



1. Practical Experiences and Recommendations from the Project Partners

The Co-creation Welfare project included a testing phase where all project partners trained local practitioners that work in local and regional welfare organisations like schools, health providers, child care institutions etc.

Based on the testing phase, the following list of experiences and recommendations have been elaborated.

Some barriers to working with the training material

The master document is a good inspirational starting point, but it needs to be adapted to local, national and specific needs of the groups that are being trained. When doing this, it is important to think about getting the right balance between flexibility versus guidance, theory versus practice, and real case versus general case.

This is transformative training aimed to create a shift in the way people think and work. This can be a challenge and sometimes people love this and others are reluctant.

Training a range of people with a range of cocreation experience and knowledge can be difficult, so working with specific levels of experience is recommended, for example either those who already use co-creation but want to know more tools OR novices, but both together can be challenging to train at the same time.

A will to learn and change is a pre-requisite to the training, i.e. if people think they know it all, it is less successful. Humility is required. Sometimes we found that the people who think they work with co-creation are sometimes the ones who least do it.

Trainers need to be honest about what their intention is and be humble about what they can achieve.

Some promoting factors to working with the training material

The potential for networking and collaborating with other people interested in co-creation was strong.

Involving people from the start and flexibly throughout the process in a co-creative way was a key strength. Taking into account people's comments, listening to attendees and considering how attendees would benefit from activities and training were key.



People found training on HOW to do co-creation very useful and the transnationally relevant tools are a very important part of this training. The CUbe has especially been successful as a result of its flexible and inclusive nature.

The tailoring of the training to the local needs and the iterative development of the training from feedback and discussions during the training delivery were important. The training is a flexible toolbox. Each context and group being trained and doing the training will be different

The emphasis on sustainability throughout the project with publicly accessible free tools and encouraging people to use them and go on and train others to use them has already made a difference in practice.

This training course follows a progressive path that has inspiring and fun activities that not only teach people about the concepts, but allows attendees to experience co-creation for themselves. The training actually provides space for people to co-create solutions for problems and change real situations in practice.

Gathering feedback of what attendees main barriers and successes were to doing co-creation during the course helped trainers to work with the attendees to reflect and co-create solutions to these barriers together.

The training material can either be trained to group of attendees from a range of backgrounds where they all work on co-creation as a topic in itself (for example what are the problems to co-creating), and with a group of people from the same project (for example, what are the problems to co-creating in your specific project).

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In some organisations undergoing changes, being on this course helped attendees to co-create solutions to some of the difficulties they were experiencing.

Trainees could also have the possibility to co-create with trainers. The trainers learned a lot from being part of this project as well as the trainees.

Competencies/benefits obtained throughout the training

Facilitation – creativity – confidence – conflict resolution – reflective practice – self-awareness – organisation – accepting – engaging – problem solving – focussed – sensitive to equality and diversity – using learning in work – change in perspective – taking into accounts people’s needs more – using and adapting the tools.



Examples of how the material is already being used

- training researcher colleagues working in the field of health promotion - training future teachers (Teacher training Masters' degrees) - training Masters' in health promotion - using the Tools during meetings - using the Tools during workshops

We have members of staff in our organisation and the organisations of course attendees using co-creation tools within their teaching and to co-create the curriculum/services. We have already been commissioned to co-design the course to fit the needs of NHS England and deliver some training there, where those people then go on to teach others in the organisation. We have done an invited keynote talk and marketing stand at a conference as well as working with the organisers to embed co-creation into that conference with activities using tools from the project throughout the day. We are still being approached by organisations about the potential of other teaching opportunities with the aim of using the tools and embedding co-creation in their work.

When people call me for training in health promotion and education, or in sexuality education, as is often, I can use the CUbe activity, the sticky notes activity, the Q-Short activity, the Lego activity, the fish-bull activity and soon. I already used it in a training about sexuality education after Co-creation training course material. And I will continue to use it in this context.

I will use the Story Cubes Pecha Cucha the story telling etc.

Barriers to co-creation training in local contexts

Co-creating over a period of 3 years, we found that the organisations that we worked with often underwent big changes in structure and staff, meaning that those that could be involved in the co-creation and training changed over time.

There was a variety in the level of knowledge of co-creation in different partner countries, meaning that some embraced it more than others. In some contexts the attendees did not know what the concept of co-creation was and some found it challenging to empathise with citizen's needs. In other countries, co-creation is becoming more of a higher priority, resulting in a range of co-creation knowledge and use. In contexts where co-creation was supported by large influential organisations and policy makers, this training was viewed as timely and more positively taken up, embedded in practice and learning was passed from one person to another more readily.

Examples of barriers to co-creation that the course helped to address in the pilot

- Lacking confidence
- Worrying about doing it right
- Not having the time
- Not having buy-in from managers
- Everyone expecting one person to make all of the changes
- Doing consultancy when trying to do co-creation
- Working as a team
- Taking into account other people's perspectives
- Understanding the relevance of co-creation to practice



What can be done in order to promote co-creation as a recognised development process in your country?

Changing perceptions, reducing barriers and providing tools (fast and inexpensive) to help embed this in practice. A neutral environment providing a safe space was an important thing that has come up time and time again throughout the project. Encouraging people to embed this in their every day practice in any shape or form is key as a barrier was often lacking confidence, time and effort to do the perfect co-creation session. Although useful to publish this in scientific articles to encourage this to be a research method that is taken up, it is more important to encourage this to be a more common place way of working together more generally and therefore dissemination in a range of methods to a variety of audiences would be useful.

Materials can be edited and published for national dissemination. Interviews in local journals, radio and television, to talk about the co-creation training and its usability in professional context, can be done either with the trainers or with trainees.

- disseminate the concept - disseminate the training (which is Something we will be doing) - working with activities which can Promote change processes, develop critical thinking and project management competences, problem solving and group collaboration

Key co-creation reflections

- Co-creation is possible!
- People taking part in co-creation are 'co-creators' - this is a preferred word over end-users, stakeholders, public, people or citizens.
- Caution should be used when using words like empowerment. This word implies that power is given from a place of power to a place without power. Co-creation is about creating a space to harness the power that the co-creators already have.
- The idea of 'safe space' has arisen time and time again throughout this project. Co-creation needs a space for those involved to feel safe, for example, this could be a neutral setting that can be shared by all.
- Co-creating the rules of engagement is an important starting point together for example, ownership, confidentiality, changing dynamics of the group as people leave and join.
- The co-creation collaboration process consists of:

Co-define (identifying needs and resources, and managing conflicts and collaborative problem formulation)

Co-design (collaborative problem solution and co-designing actions to implement solutions)

Co-refine (evaluating planned actions, iterative development, dissemination and impact activities)

Co-creation is NOT:

Co-creation is NOT just for people who consider themselves to be creative or "arty". The collective creativity of co-creation is something that everyone can do. You are all in the



same boat, facing the same challenge and it helps to create an even playing field where people have an equal voice. Co-creation is something to be enjoyed so have fun!

Co-creation is NOT just a one off 'snap shot' method, co-creation is a philosophy of working using co-creative processes iteratively over time. You need to embrace the messiness and unknown, and know that it is OK to be wrong early on in the process, as it is a prototype that you are collectively developing.

Co-creation is NOT just about a professional involving or engaging a person that their work impacts. Co-creation can be initiated by anyone and should involve all of those who can create a barrier or success to that situation being co-created.

Co-creation is NOT about gaining people's opinions on a problem you have already decided on or consulting them on a solution you have already arrived at. Co-creation is the development of the problems and needs together and then working together to solve those problems. Often people in a group try to rush straight into finding their similarities, consensus and solutions. It is important to spend time identifying and negotiating the differences, needs and problems first together.

Co-creation is NOT designing a one off outcome that is inflexible to change or development. Ideas and artefacts developed should not be precious outputs that cannot change, they should be changeable as new information and ideas develop.

Co-Creation is NOT a less efficient way of working. When developing an outcome without using co-creation, you may create something that people then do not want to use or it cannot be delivered or maintained and therefore takes more time and effort to correct or it might fail and you need to start again. When using co-creation, it may take more time and effort at the beginning to get co-creators together but by taking this time at the beginning to identify the barriers and solutions together, the outcome is more likely to be useful, effective and meaningful.

Co-creation is NOT the organiser's responsibility. The organiser is not the only person with power, responsibility or expertise, they are purely the initiating facilitator. The organiser can be involved in the co-creation too and during co-creation, it is not only about arriving at WHAT the solutions are, but also HOW they will be done and WHO will do them. This increases the sustainability of the co-creation with a shared feeling of ownership. This is one of the reasons that it is important to co-create the rules of engaging together from the start and during the process.



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