Education for innovation in Hilumi and FCC

by Outi Heloma (CERN), Isabel Bejar Alonso (CERN)

HiLumi FCC education innovation

What's in it for innovators in Hilumi and FCC? Twenty young researchers interested in innovation and entrepreneurship participated in this two-day course.

HiLumi and FCC organised their first innovation course in collaboration with IdeaSquare

and CERN Knowledge Transfer (KT) on 31 January and 1 February, 2018. Twenty students and young professionals from HiLumi and FCC interested in innovation and entrepreneurship participated in the two-day course and will continue working on their ideas for a few weeks. The purpose of the induction session was twofold: to let the participants explore potential ways to apply their knowledge and skills outside the CERN context, and to familiarize them with established innovation practices. The aim was to inspire students/young professionals to think "outside the box" and teach them basic skills on how to think like an innovator and an entrepreneur thus offering them new skills and competences, which they may find useful later on in their careers. "It has been a real pleasure to host the course at IdeaSquare", says Markus Nordberg who is a recognised expert in open innovation and manages other innovation courses such as the Challenge Based Innovation CBI.

During the two days, the participants gained insight into how to deliver innovation, assess knowledge transfer opportunities and identify different applications of CERN technologies from presentations given by the IdeaSquare team and distinguished visiting presenters. Harri Toivonen from Aalto University introduced the participants to the design thinking philosophy, opening minds on how to approach challenges with no clear solution. Giovanni Anelli from KT demonstrated how CERN technologies have turned into applications that benefit society in sectors such as medicine, safety and environment. He also put a focus on the innovation opportunities offered by KT. Philipp Topic from Vienna University of Economics and Business introduced Technological Competence Leveraging, a systematic, proactive and crowdsourcing-based method to identify new application fields for technologies. Marcello Losasso presented the QUACO project as a case study of a Pre-Commercial Procurement initiative, a mechanism that boosts innovation and attracts potential industrial partners. Creating a network of like-minded people is also a key to success in innovation and this is why Laure Esteveny presented the CERN Alumni activities and IdeaSquare and KT student programs were presented to open up ideas on how to reach to peers.

The participants were encouraged to bring their own innovation topics to the course, and if so had the chance to display them in an elevator pitch on both days. Using the knowledge and tools introduced during the course, the participants then worked in four groups, developing and refining their ideas. During the group sessions, some ideas were dropped, and the groups developed detailed presentations for 10 ideas they most believed in, to defend their views. At the end of the second day, three ideas were subsequently voted as most promising and three groups were put in place to further refine and work on them. At the time of publication of this article each group is developing their ideas with expert support.

The results will be presented in an award ceremony to an invited audience on 21 March. "It has been extremely impressive how the participants have used the information

received during the course", says Isabel Bejar Alonso, organizer of the course. "From the first presentation to the last there has been a complete revolution moving from vague ideas to credible proposals." This innovation course has demonstrated how important it is for young researchers to see that entrepreneurship can be an option for their careers. Even more so as they realised that there is no real frontier between industrial innovation and the work they do every day.

Header image: The participants refined their ideas during group workshops in the HiLumi FCC Innovation course at IdeaSquare (photo by Isabel Bejar Alonso, CERN)