

EVOLVE2CARE TRAINING SERIES: BUILDING CAPACITY FOR INNOVATORS AND LIVING LABS

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Abstract

The Evolve2Care Training Program Series was created to address a critical challenge: many promising ideas and technologies emerge in research settings, yet few reach real-world use. Transforming concepts into concrete solutions requires coordinated work among researchers, entrepreneurs, companies, investors, and support organisations. These interactions are often fragmented, slowing the transition from experimentation to implementation. To bridge this gap, Evolve2Care provides two coordinated six-part training programs: the Training for Innovators and the Training for Living Labs.

Keywords: *Training program, living labs, rapid prototyping, healthtech innovation, user-centred design.*

1. Introduction

Despite significant investments in research and innovation, the pathway from early-stage ideas to real-world health solutions remains complex and uncertain. Healthtech innovation often requires not only technological excellence, but also a deep understanding of users' needs, regulatory frameworks, market dynamics, and real-life implementation environments. Many promising initiatives struggle at this intersection, where technical development must align with practical, organisational, and societal constraints.

Living Labs play a crucial role in addressing this challenge by providing real-life experimentation settings that connect innovators with users, healthcare professionals, and public and private stakeholders. However, effective collaboration within these ecosystems requires shared skills, methodologies, and a common understanding of innovation processes. Innovators and Living Labs often face different, but complementary, capacity gaps that can limit the impact of their collaboration.

In this context, the Evolve2Care Training Program Series was designed to strengthen the capabilities of both Innovators and Living Labs, supporting them throughout the innovation journey, from early experimentation and rapid prototyping to user-centred validation and readiness for implementation. By offering two structured and coordinated training pathways, the programme aims to foster more effective collaboration and accelerate the translation of healthtech innovations into practice.

The Training for Innovators, led by Anthology Ventures, equips participants with a full innovation toolkit, including design thinking, challenge framing, rapid prototyping, user-centred testing, IP strategy, business modelling, and investor preparedness. Beyond live sessions, the program generated practical outputs: (i) a no-code chatbot template linked to a customizable Google Sheet for user feedback; and (ii) a Product Requirements Document and use-case prototype on hospital discharge management, created with structured prompts and the Lovable tool.

In parallel, the Training for Living Labs, led by the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL), strengthens the capacity of Living Labs to facilitate a smoother transition from research to market-ready solutions. Building on gaps identified by ENoLL as part of their collaboration with its Members, and as identified in the booklet *Living Lab origins, developments, and future perspectives*, participants received practical tools including: (i) a service design blueprint for structuring user validation processes; and (ii) an ethics checklist to guide research and experimentation with end users.

This dual-track approach is a distinctive strength of Evolve2Care: innovators and Living Labs are trained through aligned frameworks that reinforce each other, creating a coherent innovation pathway. All outputs, including tools and resources, can be continuously accessed, and participation tracked via the ENoLL Living Labbers Academy, promoting ongoing learning and providing reusable materials to support future health-tech innovation projects.

2. Methods

The dual-track training program aimed to strengthen both innovators' and Living Labs' capacity to develop, test, and implement health-tech solutions. Participants included researchers, early-stage entrepreneurs, and Living Lab professionals with diverse levels of experience, which shaped a progressive learning design starting from foundational concepts to applied skills. Innovators were guided through design thinking, rapid prototyping, business modelling, and commercialization strategies, while Living Labs focused on user validation, operational methodologies, stakeholder engagement, and ethical considerations. The two tracks were deliberately aligned to promote collaboration and ensure that skills and outputs complemented each other.

Both the Training Programs were developed using a **learner-centred pedagogical approach**, ensuring that content, activities, and materials respond directly to the needs and realities of the Living Labs and Innovators operating within the healthcare and transitional care sectors. The design intentionally combines *solid theoretical foundations* with *structured opportunities for practical application*, enabling participants not only to understand key concepts but also to translate them effectively into their operational environments. To support this, each module was structured around a **progressive learning pathway**, beginning with conceptual grounding and moving towards increasingly applied and reflective exercises.

All training sessions and materials were subsequently made freely available through ENOLL's Living Labbers Academy - <https://academy.enoll.org/>, providing ongoing access to the content and enabling participants to revisit lessons, apply resources in their projects, and continue learning beyond the live sessions.

Figure 1. Training Series Web Banners.



3. Discussion and results

The EVOLVE2CARE dual-track training received highly positive feedback from participants across both tracks. Overall session quality was rated between 3 and 5 out of 5, with most detailed criteria content relevance, speaker quality, actionable tools, pacing, and resources scoring between 4 and 5.

Participants highlighted the relevance and practicality of the sessions. Innovators particularly appreciated guidance on design thinking, rapid prototyping, business modelling, and early-stage commercialization, while Living Lab participants valued learning about operational methodologies, user validation, and stakeholder engagement. The structured progression from foundational concepts to applied exercises, together with supporting materials such as slides and recordings, helped participants build confidence in applying their skills. Many reported that the training clarified their next steps in innovation and encouraged them to take concrete actions toward developing and validating solutions.

In terms of impact, 43% of participants are already taking action, 29% plan to do so within 3-6 months, and 28% indicated they need further guidance. Feedback also showed strong interest in continued engagement with EVOLVE2CARE, suggesting the programme not only supported immediate learning but also strengthened ongoing collaboration and professional growth.

4. Conclusions

The EVOLVE2CARE dual-track training successfully empowered participants to take concrete action, with 43% already applying what they learned and most others planning next steps within the coming three to six months. Participants gained practical, actionable tools spanning design thinking, rapid prototyping, stakeholder engagement, and early-stage commercialization. The structured programme, supported by high-quality resources and expert guidance, boosted confidence, clarified next steps, and helped transform learning into immediate impact. Feedback also highlighted strong interest in continued engagement, demonstrating that the training not only achieved short-term results but also fostered long-term collaboration and professional growth.

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