

# Augmenting student experience with open innovation platforms: the example of OpenIDEO

Emmanouil Gkeredakis, Assistant Professor  
Emmanouil.Gkeredakis@wbs.ac.uk

*Presentation for the Teaching and Learning Showcase  
WBS, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015*

# Overview

- ◎ Open innovation (OI) platforms
- ◎ A “learning experiment” with OpenIDEO
- ◎ What happened
- ◎ Student experiences
- ◎ Personal reflections
- ◎ Implications for using OI platforms in HE

# Open Innovation (OI) platforms

- ◎ websites where complex problems are publicly posted and an undefined group of people is invited to generate and submit proposed solutions – also known as “*crowdsourcing for innovation*” (Howe 2006)
- ◎ Diverse problems: complex science & technology, data science & analytics, social innovation, design & marketing, creative work

# Large variety of OI platforms

kaggle

threadless

crowdSPRING

 INNOCENTIVE®

 tongal™

 DELL | IdeaStorm  
Where Your Ideas Reign

Quirky

open IDEO

  
[topcoder]™

# Opportunities offered by OI platforms

- ⦿ Interaction with the outside world
- ⦿ Engage with “real world problems”
- ⦿ Challenge oneself
- ⦿ Work alongside high profile sponsors
- ⦿ Engage in exciting collaborations
- ⦿ Learn to navigate digital environments

*Such opportunities are being explored by other HE institutions, such as NYU and Harvard*

# Designing an “experiment” to use OpenIDEO (1)

- ⦿ Social innovation challenges: no need for expert knowledge (“we are all designers”)
- ⦿ MSc Module on Innovation at WBS
- ⦿ Assessed group work (20%): group participation, idea submission, presentation (reflection and use of theory)
- ⦿ Supportive mentor: Professor Joe Nandhakumar

# Designing an “experiment” (2)

## Learning activity

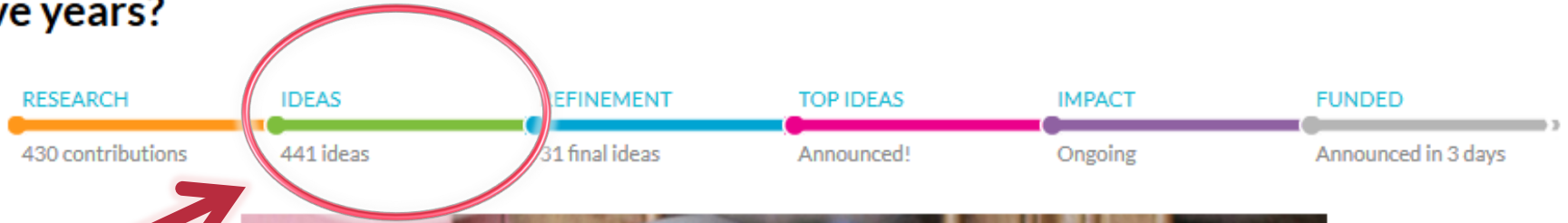
1. Participation in OpenIDEO challenge
2. Reflection on group work
3. Propose theory-informed enhancements to the OpenIDEO platform

## Learning objective

- 1A)** Skills for creative problem solving
- 1B)** Group working skills
- 1C)** Experiential learning of innovation process
- 2)** Learning journey and Personal development
- 3)** Develop skills to apply theoretical knowledge

# The OpenIDEO challenge

How might parents in low-income communities ensure children thrive in their first five years?





# What we asked students (within 4 weeks)

- ◎ Create a group profile
- ◎ Work in groups and discuss the “research contributions”
- ◎ Brainstorm, develop and submit one idea
- ◎ Respond to comments made by others to their idea
- ◎ Make comments to other ideas
- ◎ Reflect on participation
- ◎ Prepare presentation and demonstrate application of concepts

# *How might parents in low-income communities ensure children thrive in their first five years?*



**Veggication - Communal vegetable planting education scheme to give children the opportunity to learn about their individual influences, secure food supplies, and strengthen family ties.**

# On-going interactions & adjustments

- ◎ Encouragement: [my personal submission](#)
- ◎ Some groups [submitted two ideas](#)
- ◎ Reminder of “rewards”: *“assessment will be based on evidence of participation”*

# Students' reflections

- ✓ Platform easy to use
- ✓ Creative confidence: *“by surrounding ourselves with like-minded innovators, our creativity was reinforced”*
- ✓ Lack of pressure to submit a “perfect” idea
- ✓ Articulating ideas and challenging each other
- ✓ *“Our own life experiences can be a source of new ideas”*
- Groupwork tensions (also positive)
- Had to do research for an unfamiliar topic
- Lack of expertise specific to the challenge
- Required too much work + few incentives (“only 20%”)

# Personal reflections

- ◎ Challenges specific to OpenIDEO
  - Pre-requisite understanding of “design thinking”
  - Exclusive social Innovation focus
  - Finding a relevant challenge + timeframe challenges
  
- ◎ General issues:
  - Under-estimated effort required by students
  - Risk of matching module objectives with OI platform activities
  - Consider benefits (and costs) of customized solutions

# Implications for using OI platforms in HE

- ◎ Use of OI platforms can augment student experience
- ◎ New possibilities for experiential learning
- ◎ Plurality of platforms offer diverse opportunities
- ◎ Thinking beyond individual modules?

**Thank you! Any questions?**