

1.1 Design Thinking, UX, SCRUM & Co: How inclusive are methods of knowledge sharing in innovation?

Moderation

Prof. Dr. Brigitte Liebig (FHNW), MSc Debora Mittner (FHNW)

Panelists

Luise Arn (Innovator Fellow, ETH Library Lab PHD candidate Computer Science, University of Zurich), Dr. Alan Cabello, PhD (Program Lead – Founder, Spark Labs at ETH Zurich), Robert Fritze (Head Design – Principal, ti&m), Dr. Barbara La Cara (Project Manager ETH Talent & Social Innovation Expert Student Project House, ETH Zurich)

Evidence has shown that diverse teams (e.g. with respect to gender, ethnicity, professional background) often show higher degrees of creativity and find more innovative solutions to problems. However, structural forms discrimination (e.g. legal or economic inequalities), as well as psychological and cultural mechanisms (e.g. diversity-blindness or unconscious biases) can limit the benefits of diversity for knowledge sharing in research and innovation.

In this panel, researchers and practitioners discussed challenges and possibilities of human-centered methods and agile forms of organization such as Design Thinking, UX or SCRUM as new methods for knowledge sharing and creation in innovation. Doing so, we asked for the meaning of these methods for diversity and inclusion – and vice versa.

The discussion was followed by a brief presentation of the «Tool Kit» *Women and Diversity in Innovation*, which is developed by Brigitte Liebig and Debora Mittner at FHNW School of Applied Psychology.

How can we make innovation processes more inclusive?

During the discussion, several participants emphasize that a diverse team composition is key for inclusion in innovation processes. Today, especially vulnerable diversity groups like gender minorities and migrants are still underrepresented in design processes. Alan Cabello mentions an example in which a health-care related project failed due to its virtual format. The development team just didn't consider that due to their medical condition, some of their users were not able to use a computer.

Another comment from the audience addresses the possible conflict between agile methods as a way of innovating faster or more efficiently and a critical reflection of these methods from a diversity perspective, which might initially slow down innovation processes. Barbara La Cara shares the success story of the first social hackathon she organized at ETH Student Project House, bringing together technically oriented students and social entrepreneurs with a refugee or migrant background. Although cross-cultural communication might have caused some difficulties or even frustration in the beginning, the participants from both groups were able to build trust and learn something from each other during the process.

Luise Arn sees a huge challenge in changing our own behaviors. Even if we are aware of our own potentially stereotypical views, it can be very hard to reflect on, let alone overcome them. Robert Fritze notes that agile innovation methods are still in a stage of being developed. To conclude with, a critical perspective considering diversity aspects may also help us shape these evolving methods for good.

«Tool Kit» Women & Diversity in Innovation

The «*Tool Kit*» *Women & Diversity in Innovation* is a collection of instruments aiming to foster diversity in research and innovation in Switzerland and to generate a more inclusive innovation environment. It focusses on the organizational conditions in more general terms (organizational structure, processes, strategies and culture) as well as five specific fields of action (recruiting & career path, research & development teams, innovation processes, communication & marketing, innovation culture). Six company partners are participating in the pilot program helping to develop the tool kit. The Tool Kit is currently in the prototype phase and will be made available to the public in spring 2021.

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