

Challenges and Best Practice in Co-Production

Co-Designing Creative Evaluation Approaches

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Capturing the value of engagement between the public sector and the communities with which they work is both critically important and rare. In today's climate there is an ever increasing need to better demonstrate the evidence public sector organisations are making to the communities. Considering this context, we suggest the value of creative evaluation as part of a co-design approach. It could be argued that conventional evaluation approaches with which researchers and practitioners are familiar follow traditional methods such as surveys, focus groups and interviews [Whitehead, 2002]. While such approaches are structured and capture key evaluation data, their appeal and effectiveness can suffer from not providing an engaging experience for participants [Preskill et al. 2015]. We propose that when designing an evaluation tool, while it is important to bear in mind that the tool should be co-designed so that there is some thought and intent as to what is to be captured, how best to capture it, and what the analysis of the captured data will tell us about the project, there also needs to be a creative aspect to such tools, in order to engage participants. Considering this notion of such creative tools, we present "The Evaluation Game", a creative evaluation tool co-designed with four different public sector organisations within the Highlands and Islands. As a part of this project we developed a new approach through co-design to bring transparency, suitability and effectiveness in engagement, as well ways in which to articulate impact better. This creative evaluation approach has been informed by a series of co-design workshops, where we explore ways in which these organisations could overcome the universal challenge of evidencing impact. We offer these contributions to the field of co-production and evaluation as evidence of the value of non-traditional qualitative processes. Finally, we present our co-design approach, tools developed and conclude with the challenges encountered.

Reference

Preskill, H., Gopal, S., Mack, K and Cook, J. 2014. **Evaluating Complexity: Propositions for Improving Practice**. Online Available at <http://www.fsg.org/publications/evaluating-complexity> [Accessed on 12 February 2016]

Whitehead, L. T, 2002. **Traditional Approaches to the Evaluation of Community Based Interventions: Strengths and Limitations**. CCHC. Online Available at www.cusag.umd.edu/documents/WorkingPapers/Traditional%20Approaches%20to%20Program%20Evaluation.pdf [Accessed on 20th February 2016]