

Career Talk: Navigating Different Pathways

By Autor

The Career Talk: Navigating Different Pathways session brought together three professionals whose diverse journeys exemplify the many routes a scientific career can take beyond traditional academia. The speakers Dr. Paola Butler-Zanetti, Dr. Shunichi Kasahara, and Dr. Shivani Sathish shared their personal experiences transitioning from research to entrepreneurship, innovation, and technology development.

Dr. Paola Butler-Zanetti, a chemist turned Technology Licensing Specialist at OIST Innovation, described her unconventional trajectory through multiple sectors, including industry, startups, and even forensic fire investigation. Her talk emphasized the value of transferable skills and curiosity in navigating career transitions. She highlighted that scientific training provides a powerful foundation for problem-solving in any context, and that embracing flexibility can lead to unexpected yet fulfilling opportunities.

Dr. Shunichi Kasahara, a visiting researcher at OIST and an entrepreneur at Sony, works at the intersection of human-computer interaction, design, and sensory augmentation. He discussed how emerging technologies could expand human perception and redefine creativity. His perspective illustrated how deep scientific knowledge can drive not only innovation but also philosophical reflection on what it means to be human in a technologically integrated world.

Finally, Dr. Shivani Sathish, an OIST alumna and founder of Atierra, shared her experience transitioning from academic research to entrepreneurship. Now based at the OIST Incubator, she is working to bring research-based innovations to market. Dr. Sathish's story underscored a key message of the event: there is no perfect moment to start a venture. Instead, she encouraged aspiring entrepreneurs to begin with what they have, learn along the way, and continually adapt. Her practical advice resonated strongly with early-career researchers contemplating their next steps.