



Young European Biotech Network

Newsletter | April 2011

www.yebn.eu

Official newsletter of the Young European Biotech Network (YEBN). Edited by the YEBN communication task group.

Editors

Annika Hohendahl, Marie Müller

Staff writers - editorial board

Alba Olivares Polo, Christine Weckenmann, Debora Keller, Irina Epstein, Natalia Borkowska, Roi Villar Vázquez, Tommaso Scarpa

Special contributors and credits

África Sanchiz Giraldo, Alejandro Sarrión Perdignes, Andreas Albrecht, Barbara Henggeler, Herbert Polzhofer, Joanna Kud, Leone Olivieri, Sara García Alonso

Legal Notice

The content of this newsletter is copyrighted by the Young European Biotech Network. Where not differently stated, the content is licensed under creative commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0. A copy of the licence can be found at the following link: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>. Logos, registered marks and trademarks belong to their respective owners.

*Dear all,
The biotech community has been busy again - find out how the YEBN Institutional Members (IMs) develop projects and conferences to support their members in the IM focus and the Event Report section. Learn how Robert G. Edwards was motivated to start his ground-breaking research on in-vitro fertilisation on page 3. From now on we will regularly present the best of YEBN in the New Biotechnology Journal of the European Federation of*

Biotechnology. Finally get an update on upcoming events in life sciences on the last page. We would be very thankful, if you could tell us what you think about our newsletter by clicking here: <http://bit.ly/f7XJSG> Tips and hints as well as criticism are very welcome. Enjoy the wonderful springtime!

Annika Hohendahl, Marie Müller

*YEBN newsletter editors
[newsletter\[at\]yebn.org](mailto:newsletter[at]yebn.org)*

Institutional Member focus: CNSB



Interview with Leone Olivieri, CNSB Chairman

Leone, how did your organisation evolve?

CNSB, Coordinamento Nazionale Studenti di Biotecnologie, was founded in 1999 by biotechnology students to share doubts, needs and experiences. They were aware of being part of a completely new field and had doubts about the kind of jobs they would pursue and which role in society they would play. They founded CNSB from a deep need of self-consciousness and awareness.

This is exactly why I became a member of CNSB: I was happy to join a biotechnology programme, but I also had a lot of questions.

Who are your members?

CNSB is a students-only association. Our members are biotechnology students from all over Italy, from the beginning to the end of their biotechnology studies. As they have to leave the organisation when they receive their master's degree, there is a constant turnover with about 50 to 200 new members each year. Right now CNSB has around 210 members. A good option for those who have to leave CNSB

is joining ANBI (see IM focus in YEBN Newsletter Sept. 2010), that responds better to the different needs and interests of PhD students and young professionals.

Why is CNSB a member of YEBN?

Biotechnology is not a local matter. We want to get in contact with the problems, challenges and events in the European scientific communities, and the YEBN allows us to reach out to our colleagues in the other countries. This is the best instrument to get in touch with the real situation in Europe. CNSB was one of the founders of YEBN in 2002.



What does your organisation add to YEBN?

We are one of the IMs which bring the point of view of the youngest into YEBN. The point of view of students that are not yet full biotechnologists, but are still on their way. To become a full scientist, they have to learn what to focus on. We are currently carrying out a project to compare the diverse biotechnology programmes in Italy. If this project works out, we would like to share and discuss our experiences with the other IMs, to see the differences between biotechnology programmes in the different European countries.

Which activities characterise your network?

Personal contacts and networking are very important. In CNSB

we create a network with other biotechnology students and exchange experiences and opinions about studies and your later career. We gather biotechnology students at events on topics, which are of interest for undergraduates, mostly events on education. One event is the "Research Day", where younger students get the opportunity to meet the more experienced ones and get replies to their questions: basic information about biotechnology, current research activities that are ongoing in their university and first-hand reports about experiences in the different fields of biotechnology. Our many local groups carry out their projects independently, according to the local interests in their university.

What would be the best way to get in touch with you as a young Italian biotechnologist?

You can subscribe on our website (www.cnsb.it) for free and get access to all the information, our events and the forum. We will then be able to communicate with you via email and the CNSB newsletter. Once you subscribed on the CNSB website, you can also join our group on Facebook.

Interview by Annika Hohendahl



Institutional Member focus: FEBiotec's Empredevirus project

The Spanish IM FEBiotec and the local emerging company Grupo Hesperides Biotech Ltd. have been developing an innovative project entitled "Empredevirus: injecting entrepreneur's gene" since January. This programme aims at motivating over 600 high school students in southern and eastern Spain to consider entrepreneur as their future profession.

This ambitious program will allow students to acquire skills and knowledge needed to benefit from the typically repressed "entrepreneurial gene". This activation will give rise to a dynamic change from the production model to a knowledge-based economy, promoting self-employment. Therefore, we have opted for a close and interesting methodology in order to lay the groundwork for future entrepreneurs, erasing the concept that entrepreneurship is something inaccessible.

After visiting 19 schools and holding two different workshops, the project just went into a new phase: in the contest called "Initiatives for Today are our Tomorrow's Future" students participating in the workshops will present their business ideas in an online contest. The final session will be held on April 15th at the Pablo de Olavide University in Seville, Spain. More info at: www.empredevirus.es

Alejandro Sarrión Perdigones, Roi Villar Vázquez

Event Report

Zurich Life Science Day February 15th in Zurich, Switzerland

What options does a PhD in life science have? Does my CV convey my skills and motivation? What will consulting companies ask me during a case study interview? How do I economise my business idea? These and other questions were answered during the Zurich Life Science Day 2011 at Irchel campus.

The Zurich Life Science Day 2011 attracted over 470 life science students and post-docs to the Irchel campus on February 15th. In more than 20 lectures life scientists gained insights into various non-academic career paths, learned about application processes in industry and competed with their entrepreneurial ideas. CV checks, a company fair and a networking lunch completed this successful event.

In three parallel sessions, the participants took part in a business model competition from venturelab, watched a live case

study interview by the Boston Consulting Group or heard about Career Concepts at the Interface between Academia and Industry by Professor Jonathan Hall. "It

is a shame that this event did not exist at my time in university!" said Bernhard Weber, invited speaker about teaching careers. It was the second time the Zurich Life Science Day took place. It was organised by the Life Science Zurich Young Scientist Network (YSN), YEBN's Swiss IM. YSN is a non-profit organisation founded and run by students and post-docs from ETH and University of Zurich. Their goal is to expand career horizons and provide a networking platform for life scientists in the transition from academia to industry.



Presentations of Zaki Sellam (RSA AG) and Willy Kinzy (Roche) are available at <http://bit.ly/gCMB7c>

Herbert Polzhofer

Robert G. Edwards and his Nobel Prize for in-vitro fertilisation

Infertility affects more than 10 % of world's couples. Thanks to in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) today there is hope to help those couples in having their own children. This breakthrough is mainly an achievement of the physiologist Robert G. Edwards, winner of the Nobel Prize 2010 in Physiology or Medicine "for the development of in vitro fertilization". But his success was preceded by decades of hard and demotivating laboratory and clinical trials.

Breakthroughs in Life Sciences

For Edwards "the most important thing in life was having a child" said his daughter in an interview for a documentary for the Nobel Foundation, thus he "could really identify himself with people that didn't have a child". Helping especially these people was his motivation when he started his work in 1963 at the University of Cambridge. In 1969, after six years of demotivating results, he managed to fertilise the first dividing human egg in a test tube. Unfortunately, the fertilised eggs refused to develop; this important milestone was followed by decades of frustration. His former secretary stated in an

interview: "If I had to describe him in one word, I would say: enthusiasm", and this enthusiasm helped him to go on with his work. After years of unsuccessful results he realised that eggs needed to mature in a woman's ovary, not in a laboratory. For that reason he collaborated with the gynaecologist and pioneering surgeon Patric Stepto, who shared the same passion to help infertile couples. Difficult years of disappointment followed. On top of that, they also had to defend their work in front of the media, ethic commissions and people who called their work "creating Frankenstein" or adjudge Edwards as "Nazi-doctor". Additionally to these problems, funding for their research project was cut, but through the financial support from an anonymous Californian they could pursue their goal. Finally, in 1977 the first woman became pregnant by their technique and gave birth to the first in-vitro fertilisation baby: Louise Brown. After this breakthrough, Edwards and his co-workers optimised the in-vitro fertilisation technology and made the

new technology accessible to the whole world. Until today it is estimated that more than 4,000,000 babies have been received with the help of in-vitro fertilisation to couples who were not able to conceive children naturally. After more than 30 years of experience in-vitro fertilisation is a successful and safe therapy. There is a 20-30 % chance for birth of a child from an in-vivo fertilised egg. Evidence for the effectiveness and safety of this technology is the fact that Louise Brown and several other in-vitro fertilisation children have given birth to children themselves. Finally, the vision of Robert Edwards becomes "reality and brings joy to infertile couples all over the world."

Andreas Albrecht

Reference

"The 2010 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine - Press Release". Nobelprize.org. 3 Mar 2011 http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/2010/press.html

Best of YEBN in New Biotechnology

Humanis AG – recruiting in the Life Sciences sector in Switzerland. An interview with Barbara Henggeler, Humanis AG

Humanis AG has been active in the field of management and specialist selection since 1986. It has ten competence teams in the areas of Life Sciences, Engineering, Finance & Controlling, Human Resources, Real Estate & Construction, IT & Telco, Sales Marketing Communications, Supply Chain Management and Tax Legal Compliance and Banking. All Humanis senior consultants have experience in the sectors and professional fields in which they recruit candidates for their clients, allowing them to handle extremely demanding search requests where the traditional recruitment methods often fail.

Humanis clients range from small and medium-sized companies to groups with over 1000 employees. Humanis is a member of the Excellent Careers Group, and is one of Switzerland's leading executive consulting groups.

More info can be found at: www.humanis.ch

When I asked two of my good friends, who had just landed their first job in the industry shortly after their graduation, how they

did it, they both told me about the great personal advice and help they had received from Dr Barbara Henggeler, a senior consultant

in Humanis AG. So I decided to contact her, and allow you, the reader, to profit from her advice and experience in recruiting for the life sciences' sector.

With what type of candidate do you work with, and for what positions?

The Humanis Life Science team is specialized in filling management and specialist vacancies for marketing, sales, medical, clinical research, regulatory and quality. I receive many CVs from candidates, a lot of them after their studies or PhDs, but it is difficult to work with them all. Most clients are looking for candidates with experience, so I try to find candidates that fit these needs. However, I also like to help candidates making their

first steps in the industry, and sometimes work with candidates that have no such experience if I think they could fit the need of a client.

How do you then assess my fit with the client's need?

First of all, I know exactly what the clients are looking for since Humanis has a long-standing relationship with most of them, and I have myself 12 years of professional experience in many different positions in the Life Sciences sector.

To assess the candidates, I perform a first short interview, by phone or a longer structured one at our headquarters. Using some standard questions, I try to find out about their strengths and weaknesses, see how flexible they are, if they are perseverant and dedicated, if they have team spirit, how they work and behave in different situations. For PhDs or Postdocs, I try to see if they have 'industry-thinking' or if they are just focused on science. If the candidate has no previous experience in the industry, I look if he had working experience during the semester holidays showing that he is engaged and active. During a phone interview, I pay attention to the politeness, how the candidate speaks, if he listens or interrupts me, what questions he posed.

Out of these interviews, I will make my first rankings, and contact the candidate again if I have a vacant position that he could potentially fit.

How important are soft skills for you or the client?

Soft skills are very important! Candidates with no industry

experience do not have the 'hard skills' that client is asking for. Therefore soft skills can make the difference. I assess how fast they can think and react when confronted with tricky questions or in special situations, how they deal with such questions, their language skills. To assess their project-management abilities, I look if they have worked in an organization for example, if they show initiative or only do what they have been told to.

All of these soft skills are evaluated during the first structured interview with some standard questions so I am able to compare and judge different candidates without being subjective.



Would you suggest me a job that might be different than what I am looking for? And how long should I stay in my first job?

I always ask the candidate what she wants to do, what is she interested in and if she knows what the job entails. Most of the times, the candidate does not really know what the job is about, and I try to help them finding out. This is the counseling part of my job.

Regulatory affairs or clinical research positions are usually a good start in the industry. With this kind of job you can be part of a team, be interactive, actively contribute and bring good inputs

on where the company could go in the future. This kind of job can be very attractive as a first step in the industry, and brings the 'hard skills' that might be needed for the future.

I would advise to stay at least two years in your first job. If you change too soon, it might show that you are lacking perseverance and endurance. Two years is the time needed to get the experience. You might end up liking it after all!

How long should I expect to look for a job? What should I consider when applying to different companies?

The time of job search varies for every applicant. For your two friends, it went quite fast, but it can go from two months up to one year.

Humanis will help you to find a position, but we will not suggest you to every client we have, only to the job profiles that we think you would fit. Also, you need to modify your CV so that it fits the job profile and the company: do not use a standardized CV, full of information that might not be of interest to the client, such as an in-depth description of your PhD project.

Concentrate on bringing forward your soft skills that are of advantage for a specific position.

Debora Keller, EPFL Lausanne, Switzerland
(originally published in *New Biotechnology*, Vol. 25, April 2009)

Upcoming events in Life Sciences

DNA Encyclopedia of Life, April 15th–16th, 2011 in Poland

The main goal of this annual open workshop is to bring science to the Polish public by fun and entertainment.

Five Polish university cities (Gdansk, Lublin, Szczecin, Warsaw and Wroclaw) will

be involved in this nationwide project this year. For two days, participants get the chance to listen to lectures as well as to take the floor during discussions with scientists. For people curious about the world of science, we offer practical, hands-on experiments under supervision of specialists.

More info at www.dna.assb.pl

Joanna Kud



ConCiencia, April 29th–May 27th, 2011 every Friday in León, Spain

The program ConCiencia is a collection of brief conferences aiming at spreading Biotechnology among people without an extensive knowledge of science. The goal is to introduce this emerging technology, to explain some misunderstood ideas and to show the benefits it can provide to society. Conferences will take place in León's Museum each Friday from April 29th to May 27th. The speakers, Carmen Vela, Laura Lechuga, Lucas Sánchez Sampedro, José Luis García and Leire Escajedo,

have been carefully selected from Spanish researchers and entrepreneurs across different areas in biotechnology in order to reach the widest possible topic's range. The program was organised by the executive board of León Biotechnologists' Association principally by Sara García Alonso and África Sanchiz Giraldo.

África Sanchiz Giraldo, Sara García Alonso



Conference "Young Generation In BioBusiness", May 12th, 2011 in Lodz, Poland

Planning your own biobusiness? This is your event. The Academic Society of Biotechnology Students (ASSB) in cooperation with BioTech Consulting invite to the "Young Generation In BioBusiness" conference during the 10th edition of BioForum. BioForum is the Central European Forum of Biotechnology and Innovative BioEconomy. Its goal is to help young people to find their own path to a business carrier in the biotech sector. Meet researchers who succeeded in transferring ideas from academic centers to the biotech industry. A special coaching session shows how to find passion in everyday work. Get to know work requirements of leading biotech companies and

establish contacts in the biotech sector.

Free entrance to the trade fair and lectures. More info at www.bioforum.pl/2011/

Joanna Kud

btS weekend, July 3rd–5th, 2011 in Pottenstein, Germany

Traditionally, btS members from all over Germany meet twice a year. This year, the first meeting is scheduled in Pottenstein, a small town in eastern Bavaria near Erlangen, July 3rd – 5th. More than one hundred participants from different btS branches will participate. Get to know each other, discuss different btS projects, and enjoy a weekend full of fun! Workshops led by btS members and well-known companies will give young scientists the opportunity to gain beneficial knowledge from experienced btS members and alumni as well as potential employers.

More info at www.bts-ev.de

Christine Weckenmann

