

Co-creation Guide

Realising Social Innovation together



#Co-creation tweets:

- Co-creation: the end result is richer than the contribution of each individual partner
- Without trust, shared values and a view on a bit of profit, co-creation is not possible. Let's find shared values worldwide
- For every social change you need to create a public
- First set the rules of the game before you start talking content
- Co-creation is more about attitudinal change than a toolbox
- Embrace the fact that part of the answer is to genuinely give some of your power away
- Co-creation is all about listening, taking care of each other, and the will to change



social innovation
eXchange



DIALOGUE
cafe

This guide is tributed to Diogo Vasconcelos (1968 - 2011).

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www.socialinnovationexchange.org

www.knowledgeland.org

www.dialoguecafe.org

Text Editors:

Louise Pulford, Kine Nordstokka, Connor Friesen, Chris Sigaloff, Kimon Moerbeek and Lorine van Loon

Design:

Marcel Oosterwijk

Illustrations:

Spraakmakende Verbeelding by Thomas van Daalen



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Why a co-creation guide?

Everyday, whether we are working in the third sector, government, business or the media, we are faced by new challenges. Increasingly, these challenges are social. Social Innovation has been defined as the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs. This broad definition embraces innovations in fields as diverse as fair trade, distance learning, hospices, urban farming, waste reduction and restorative justice. Social innovation can come from individuals, groups and associations, the non-profit sector, the market and the state.

The basic difference between social innovations and other innovations can be found in the motivation behind them. While innovations, generally speaking, are motivated by private financial appropriation, social innovations are motivated to produce social value¹. The need for social innovation is widely accepted across all sectors and all over the world, but acceptance is not the same as action; for many new social innovators, the process of initiating and implementing social innovation is challenging. However, the more people work together, the more engagement there will be between citizens and service users, the more effective new solutions will become - finding effective ways to solve social problems (in healthcare, communities, local government etc.) is no longer a job for governments alone. By working together - by co-creating - social innovators can create wide-ranging solutions that draw on the insights of everyone involved.

Whether it is through co-design, co-production, co-collaboration, or co-creation, the idea of 'co- ' - the idea of acting together - has become part of the way in which we live our lives and shape our society. It undermines top-down thinking, while not being entirely bottom-up.

¹ <http://socialinnovationexchange.org/aboutsixcorepartners>

It brings together a broad range of perspectives. It changes the way we approach ownership of projects and responsibility for outcomes. But what does co-creation really mean? Is it just another buzzword, or an effective mechanism to create new solutions?

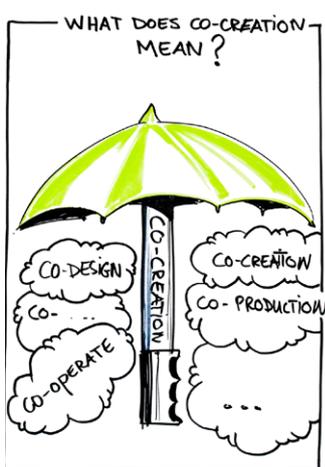
On the 24-25th May, 2011, nearly 100 participants gathered in Amsterdam to discuss the advantages and pitfalls of co-creation between citizens and organisations in this new technology-mediated world. A global community including professionals from public agencies, NGOs, global firms and universities joined with technology experts, policymakers, and service users to explore these issues.

This guide is a result of the outcome of the discussions.

How can we do it?

Efforts around the world to make co-creation more meaningful and useful are fragmented. There are very few explanations available regarding effective methods of co-creation - what works and what doesn't? The aim of this guide is to share principles and experiences as well as questions, in order to shed light on the real, practical strengths and opportunities that can come from working in this new way.

Our purpose with this 'guide' is therefore not to dictate a set of answers or a formula for successful co-creation, but rather to take a look at some of the discussions that are happening around the topic, to reframe the debate around co-creation and citizen participation, and to look at old issues from new angles and with fresh perspectives. This approach is more focused on asking the right questions than finding definitive answers, so we are likely to end up with more questions than we started with—some will be new and some will be inspired by foundational questions. The entire co-creation 'guide,' aims to be useful as a tool to inspire further thinking and debate around this important and timely issue. We hope that this guide will enable us, together, to co-create new ways of working with each other and within our organisations.



“Lots of co-creation is happening around the world. What is lacking is a real-time assessment of which of these are working and which aren't. Instead there is a stream of books and articles saying it is all wonderful- and that is actually not helpful because then people make unnecessary mistakes.”

Geoff Mulgan (NESTA)
on the challenges of co-creation

Why co-creation? Why now?

“We live in times of profound change.”

Roel in't Veld
(Open University of Netherlands/ University of Tilburg)

The Dutch scientist Roel in 't Veld conducted profound research on contemporary society and comes to the following analysis that illustrates the social-political dynamics of these times.

I. Representative democracy versus emerging participatory democracy:

Representative democracy has been a huge success and has, for a long time, been a strong brand. Nevertheless, it is now in decay due to the fragmentation of value patterns and a weakening of ideologies. Citizens, as creative contributors, are being neglected. Participatory democracy is necessary to overcome the weakness of representative democracy.

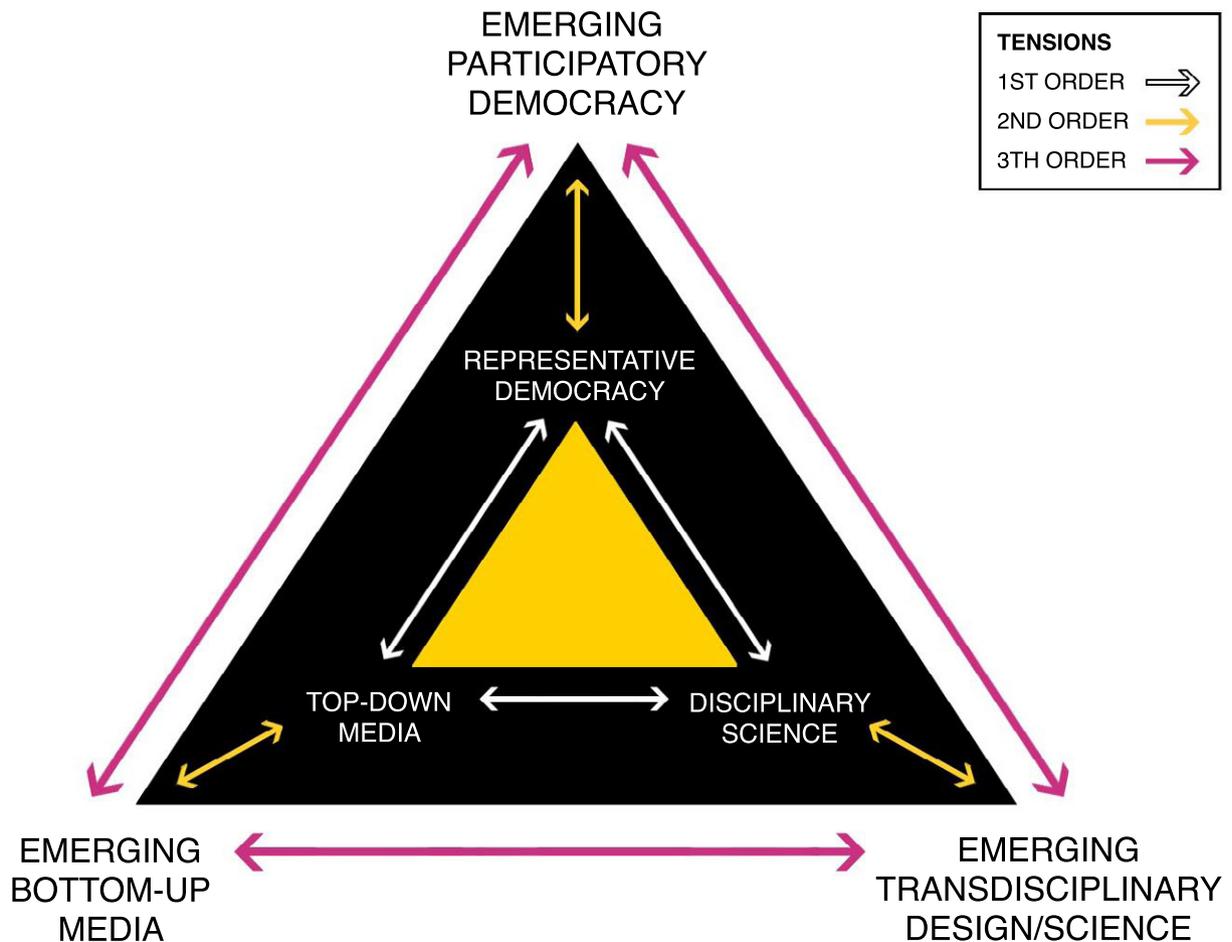
II. Disciplinary science versus emerging trans-disciplinary design science:

The development of the scientific method was revolutionary in itself and many entrenched and pervasive problems have been solved through a scientific approach. However, many of our current problems cannot be solved through disciplinary science. The relationship between science and politics demands new design in an environment of media-politics, wicked problems and reflexivity.

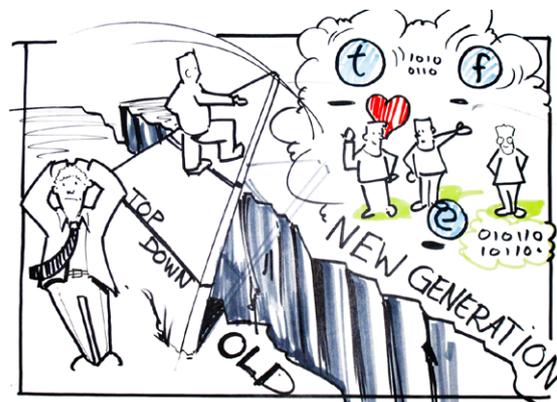
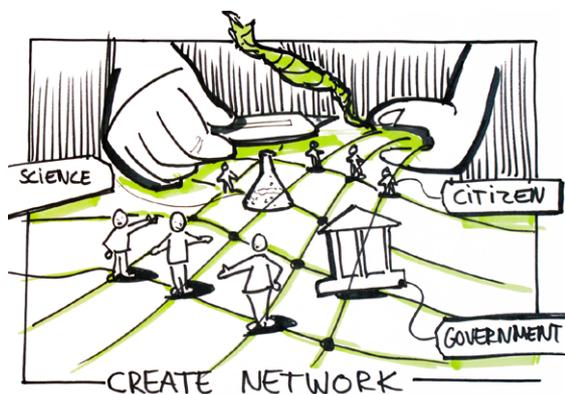
III. Top down media versus emerging bottom-up media:

Classical media producers are enterprises with power; structurally speaking, there is a mutual dependency between politicians and classical media. Social media, on the other hand, is mass self-communication. No ownership is visible on social media platforms and consumers are producers ('prosumers'). There are no editors, so no

selection. The presence of social media liberates the politician from the classical media in principle. Communities exist in social media, society is richer than ever on social media.²

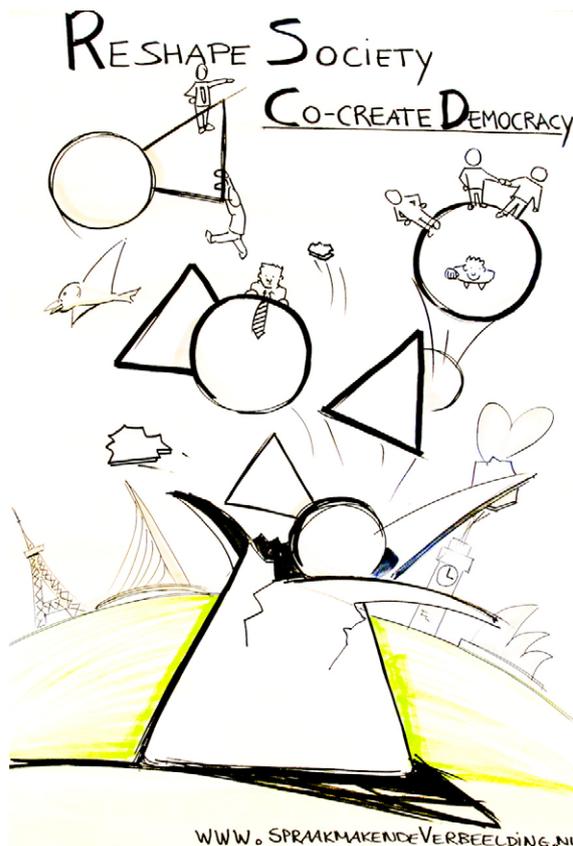


² Roel in 't Veld during SIX Spring School Presentation 24-05-2011



“Co-creation is an attitude from the initiators. You can have a series of steps and plans, but unless you have an attitude from the person who initiates the action, real co-creation is difficult to achieve. Co-creation necessitates an attitude of learning and listening from the people you are working with. It begins with a personal attitude before it reaches out to the range of different methodologies. Unless you have got the attitude right, the methodologies are going to fail. To move the field of co-creation further is more about attitudinal change than it is about a toolbox. Co-creators must take the role of facilitators, not experts. The experts are often the ones who are closest to the issues.”

Garth Japhet
(Hearlines / Soul City)





#Co-creation tweets

- It's an illusion to think that we can completely decentralise power, you will always need states at whatever level.
- How will bottom up innovation supplement top-down government, as we know it?
- Does co-creation ever get matched with new modes of co-accountability? Are we only having half the conversation? The easiest half?
- If participatory democracy is to come about, we need new models of governance that can overcome immense complexity.
- How can government become a linker rather than a doer?
- Pessimism and optimism both have their own truth: empower new visions of participations without having the feeling of being naïve.
- Co-creation is an untapped resource.
- Government cuts are opportunities.

Principles - What could make co-creation work?

The aim of this section is not to offer grand solutions and rigid principles which dictate what you must do to make co-creation work. It is rather to offer some suggestions of tools, perspectives and new questions.

Important questions that come up when discussing co-creation:

Engagement:

- How can we convince the dominant players to go a step further?
- Are civil servants in power to give power to the people?
- How can we find out if a community is ready for change / co-creation?

Do's and don'ts:

- What do we need to stop doing to make co-creation effective?
- Citizens' engagement in innovation policies is not uncontroversial. How do we deal with the arguments pro and contra? How do we make this work in our representative democracy?
- What makes online co-creation work and what we can do to facilitate more success?
- How can we create the right framework for co-creation?

Framing:

- Is there any difference between co-creation & community participation or dialogue?
- Who is co-creation for? How can we enhance diversity in the co-creation process?

Sustainability:

- How can we design social sustainability?
- How do we select quality and act on / grow the work?

Sharing knowledge:

- What would a global content-sharing strategy look like?

Addressing these questions - Leading principles of co-creation

The value that co-creation can add and the ways in which it should be designed varies from situation to situation. There is not one winning strategy. Moreover, to design one specific method for co-creation would run counter to the spirit of co-creation.

So, we have harvested outcomes of discussions around these questions and present a number of working principles that have emerged from concrete experiences.

1. We should start with a dialogue that is:

- Knowledge driven instead of position driven.
- Participatory.
- Encourages a learning attitude and shared responsibility.
- Includes a diversity/variety of voices.

2. We must be:

- Open minded: Co-Creation as attitude (not a precise method).
- Tolerant of failure.
- Less bound by 'the rules'.
- Focused on sustainability.
- Open to creating unexpected partnerships.
- Trusting instead of controlling.

3. We can use:

- Social media and new forms of connectivity.
- Although social media is not a creator of change or of social movements, it can amplify them.
- The power of networks.
- Small steps.
- Engage people with stories.
- All talent available and be inclusive – everyone should feel empowered.
- Different approaches at the same time.
- New types of process design/different architecture.
- Sharing and networking, both within countries and internationally.

4. Then we can:

- Politicize it.
- Share power (and co- own).
- Bring people together – offline and online.
- Feel engaged/proud.
- Visualize ‘wins’.
- Celebrate success.



“Obstacles to co-creation are fundamentally divergent interest (co-creation of experts, not of everyone), lack of time (co-creation takes time, and people are short of time), and power structures and hierarchies (it is rare that the people themselves are given real power).”

Geoff Mulgan (NESTA) on challenges of co-creation

Co-creation in two different fields

There are many fields where co-creation can start, and many ways that co-creation can arise within those fields. As an inspiration we want to highlight two different areas which demonstrate slightly different approaches and characteristics of co-creation:

1. The Power of People in Communities

There are four characteristics that can improve the ability of a community to change and co-create:

- An angry community. Most co-creation comes out of crisis and the need for change, but not always. Co-creation looks very different if it is instigated by communities who just want to find a new way of working and who are not angry and frustrated by a system.
- You also need a learning community. Communities need to be willing to learn and to dare to try again and again.
- You need a confident community. Proud citizens who feel ownership of and identify with their own communities can be a powerful tool for co-creation.
- Lastly, you also benefit from having a responsible community who makes the effort to create the change that is needed to deal with the challenges it encounters.

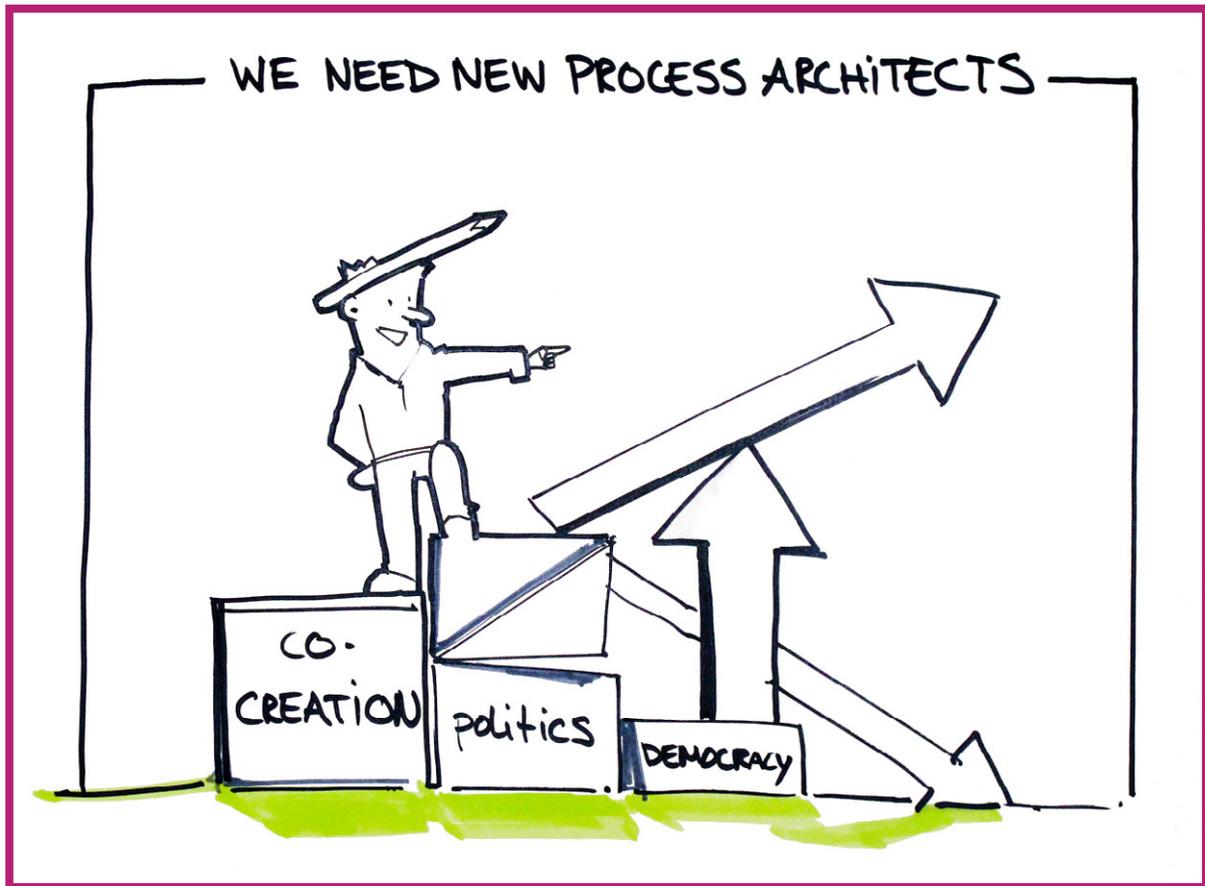
“Many of the projects had been started in response to a crisis. In all cases a spark is needed to light a flame but success and sustainability will be dependent on their social impact. From a resident’s or citizen’s point of view, success will be seen if they continue to feel part of a movement, if they have a sense of belonging, trust and connectivity to a cause.”

Chris Durkin (University of Northampton)

2. The Power of People in Government

*“How can the government become more of a process architect than a governing body?
What does civil society need to do to link with the government?”*

Chris Sigaloff (Knowledgeland)



The central questions in discussions around the power of people in government is not so much about building institutions, but more about changing the way that governments work at the moment. We have to let go of the idea that change is something 'earthquake-like' that will suddenly fix everything by tearing down bad practices. At the end of changing the government, the government will still be there, only it will look slightly

different. Changing the government is often a slow process and a process without a 'steering wheel'. Politicians should not control the process of change. Rather, they should facilitate the process and adopt a leadership style which makes others feel confident to speak and act.

The government is traditionally seen in the role of Organiser, however, people are very capable of organising their communities if they are empowered to do so. In many states citizens are used to the government taking responsibility for creating solutions to major issues and problems. Communities lean back and only get angry when things go wrong. **Citizens need to have a lean-forward relationship with the state.** Communities should aim for an engagement with the state that goes beyond lodging complaints. Communities should take a generative approach and suggest improvements.

Case: Pendrecht University

'The learning neighbourhood: everybody gets smarter'

Formerly, Pendrecht was a troubled quarter in the city of Rotterdam. Now it is host to a unique institution: the Pendrecht University. At the University, residents of the quarter are the professors and the professionals and local governors are the students. One of the ground principles of the Pendrecht University is to make residents feel that they are the expert concerning every day matters and issues in their communities and neighbourhoods. They know which issues need attention and what would be the best way to tackle them. At Pendrecht University they share their knowledge by teaching the professionals.

www.socialinnovationeurope.eu/node/2052

Case: Verbeter-de-buurt (Improve the neighbourhood)

Verbeter de buurt is a Dutch social platform that unites citizens and local government, by offering an easy way to improve the neighbourhood. Neighbours literally put their issues (problems and ideas alike) on the map and the city council will be notified. The platform offers other neighbours the options to read, vote and react on issues posted by their peers, encouraging dialogue. Ultimately leading to an improved neighbourhood.

www.verbeterdebuurt.nl

Risk management or Blame management?

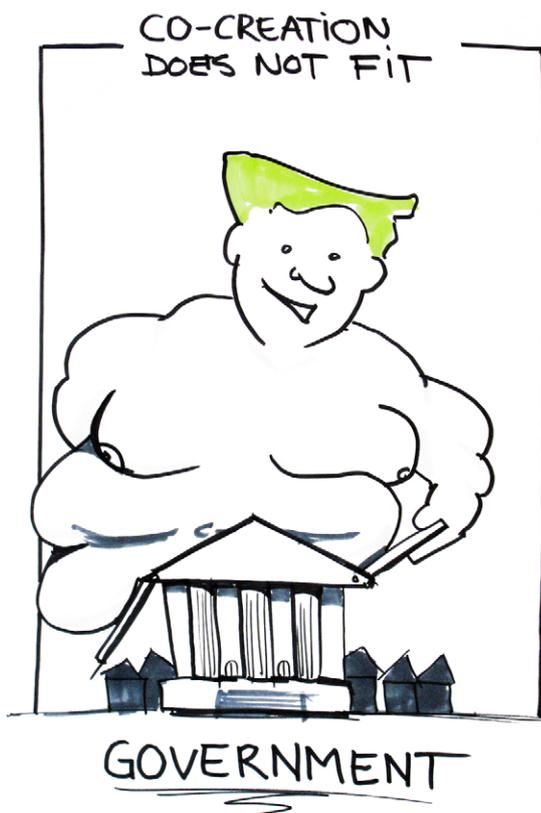
Governments often avoid change because of what we call Risk Management. Risk Management, however, often has more to do with the management of blame. Governments are often reluctant to change their actions because they are reluctant to shoulder the blame for failures. This reluctance can be softened if a party comes in on a project and offers to take the blame if the project goes wrong.

Futuregov (wearefuturegov.com), for instance, has offered to take blame in projects— this action dramatically ‘de-risks’ projects in the eyes of stakeholders within bureaucratic structures. Removing the threat of blame from the government can open up a broad space for more innovation and co-creation. Institutions are risk averse, but so are people. Action, risk and trust are related to each other, so when we want to transform words into action, we need to work out a space where people feel comfortable to act.

Case: Hack The Government

Hack de Overheid organises events bringing civil servants, geeks and designers together to discuss and build applications built around open government data. It is actively situated in pushing the agenda that open government can bring benefits to society, not only making the political process more transparent but improving public services and social cohesion.

www.hackdeoverheid.nl



“One key to creating more co-creation in the public sector could be to frame co-creation as an opportunity and as an untapped resource for public bodies. It is a resource in terms of intelligence of a problem, ideas for solutions and expertise. How can we mobilise this to the best effect?”

Perrie Ballantyne (NESTA)

“We do need new modes of governance, but not without paying attention to three key issues: how we constitute authority, how we decide who gets to act and on what basis and, most importantly, how we hold people with power properly accountable.”

Martin Stewart-Weeks (Cisco)

“How do we retool government and governing to accommodate new trends and demands for openness and co-creation without jettisoning enduring values of public work such as accountability, fairness, rigor, process fairness? If we can’t work out how to do both, the debate about changing government will remain mostly aspirational and peripheral.”

Martin Stewart-Weeks (Cisco)

“The important thing for Government is not to do things which individuals are doing already but to do those things which at present are not done at all.”

John M. Keynes
(Quote used in presentation by
Diogo Vasconcelos, Cisco)

Case: Soul City

The Soul City model in South Africa has created a mass media platform which can deal with multiple issues over time. Soul City now reaches 30m people by using edutainment to integrate social issues into popular and high-quality entertainment formats, based on a thorough research process. It also uses multiple media – prime time television drama, radio drama and print media – to capitalize on each medium’s strength and to reach a variety of audiences.

Two elements are at the heart of Soul City’s work: formative research and partnerships. Formative research is carried out with both audiences and experts to develop and field-test materials to ensure their effectiveness. Partnerships are established with organisations active in the relevant issues.

www.soulcity.org.za



#Co-creation tweets

- Ideas for co-creating public services: start where everything else failed, generate ideas from stories, learn lessons from failure.
- Great insight: governments don't avoid risks, they avoid blame. That's also where external consultants come in :-)
- Bruno Latour's The Phantom Public: "for any social change, you have to make the public the agent of that change."
- The question is also: how do you support emerging practices? It's happening now, what do we (govt, org, people) do to support it.
- Funny how people are very keen to say how co-creation *should* work but very reluctant to say what they will *do* personally.
- In that spirit, here's what I will do: involve at least one person from a different discipline in my next project.
- A new process architecture for co-creation as a central tool of govt and democracy. Can only be done empirically-learn by design.
- Ideas for co-creating public services: a "budget for silly things", run a project with role play (citizens are servants & vice versa)
- Make alliances with senior gov managers.
- Alliances with senior people are overrated, it's the middle managers you need to work on :-)

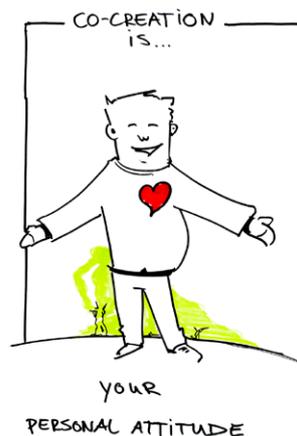


Are we ready?

Co-creation is a social process – it means different things to different people in different sectors of society, but there is a lot we can learn from each other about how to engage citizens. Co-creating requires a dialogue and a real desire to learn.

But it's not about learning from a list of tools. It's about a mind-set. We have to truly want to co-create, and we need to create a safe environment in which to do this.

The world we live in is changing and the nature of what it means to be a citizen is also beginning to change. The recent eruption of civil unrest in North Africa and the Middle East is just the beginning of a new generation of citizen activists. Simultaneously, crowd sourcing ideas and crowd funding new projects is happening all over the world. Whether top down or bottom up, engaging with different groups of people is important, but requires us to rethink our assumptions. Co-creation is not just another buzzword, but in order to create long term value for all involved, the concept certainly needs more attention. In order to co-create effectively; we need to answer the question – Are we ready for co-creation?



SIX Spring School 2011

SIX organisers:

Social Innovation eXchange (SIX)

SIX is a global community of over 3000 individuals and organisations – including NGOs, global firms, public agencies and academics - committed to promoting social innovation. Our aim is to improve the methods with which our societies find better solutions to challenges such as climate change, inequality and healthcare.

A series of varied events is one of the key ways SIX achieves its objectives – some focus on specific regions and themes, others bring together people from different corners of the world to converse via TelePresence. SIX's landmark events are its Spring and Summer schools.



These events are more intense and useful than others in related fields. We take one current global challenge, people of varying ages and experiences, allow plenty of time for open space learning and collaboration, and keep traditional 'speeches' and 'lectures' to a minimum.

SIX's most recent project has been to develop a strategy for the European Union to support social innovation, including in ageing, through reforms to current funding for research, regional development, business and employment.

Knowledgeland (KL)

Knowledgeland contributes to a smarter Dutch society. We believe that the best guarantee for future prosperity and welfare, now and in the future, is to strengthen our knowledge society. We help to realise this goal by developing and delivering key interventions. Knowledgeland is an independent think tank. We are continuously searching for ways to spark the social innovations needed to improve the knowledge

society. We start by defining challenges for the knowledge society and creatively finding possible answers to them. Knowledgeland also develops and delivers projects, programmes and platforms to help others solve the issues at hand.

Altogether, Knowledgeland develops and realises a broad range of interventions to make societies smarter. We often initiate them ourselves, but we are also frequently commissioned by the government and public organisations which share our ambition and which are in need of our expertise. This yields investigations, recommendations, projects, programmes, networks, meetings, training and re-organisation. Knowledgeland is active in six fields: education, government, cultural heritage, copyright, creative economy and social media. We strive to innovate these fields, often in collaboration with partners and networks.



Dialogue Café

Dialogue Café is a global non-profit initiative that enables face-to-face conversations between diverse groups of people from around the world so that they can share experiences, learn from each other and work together to make the world a better place. This is the world's first public video conferencing network specifically for civil society - for social, educational and cultural organizations. We have three Dialogue Cafés already up and running in Amsterdam, Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro.



