

Field Report of a Swiss Biodesign Fellow

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Technology Risk Consultant Pyranka Chadha attended the CAS-pilot “Swiss Biodesign Bootcamp” in 2019 with a high potential scholarship. In this contribution, she describes her experiences as a Swiss Biodesign Fellow.

As a Medical Engineer who made the transition into the world of technology in business, I found myself missing my old trade and craving an opportunity to combine my business knowledge with my engineering background and passion for healthcare. So, when I found out about the Swiss Biodesign Bootcamp I was overwhelmed with excitement, as the course entailed unique experiences, like clinical immersion, and would teach me more about design and the business thinking behind taking novel medical technologies to market.

Inspiring environment

The Swiss Biodesign course exceeded my expectations – it was an incredibly enjoyable experience of learning and development. Being amongst a group of like-minded people from various backgrounds created an inspiring, open environment where we all felt comfortable to debate and innovate. Moreover, we were given the opportunity to get to know each other well through organised dinners and shared accommodation during the first week. I particularly appreciated this, as coming from the UK I had very little experience with Swiss culture and language, so it was a little bit daunting for me at the beginning. However, the intimate environment was perfect for everyone to settle in, and the beautiful Swiss nature background made it all the better. I felt comfortable very quickly and now have a new-found love for Switzerland and the Swiss precision.

Online test as preparation

Before the course started, we were provided with pre-course readings and a test. This was an excellent way to get us prepared for what was to come. I found the first couple of days at the Bootcamp refreshing the material useful, and the light learning meant we could spend more time getting to know each other. The “light” work didn’t last very long, however, as we were soon into the depths of Biodesign and ready for clinical immersion. Our area of investigation was gastrointestinal diseases; learning the pathophysiology of the different diseases and the treatment methods was challenging, but the team of specialists at Winterthur hospital were incredibly supportive – they made sure that we were all well informed and able to ask as many questions as we wished.

The clinical immersion aspect of the course was definitely a highlight for me. Very few people are given the opportunity to experience surgeries and consultations first hand. It was particularly interesting for me to learn how differently the Swiss healthcare system operates in comparison to the NHS in the UK. The days we spent in the hospital, putting everything we had been taught into practice was incredibly rewarding as it made me realise how I had developed a completely different way of thinking about my surroundings with respect to customer needs, product design and business aspects.



Clinical Immersion as a Highlight

Intensive course that was worthwhile

Another highlight for me was the opportunity to speak with industry experts, venture capitalists and startup founders. Their passion was infectious, and it was cool to see the tangibility of what we were doing as they started out with visionary ideas, too. When we got to the final part of the Bootcamp, and had to pitch our novel medical technologies to the Biodesign Faculty, it was a moment full of pride as the course was intense and we had developed so much from early concepts, patent research to 15+ physician and patient interviews in Switzerland, US and UK. We had actually created a product concept of potentially high medical and market value, and everything we had learnt throughout the course came together. Despite the restless nights and stress, the Bootcamp taught me so many soft and hard skills that I will continue to use, it was undeniably worth it.

About the author



Pryanka Chadha is a Technology Risk Consultant for PwC in London/UK, a trained Biomedical Engineer of the University of London and enjoys coding, travelling and learning Chinese in her spare-time.

The Biodesign concept will also be integrated in the Master of Science curriculum as of summer 2021. Contact the program head for questions: jens.haarmann@zhaw.ch