

HARNESSING INNOVATION IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

On January 23, 2019, Professor Tina Ambos, Director of the Management School, and PhD candidate Katherine Tatarinov hosted a luncheon at the World Economic Forum in Davos on harnessing innovation within and across organizations to achieve the SDGs. Representatives of International Organizations, social enterprises, NGOs, philanthropy, private sector, and academia came together to discuss their vision for joint-collaboration and the challenges in making potential a reality.

Addressing these challenges will require not only new forms of collaboration, but pushing our organizations from within to change the systems stifling innovation – in order to create agile organizations in an environment where risk and failure is accepted. The support of our luncheon and the push from the top of the UN shows that organizations are ready.

Join us in our next steps:

1. Workshop - Building effective innovation structures: Many organizations are in the process of setting up “innovation offices” and dedicated “innovation teams,” but what are the different organizational solutions and which one better fits our ambitions and our mandate? We will host a workshop on this topic in Geneva in the Spring. We look forward to discussing your insights and sharing best practices.

2. Research - Profiles, skillsets and mindsets ready for transformation: Many of the participants pointed towards the need for a cultural change – and the challenge of stretching across boundaries to create innovative ideas while having to work within boundaries to realize and scale innovation. These are stretch goals in large dispersed organizations and we need to learn to embrace them – and develop people’s capacity to do so. Our aim is to map profiles of recent graduates and the ideal skills needed to drive innovation.

3. Platform - Coming together and opening opportunities: We are all aware of the limitations of our organizations, but there are also tremendous strengths and potential. If we can combine them and find connecting points between the disruptive technology of a start-up, a multinational’s power for scaling and delivery, the local embeddedness of NGOs, and an IO’s access to governments and beneficiaries’ needs, we will be able to harness innovation for the SDGs. As the University of Geneva, one of our strengths is to provide a neutral ground to discussions, to bring people together on an eye-to-eye basis. Our aim at the **i2i Hub for Innovation and Intrapreneurship** is to provide a fertile ground and act as a catalyst for innovation. We also started as a bottom-up effort and we are now seeking to grow our initiative – follow us on Twitter: @io_innovation and connect with us by email: gsem-innovation@unige.ch

The i2i Hub seeks to:

- **act as a catalyst for innovation in International Organizations**
- **connect innovators from different organizations, including private and public sector**
- **spur and disseminate ideas to create impact**
- **be a place for eye-to-eye (i2i) exchange of knowledge**

