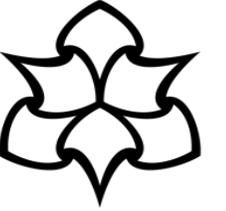


Sustaining and growing innovations in democracy and co-creation

Sue Baines





Co-creation

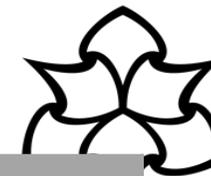
In the context of public services, co-creation refers to citizens' contribution to shaping and implementing the services that affect them.

It has become an orthodoxy widely recognised as inclusive and humane

Definition vary in detail but co-creation essentially recognises the legitimate knowledge and lived experience of people who typically have services 'done to' them.

CoSIE definition: “a collaborative activity that reduces power imbalances and aims to enrich and enhance the value in public service offerings”

Co-creation and democratic renewal overlap



	Democratic Renewal	Co-creation
Rationale	Policy making seen as lacking legitimacy	Services framed by and for public institutions miss the real needs of citizens
Processes	Opportunities for citizens to participate in planning, problem solving and decision-making	Engage individuals and groups who use (or are directly affected by) public services in making decisions about the services
Impact	Quality of democracy	Quality of services
Targets of change	Representative institutions	Service providers and their professional staff
Enemies	Conflictual engagement	Resistance
Advocates	Civil society and social movements; (some) elites	Civil society; (some) service providers
Critiques	Side-line elements that challenge power and wealth distribution	Can be tokenistic and fail to address power differences

What the CoSIE project did

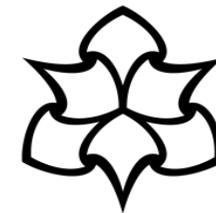
- Delivered real-life pilots in nine counties – many different services (e.g. health, housing, social care, work activation)
- Distinctive in ambition to advance co-creation with citizens who are typically excluded or overlooked sometimes referred to as “hard to reach” - a term detested by many individuals and partners involved in the project
- Each pilot responded to local priorities
- Pilots found many new ways collaborate and co-create, new processes to enhance responsiveness of services, sometimes new services

<https://cosie.turkuamk.fi/arkisto/innovations/index.html>



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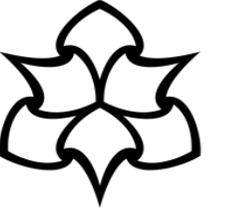
Co-creation in CoSIE

Rationales for the pilots emphasised social justice for people who are marginalised and lack voice

Inspired by struggles of disabled people for control over the support they need to live independently 'Nothing about us without us'

Conceptually the CoSIE project was influenced by thought on human needs and human flourishing





Innovation

The 'I' in CoSIE stands for innovation

Social innovation mobilizes citizens to become an active part of the innovation process

“Social innovation is essential to boost participation by the public and civil society and strengthen more direct democracy” EESC 2016

A key challenge for social innovation is how individual examples can go beyond discrete projects, share learning, and evolve into the ‘modus operandi’ of institutions and societies.

CoSIE examples of change for individuals

“It has been fantastic to get to influence the surrounding society - something that you wouldn’t have believed you would be able to do” (*Young person, Finland*)

“Some of the people got thinking and they had ideas that would never have occurred to me.... you should give them the freedom to come up with their ideas themselves, you shouldn't do the thinking for them” (*Village Mayor, Hungary*)



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Front-line workers and organisations

- Staff adopted new attitudes and practices
- Evidence of change in organisational routines and culture
- CoSIE pilots mainly operated *across* systems rather than *within* single organisations

“I feel that the biggest result from this was an attitude change and a change in the ways of working” (*Youth worker, Finland*)

“Employers and job-seekers often have good ideas themselves, but you have to ask them.....that was very educational”. (*Municipal employee, the Netherlands*)

“Communicating with people you do not know and with whom you are not used to work is tiring but what you do in this way of working makes the difference” (*paediatrician, Italy*)



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Sustaining innovations

- Real, visible results - without them there is a danger of disillusionment and cynicism
- Energetic and proactive networking – people with power to influence as well as those with positional power
- Align with emerging national and regional priorities (e.g. sustainable cities, rural economic development)
- Evaluation and evidence
- BUT be aware of service structures and policies that push against co-creation



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