.

How satisfied were you with the startup pitch competition?

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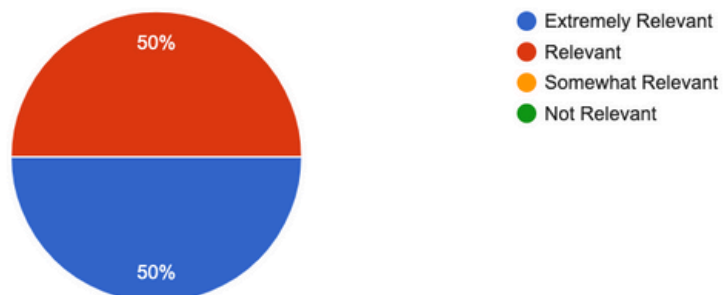
4 responses



How relevant were the insights from the judges to your business?

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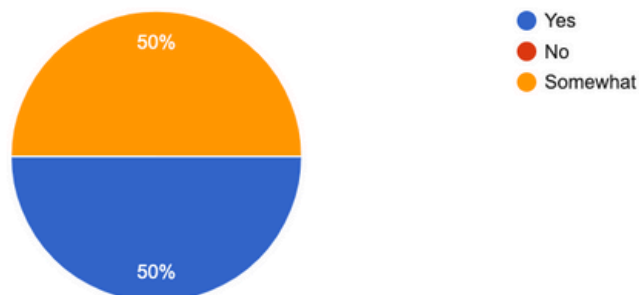
4 responses



Did the networking opportunities at the event meet your expectations?

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4 responses

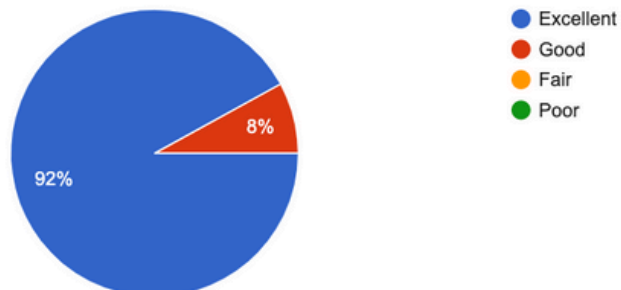


Appendix 6: Feedback from Volunteers.

1. How was your overall experience volunteering for the Career Connect Expo?

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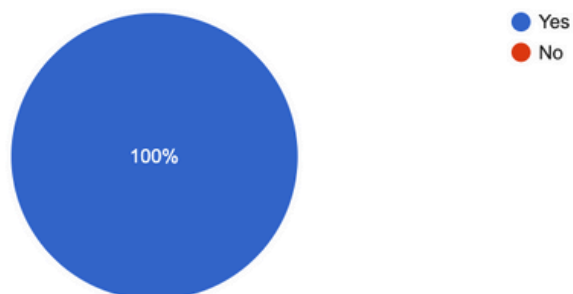
25 responses



2. Did you receive adequate support and communication from the organising team?

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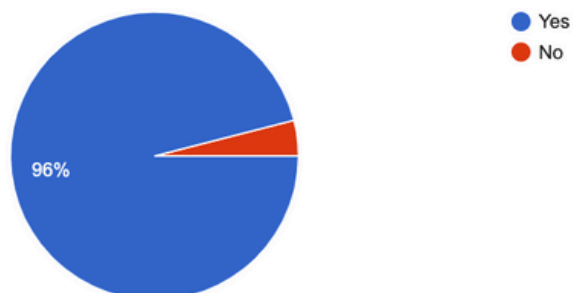
25 responses



3. Were your tasks clearly defined ?

[Copy chart](#)

25 responses

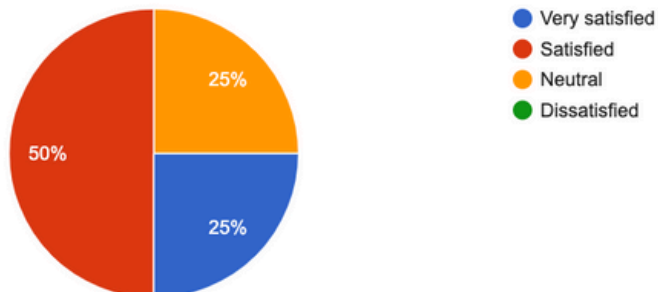


Appendix 7: Feedback from speakers.

1. How satisfied were you with the organization of the event?

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4 responses



2. Did the audience engagement meet your expectations?

 Copy chart

4 responses



3. Were the topics assigned to you aligned with your expertise and interests?

 Copy chart

4 responses

