



Social Innovation Incubators for Inclusive Digital Healthcare

INVITE

Assessment of the Social Innovation Incubator

Developed by the *Project partner MEDITERRANEAN ECONOMIC FORESIGHT INSTITUTE (IPEMED)*



Sadržaj

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1. Summary

Fifteen students from the three partner medical vocational and educational (VET) schools completed one survey after the INVITE Learning Expedition. Their retrospective ratings were higher for every assessed ability, particularly for defining a problem from a user's point of view, using a Lean Canvas, explaining the innovation process and creating a prototype. Students also valued learning by doing, feedback and the relevance of the experience to their future education or work.

Written responses most often highlighted teamwork and working with students from other countries. Several students valued the pitch, empathy map, Lean Canvas and work on a concrete solution. Suggestions concentrated on more time for activities and final preparation, clearer instructions and additional practical opportunities. These findings describe students' perceptions of one small delivery; they do not demonstrate independent skill attainment or subsequent impact on access to healthcare.

2. The INVITE Social Innovation Incubator

The INVITE Social Innovation Incubator gave medical VET students an opportunity to work on challenges in inclusive digital healthcare. It forms part of INVITE's approach to preparing future healthcare professionals to recognise unmet needs, collaborate with others and develop practical responses, particularly for older people who may face barriers to using digital health services.

The Learning Expedition put the project's Social Innovation Toolkit into practice through a short, structured innovation process. Students explored a challenge from the user's perspective, defined the problem, generated and selected ideas, and developed ways to explain or demonstrate a proposed solution. Tools such as empathy mapping, prototyping, the social innovation Lean Canvas and pitching helped them consider whether an idea would be useful, accessible and feasible.

The incubator was also a learning experience in collaboration. Students from the partner schools worked with others to develop and communicate ideas while considering the people who would use their proposed solutions. This assessment examines what students perceived they learned through that experience and which activities they found useful. It does not assess whether proposed solutions were subsequently implemented.

3. How the incubator was assessed

Students completed one survey after the Learning Expedition. The dataset contains 15 responses: eight from the medical school in Split, four from Lokman Hekim Medical School in Bursa, and three from the medical school in Trnava. All recorded submissions are dated 13 September 2026.

To explore perceived learning, students rated 13 abilities twice in the same survey: how well they believed they could perform each activity before the expedition and now. Nine statements concerned developing a social innovation, from understanding user needs and defining a problem to prototyping, using feedback and pitching. Four concerned teamwork, listening to others, taking a user's perspective and confidence communicating ideas. The five-point scale ran from 1 ("Not at all / Very little") to 5 ("Very well").

The survey also included ten statements about the learning experience, three questions on perceived learning and confidence, and three open questions about main learning, the most helpful activity and possible improvements. Results are presented descriptively alongside themes from the written responses. The BEFORE ratings were recalled after the expedition; differences therefore show perceived development rather than measured pre/post change. With 15 responses from one delivery, the findings should not be generalised to other cohorts.

Four cells in the BEFORE/NOW section contained two selected ratings. Each affected pair is omitted from that item's means and change score, without excluding the student from other items. One experience rating also contained two selections; it is omitted from that item's count. The relevant denominators are shown below.

4. What students reported

4.1 Developing a social innovation

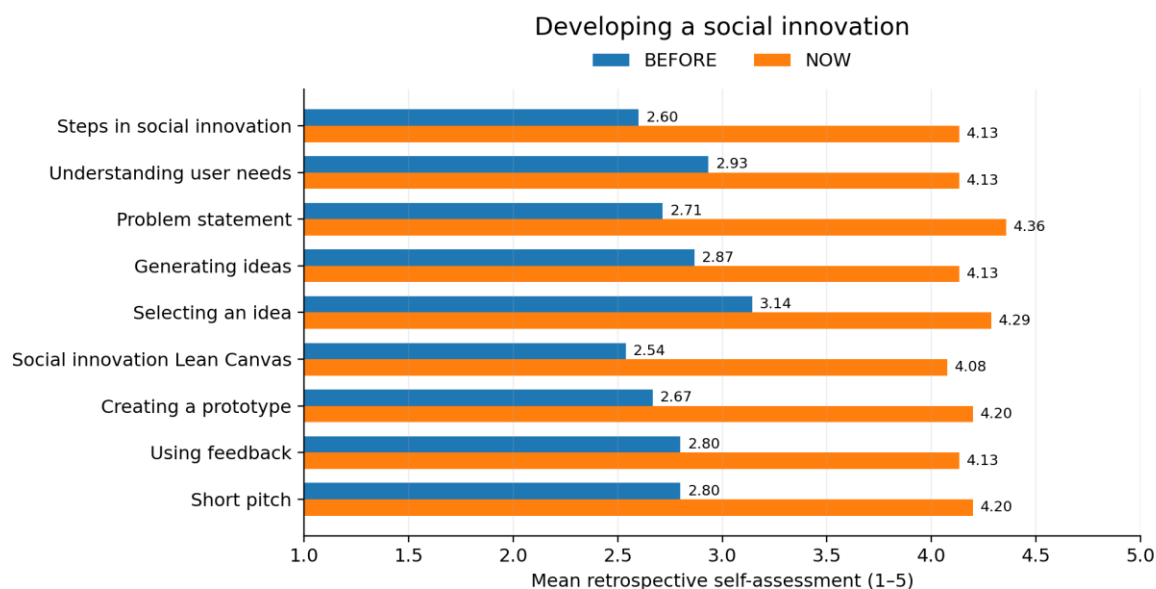
Students rated their ability higher now than before on all nine statements. The largest mean differences concerned writing a problem statement from the user's point of view, describing a solution using a Lean Canvas, explaining the innovation process and creating a prototype.

The largest mean increase was recorded for writing a user-centred problem statement (+1.64 points), followed by describing a solution using a Lean Canvas (+1.54), explaining the main steps of social innovation (+1.53) and creating a simple prototype (+1.53).

Table 1 Students' Retrospective Self-Assessment of Social Innovation Abilities: BEFORE and NOW Ratings

Ability	Before	Now	Change	Improved
Explain the main steps of social innovation	2.60	4.13	+1.53	15/15
Identify what a user really needs	2.93	4.13	+1.20	13/15
Write a user-centred problem statement	2.71	4.36	+1.64	12/14
Generate different ideas	2.87	4.13	+1.27	13/15
Select an idea for usefulness, accessibility and feasibility	3.14	4.29	+1.14	10/14
Describe a solution with a Lean Canvas	2.54	4.08	+1.54	12/13
Create a simple prototype	2.67	4.20	+1.53	13/15
Use feedback to improve an idea	2.80	4.13	+1.33	11/15
Explain an idea in a short pitch	2.80	4.20	+1.40	14/15

Figure 1. Mean retrospective self-assessment for nine social innovation abilities.



4.2 Working with other people

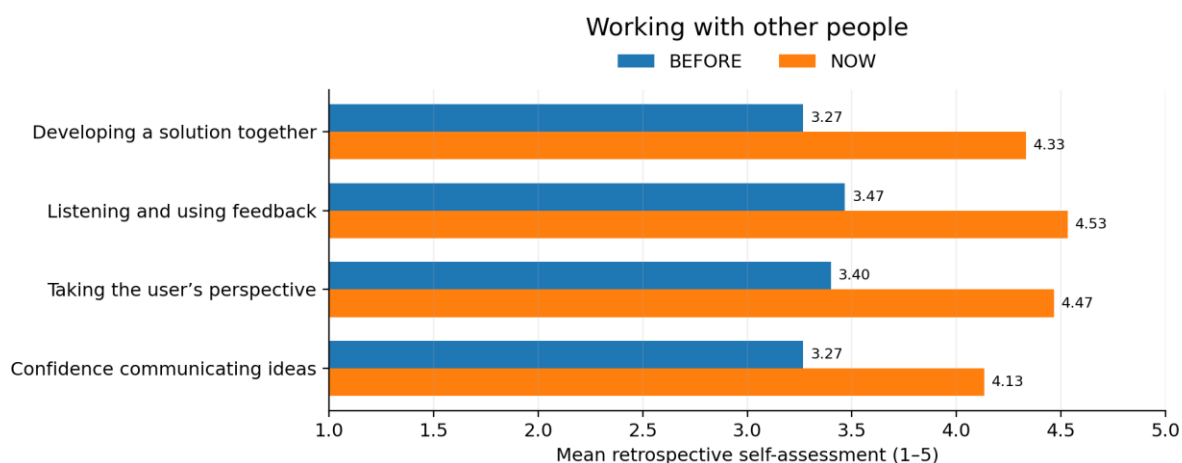
Students began with somewhat higher self-ratings for these abilities. Mean NOW ratings were higher for all four statements. Taking a user's perspective received a high NOW rating; confidence communicating ideas showed the smallest mean difference.

The mean increase was similar across three collaboration abilities (+1.07 points each), while confidence in communicating ideas showed a smaller increase (+0.87 points); taking the user's perspective received the highest NOW rating (4.47 out of 5).

Table 2 Students' Retrospective Self-Assessment of Collaboration Abilities: BEFORE and NOW Ratings

Ability	Before	Now	Change	Improved
Develop a solution with other students	3.27	4.33	+1.07	9/15
Listen to ideas and use others' feedback	3.47	4.53	+1.07	9/15
See a problem from an older person's or user's perspective	3.40	4.47	+1.07	11/15
Feel confident communicating ideas	3.27	4.13	+0.87	8/15

Figure 2. Mean retrospective self-assessment for four collaboration abilities.



Means use valid paired responses for each item. The denominators are 14 for the problem statement and idea selection, 13 for Lean Canvas, and 15 for all other abilities. “Improved” counts students whose NOW rating exceeded their recalled BEFORE rating; no unambiguous pair showed a lower NOW rating.

4.3 Experience and confidence

Responses to the experience statements were generally favourable. Fourteen of 15 students agreed that they learned by doing, and 14 of 15 agreed that feedback from students and facilitators helped improve their work. All 15 agreed that what they learned could be useful in future education or work. Thirteen of 15 agreed that teamwork helped them learn, and 13 of 15 were satisfied with the expedition overall.

The responses also point to areas worth examining. Ten of 15 agreed that they felt comfortable asking questions and sharing ideas, while five selected neutral. Eleven of 14 valid respondents agreed that the activities were interesting; 11 of 15 agreed that the activities helped them understand the topic better. These responses should be read alongside the written suggestions, rather than using overall satisfaction alone to assess the experience.

All 15 described their learning as “quite a lot,” “a lot” or “a great deal.” Ten selected “quite a lot” for increased confidence in solving a real-life problem; nine selected that response for developing an idea with others. The other answers on those two questions ranged from “somewhat” to “very much.” These are separate verbal response categories, so they are not converted into the five-point ability scale.

5. Student reflections and recommendations

Fourteen students answered each of the first two open questions, and 13 answered the question about improvements. Several replies were very short, so the themes below indicate what was mentioned rather than how strongly or widely a view was held.

5.1 What students found valuable

Teamwork was the clearest recurring theme. Students mentioned learning to work and communicate with peers, including peers from other countries, and seeing how different ideas broadened their perspective. Others identified confidence, digital skills, understanding users' needs and thinking through the details of a whole project.

Asked which activity helped most, students named group work and discussion, the empathy map, Lean Canvas, structured planning, final pitch and work on a concrete solution. One student described developing the "CareCompanion" idea as valuable because the team applied what it had learned to a real problem. These comments align with the strong survey ratings for learning by doing and receiving feedback.

5.2 What to improve

Some students wanted more time for activities, final preparation, and developing or testing ideas. Others asked for clearer or more precise instructions and more interactive or practical activities. Several wrote that they would change nothing. The suggestions support focused adjustments to the schedule and instructions while retaining the hands-on team process.

5.3 Recommendations for a future expedition

1. Give each team more time to develop one idea.

Reserve time for a simple prototype, feedback, revision and pitch preparation. Several students requested more time, including for testing. Prioritise depth on one idea over adding activities.

2. Make the task and expected output clear at each stage.

Provide a brief prompt and example when teams move from user needs to a problem statement, then to a Lean Canvas and a prototype or pitch. Students asked for clearer instructions at these practical stages.

3. Protect participation in international teams.

Retain group discussion and shared decisions. Add a brief team agreement and turns for contributions and questions: five respondents were neutral about feeling comfortable sharing ideas, despite favourable teamwork ratings.

4. Ground ideas in the perspective of the intended user.

Keep empathy mapping central. Where access and consent allow, ask an older person or practitioner to respond to a prototype, and record what changed. The survey does not establish that every solution was user-tested.

5. Assess a small amount of demonstrated work next time.

Use a short common rubric to review a problem statement, prototype and response to feedback alongside the survey. This would add evidence of demonstrated work. Record total participation to calculate the survey response rate.



Sources

INVITE Learning Expedition – Student Survey (15 responses, 13 September 2026); Social Innovation Toolkit for Inclusive Digital Healthcare (INVITE, 2026). The eSleep_dHealth assessment and INVITE OER assessment informed the report format and figure style.