Developing institutional services using design thinking approach

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In the recent years, developing and supporting a new generation of researchers has become a primary focus of many RMAs. Unfortunately, RMAs working in the researcher development field face numerous challenges. These challenges include the scarcity of resources and underdeveloped professional development frameworks. The Vitae researcher development framework has been widely used in the UK and successfully tested in several other countries. However, this framework is not universal and may not "fit" all intuitions across the world equally. Finding the right "fit" for programs to support early career researchers (ECR) has been effectively addressed by applying design thinking at Kyoto University and at Okinawa Institute of Science (OIST). Using design thinking methodology allowed us to dig deeper into the actual needs of our target population and gain new insight on what kind of support ECR are really looking for. As a result, both institutions created their own professional development frameworks and diversified educational content by incorporating several non-traditional courses such as VTS, "Design your life" and strength coaching. These modifications allowed our researchers to practice creative problem solving and to gain new skills necessary for a highly competitive international research environment. During this interactive session, we will discuss the obstacles we encountered while trying to implement the Vitae framework. Additionally, we will share how we overcame encountered obstacles using designer mindset. We invite all RMAs, regardless of their professional field, to join this conversation about innovative ways to create customized, human-centered solutions to improve institutional services and programs.

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